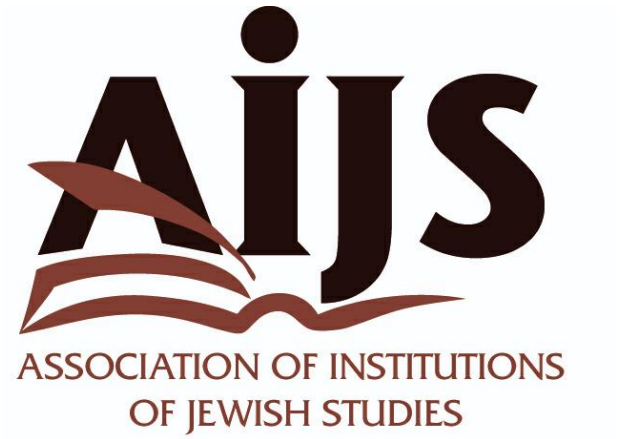

HANDBOOK

On March 10, 2016, AIJS was granted initial recognition by the U.S. Department of Education as a nationally recognized accrediting agency, for a period of five years, and on June 2, 2021, AIJS recognition as a nationally recognized accrediting agency was renewed for a period of five years with the following scope of recognition:

Scope of recognition: the accreditation of postsecondary institutions of Jewish Studies offering educational programs leading to a certificate, associate degree, baccalaureate degree, or their equivalent credential, all with at least 30% credit content in Jewish Studies or Classical Torah Studies.
Geographic area: within the United States

EXECUTIVE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL (EAC):

Dr. Chaim Cohen, Chair

Rabbi Sholom Kamenetsky, Vice-Chair

Rabbi Shlomo Lesin, Secretary- Treasurer

Rabbi Moshe Bender

Mr. Samuel Brown, Esq., Public Member

Rabbi Dovid Heinemann

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SECTION I
THE FRAMEWORK FOR AIJS ACCREDITATION

INTRODUCTION AND MISSION

The Association of Institutions of Jewish Studies (AIJS) is an accrediting agency with a voluntary membership of post-secondary institutions specializing in traditional Jewish Studies, dedicated to fostering quality and integrity within the institution, and in its relationships with its stakeholders. AIJS reviews, approves and accredits institutions that offer traditional Jewish Studies programs that ascribe to the principles and philosophy of classic *Halacha* (codes of Jewish Law) as embodied by the *Shulchan Aruch*, and operate in accord with the definitive guidance of contemporary, traditional mainstream Orthodox rabbinical authorities.

AIJS fosters quality education and encourages academic and administrative excellence by conducting a comprehensive and systematic evaluation of the institution and subsequently granting accreditation to those institutions that meet the organization's Standards. Accredited institutions use accreditation to establish eligibility for federal financial aid programs.

The scope of AIJS accreditation is institutions of higher education offering programs with a focus on traditional Jewish Studies on the undergraduate level. This would include post-secondary certificate programs, Associate Degree programs, Bachelor's Degree programs, and programs that lead to highly specialized degrees in classical Jewish studies. The geographic scope of AIJS is limited to institutions which are located within the United States.

What are the basic parameters of the field of Jewish Studies? To begin, we should identify certain elements that are subsumed under the broad heading of Jewish Studies. This is not to suggest that each Jewish Studies institution must offer instruction in every one of these areas.

The following elements provide a general landscape of the field of Jewish Studies:

- Biblical studies and Biblical commentaries
- Jewish law, practice and customs
- Talmudic and rabbinical studies

- Medieval and contemporary Jewish exegesis
- Jewish religious and philosophical thought
- Jewish ethics
- Jewish history
- The study of Hebrew, Aramaic and Yiddish languages
- The methodology of instruction of the above fields of study

While some AIJS member institutions may offer programs exclusively in Jewish Studies, other institutions may elect to offer their students an integrated program of Jewish Studies with Liberal Arts or career-oriented sequences. These programs might include coursework in the following traditional disciplines, Arts, Business Administration, Computer Science, Counseling, Education, Psychology, Sociology, and more. All courses offered at AIJS member institutions must reflect classical Torah values in accordance with the definitive guidance of contemporary mainstream Orthodox rabbinical authorities. The staff of AIJS institutions, whether instructors of Jewish Studies or other studies, must, likewise, be sensitive to these guidelines.

In summary, the field of Jewish Studies offers students a rich opportunity to gain an interdisciplinary perspective of history, culture, languages and laws of this dynamic civilization from Biblical times to the modern day. AIJS institutions will include this rich heritage of social values in all the coursework studied within its institutions.

JEWISH STUDIES TODAY

The universe of formal post-secondary programs that are devoted to Jewish Studies has been growing steadily, commensurate with the growth of the Orthodox Jewish population in large and small cities around the country. This population places great cultural and historical value on educated citizens with a strong background in Jewish Studies, dedicated to the good and welfare of their communities.

For centuries, the epicenters of traditional Jewish Studies were located in the academies and centers of scholarship in Israel and Eastern Europe. With the advent of mass Jewish migration to the U.S. in the early decades of the 20th century, there began an undercurrent of yearning for the establishment of classical post-secondary programs in Jewish Studies.

Beginning with the founding of a few fledgling institutions in the 1940s and 1950s, there are now well over 100 institutions located throughout the U.S. that provide Jewish Studies at the core of their higher education offerings.

The vast majority of post-secondary Jewish Studies institutions belong to one of two basic categories. The first category is Yeshivas, catering mostly to young men, that see, as their mission, the production of world-class scholars in Jewish Studies, primarily in Talmudic and Rabbinical studies. The second category is Jewish institutions for women, commonly referred to as Seminaries, developed with the primary mission to give each student a quality college level Jewish Studies curriculum and to prepare students to become Jewish Studies teachers.

Over the last 50 years, women's seminaries have graduated and placed thousands of Jewish Studies teachers in Hebrew Day schools across the country. Likewise, Yeshivas have succeeded in producing a generation of graduates who are fluent in the scholarship of the Talmud, Jewish Legal Codes and related studies.

AIJS also seeks to serve an additional population of institutions that offer Jewish-studies programs. These institutions serve students who seek to integrate a concentration of Jewish Studies alongside college level secular studies. Such programs provide advanced Jewish scholarship as well as the skills and knowledge to pursue a secular profession. These programs all share the common thread of offering higher education programs anchored in higher Jewish learning.

It should also be noted in this context that while there are secular Liberal Arts institutions that offer courses or even programs in Jewish Studies, the vast majority are at an introductory level, at least in the undergraduate degree programs, and do not fulfill the academic objectives of the student who is seeking a more traditional and comprehensive advanced Jewish Studies curriculum.

The earliest discussions leading to the creation of AIJS date back to 2000, when a number of institutions met to discuss forming an organization that would facilitate the growth and quality of institutions of Jewish Studies. These discussions culminated in the formation of an accrediting agency for Jewish studies, which subsequently became the Association of Institutions of Jewish Studies and is now a nationally recognized accrediting agency.

THE PURPOSE OF AIJS ACCREDITATION

Accreditation serves several purposes in higher education. At its core, it makes judgments about the quality and effectiveness of the delivery of educational programs. This provides a level of assurance to the institution's various stakeholders that benchmarks of effectiveness and quality have been attained. To this end, accreditation is primarily concerned with the establishment of objective 'Standards' by which these judgments can be made.

Another purpose of accreditation is to improve the performance of educational programs. For institutions that already meet the baseline Standards of effectiveness and quality, continued accreditation challenges them to strive higher in a quest towards educational excellence.

The third purpose is to enable eligible students to benefit from HEA programs.

AIJS DECISION MAKING COUNCIL – THE EAC

The Executive Accreditation Council (EAC) of AIJS is the decision-making council for AIJS and is analogous to the board of directors of a corporation and is broadly responsible for the operations of the agency. The EAC ensures that AIJS has the appropriate resources and staff to: (a) carry out its accrediting responsibility effectively, (b) manage the organization and its finances effectively, and (c) satisfy all requirements of the U.S. Department of Education.

The founding EAC was created by nomination and consensus of the various stakeholders, including institutions and community members, with a strong interest in establishing a quality accrediting agency for Jewish Studies.

Subsequent to its founding, new members are added to maintain the EAC at an effective level of membership. Individual EAC members can nominate a new member for consideration by the EAC. The EAC then discusses and votes on the nominee's acceptance to the Council.

All members of the EAC receive training on their responsibilities as members of the agency's decision-making body. They are also trained in the AIJS standards and on the AIJS policies and procedures for accreditation.

The EAC defines the broad policies and procedures for accreditation and ensures that its accrediting activities are in full compliance with the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education.

The Chair of the EAC and the Vice Chair and the Secretary-Treasurer of the EAC comprise the Executive Committee of the EAC, and they select candidates for the position of executive director, to present to the EAC for approval. The chief executive officer or president is responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the organization. The chief executive officer or president reports to the Executive Committee, who in turn reports to the EAC.

As per AIJS Bylaws, the EAC meets a minimum of one time per year, but generally meets twice annually and may meet more frequently, if necessary. Members of the EAC serve for a term of five years and may serve no more than two consecutive terms.

The EAC has the power to create standing or working committees, as necessary, to effectively oversee AIJS operations, to establish and review Standards, and to set policies.

The EAC has developed accreditation Standards in the following areas:

1. Institution Mission and Goals
2. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
3. Student Progress and Learning Outcomes
4. Facilities, Resources and Equipment
5. Recruitment, Admissions, Catalogs and Student Services
6. Student Records
7. Measures in Program Length, Objective of Degrees, and Credentials Offered
8. Faculty Qualifications and Responsibilities
9. Administration, Human Resources and Collaborative Relationships
10. Financial Practices

The EAC determines the measures of performance in each of the Standards necessary for accreditation, and the conditions under which it could decide to deny, withdraw, suspend or terminate the accreditation of an institution.

AIJS shall periodically evaluate its own accrediting Standards, which may be expanded or adjusted as necessary in order to keep AIJS accreditation relevant and in compliance with current governmental and professional norms. If the agency determines that it needs to make certain changes to its Standards, it shall initiate action within 12 months of that determination and complete its revision within a reasonable period of time, generally within 24 months.

Before finalizing any substantive changes to the AIJS Standards, the agency will: (a) provide notice to all of its relevant constituencies, and other parties who have made their interest known to the agency, of the changes the agency proposes to make; (b) give its constituencies and other interested parties adequate opportunity to comment on the proposed changes; and (c) take into account any comments on the proposed changes submitted by these parties in a reasonable timeframe.

The major responsibility of the EAC is to accredit institutions of Jewish Studies. It does that by reviewing AIJS site review reports, and other information as appropriate, and then decides which institutions and/or programs will receive AIJS accreditation according to its published Standards.

As part of its accrediting function the EAC will review and ascertain that:

1. Accredited institutions offer education on a post-secondary level of instruction that is within AIJS's scope of recognition.
2. Reviews are professionally and fairly conducted.
3. Accredited institutions represent their programs fairly to the public.
4. Academic and administrative affairs are conducted in accordance with published AIJS Standards.

The EAC will ensure that potential candidates for accreditation are provided with:

1. Clear published Standards and criteria for accreditation.
2. A full description of all accreditation review processes and procedures.
3. A full description of the Institutional Self-Appraisal (ISA) process that must be conducted by the institution to evaluate its own administrative and educational strengths and weaknesses.

4. Appropriate support throughout the accreditation process.

While AIJS operates as an independent accrediting agency, it measures its Standards and accreditation activities against generally accepted policies and procedures in the American system of peer-review accreditation, as well as the Standards and guidelines recommended by the U.S. Department of Education.

The EAC has a responsibility to ensure that the Standards adopted are appropriate for Jewish Studies post-secondary programs, that they are consistently and professionally applied, and that they are in full compliance with federal requirements.

