

ACCE Guidance Committee Best Practices Task Force

Best Practice No. 1 (July 2006)

Common Weakness

“The Visiting Team was unable to verify the requirements of the specified number of hours in (some subject matter / topical area)”.

Justification

Programs must show that they meet minimum semester/quarter hour requirements in curriculum categories and core subject matter areas. The curriculum matrix (found in Document 102) has been developed to provide a consistent method for programs to identify the location of curriculum requirements within their courses. The Visiting Team reviews course and student material in an attempt to verify that the semester/quarter hour requirements on the curriculum matrix are accurate and meet ACCE standards.

Fifty programs were evaluated by the ACCE from February 2002 through July 2005. Visiting Team reports from these fifty visits cited a total of 164 weaknesses, of which 60 were attributed to the “Curriculum” section of the standards. A common weakness in this section of the standard (representing about ¼ of the curriculum weaknesses) was the inability of visiting teams verify compliance with the number of semester/quarter or instructional hours when looking at various curriculum requirements.

Potential Solution

In order to help address this weakness, the author of the self-study (i.e. program coordinator or other) needs to be thoroughly familiar with the ACCE Standards (Document 103) while preparing the matrix in Document 102. Since the self-study author will most likely not have firsthand knowledge of each course within the curriculum, it is imperative that program faculty (who teach these courses) be involved with, and contribute to, the creation of the curriculum matrix. A possible process to gather appropriate input regarding the assignment of courses, or portions thereof, to particular ACCE subject matter and topical content categories may be as follows:

- Self-study author/program coordinator organizes and facilitates an initial faculty meeting 6 – 12 months before self-study is due. The purpose of this meeting is to assign course “hours” and “topics” to various categories within the matrix. A large-scale version of the matrix may be helpful for display and mark-up during this working session.
- Self-study author/program coordinator takes this input and performs a gap analysis to identify areas of curriculum that appear to be insufficient.
- Self-study author/program coordinator facilitates a second meeting with faculty to investigate the gaps. Some material may already be covered in other courses but overlooked during the initial meeting. Missing/deficient subject hours and topical content will have to be addressed and fixed.
- Assignment of subject matter or topical content should be reflected in course documentation (i.e. syllabi and student work) and coordinated with the matrix. A simple solution to this is to add an extra “ACCE” column to each syllabus. This helps to simplify the job of the visiting team when validating course content with the semester/quarter hours shown on the curriculum matrix. An example of such syllabus is attached.

Areas Requiring Close Attention

- Read the instructions listed on the matrix. Place all courses within the curriculum across the top of the matrix and distribute the quarter/semester hours to the proper curriculum and core subject matter category. Topical content can be marked with an “X” in lieu of credit hours or instructional time.
- Assignment of semester/quarter hours in “Construction” category versus “Construction Science” category in the Baccalaureate Degree programs. See Standard (Document 103, p. 11- 12).
- Interpreting the assignment of semester/quarter hours in “Project Management”. See Standard (Document 103, p. 12 – 15, p.18 -19).
- Interpreting the assignment of semester/quarter hours in “Business and Management”. See Standard (Document 103, p. 10 – 11, p.20).

Sample Syllabus

Course content specifically referenced to ACCE Subject Matter or Topical Requirements

TIME: LOCATION:				
Session	Topic	ASSIGNMENTS & HOMEWORK SOLUTIONS	POINTS	ACCE TOPICAL CONTENT
1	Introduction	Your Father's Oldsmobile Do you A992		4.24
2	Analysis of tension members	Net area, gross area and block shear problem 2-5		4.24
3	Analysis of tension members	Staggered holes, problem 2-6		4.24
4	Design of tension members	Effects of shear lag problems 2-2, 2-18 Effective Contract & Shop Drawings		4.24 1.2 Ethics—1 hr
5	Design of tension members	Design of tension members problem 2-23, 2-30		4.24
6	Exam 1 GOOD LUCK!!		100	4.24
7	Column analysis	Column analysis column analysis flowchart 2-13.doc 2-13.htm		4.24
8	Column analysis	Plotting E2-1		4.24
9	Column design	prob2-18and2-20.doc prob2-18and2-20.htm		4.24
10	Column design			4.24
11	Column baseplate design	baseplates		4.24
12	Column baseplate design	3-18		4.24
13	Exam 2 GOOD LUCK!!		100	4.24
14	Beam analysis, allowable stresses	4-18, 4-21		4.24
15	Beam analysis	Example 4-5, 4-13, 4-30, 4-33		4.24
16	Beam design			4.24
17	Beam design	Fb and unbraced length Finding Fb 4-6, 4-14		4.24