The EAC may create task forces, working committees and standing committees in any of the areas in its jurisdiction. Such bodies may include current members of the EAC, outside experts, stakeholders, members of the community and public members.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTION OF EAC MEMBERS

The cumulative membership of the EAC must include a healthy combination of individuals with substantial expertise and experience that can be helpful in evaluating Jewish Studies institutions. Such individuals may include, Rabbinical/Talmudic scholars, senior college-level administrators, college faculty members, experienced financial professionals, lay leaders and professionals with involvement in the Jewish Studies universe, community leaders, public members and others with an interest in advancing the quality of Jewish Studies institutions. The EAC will always be comprised of academic and administrative experts and public members. At least two members of the EAC must be academic experts and at least two members of the EAC must be administrative experts. At least one out of every seven EAC members must be a public member as defined in a later section of this guide. An "Academic expert" is someone who is currently or was recently directly engaged in a significant manner in post-secondary teaching and/or research, and an "Administrative expert" is someone who is currently or was recently directly engaged in a significant manner in post-secondary program or institutional administration. EAC members are classified into one of the following four categories – academic, administrative, other professional and public members.

The suitability of individuals recommended for EAC membership will be assessed on the basis of formal academic training and degrees earned, employment history, experience, and other qualifications as well as recommendations received. AIJS will be looking for

individuals who recognize the importance of Jewish Studies and acknowledge its legitimacy as a discipline of scholarship and research, and who are committed to promoting educational and administrative excellence within institutions that provide Jewish Studies. All EAC members are required to attend annual training sessions which address the EAC's responsibilities and include training updates on AIJS accreditation standards and AIJS accreditation policies and procedures, as well as federal updates relevant to accreditation.

AIJS has ratified the process for including new members into the EAC by nominating and voting on the acceptance of new members. EAC members may not be elected or selected by the board or chief executive officer of any related, associated, or affiliated trade association of membership organization. EAC members may not serve on the Board or as CEO of any related trade association or membership organization. New members may join the EAC after being nominated by an existing member and approved by majority vote following careful review of their experience and expertise by the members of EAC. They will be obligated to attend training for their role and formally observe an EAC session. Any EAC member approved by the EAC must meet the requirements of the AIJS Conflict of Interest Policy that appears below and must attest that he/she will adhere to the AIJS Conflict of Interest Policy by signing a Conflict of Interest form prior to serving as an EAC member and at least annually. AIJS staff members receive notification from the EAC following an EAC meeting at which EAC members are nominated and follow through with securing the Conflict of Interest Form.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTION OF PUBLIC MEMBERS

As stated in a previous section, the EAC membership will also include public members, complying with the federal requirement that a minimum of one out of seven EAC members must be a public member.

A public member is anyone who is not:

(1) An employee, member of the governing board, owner, or shareholder of, or consultant to, an institution or program that either is accredited by the agency or has applied for accreditation;

(2) A member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated with, or associated with the agency; or

(3) A spouse, parent, child, or sibling of an individual identified in paragraph (1) or (2) of this definition.

Any public member nominated to the EAC must sign an Affidavit for Public Members in addition to the AIJS Conflict of Interest Form prior to serving as a public member. AIJS staff members receive notification from the EAC following an EAC meeting at which EAC public members are nominated and follow through with securing the Affidavit for Public members as well as the Conflict of Interest Form.

AIJS CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

The AIJS conflict of interest policy is designed to avoid actual conflicts, potential conflicts and even the appearance of conflicts of interest in the agency decisions. AIJS conflict of interest policies are relevant to members of the Executive Accreditation Council including Public Members, Site Visit Team chairmen, Site Visit Team members, Members of an Appeals Panel, Members of the AIJS Administrative Staff, Agency representatives and Consultants.

AIJS will not assign any individual as Chairman of a site visit, site team member, reviewer or Appeals Panel Member if the individual is an alumnus of the institution, employee of the institution, a candidate for employment within the recent year, or has been employed by the institution within the past five years, belongs to the governing body of that institution or has belonged to the governing body in the past five years, has a personal, consulting or business relationship with the institution under review that could affect his or her objectivity, or has had a personal, consulting or business relationship with the institution under review, has a material interest in a positive accreditation outcome, has a close relative who is an employee of the institution, board member, current candidate for employment, a student at the institution or is an alumnus of the institution. A close relative includes a spouse, parents, guardian, siblings, or children of the individual or their spouse.

AIJS Staff liaisons will not be assigned to any institutions where they have ever been enrolled as a student, been employed or actively been a part of or are presently being considered for employment.

AIJS employees, EAC members, Site Visit Chairmen, Site Visitors, Members of an Appeals Panel, Agency representatives and Consultants to AIJS may not accept awards, honors or

honorary degrees from an institution during the period of their employment/service at AIJS. AIJS employees and agency representatives may not serve as consultants to member or applicant institutions. AIJS employees and agency representatives may not serve as a participating "voting" member of an assessment visit team; AIJS staff may accompany such teams and review such documents. At visits following actions of warning, probation, or show cause, an AIJS staff member may not serve as the sole evaluator.

Further, the names and affiliations of prospective site visit teams will be conveyed to an institution in advance of the visit, in order to allow the institution the opportunity to identify any conflict of interest, actual or perceived.

EAC members, Site Visit Chairmen, Site Visitors, Members of an Appeals Panel, AIJS staff, Agency Representatives and Consultants must sign a Conflict of Interest Form, indicating that he/she is aware of the agency's conflict of interest policies and will act accordingly.

The Chairman of the EAC, at his or her discretion, may disqualify a member of the EAC from participating in an accreditation decision for a perceived conflict of interest.

AIJS CONFLICT OF INTEREST PROCEDURES

As stated in the section for Requirements for Selection of EAC Members, any EAC member approved by the EAC must meet the requirements of the AIJS Conflict of Interest Policy that appears below and must attest that he/she will adhere to the AIJS Conflict of Interest Policy by signing a Conflict of Interest form prior to serving as an EAC member, and annually. AIJS staff members receive notification from the EAC following an EAC meeting at which EAC members are nominated and follow through with securing the Conflict of Interest Form.

Any public member nominated to the EAC must sign an Affidavit for Public Members in addition to the AIJS Conflict of Interest Form prior to serving as a public member. AIJS staff members receive notification from the EAC following an EAC meeting at which EAC public members are nominated and follow through with securing the Affidavit for Public members as well as the Conflict of Interest Form.

In addition to EAC members, any site visit team members, members of an appeals panel, members of the AIJS administrative staff, agency representatives and consultants must adhere to the AIJS Conflict of Interest Policy. AIJS has instituted the following procedures to ensure that AIJS conflict of interest requirements are met.

Potential site visitors, potential members of an appeals panel, potential employees of AIJS administrative staff, agency representatives and consultants are given a copy of the AIJS Conflict of Interest Policy to read and review. He/she is then given the signed Conflict of Interest form to sign and return to AIJS prior to the start of his/her duties or responsibilities at AIJS.

AIJS maintains a file that contains all of the Conflict of Interest forms that have been signed and returned to AIJS to ensure that each EAC member, site visit team member, member of an appeals panel, member of the AIJS administrative staff, agency representative and consultant has completed the required form. AIJS staff members review the file that contains the Conflict of Interest forms periodically and compares the list of forms contained in the file to the list of EAC members and EAC nominees to ensure that all forms have been obtained. Public member affidavits are likewise kept on file and the file is periodically reviewed.

BENEFITS OF AIJS ACCREDITATION

Before describing the actual process of accreditation, it is important to understand the unique benefits that may be attained by an institution's being awarded accreditation.

As stated earlier, the objectives of AIJS accreditation are to assure standards of quality and to encourage and facilitate excellence in institutions offering programs in Jewish Studies. Once the institution is granted AIJS accreditation, each of its stakeholders stands to benefit, although the particular benefit may vary among its constituencies.

For Institutions:

The primary advantage to institutions arises from the very object of the accreditation process, namely an impetus toward institutional development and improvement. The institution's self-appraisal addressing the agency's Standards of excellence, and the subsequent site visit to the institution, encourage the institution to focus upon and better understand their unique strengths and weaknesses. Once identified, institutional strengths

can be further expanded and refined, while weaknesses can be addressed more openly, and ultimately resolved.

Most institutions appreciate the benefits that accrue from self-appraisal and reflection; however, the constant pressure of day-to-day responsibilities often diverts attention from such endeavors. Often, the accreditation process provides an external imperative to address areas that the institution knows that it needs to address but never found the time to do so because of internal conditions and external constraints.

The Institutional Self-Appraisal required by AIJS provides a framework for exploring these areas. It allows for enhanced communication, discussion and reflection. Working with the site visit team allows for the frank and constructive sharing of experience and ideas developed and used in other institutions.

Institutions also benefit from accreditation as a result of the enhanced status they derive as a result of a favorable evaluation by colleagues at other institutions. Accreditation provides an imprimatur, and signals publicly that the institution is concerned with issues of effectiveness and excellence in its educational and administrative functions.

The granting of accreditation demonstrates, in the clearest terms possible, that the institution has attained the highest standards of performance and achievements that might be expected by a post-secondary institution of Jewish studies. It also shows that these accomplishments are not simply self-proclaimed but are attested to objectively by professionals within the extended Jewish Studies community.

Accreditation thus provides an external, objective assessment of the quality of the institution and its educational programs that other institutions, agencies, and constituencies can then accept. Among these other agencies is the U.S. Department of Education. On March 10, 2016, AIJS was granted initial recognition by the U.S. Department of Education as a nationally recognized accrediting agency, for a period of five years. Recognition of AIJS by the US Department of Education allows an AIJS accredited institution to fulfill one of the Department of Education's requirements for institutional eligibility and thereby enable student participation in federal student financial aid programs.

For Students:

Students also gain from the accreditation process and accreditation. The enhanced status of the institution grants students a broader acceptance of the academic work that they complete. This is of particular significance for students who are already planning their future careers. Having completed academic work in a recognized nationally accredited institution opens a new range of possibilities and options. Students, as well as their parents and guardians, also benefit from the accredited institution's eligibility to participate in federal financial aid programs.

Accreditation requires institutions to provide "consumer information" to their students and also adds significant transparency to an institution due to enhanced institutional reporting requirements and the obligation of AIJS to report adverse actions publicly.

Additionally, many of the AIJS Standards that are the basis of accreditation deal directly with the level and quality of student services. An accredited institution is one that is more sensitive to its students' needs, and one that has in place the mechanisms to provide a broader range of student services.

Accreditation also gives students another forum into which to lodge complaints, with the assurance that their issues will be given serious consideration.

For Supporting Constituencies and the Public:

A healthy diversity prevails among post-secondary institutions that provide Jewish Studies programs. Different institutions have developed particular emphases and expectations that reflect their organizational histories and culture, as well as the special nature of the communities which they serve. This general diversity, however, can lead to some interesting issues.

The graduates of these distinctive institutions frequently accept positions as teachers of Jewish Studies in other institutions. One of the goals of AIJS accreditation is to introduce important benchmarks in the field of Jewish Studies. While recognizing the underlying diversity, a common denominator for standards emerges out of the AIJS accreditation process.

The core of academic expectancies and standards that result from AIJS accreditation means that the wider public – including parents, employers, funding agencies and benefactors – gains a yardstick by which it can measure and compare institutions of Jewish Studies. In an environment where resources are limited, accreditation provides this wider public with an objective standard to gauge the quality of the institution that can be used when making decisions regarding admissions, placement, etc.

AIJS MEMBERSHIP

Institutions that offer post-secondary level programs in Jewish Studies and/or programs with a core curriculum of Jewish Studies, and that ascribe to the principles and philosophy of classic *Halacha* (codes of Jewish Law) as embodied by the *Shulchan Aruch,* and operate in accordance with the definitive guidance, traditional mainstream Orthodox rabbinical authorities, may apply for membership in AIJS. Membership status does not infer or ensure that full accreditation will result, and no such claims can be made by the institution.

To apply for membership an institution must submit a membership application to AIJS. The staff of AIJS will then evaluate the application to confirm that the information listed on the membership application is accurate, and that the institution meets the basic criteria of AIJS Membership. Among other verification procedures, AIJS may make a short visit to the institution, with visitation costs to be borne the institution. If accepted for membership, the annual standard membership fee (currently $12,500) would be payable, and the institution would be eligible to apply for AIJS accreditation.

Membership in AIJS is not dependent upon membership or affiliation with any other organization or agency. Dues owed to AIJS are to be paid directly to the agency and not through any related, associated, or affiliated trade association or membership organization.

THE INITIAL ACCREDITATION PROCESS

In keeping with the mission of AIJS, and in order to promote and sustain the goals of accreditation, interested and qualified institutions are invited to engage in the accrediting process, which consists of the following steps:

1. Institution applies for Membership in AIJS.
2. AIJS reviews the membership application and approves or declines it.
3. If accepted for Membership, the Institution may prepare and submit an ISA.

4. After the ISA has been submitted, reviewed and accepted, an AIJS site team evaluation is scheduled and conducted.

5. The EAC reviews the ISA, Site Visit Report and determines if the institution complies with the accreditation standards. The EAC then votes to grant or deny accreditation status.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION

AIJS requires that any post-secondary institution of Jewish Studies wishing to be considered for initial accreditation, meet the basic eligibility requirements described in this section. Eligibility requirements are regarded as essential conditions that must be fulfilled before the institution can begin the process of accreditation. The agency's Accreditation Standards rest upon these minimum eligibility requirements.

Eligibility requirements should not be confused with accreditation Standards. If each one of the eligibility requirements is in place, then there is a possibility that the institution is structurally able to proceed toward the accreditation process. While meeting the eligibility requirements is essential before the process can begin, there is certainly no assurance that accreditation will be granted.

As a post-secondary, institutional accreditation agency, AIJS accepts membership applications from post-secondary institutions that offer a predominantly Jewish Studies curriculum, or a core Jewish Studies curriculum complemented by other disciplines, such as Education, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Computer Science, and Business Studies. AIJS will consider applications from institutions that ascribe to the principles and philosophy of classic *Halacha* (codes of Jewish Law) as embodied by the *Shulchan Aruch,* and operate in accordance with the definitive guidance, traditional mainstream Orthodox rabbinical authorities.

In general, the principal programs of eligible institutions will build upon the knowledge and competencies normally acquired by students through a completed high school program, or its equivalent. This academic foundation must be verifiable by objective criteria.

Eligibility requirements which must be met:

1. <u>Authorization</u>

The institution is authorized to operate as a post-secondary institution by the appropriate governmental organization, agency, or controlling body as required by the jurisdiction or state within which the institution operates.

2. Administration

   The institution has the administration, support, and services necessary to achieve the stated mission.

3. Faculty

   The institution employs sufficient professionally qualified faculty to fulfill its obligations toward achieving the institution's stated mission.

4. Financing

   The institution substantiates an objectively verifiable funding base and has the financial resources to achieve its mission.

5. Educational program

   The institution offers one or more educational programs in Jewish Studies consistent with its stated mission. The educational programs offered must be of sufficient duration and content to provide documented levels of educational quality on the undergraduate level, consistent with the degree(s) or credential(s) offered.

6. Operational status

   The institution will have been in operation and offering its principal educational program for at least one full academic year, with registered students pursuing credentials through these programs, at the time that the AIJS evaluates the Application for Accreditation.

7. Relationship with the Association of Institutions of Jewish Studies

   The institution accepts the standards and related policies of the AIJS and agrees to comply with the standards and policies as currently stated.

INSTITUTIONAL SELF APPRAISAL (ISA) AND ON-SITE VISIT

Applicants for Accreditation must prepare a comprehensive self-appraisal, the ISA. The purpose of this self-appraisal is to assess the degree to which the institution is in compliance with the Standards that have been promulgated by AIJS for accreditation. Applicants will receive guidance on how to develop their ISA in the *Guide to the Institutional Self-Appraisal (ISA)*, which includes detailed instructions on what is expected in the ISA.

Essentially, the institution is required to examine and report on the level of its compliance with each of the Standards required by AIJS.

It is important that the institution involves its various stakeholders including board, faculty, administration and students in the preparation of its ISA. In this way, the study can encompass the different interests and viewpoints of the institution's constituencies, thereby resulting in a more accurate and objective assessment of the institution's strengths and weaknesses. A liaison for accreditation should be appointed by the institution to direct the process.

The AIJS Standards are critical to the accreditation process. They define areas of developmental growth, opportunity and progression toward excellence within the educational and administrative activities of institutions. Even before work on the ISA is begun, those institutional members who will be involved in the study should study in detail the Standards described in this Handbook as well as in the *Guide to the ISA*.

By conducting a careful, honest and objective self-appraisal, the institution will be able to identify its operational and strategic strengths and weaknesses. The institution is invited to reflect on these and determine whether current practice deviates from the requirements of AIJS. If a deficiency is found to exist, the institution is expected to identify it and take operational measures that will correct or otherwise address the weakness.

After the ISA has been completed, it must be submitted to AIJS. AIJS reviews the document and sends the institution comments and feedback. The institution has the opportunity to respond to the comments and resubmit the document. Then AIJS can accept the document, reject it, or may ask for supplementary documentation, explanations, or supporting materials.

Once the ISA has been formally accepted by AIJS, an evaluation committee, or site visit team, will be appointed, and a site visit will be scheduled to the institution. The purpose of this visit is for knowledgeable evaluators, representing different aspects of higher Jewish, general education, and other professionals committed to excellence, to review the operations of the institution. Their review will be based on the comparison of the institution’s own self-study to their first-hand observations and discussions with the key individuals on-site.

The site visit team will conduct a careful review of the institution and assess the degree to which the institution satisfies each of the AIJS Standards. In order to discharge their duties properly, the site visit team members must be fully prepared for the on-site visit, and thoroughly familiar with the provisions of the Guide to the ISA and the Site Visitors Manual.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

Those who are selected to serve as evaluators of applicants for AIJS accreditation have demonstrated a commitment to quality and excellence in post-secondary education, administration or finance. The team consists of a minimum of three evaluators, consisting of a noted academician, an experienced school administrator and a financial professional. One of the evaluators is chosen to be the Site Visit Chairman. The duties of the Site Visit Chairman are to assure that the team is working in a unified and organized manner and to produce a Site Visit Report after the conclusion of the visit.

The site team may be expanded if the institution being evaluated has coursework that spans several different disciplines, has multiple campuses or for other reasons, at the discretion of AIJS. But regardless of the expertise of the individual evaluators, one element that ties them together in this enterprise is their responsibility to AIJS and the institution's stakeholders, who rely on accreditation to confirm the quality of the institution's educational services.

In conducting the review of an institution, AIJS evaluators have a mandate that calls for them to both evaluate and be helpful to their colleagues at the institution in the effort to understand more clearly the institution's strengths and weaknesses. AIJS reviewers must be discrete, objective, professional, and dedicated to quality Jewish Studies education.

In this Handbook, two sections in particular outline what must be done prior to the team's visit, and what the team will do on its visit. Institutions planning to host an agency site visit, as well as individuals appointed to serve on an agency site visit team, are encouraged to read the two important guides: *Site Visitor's Manual* and the *Guide to the ISA*.

ACCREDITATION

Following the application process described above, in which the institution submits a comprehensive ISA and subsequently hosts the site team visit, the agency will decide

whether the institution should be granted accreditation in accord with the following process.

After the site visit, the Chairman of the Site Visit Team submits a report that represents the findings of the site visitors to AIJS. The report is reviewed and then sent to the institution, within 45 days of the site visit. The institution is asked to comment within 14 days of receipt of the site visit report and may either accept the report as stated or inform the chairman or executive director of any omissions or errors in the factual description of the institution. The institution may also use the opportunity to address any recommendations or suggestions highlighted in the Site Visit Report. The institutional responses, if any, would then become a part of the report. Once the report has been finalized, it is forwarded to the Chairman of the EAC who will share it with the members of the EAC.

Notice of an upcoming accreditation council meeting is posted on the AIJS website *www.theaijs.com*, and in publications widely read by those who would be interested in an AIJS decision. In these notices third party comments are invited, and all comments are kept confidential. At the next scheduled meeting of the EAC, usually within 6 months or less, members of the EAC make an accrediting decision. The institutions are notified of the decision and if not satisfied, have a right to appeal. This process is further discussed in the last section of the Handbook.

Under normal circumstances, if the institution demonstrates during the application process that it satisfies each of the AIJS Standards, it will be granted accreditation and become an accredited member of AIJS.

The cycle of accreditation is generally two to ten years. An accreditation period of up to three years is awarded to new institutions. Likewise, institutions that have undergone a recent substantive change and institutions that have significant recommendations noted by the Site Team may result in a shorter accreditation and/or other follow-up activities, including additional focused visits. The maximum time frame of ten years of accreditation may only be awarded to a mature, exceptional institution that has demonstrated compliance with all AIJS Standards and has previously been accredited by AIJS or by a nationally recognized accrediting agency for at least a five-year period. AIJS may also limit or condition the term of accreditation based on the results of the accreditation review. For

more detailed information on accreditation decisions refer to the Sections on Accreditation and Accreditation Decisions that appear later in the handbook.

Accredited institutions should acknowledge and disclose this status in their catalogs and other publications by publishing the following statement:

(Name of Institution) has been granted Accreditation status by the Association of Institutions of Jewish Studies (AIJS). Accreditation indicates that the institution has achieved recognition by AIJS, by demonstrating compliance with AIJS accreditation Standards.

NOTICE REGARDING PRE-ACCREDITATION

At this time AIJS does not have pre-accreditation in its scope of accredited activities. AIJS has not granted and will not be granting pre-accreditation to any institution at this time, and no recognition of any AIJS pre-accreditation status by the US Department of Education has been granted or implied.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

Whenever an institution plans to adopt a substantive change in its governance or academic program, as defined below, the agency must make a determination whether the change will have a significant effect on the quality, integrity and effectiveness of the institution. Specifically, the institution must demonstrate that it has the programmatic, fiscal and administrative capacity to incorporate the substantive change into its current operation while still meeting all of the AIJS Standards for accreditation. After the institution determines it can successfully implement a proposed substantive change it must seek AIJS approval to implement the change.

Procedurally, an institution notifies AIJS of a proposed institutional change using the Institutional Change Form. Once the form is received, AIJS staff will determine if the change is classified as a substantive change that requires approval from the Executive Accreditation Council (EAC). AIJS will provide the institution with a response for next steps. If the change is for a change that is not classified as a substantive change the next steps may range from acknowledgement of the notification to requiring additional documentation supporting the change or other measures of review and approval.

If it has been determined that the proposed change is a substantive change then AIJS will provide information regarding next steps which will include the submission of an Application for Substantive Change, along with documentation supporting the application as indicated on the form, and any appropriate fees. The institution then waits for a formal written approval from AIJS. Substantive changes are approved by the Executive Accreditation Council of AIJS. In some cases, as indicated below, the EAC may designate agency senior staff to approve or disapprove the request.

The definition of substantive change shall include the following types of change:

1. Any change in the established mission or objective of the institution.
2. Any change in legal status, control or ownership of the institution.
3. The addition of courses or programs of study, which represent a significant departure from existing offerings of educational programs or methods of delivery from those that were offered when AIJS last evaluated the institution.
4. The addition of programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution's current accreditation.
5. A change in the way an institution measures student progress, including whether the institution measures progress in clock hours or credit-hours, semesters, trimesters, or quarters, or uses time-based or non-time-based methods.
6. A substantial increase in the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded, or an increase in the level of credential awarded, for successful completion of one or more programs.
7. An additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50% of the educational program.
8. The acquisition of another institution or any program or location of another institution.
9. If an institution enters into a written agreement with a non-Title IV eligible institution to provide more than 25%, but less than 50% of a Title IV eligible institution's educational program. Under no circumstances will AIJS approve a written agreement with a non-Title IV eligible institution to provide more than

50% of a Title IV eligible institution's educational program as this would disqualify the program from being Title IV eligible.

10. The addition of a permanent location at a site at which the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their course of study.

The EAC may assign agency senior staff to review and approve or disapprove substantive changes that fall under the definitions listed above in numbers 3,5,6,9,10, specifically changes that involve (3) the addition of courses or programs of study, which represent a significant departure from existing offerings of educational programs or methods of delivery from those that were offered when AIJS last evaluated the institution, (5) a change in the way an institution measures student progress, including whether the institution measures progress in clock hours or credit-hours, semesters, trimesters, or quarters, or uses time-based or non-time-based methods, (6) a substantial increase in the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded, or an increase in the level of credential awarded, for successful completion of one or more programs, (9) if an institution enters into a written agreement with a non-Title IV eligible institution to provide more than 25%, but less than 50% of a Title IV eligible institution's educational program.. Under no circumstances will AIJS approve a written agreement with a non-Title IV eligible institution to provide more than 50% of a Title IV eligible institution's educational program as this would disqualify the program from being Title IV eligible, (10) the addition of a permanent location at a site at which the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their course of study.

AIJS may determine that other substantive changes, not listed above, significantly affect the operation of the institution and will be handled as substantive changes. Examples include the move of a main campus or additional location that significantly affects the operation of the institution. Institutions provide notification of a change of address to AIJS and will be required to submit information necessary for AIJS to determine if the change is a substantive change. See "Change of Address" that appears later in this section.

Once an Application for a Substantive Change is received and reviewed, the EAC will determine what steps are necessary to review and approve or disapprove the request.

These steps may include a staff site visit focused on the proposed substantial change, and a possible request for additional documentation. A business plan may also be requested if significant resources are involved. The staff site visitor(s) will visit the institution and prepare an evaluation report detailing how the proposed substantial change may affect the institution's compliance with AIJS standards. The Institution's Application for Substantive Change and AIJS Staff visit report are forwarded to the EAC. The EAC will evaluate the staff report and any additional documentation submitted and make a determination as whether to approve the substantive change.

In cases of a substantive request for an institution entering into a written agreement with a non-Title IV eligible institution to provide more than 25%, but less than 50% of a Title IV eligible institution's educational program, AIJS will make a final decision within 90 days of receipt of a materially complete request.

In certain instances, a proposed substantive change is deemed to be so fundamental and comprehensive as to question whether the entire current institutional accreditation is still relevant. These are changes that significantly alter the institution's structure, operations, or educational offerings. These changes are often high-impact, high-risk and may include changes to mission, legal status, or the addition of new programs.

In such cases AIJS will require a full revaluation of the institution, similar to a new application for accreditation, before the substantive change application can be approved. Examples of this might include: a change of mission that results in significant changes to other accreditation standards, such as curriculum, faculty, and credentials or, the relocation of an institution to a different state that results in significant change to a number of other accreditation standards such as administration, degrees and credentials (due to state licensing regulations), student body, faculty, and fiscal operation. The relocation of an institution does not automatically require a complete re-evaluation of the institution.

Institutions that have been placed on a status of warning or probation (as detailed in the section on Enforcement of Standards) or have been subject to negative action by AIJS over the prior three academic years, or are under a provisional certification, must request and receive prior approval for the following additional changes (all other institutions must report these changes within 30 days to AIJS):

(1) A change in an existing program's method of delivery.
(2) An aggregate change of 25 percent or more of the clock hours, credit hours, or content of a program since the most recent accreditation review by AIJS.
(3) The development of customized pathways or abbreviated or modified courses or programs to- (i) Accommodate and recognize a student's existing knowledge, such as knowledge attained through employment or military service; and (ii) Close competency gaps between demonstrated prior knowledge or competency and the full requirements of a particular course or program.
(4) Entering into a written arrangement under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the Title IV, HEA programs offers up to 25 percent of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs.

Additional Requirements:
Change of Ownership – The institution must notify the agency of a change in ownership before the transaction goes into effect, and must submit documentation describing the new ownership, and provide documentation of the transfer such as signed contracts or option agreements. In all cases of change in ownership, the agency will conduct a site visit as soon as practical but not later than 6 months after the change in ownership took place.

Additional Location – AIJS defines an additional location as a physical facility that is geographically separate from the main campus of the institution and within the same ownership structure of the institution, at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program. An additional location participates in the title IV, HEA programs only through the certification of the main campus. AIJS's review for a new location includes an assessment of the institution's fiscal and administrative capability to operate the location or branch campus, the regular evaluation of locations, and verification of the following: (1) Academic control is clearly identified by the institution. (2) The institution has adequate faculty, facilities, resources, and academic and student support systems in place. (3) The institution is financially stable. (4) The institution had engaged in long-range planning for expansion.

An institution must demonstrate clear academic control over the additional location by establishing and maintaining oversight mechanisms that ensure academic quality, program integrity, and compliance with institutional standards. Specifically, the institution must demonstrate that programs and instruction at the additional location meet the same

academic standards as those offered on the main campus, and that student achievement is comparable.

The institution should have clear procedures for the additional location, covering aspects like curriculum, faculty qualifications and faculty oversight, student support services, and academic integrity. The institution should implement regular evaluations of the location, including ongoing assessment of student learning, ensuring that academic standards are being met.

The institution shall demonstrate that it has the adequate resources and support systems to ensure the availability of appropriate faculty, facilities, resources, and academic and student support systems at the location, ensuring that the academic programs at the additional location align with the overall mission, vision, and goals of the institution.

The institution should establish clear lines of authority and decision-making processes for academic matters related to the additional location.

The institution shall demonstrate that it has the administrative and financial resources necessary to demonstrate a commitment to the ongoing viability of the additional location to ensure that the educational experience at the additional location is of the same quality as at the main campus.

If the substantive change application is for an additional location offering at least 50% of a program which is defined by AIJS as a location at which a student may complete at least 50 percent of a credit-bearing or Title IV eligible educational program, then the location must be visited before the EAC will grant approval for the additional location. The visit will verify that academic control is clearly identified by the institution, the institution has adequate faculty, facilities, resources, and academic and student support systems in place, the institution is financially stable, and that the institution had engaged in long-range planning for expansion.

AIJS has not established a process for the pre-approval of additional locations for schools that have completed at least one cycle of accreditation and already have AIJS approval for two approved additional locations.

Therefore, no additional locations will be pre-approved by AIJS. AIJS monitors the number of additional locations that an institution has to ensure that the quality of the education is not being compromised by the rapid growth of the institution. During an institution's re-accreditation cycle, AIJS will visit a representative sampling of 25% of the additional locations at which 50% or more of a program is offered to ensure that the quality of the education offered at each additional location.

AIJS strives to make biennial monitoring visits to each of the locations of any institution that has multiple additional locations, to ensure that educational quality of the programs or portion of programs offered at the additional locations continues to meet AIJS standards and that the location continues to have the personnel, facilities and resources described in the institution's application for approval of the additional location. These monitoring visits may be unannounced.

AIJS has not established a process for the prior approval of substantive changes. All substantive changes must be approved prior to being included in an institution's scope of accreditation.

BRANCH CAMPUS

A Branch Campus is a physical facility that is geographically separate from the main campus of an institution and within the same ownership structure of the institution, and that is independent from the main campus, meaning the location is –(1) Permanent in nature; (2) Offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; (3) Has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and (4) Has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

Institutions seeking to establish a branch campus must inform AIJS and must undergo a full review for the branch campus which includes an application, a comprehensive business plan, similar to the ISA, that describes the educational program(s) the institution plans to offer; a budget projecting the revenues and expenditures as well as the expected cash flow at the site; and a description of the operation, management, and physical resources to operate at the branch campus, before the institution is permitted to establish the branch campus. AIJS will review the application and business plan and will give the institution initial approval to establish the branch campus if it determines that the institution has the necessary resources and procedures to operate the branch campus. A follow up

comprehensive site visit to the branch campus must take place within six months of the establishment of the branch campus to determine if the institution substantially followed its business plan. A site report from the visit will be forwarded to the Executive Accreditation Council for consideration at the next regularly scheduled EAC meeting. The EAC will determine institutional compliance with its business plan as established at the site visit. At the institution's next regularly scheduled accreditation review, the institution must incorporate in its ISA the activities of the branch campus and must demonstrate how those activities and operations comply with AIJS standards.

INSTITUTION COMPRISED OF FEWER BRANCH CAMPUSES AND LOCATIONS THAN TITLE IV CERTIFICATION

AIJS does not accredit an institution comprising fewer than all of the programs, branch campuses and locations of an institution as certified for Title IV participation by the Secretary of the US Department of Education, except with notice to and permission from the Secretary of the US Department of Education.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OF APPROVED LOCATION

Accredited institutions undergoing a change of address of any approved campus location, including the institution's main campus or an additional location, must notify AIJS of the change by submitting the institutional change form informing AIJS of a planned change of address. AIJS procedures for review and approval of a change of address of any approved location, including the institution's main campus are determined by several criteria, including:

- the distance of the new facility from the approved location
- accessibility of the new location for students to transportation to and from the new facility,
- accessibility to student services currently provided at the approved location,
- whether or not there will be changes to faculty providing instruction at the new location,
- whether the change of address will result in a change to the student demographic population,

- whether the change of address will impact courses to be offered at the new address,
- how the change of address may impact the school's administrative and financial operations, and
- in the case of a change of address of an additional location, if there will be any change to the academic control of the additional location due to the change of address,
- how the change may impact compliance with AIJS Standards, including ensuring the institution will continue to provide adequate faculty, facilities, resources, and academic and student support services to ensure continued quality of education.

If, based on the above criteria, the change of address is determined to represent a substantive change, AIJS procedures for substantive change will apply and will require the submission of an Application for Substantive Change with the relevant appendix(ces), a review of the application and appendix(ces), a site visit to the location, and an EAC action on the application.

If AIJS determines that a substantive change is not warranted, then the change of address may be reviewed and approved by AIJS staff. If the change is minor with little or no impact, AIJS staff may determine that no approval is needed, in which case the change will be acknowledged and recorded.

An address change will generally require a site visit to ensure compliance with AIJS Standards and the agency's policies and procedures. During the site visit, AIJS staff will review information related to demonstrated planning, financial and administrative capacity, academic and student support, faculty, the facility(ies), any teach out plans required for enrolled students, and the impact of the move on the institution's compliance with AIJS standards.

DESIGNATION OF LOCATION AS A PART OF THE MAIN CAMPUS

A location which is geographically close to the main campus may be considered as a part of the main campus if it meets certain criteria. If AIJS determines that an instructional site is part of the main campus, then that site does not need approval as an additional location. Approval of the site may be granted by AIJS staff and may or may not require a site visit

to the site. AIJS will make the determination of whether or not an instructional site may be designated as a part of the main campus based on the following procedures:

Accredited institutions must notify AIJS of plans to open a location for any new instructional site even if the site is in close proximity to the main location. The institution uses the institutional change form to inform AIJS of the new instructional site. AIJS reviews the form and either approves the site or responds with a request for additional information relevant to the criteria listed below.

- the actual distance of the new site from the main campus
- the walking distance of the new site from the main campus and ease of accessibility for walking
- accessibility of the new site for students to transportation to and from the new site
- accessibility to students to student services from the new site
- how the new site may impact the school's administrative and financial operations
- if the new site will be under the same academic control as the main location
- if the faculty providing instruction at the new site will be different from faculty providing instruction as the main campus

AIJS will review the institution's application and supporting information and make a determination as to whether or not the site is part of the main campus. If it is determined to be part of the main campus, then a letter to that effect will be sent to the institution and no further action is required. If it is determined that the new site is not part of the main campus then a determination is made by AIJS if the new site falls under the category of additional location providing at least 50% of a program, in which case a full substantive change requiring EAC approval is required. If AIJS makes a determination that the site is not part of the main campus but does not fall under the category of additional location at which 50% of a program is offered, then the site may be approved as a non-substantive change, not requiring EAC approval. AIJS records will be updated accordingly. AIJS may still require a site visit to confirm that the facilities are adequate for the portion of the program(s) offered at the new site.

SECTION II
THE INSTITUTIONAL SELF APPRAISAL

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTER

The ideal institution should be self-evaluating. It should be continuously monitoring its own activities so as to determine whether it is meeting its goals, or even whether these goals should be reconsidered. The decision-makers should seriously consider any evidence that suggests a change in goals or programs may be appropriate. In an ideal organization, there should be no vested interest in continuing with policies that produce ineffective and possibly dysfunctional institutional outcomes.

This Institutional Self Appraisal (ISA) exercise does not expect the institution to describe an ideal organization. Instead, AIJS anticipates an honest, earnest effort in describing the institution's existing reality and, where helpful, the antecedents of this reality. Considering this reality, the institution should then describe its strengths and weaknesses. If after this effort, the institution can step back and offer realistic answers to such questions as "Where do we go from here" and "How do we get there," then AIJS will consider the application process to have been successful.

THE INSTITUTIONAL SELF APPRAISAL (ISA)

Completion of an Institutional Self-Appraisal (ISA) allows the institution to critically examine and reflect upon, and if necessary, to upgrade, its administrative and educational operations to comply with the spirit and letter of each of the specific Standards required for accreditation.

AIJS requires that institutions seeking accreditation prepare an ISA. In so doing, AIJS is not looking for simply another report from the institution. Rather, in the experience of accrediting agencies, the very process of completing a self-study helps the institution to better focus on critical administrative and educational issues. By focusing on these issues, the institution is better able to define its strengths and identify its weaknesses.

Two end products result: The first is a completed ISA report that is forwarded to AIJS for review and comment. The second, of equal if not more importance, is an opportunity for the institution to thoroughly review and reflect on its own policies and practices.

The ISA report should be an extensive and complete narrative built around the framework outlined below. It is important that all sections of the ISA report are completed and that the entire document is well articulated and integrated. Rather than address specific questions in each section, the institution should attempt to understand the purpose of the section and demonstrate its understanding in the ISA.

The ISA report should contain the following chapters:

- Introduction:
  - A brief history of the institution
  - Mission and objectives
- Discussion of How the Institution Meets AIJS's Standards:
  - Standard 1: Institution Mission and Goals
  - Standard 2: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
  - Standard 3: Student Progress and Learning Outcomes
  - Standard 4: Facilities, Resources and Equipment
  - Standard 5: Recruitment, Admissions, Catalogs and Student Services
  - Standard 6: Student Records
  - Standard 7: Measures in Program Length, Objective of Degrees and Credentials Offered
  - Standard 8: Faculty Qualifications and Responsibilities
  - Standard 9: Administration, Human Resources and Collaborative Relationships
  - Standard 10: Financial Practices
- Appendices

In each of these Standards, the institution should present its understanding of what the Standard calls for. Many of these Standards suggest documentation that supports the narrative (forms, copies of materials, publications, etc.). The institution should attach this documentation as exhibits in an appendix to the ISA. Note that the documentation appended to the ISA should only be used to illustrate and/or document specific statements made in the ISA. A full explanation as well as the names of the documents noted should be included in the narrative.

Through this process of self-examination, the institution can identify organizational strengths and weaknesses that have a bearing on the operations of the institution and ways

in which it might respond to change. The purpose of the ISA is not merely to anticipate the questions of the site visit team, but to allow participants to critically examine the institution, identify areas of strength and weakness, and report on the institution's ability to best serve its constituents.

In writing the ISA report, the institution should read each section in the Guide to the ISA to best understand what the report should contain and what it is that the site visit team will want to see demonstrated. There is a list of suggested supporting documents after each description of the Standard. More documents may be required, depending on the individual institution.

This exercise, while significant in its own right, is seen as preparing the institution for the second phase of the accreditation process. The site visit, which is the second phase, will determine if what the institution presents in the ISA actually corresponds to practice. The site visit will determine the extent to which the institution has implemented sound policy and developed proper procedures.

AIJS will carefully review the ISA that the institution submits. There are three possible outcomes of this review process: (1) acceptance of the document as it stands; (2) a request for additional information or documentation; or (3) rejection of the ISA because of an unsatisfactory submission.

STANDARDS: INTRODUCTION

In exercising its accreditation responsibilities, AIJS looks at how effective the institution is in achieving its academic and administrative mission, as well as the level of quality and professionalism of its operations. In order to make these judgments, a framework of operational dimensions is required, as is a set of performance measurements. When evaluated, an institution worthy of being accredited will consistently score highly on all of these operational dimensions. The task of AIJS will be to determine an applicant institution’s performance level on each of these operational dimensions, which it calls Standards.

In this section, the AIJS Standards will be presented. Each section consists of a definition of the Standard, followed by an interpretive explanation of that Standard. Implications for the institution under review and what site visitors will consider when evaluating the Standard are described separately in the *Guide to the ISA*.

AIJS considers the Standards that it has selected as essential to the effectiveness and excellence of an educational institution.

In the Guide to the ISA, there are multiple examples of ways in which the Standard should be evident in the institution's operations. Institutions engaging in the accreditation process should carefully examine the extent to which these Standards are reflected in their operations. Mapping these (on the checklists provided in the Guide) is the first step in the preparation of the Institutional Self-Appraisal.

In explaining how the site visit team will measure the extent to which these Standards are satisfied by an institution, there are behaviorally anchored statements – what a typical institution will be doing if its performance is judged unacceptable or acceptable. All of this is included in the *Guide to the ISA*.

STANDARD 1: INSTITUTION MISSION AND GOALS

Definition

This is the Standard as defined by AIJS:

> *The institution has a clear mission and goals. The mission defines the institution's reason for existence and the students and community it seeks to serve.*
>
> *The institution's mission must clearly state that the primary purpose of the institution is to provide a postsecondary program in the field of Jewish Studies. The mission is clearly articulated and encapsulated in a mission statement that states the institution's general purpose and philosophy.*
>
> *It states the institution's goals consistent with the expectations of higher education. These goals provide the direction for institutional growth, student development, and student objectives.*

The mission of an institution is the driving force that sets the framework for all institutional activity. It should drive decision making, planning and allocation of resources; and should act as the benchmark to evaluate actual performance.

Articulating the mission into a Mission Statement is imperative in two regards. First, it gives a succinct and publicly disseminated statement of the institution's reason for being. It should address the institution's purpose, philosophy and approach toward its role, its constituents and its distinctive educational services. While the mission statement should

be revisited periodically, it can be taken as representing a stable statement of organizational purpose.

Secondly, the Mission Statement should allow for growth and development by pointing to a framework for setting operational objectives and determining student achievement outcomes. Both of these elements, the statement of purpose and a framework for planning, should be clearly evident within the Mission Statement. AIJS will assess both of these aspects of the school's mission statement.

Institutional Implications

In determining whether an institution has a clear, effective mission, AIJS will determine how well the mission is integrated throughout all institutional activities. Using the Mission Statement as a guide and benchmark, AIJS can assess how well an institution is accomplishing its mission.

What elements should a Mission Statement contain?

1. A Purpose Statement

   The purpose statement clearly states what an institution seeks to accomplish, the reason for its existence, and the ultimate result of its work.

   A typical purpose statement might include: "to transmit classic higher Torah scholarship to its student body." Another might be: "to enhance the student's knowledge of *Halacha*, or traditional Jewish law", "to promote self-awareness and character development" or "to train future teachers in a broad range of Jewish Studies."

2. An Activity Statement

   This statement will present the activities or the programs that the institution provides in order to accomplish the stated purpose. For example, there are many ways to approach traditional Jewish Studies within the student body by offering a comprehensive program of studies firmly grounded in traditional Jewish texts. One might be "to deepen the knowledge of traditional Jewish law through the study of Talmudic or Biblical texts together with the classical medieval commentaries and Responsa" or "to promote self-awareness and character development through the

study of classical *Mussar* or Hassidic texts and tracing their sources in the Bible and Commentaries".

A Mission Statement should drive the decision-making process in an institution and should be well known by all institutional participants. It should be communicated prominently, clearly and often – and should reverberate throughout all institutional activities, including academic, administrative, and public functions.

In this regard, AIJS will review the degree to which the mission statement drives the planning and decision-making process within an institution, and how an institution's mission is translated into practice.

Questions to be asked by AIJS in assessing an institutions mission include:

- Are all members of the institution, at every level, aware and invested in the mission?
- Are the overall operations, beginning with recruitment and continuing through establishing and assessing outcomes, consistent with the mission?
- Are resources allocated wisely toward the goal of furthering the mission?
- How does the institution determine if it is succeeding in achieving the goals determined by the mission?
- Is the mission revisited periodically to determine that it is still relevant?

STANDARD 2: CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

Definition

This is the Standard as defined by AIJS:

> *The institution has a curriculum for each of its programs, which is consistent with the mission of the institution.*
>
> *Curricula should specify educational objectives consistent with accepted standards of postsecondary education.*
>
> *Curricula should state the criteria for assessing achievement. The institution has applied suitable procedures to measure student progress within each course, to assess the knowledge and skills acquired as specified in the educational objectives.*
>
> *The curriculum for each degree or academic credential offered must contain at least 30 percent of its courses in the field of Jewish Studies.*

The institution uses methods of delivering instruction appropriate to each program it provides. All courses and curricula offered by the institution must be consistent with classical Halacha (Jewish Law) based on the Shulchan Aruch.

The core of the effectiveness and viability of an educational system is an understanding of what content is included; what goals are to be attained; an agreement as to educational methodology; and procedures for assessing the extent to which participants are meeting these educational goals. AIJS refers to the written descriptions of the programs and courses as 'curriculum'. The curriculum should have descriptions detailing the content, objectives, learning experiences, educational outcomes and methods of evaluation of each program offered.

Institutional Implications

The institution must have a curriculum available for all of its programs and individual courses. The curriculum allows for a consistent and methodical way of describing the teaching and learning that will take place. This is achieved by providing a description of the objectives and learning outcomes that the program and individual courses are designed to address.

The curriculum outlines the learning experiences that students are expected to undertake and the methods and criteria that will be used in assessing whether the course objectives were met. A curriculum allows for careful planning of the learning environment, maintaining a balance of subject area components, attending to the needs of the students, and allocating institutional resources effectively.

A well-considered curriculum allows for planning and incremental development of the educational courses within the institution. It also provides for realistic and focused criteria for a student's success within the course or program, which in turn allows the institution to evaluate the extent to which its own mission has been realized. Well-constructed course curricula in the form of syllabi, enable students to declare: "I know what I am learning and why."

The term "curriculum" includes the entire teaching/learning process. The process takes place within a framework that has purpose, direction and goals. This means that each program within an educational institution has a clear, well-articulated curriculum. Programs should be similar in rigor to accepted practice in post-secondary education.

Courses, curricula, and degree programs will be assessed as to their level and quality to assure that they are on a post-secondary level. This includes the core Judaic studies courses as well as any other credit bearing courses offered at the institution. This assessment will consider comparison with similar institutions in terms of skills, content, academic rigor, expected outcomes and are expected to be similar to normative expectations in the higher education arena, and specifically to typical Yeshiva and Seminary programs. Additionally, the degree programs must conform to generally accepted post-secondary standards whereby an Associate degree is generally awarded after the successful completion of 60-64 credits and a Baccalaureate degree is awarded after the successful completion of 120-132 credits (five year Talmudic or Rabbinical programs should typically require the successful completion of 150-156 credits).

The length of the program and each individual course within that program requires an appropriate number of hours to earn credit. The generally accepted calculation for a credit hour is referred to as the "Carnegie Unit," wherein one credit is awarded for a three-hour cluster per week over approximately a fifteen week period, which generally contains one hour of instructional time and presumes two hours of outside classroom work in the form of preparation, study, research, and writing.

Adjustments to this calculation, where appropriate, will be considered when the coursework is more suited to an alternative framework. For instance, in *Bais Medrash* study for Talmudic and Rabbinical subjects, *Chavrusa Study* (structured and supervised sessions with a study partner), and *Chabura studies* (several students studying in a cluster with a team leader), are the primary method of learning. Augmented by formal lectures, these sessions contain a balanced mix of joint study of primary texts, followed by research of related sources, critical textual analysis of these sources, formulating hypothesis to address seeming contradictions and inconsistencies, peer review of conclusions, and development of original presentations in a group setting. In this context, AIJS will be looking to see that there are three hours of such learning activities for each credit in the various modes.

Course syllabi should indicate how many hours per week the course meets and how many credits will be awarded for that course over the semester period. The semester schedule and calendar should reflect that calculation.

Accepted areas of study for 30% of the core curriculum (36 credits for Bachelor's Degree programs and 18 credits for Associated Degree programs) may be in areas of Biblical Studies, Talmud, Jewish Law/Legal Codes, Jewish History, Jewish Philosophy/Ethics and the Hebrew, Aramaic and Yiddish languages as they support the study of original source texts. This requirement supports the mission and scope of AIJS, which is to accredit institutions that primarily focus on Jewish Studies.

For the award of a non-specialized Bachelor's Degree program AIJS requires a minimum of 30 credits in general education; or its equivalent in evaluated educational outcomes from other coursework. For the award of a non-specialized Associate Degree program AIJS requires a minimum of 15 credits in general education; or its equivalent in evaluated educational outcomes from other coursework.

General education includes the study of ethics and values, diverse perspectives (humanities, social science), English and foreign language skills, communication and writing proficiency, logical reasoning and critical analysis, and computer literacy.

The remaining credits after fulfilling the general education requirements and the Jewish studies requirements for a non-specialized degree may be assigned as the institution sees appropriate. All requirements for completion of a degree or certificate must be clearly stated in the catalog. They must also be consistent with the school mission as well as meet requirements of higher education academic standards.

For highly specialized programs, offering credentials in Talmudic, Torah and Rabbinic studies, there is no specific requirement for general education. However, the degree or certificate must specify the specialty in its title. Examples: Classical Torah Studies Degree, Talmudic Law Degree, Bachelors or Associate degrees in Classical Torah Studies or Talmudic Studies.

Curriculum and its development are at the core of successful, adaptive and quality programs and courses. Well-developed, integrated curricula are central to the day-to-day teaching and instruction of the institution. Each program offered by the institution should be covered by a written description that explains its goals, learning objectives, types of educational experiences to be considered, and the learning outcomes to be used in evaluating the program. Each program will, in turn, have a cluster of associated courses.

Program and course descriptions must be published in the institution's catalog. Instructors must be aware of and follow these course descriptions and curricula and use them in planning and delivering courses. The institution will be expected to demonstrate that the curricula are subject to ongoing development.

Curricula should have the active and expert participation of those in charge of educational departments and the actual teaching of courses. The process by which curricula are designed, implemented, developed, reviewed, and revised should be clear and well known within the institution. Faculty participation in the development and revision of curriculum should be evident.

The curriculum should identify learning goals that are to be achieved, as well as give the details of the resources a student is expected to use to achieve these goals. For instance, texts and educational sources are expected to be listed, current, and readily available to students. The student must be made aware of what measures of outcomes will be used to determine success. Learning outcomes must be defined and measured (examinations, assignments, projects, etc.). The institution must ensure that these stipulated methods of measurement conform to those identified in the course curriculum. Consistency must be monitored when different faculty members teach the same courses.

When a suitable curriculum has been established, it needs to be translated into educational activities, it needs to be implemented. This requires the planning, organizing, and coordinating of institutional resources in a manner that will allow the curriculum objectives to be effectively realized.

The faculty must be qualified pedagogically and academically to deliver the content of the curriculum. AIJS does not indicate which methods of instruction are appropriate. Institutions may use traditional lecture methods, supervised individual or group study, self-paced student learning, individual assignments, independent studies, and other recognized instructional strategies as deemed suitable by the institution. However, all methods of instruction should be appropriate to the content objectives of the course and must be have substantial ‘face time’ learning activities. AIJS does not approve distance education at this time.

An institution's educational program extends beyond the classroom. In this context, other resources such as the Bais Medrash (traditional study hall), libraries, computers, and individual learning resources, should be available in a culturally sensitive and academically adequate manner, to support the educational process.

AIJS supports effective instruction and endorses no particular style of education. It does not prescribe specific instructional methods or approaches, nor does it insist on innovation merely for its own sake. However, AIJS does recognize that ongoing evaluations of the curriculum and instructional methods are signs of institutional vitality.

Educational offerings should have a clear relationship with the overall mission of the school and contribute to pursuit of knowledge in a spirit of increased shared universal values. Degrees and their levels should be appropriate and proportionate to the amount of content covered and the skills developed in the program. They should generally follow the established American norms of higher education. For highly specialized degrees and certificates (where external benchmarks are often not useful), the institution should clearly state the achievements expected by the completion of the program.

STANDARD 3: STUDENT PROGRESS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Definition

This is the Standard as defined by AIJS:

> *This standard is comprised of three parts: a) Student outcomes (Annual Report) b) SAP c) Application of its grading procedures within coursework.*
>
> *An institution accredited by AIJS must develop and demonstrate student outcomes. There is a clear relationship between the student outcomes and the institution's mission. The institution is expected to review and analyze its student outcomes to ensure that they remain relevant and effective and demonstrate the institution's success with respect to student achievement in relation to its mission.*
>
> *The institution must demonstrate that it has applied suitable procedures to measure student progress throughout the program(s).*
>
> *The institution's current grading policies that assess the knowledge and skills attained by its students are contained in the student catalog.*

As students are admitted, they begin to engage with the institution's educational system. As the student moves forward, feedback to both the institution and the student will

enhance the educational experience. Feedback to the students will enable them to gauge their educational progress or lack thereof. Such information will also enable the institution to revise or adjust its curriculum content, modes of educational delivery, and evaluation methods. Feedback is also essential for the institution in setting admission criteria and marketing its program. From the students' point of view, this information is critical in gauging their progress towards their degree.

Institutions should monitor students' satisfactory academic performance both qualitatively in terms of satisfying a minimum grade average, and quantitatively in terms of progressing through the program at a satisfactory pace to complete the program. The institution should develop a satisfactory academic progress policy and that policy should address incompletes, withdrawals, course repetitions, and how they impact grade point average and total credits attempted. It should also contain provisions for students who do not meet satisfactory progress standards. In addition, there should be a process for students to appeal a determination of failure to meet satisfactory progress standards.

AIJS requires institutions to assess student learning by having specific learning objectives for each course offered as well as measures of program completion and effectiveness. It does not prescribe a specific approach or method. The institution is responsible to have in place a system that monitors the student's progress as well as gauges the learning outcomes achieved appropriate to the institutional mission.

The institution shall prepare and implement a plan for the systematic assessment of its learning outcomes consistent with its mission. The assessment of outcomes may include graduation/completion rates, student retention rates, transfers to a more advanced or specialized post-secondary program, subsequent enrollment in graduate institutions, career and occupational outcomes, job placement rates, indicators of subsequent employer satisfaction, and other generally accepted outcomes such as alumni surveys. Institutions should choose their own appropriate measures of student outcomes which are consistent with institutional mission and standard post-secondary institutional expectations. AIJS has prepared a list of outcomes with appropriate corresponding benchmarks. AIJS updates this list to reflect outcomes appropriate for AIJS institutions. Institutions choose from the outcomes on the list. While AIJS institutions are strongly encouraged to choose from the recommended list of outcomes provided by the agency, AIJS does not require institutions to choose from the list. Institutions may seek to develop their own outcome(s) which will

be reviewed and analyzed by the agency as part of its review and analysis of monitoring and other accreditation related material submitted by accredited institutions.

AIJS will evaluate the measures used by the institution to monitor students' progress and evaluate student outcomes. AIJS site reviewers and its accrediting council will evaluate if these measures are appropriate, support the mission of the school, and are consistent with the values and quality of post-secondary education.

Institutional Implications

The institution must have clear, well-designed policies in this area. Academic standards are vital to the reputation and continued well-being of an educational institution, but they also reflect an interest and concern for the student population and the wider academic community. Under the AIJS Standards, student academic progress and outcomes must be properly recorded. Its institutions must have specific performance standards or mechanisms in which students making inadequate progress are monitored and counseled.

Student Assessment and Assessment of Outcomes

Assessment tools should include systems of grading and evaluating student learning. Student assessment is vital for evaluating various components of the academic program. In addition to its value in improving academic quality and effectiveness, it is also helpful in the areas of student recruitment, retention and completions. A systematic analysis of student assessment may indicate lack of systematic sequencing of courses, ineffective instructional methods, unrealistic expectations, or the need to offer additional preparatory coursework. The school's assessment process should be viewed by the institution as a key working instrument.

Outcome measures demonstrate to the external world that the institution's programs have value than can be described and verified. These may comprise both direct and indirect measures. Direct measures would include test success, graduation rates, job placement rates, and acceptance to other institutions of higher learning. Indirect measures may include surveys, student and faculty evaluations, and feedback by employers or supervisors of the institution's graduates. Most important is to review and analyze the outcomes data collected with an eye to implement improvements in instruction and utilize the conclusions to influence strategic planning.

AIJS will evaluate the institution's designation of outcomes as well as its commitment to assessment of student achievement and learning outcomes. It will review the validity of any direct or indirect assessment measures, and how often and how effectively the institution uses those measures to evaluate the success of the program and make effective improvements in its operations.

STANDARD 4: FACILITIES, RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT

Definition

This is the Standard as defined by AIJS:

> *The institution shall provide facilities and resources to support its educational activities. Instruction is conducted in safe, accessible, sanitary, and educationally suitable facilities.*
>
> *The facilities and equipment are sufficient to support the institution's administration, instruction, and student performance. The institution shall provide its students and faculty with appropriate library and information services to support the mission of the institution and each program of study.*

In traditional models of education, instruction takes place within a physical location. The buildings within which the educational process takes place provide not only the physical location, but also contribute to the effectiveness and adequacy of the process itself.

AIJS will examine the physical facilities of the institution that applies for accreditation. The facilities must be adequately spacious, well-lit, and ventilated. Facilities mean sites of classroom instruction, faculty and administrative office space, and any facilities used for ancillary activities of the institution. Facilities must meet standards of safety and accessibility. Technology, furniture and equipment should be adequate to facilitate the mission and educational goals of the institution.

Institutional Implications

In reviewing the physical aspects of the institution, AIJS is concerned about present and future use. The agency will want to be sure that the physical allocation of space provided currently is compatible with the delivery of the stated educational objectives in an effective manner.

Within traditional educational delivery models, the size of the facilities and amount of resources must be consistent with the size of the academic population and anticipated growth. The institution must demonstrate that its facilities match the demands from the existing academic population and that they plan responsibly for future growth.

Libraries and computer facilities, where appropriate, must also be adequate to support student learning and the institutional mission.

Facilities must be clean, safe, and properly maintained, and there must be sufficient staff and budgetary allocation to ensure that plant and facilities are well maintained. The institution should be in compliance with all local and federal law regarding accessibility. Beyond mere compliance with the laws and regulation, AIJS will also look to see if the institution invests in proactive efforts to assist students with handicaps and disabilities to the maximum extent possible. This type of inclusive institutional culture is critical in allowing all students to fully participate in institutional activities.

STANDARD 5: RECRUITMENT, ADMISSIONS, CATALOGS, AND STUDENT SERVICES

Definition

This is the Standard as defined by AIJS:

> *The institution has an admissions policy that admits students able to benefit from the programs and educational activities offered. Institutional recruitment efforts seek to identify and recruit students with the potential to achieve the program goals.*
>
> *Procedures for admission and criteria for admission are clearly defined. Students admitted shall generally have a high school diploma or its equivalent. The institution will publish an institutional catalog and academic calendars that are publicly available to interested parties.*
>
> *Advertising and all forms of digital and print communication are consistent with the institution's policies and catalog and accurately portray the opportunities available at the institution.*
>
> *The institution has established a transfer of credit policy and publicly discloses it in its institutional catalog or in other publicly distributed material. The transfer of credit policy includes a statement of the criteria established by the institution for the transfer of credits earned at another institution, and a list of institutions with which the institution has established an articulation agreement.*
>
> *The institution should offer student support services to enable the student to enjoy a wholesome and supportive educational environment.*

The institution shall establish and publish procedures used to resolve student complaints. These procedures should address all aspects of the institutional activities with particular emphasis on the operation of its academic programs. The institution should maintain a record of student complaints received and how they were resolved.

Institutional Implications

Clarity, accuracy, consistency, and full disclosure in institutional materials are essential for accreditation as an AIJS institution. However, the content of these publications is certainly not sufficient. There must be congruence between what is written and what is actually implemented in matters of admissions, counseling, and other student services. Records, documentation, and feedback will all help support and confirm that the policies that the institution has adopted are, in fact, being administered in a fair, unbiased, systematic, and legal manner. These documents will be included in the ISA as exhibits. In reviewing all areas of this Standard, site visitors will pay special attention to all published information to ensure that it is accurate and not misleading.

AIJS requires clear, well-designed policies that encompass all aspects of recruitment, admissions, student retention, student-services and alumni relations. These policies should be widely accessible to all potential applicants and clearly articulated in all of the institution's admissions and recruitment literature and catalogs.

Criteria for admission must be a well-considered process that allows the most appropriate candidates to connect with the most suitable educational programs that the institution offers. Admissions criteria must be clearly documented and freely available to potential students.

If testing is required in the admission process, it should be reasonable, have face validity, and clearly satisfy the needs of the institution and expectations of the student.

The catalog factually represents the courses and programs offered and the credentials granted upon program completion. The catalog also contains pertinent consumer information including, but not limited to:

- Costs of enrolling in each program that the institution offers
- Withdrawal and tuition refund policies
- Academic calendar

- Grading policies
- Satisfactory academic progress, and other academic policies
- Student complaint policies
- Financial aid, and student services offered by the institution
- Transfer of credits policy, including a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credits earned at another institution of higher education and a list of institutions with which the institution has established an articulation agreement and, if applicable, the written criteria used to evaluate and award credit for prior learning experience including, but not limited to, service in the armed forces, paid or unpaid employment, or other demonstrated competency or learning.

The catalog is a definitive document. It should be current, well presented, and match the information disseminated about the institution in institutional publications, official websites and public relations material. AIJS requires that all institutional advertising and publications be accurate and not misleading.

The institution should offer its students a range of support services including, but not limited to, scholarship and financial aid assistance, tutoring and remedial help, guidance and counseling, and access to health and medical services. Institutions must have policies and procedures for counseling students whose progress is inadequate and for dealing with student complaints.

If the institution offers its own residential facilities and/or in-school dining options, it must conform to relevant health and safety codes, and its costs should be clearly listed.

The institution shall spell out the steps a student may take to file a complaint. This procedure should include the following elements: the reasonable and appropriate timeframes for investigating and resolving a formal complaint; provision for the final determination of each formal complaint; and assurances that no action will be taken against the student for filing the complaint. The institution's complaint procedures must include a statement informing the student that he/she has the right to file a complaint with AIJS if the complaint was not resolved to his/her satisfaction, and must include the mailing address, phone number and website address for AIJS. The institution shall maintain

adequate documentation of each formal complaint and its disposition for a period of at least five years after final disposition of the complaint.

STANDARD 6: STUDENT RECORDS

Definition

This is the Standard as defined by AIJS:

> *The institution has an orderly and secure system of generating and storing student records. These records should conform to the generally accepted practices of accredited institutions of higher education in the United States. The institution has processes to maintain and protect confidential student records that are in compliance with prevailing law including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).*

Clear record-keeping policies and organized management and maintenance of records are essential for effective administration of the institution's educational programs. Records of student progress and student achievement provide accountability for the quality and effectiveness of the educational programs and allow the student to authoritatively document his academic achievements. Accurate student account records and financial aid records ensure that funds received and disbursed from all sources for tuition are properly recorded. Clear financial records document that student charges correlate to the actual cost of providing education and demonstrate good financial stewardship.

An institution must demonstrate that its record-keeping systems are responsive to the needs of its students. They must comply with the requirements of oversight agencies that oversee federal, state, third party or any institutional financial aid programs the institution administers. The records must be maintained in an orderly manner. The institution's record-keeping should reflect the following objectives:

- To document the student's academic outcomes as well as the student's progress toward earning the institution's degree or academic credential.
- To provide important feedback on the effectiveness of the educational program.
- To serve as the basis for academic transcripts for students transferring to other institutions or applying for employment positions.
- To provide accountability and transparency in all financial activities, and to demonstrate that the institution is fiscally viable.

- To demonstrate compliance with all regulatory requirements, including financial aid programs for students.

Institutions are also required to meet their responsibilities for periodic reporting to AIJS, as well as to the state and federal agencies that oversee the institution's management capability. This will include annual reports to AIJS as well as any reports required by HEA program regulations such as IPEDS Data Collection, Student Enrollment Reporting and Campus Safety and Security reporting.

Institutional Implications

AIJS requires that educational institutions applying for accreditation have in place a comprehensive student records system.

Student records are a critical component of an accredited institution. Complete and accurate record keeping is essential for the institution, its students, and its alumni and outside agencies that may fund or oversee the institution.

The institution must have a comprehensive policy regarding student records. It is imperative that this policy is reflected in the actual operations of the institution in a consistent and accurate manner.

The institution must have a policy on how long records are to be kept. The policy should specify in what form the records are kept, and who is able to access them or request information from them. Increasingly, there are issues of security that have to be considered to ensure the integrity and authenticity of the records, especially as new and more advanced electronic systems replace older ones.

Because of the amount of records generated and the length that these documents have to be maintained, the institution must have trained personnel to deal with the record-keeping function. These individuals must be trained to operate according to procedures that ensure the accurate, timely and complete processing of student records.

Institutional staff must be able to retrieve required records. Academic records must be kept in a secure manner with controlled access to these records. There should be

safeguards in place to prevent unauthorized access. Release of academic transcripts should follow established procedures.

Regarding a student's files and records, there must be dependable procedures for safeguarding private and confidential material. There must be a system in place that allows for the release of student information conforming to current FERPA regulations, and other relevant local, state or federal laws. Students must have access to their records and know of the process whereby incorrect information can be corrected.

These provisions apply to both physical (hardcopy) documentation and all student records maintained electronically. Again, security and restricted access are key issues to be kept in mind. There should be provisions for the timely backup and restoration of records, as well a policy for their eventual disposal according to institutional and regulatory protocols.

The institution must designate appropriate institutional officials to maintain academic records, such as admission and acceptance forms documenting compliance with admission criteria, student progress records and updated academic transcripts. These individuals must be trained and knowledgeable in the requirements and practice of post-secondary academic recordkeeping.

Transcripts

Issuing transcripts is an essential service to the student and the wider community. Proper transcripts and the process for their release should conform to good practices and with all regulatory requirements. A report of academic information, such as that needed to generate transcripts should be available indefinitely.

Student Complaints

The institution has a formal complaint procedure that is publicized in its catalog or posted on its website. The complaint policy must be clear and must include procedures that students can follow to resolve any complaints they may have regarding the institution. In its complaint policy, an institution must include a statement informing the student that he/she has the right to file a complaint with AIJS if the complaint was not resolved to his/her satisfaction and must include the mailing address, phone number and website address for AIJS. The institution maintains records regarding each formal complaint lodged by a student and its disposition, in an easy and accessible manner, for a period of

at least five years after final disposition of the complaint. During an on-site review, site visitors will review the records of complaints to determine if there is a pattern of complaints in any particular area that could indicate a weakness or non-compliance, and to determine if the institution's published complaint procedures were followed.

Security of Institutional Records

The institution should have a policy in place to maintain backups of all critical institutional records. Electronic records should be backed up regularly. It is highly recommended that off-site back copies are maintained and updated regularly. Appropriate safeguards should be in place to prevent hacking and protect electronic data.

STANDARD 7: MEASURES IN PROGRAM LENGTH, OBJECTIVE OF DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS OFFERED

Definition

This is the Standard as defined by AIJS:

> *The institution publishes a description of each degree or credential, together with the typical length of each program, including the minimum number and type of credits, and courses needed to obtain the credential or degree. The anticipated conclusion of the education experience is the satisfactory completion of the requirements of an academic credential. The institution offers credentials documenting program completion.*
>
> *The institution publishes the length and increments of the academic year, i.e., semester, quarter, etc., and any established limits for program completion. The academic credits, degrees, and/or credentials are awarded in relation to the time invested and program requirements using accepted standards of postsecondary education.*

Institutional Implications

AIJS recognizes that accredited institutions will award academic credentials as part of their institutional mission. Such awards recognize successful accomplishment in meeting the required educational standards of the program. The institution should describe the procedures that recognize the accomplishments of students and provide them with a recognized credential of their success.

The credentials identify the level of performance and expectations associated with particular programs. In arriving at these decisions, the general academic context should

be considered, and any credential awarded should correspond appropriately to the length and intensity of educational experience. In addition, the requirements for obtaining the credential should be substantially similar to requirements in other post-secondary institutions that offer similar programs.

Credentials should be granted only after a program of well-defined and carefully considered sequence of courses has been completed. The credential must reflect the meaning, knowledge and experience gained from the required courses. It should also reflect the objectives and specific aims of the underlying academic program.

Institutions must clearly state the expected time frames and expected grade point averages for the completion of degree programs. The school must develop satisfactory progress standards. These benchmarks, as well as other degree requirements, should be publicly disclosed as institutional policies in documents that are readily available to students such as the catalog or school website. The published benchmarks for satisfactory academic progress should include provisions for students who do not meet the standards as well as an appeal process for students who have extenuating circumstances. In addition, the satisfactory academic progress policy should address matters such as withdrawals and incompletes.

Policies for Degrees and Credentials Granted

The institution must carefully regulate, monitor, and record the awarding of credentials. Considerations of fairness, equity, and impartiality should characterize the award of these credentials.

Where credential-granting power is regulated by local, state, federal, or professional bodies, the institution must have obtained such authority and may only act in accordance with the requirements of these bodies.

Credentials issued must be clearly and consistently worded. Their meaning should be clear to the recipient and all persons and entities that rely on their validity, veracity and clarity. Credentials should not make claims or promise expertise in professional areas unless such expertise has been, in fact, delivered by the institution's program and is, in fact, accepted by competent, external professional bodies.

Credentials should be awarded for successful and meritorious completion of institutional programs only. They should not be awarded as a mark of distinction, honor, in recognition of services or gratitude, or in connection with financial services or donations, unless they are clearly differentiated from those credentials that are earned. Such honorary credentials must be recognizable by their title on the credential.

STANDARD 8: FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Definition

This is the Standard as defined by AIJS:

> *AIJS requires that the educational services provided by the institution's instructional personnel demonstrate professional competence to help achieve the institution's educational goals. There is a sufficient quantity of faculty members to meet the mission of the institution.*
>
> *To further the mission of the institution, its academic staff members must possess the skills, competencies, and knowledge commensurate with their academic responsibilities. These qualifications are based on a combination of professional training, scholarship, experience, and classroom performance.*
>
> *The faculty has input in the development and review of curricula or other avenues of academic policy.*

In order to provide and sustain a superior educational delivery system, the institution must recruit and retain highly competent and motivated faculty and administration. The finest academic program and institutional resources are of little value without competent, prepared, and qualified instructors.

In seeking AIJS accreditation, the institution affirms its commitment to the delivery of ongoing, superior education. In order to achieve this, the institution must have a core of academically and pedagogically competent instructional staff dedicated to teaching excellence.

All faculty members employed by the institution as instructors or other professional academic personnel must possess suitable educational training and qualifications for their positions. These academic personnel shall have demonstrated proficiency in the content

of their teaching responsibilities, as well as the pedagogic and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to enable students to learn.

The quality and caliber of the faculty may be considered from a number of perspectives. Faculty members should demonstrate a high level of subject-area competence. In addition to subject-area competence, faculty members should be able to demonstrate a high level of pedagogic competency. This pedagogic competence will be demonstrated not only in the experience of the instructor, but in the ability to transmit the subject matter in ways that motivate students and facilitate effective learning.

Jewish Studies Faculty

Institutions applying for AIJS accreditation view Jewish Studies as more than an academic discipline or area of study. The curricula and programs of Judaic Studies and any other courses offered are essential components in the socialization of their students into a particular worldview and ethical construct that resonates with the traditions and history of the Jewish people.

This broader vision of Jewish Studies entails a deep-seated commitment to transmit the *Mesorah* (legacy) of Torah ethical values to each new generation of students and impacts the selection of instructors to those who live by or respect that *Mesorah*.

Viewed in this context, staff in this area should demonstrate qualities of scholarship, commitment, ethical and moral behavior, and overall personal conduct and deportment. While such criteria are important in any educational environment, it is essential at institutions that see their role as preparing students for a life committed to learning and its meaningful application in their daily living.

It is also important to distinguish Jewish Studies from other academic disciplines with respect to teaching credentials. Whereas in other disciplines, degrees are paramount and are a clear indicator of teacher qualification – there is even a formal convention that faculty credentials must be at least one degree above the credential offered by the program – in Jewish Studies, this is not that clear-cut, and standard academic conventions are not useful to determine degree requirements.

Traditionally, renowned Torah scholars rose to greatness by a combination of accumulating vast amounts of knowledge, and honing research and analytical skills over many years of full-time study in a variety of academic settings. Some studied in very structured programs, others learned privately with world renowned scholars, still others studied in small Chaburas (study groups). This level and type of study could be compared to post-doctoral studies. The most gifted and talented of this select group comprise the pool from which teachers and instructors on the post-secondary level are selected.

The faculty of Women's Seminaries (the common nomenclature for Women Institutions offering a core of advanced Jewish Studies) are comprised of Torah scholars, as described above, and outstanding personalities who have demonstrated a unique combination of mastery of subject material, considerable teaching experience on multiple levels, a natural passion for teaching, and a proven track record of conveying Jewish Studies courses in an inspiring manner. Many have earned reputations as sought out presenters and scholars-in-residence in a variety of settings, from Torah retreats, to online, video, and CD lectures.

Institutional Implications

Job descriptions for instructional and managerial personnel should outline the requirements for the position, the tasks and roles that will be expected, and how performance will be assessed. A well-written job description helps the institution define what exactly it wants from the position candidate and how performance will be assessed. There should be a procedure in place whereby job descriptions are reviewed and revised.

The institution should maintain personnel folders on all faculty members containing job descriptions, resumes, copies of academic and professional qualifications, institutional work histories, and copies of evaluations and reviews.

The institution must demonstrate that it places value on commitment to ongoing education and professional development within its teaching faculty. AIJS will examine the extent to which staff is engaged and encouraged to engage in continuing professional education.

AIJS institutions should actively solicit and demonstrate respect for faculty input in curricular decisions. Faculty input should be evident in curriculum design and revisions.

It has been a long-valued goal in Jewish studies to create life-time learners. With regard to faculty, this is especially important, in order for them to maintain their expertise in their particular discipline. To this end, AIJS will evaluate if the faculty are seriously engaged in continuing education and professional development.

STANDARD 9: ADMINISTRATION, HUMAN RESOURCES AND COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Definition

This is the Standard as defined by AIJS:

> *The institution has administrative capacity and identifies necessary organizational positions as appropriate to the specified scale of operations and aligned with its mission. Individuals in leadership and administrative roles are qualified by education and/or experience. The organizational positions and distribution of responsibilities are defined in the governance structure, processes, and activities. There are clear responsibilities delineated amongst the administrative members. The institution identifies potential candidates who are qualified by education and/or experience and recruits them to fill necessary positions.*
>
> *The institution is capably and responsibly managed. It demonstrates its ability to submit AIJS reports and documentation requests within established deadlines.*
>
> *A system is in place that measures and evaluates employee performance. This appraisal is utilized to encourage and improve employee performance and document shortcomings.*

Institutional Implications

The institution must define itself structurally. It should be aware of and able to articulate its current personnel position and recognize whether it is properly staffed in all departments and functions.

Within the institution, the quality of administrative and instructional staff is of great importance. Educational institutions should do whatever they can to hire, inspire and keep highly competent individuals to serve on their staff. The institution should have an articulated procedure for locating, identifying, and attracting capable applicants for positions. There should be a structured process of recruiting and filling vacant positions with appropriately qualified and experienced candidates. The institution should have in place a process that regularly reviews its organizational structure, positions, job descriptions and recruitment practices.

In recruiting efforts, and indeed with all human resource management practices, the institution should be able to demonstrate that it has a consistent policy of non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity that it is in compliance with all relevant laws and regulations.

There should be job descriptions for administrative staff. The job description clearly outlines the requirements for the position, the tasks and roles that will be expected, and how performance will be assessed. The institution should develop a set of operational standards to determine the degree to which actual performance corresponds to performance expectations.

The institution must maintain sufficient support staff to assist each department with its responsibilities. Cost-effective technology should be employed to make operations smooth and efficient. Many administrative functions within a higher education institution require specialized training, as well as ongoing professional development, as the practice of the profession changes. With technological advances, changes in laws and regulations, and evolving 'good practices', higher education administrators must constantly strive for excellence by adjusting and improving existing policies and procedures. Membership in professional peer organizations, attendance at external and internal training events, subscriptions and reading of professional literature and periodicals, can all be valuable tools to keep administrators current and professional. Institutions should encourage and support these activities.

An institution should maintain a current organizational chart, identifying the various functions performed within the school, the relationship between these functions, and the governance process – lines of authority, communication, and accountability.

There should be an emphasis on strong internal communications. Such exchanges can be both formal and informal. Stronger interpersonal relationships will assist the institution in improving teamwork, cohesiveness, and allegiance to a common vision.

Ensuring that the right people know the right information at the right time is basic to a well-run institution. Each department must have an effective method of communicating both within its division and with other departments. Face-to-face meetings and written

memorandums are examples of methods of communication that can be used effectively towards this goal.

To further its mission, the institution will typically need to interact with various elements that are part of its external environment. The role and effectiveness of the institution vis-à-vis its community, or relevant publics, will depend, in great measure, on the extent to which the institution has created, nurtured and developed a positive and constructive relationship with that community.

Likewise, relationships with the parents of students, feeder institutions whose graduates attend the institution, alumni, various sectors of the community, employers of the school's graduates, the broader higher educational community and local governmental agencies all constitute relevant publics that the institution relates to in implementing its mission and educational objectives. These relevant publics, or "stakeholders", for their part, will also attempt to influence the institution in the furtherance of their particular interests. A strong, mission-focused administration will be alert to and blend the interests of all the stakeholders to lead an institution dedicated to the success of its mission and its students.

STANDARD 10: FINANCIAL PRACTICES

Definition

This is the Standard as defined by AIJS:

> *The institution shall possess the financial resources necessary to fulfill its mission and educational objectives. The institution shall demonstrate institutional financial stability. The institution should have a proper accounting system and competent and trained financial staff familiar with financial management, record keeping, and internal control procedures. Roles and responsibilities shall be clear and understood. The institution must ensure that all funds and monetary instruments are accounted for, monitored, and properly safeguarded.*
>
> *The institution carries out its program responsibilities under Title IV in a responsible fashion based on compliance audits, program reviews, loan default rates, and other information the Department of Education may have provided.*

Institutional Implications

In addition to the institution's delivery of educational services, the institution must be able to demonstrate professional competence in its dealings with the financial aspects necessary

for effectively carrying out its mission. They should be qualified to handle finances by demonstrating competency in higher education good financial practices. This includes its financial dealings with its students, employees and suppliers and other key economic players including providers of student financial assistance programs.

The institution must have in place professional and competent staff familiar with basic management and accounting principles as well as internal control standards. Staff must ensure that the assets and resources of the institution are safeguarded. They must devise and implement an adequate system of financial procedures to ensure that the financial objectives of the institution are being met.

A standard institutional accounting system is imperative to ensure that financial information has been properly and consistently recorded. An appropriate system of controls must be in place to ensure the integrity of the accounting and financial record.

An external, independent audit should be conducted on a regular basis and reviewed by designated parties such as the institution's board of governors or directors. Particular care must be taken into account for federal or state monies, restricted funds, grants, and other specially designated funds.

In preparation for an initial accrediting review, the institution shall provide AIJS with recently audited financial statements, generally completed within the last year, as well as financial data for a period that includes the previous two fiscal years. Audited financial statements for the most recently completed fiscal year are also necessary for re-accreditation. If the last audit is older than twelve months, a more current financial statement should be provided. If an institution is composed of a secondary or other non-post-secondary components, a schedule containing only the post-secondary component should be provided along with the institution-wide audit.

Designated institutional staff should be responsible for developing and implementing all financial policies and practices. These staff members should be professionally qualified and should be required to be up to date with applicable legal, administrative, and governmental regulations.

The institution should set tuition and related fees with the following considerations: the type, quality, and length of the educational programs provided, the institution's actual costs, the institutional mission, competitive environment, communities, and economic background from which the institution draws its students.

Tuition payments should be posted in a timely and accurate manner. The institution must maintain and publish a fair and equitable tuition refund policy and have procedures to ensure that refunds are disbursed in a timely manner.

If the institution participates in federal governmental financial aid for its students, it must demonstrate competency in administering student financial assistance programs in full compliance with all applicable regulations and program requirements. This includes proper training and ongoing professional development.
The institution shall properly document its compliance with federal requirements for HEA programs. This will include actions resulting from findings in financial or compliance audits, program reviews, the most recent student loan default data, and any other information requested by the U.S. Department of Education.

Any institution found to have a high student loan default rate, as defined by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid, must develop a corrective action plan to address the high default rate. The institution must also demonstrate that it has effectively resolved any area of deficiency identified in audits, program reviews, and any other information provided by the Department to AIJS.

SECTION III
THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

AIJS MEMBERSHIP

AIJS accreditation is potentially available only to AIJS Members. Membership is open to Institutions that offer post-secondary level programs in Jewish Studies and/or programs with a core curriculum of Jewish Studies, and that ascribe to the principles and philosophy of classic *Halacha* (codes of Jewish Law) as embodied by the *Shulchan Aruch,* and operate in accordance with the definitive guidance, traditional mainstream Orthodox rabbinical authorities. Membership status does not infer or ensure that full accreditation will result, and no such claims can be made by the institution.

To apply for membership an institution must submit a membership application to AIJS. The staff of AIJS will evaluate the application to confirm that the information listed on the membership application is accurate, and that the institution meets the basic criteria of AIJS Membership.

APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION

Members of AIJS are invited to apply for accreditation. The institution should inform the AIJS staff of its intention to apply.

THE INSTITUTIONAL SELF-APPRAISAL (ISA)

Following approval of an institution's membership application and notification of its intent to seek accreditation, the institution conducts a comprehensive self-assessment. In the course of this self-assessment, each of the AIJS Standards is subjected to careful examination in order to determine the extent to which the institution satisfies the individual Standards. During this time, the institution develops a systematic self-study document, termed the Institutional Self-Appraisal (ISA) that describes in detail its compliance with each of the AIJS Standards. The ISA is designed to be comprehensive, providing all the information necessary for the EAC members to make an informed decision about the extent to which the institution satisfies the accreditation Standards. Supporting documents will be required to supplement the facts provided in the ISA. This document is then submitted to AIJS.

AIJS reviews the ISA to determine whether the institution is in compliance with the Standards and is therefore ready for an accreditation site visit. At this point, the agency either recommends to continue the review process (when there is reasonable expectation that all Standards for accreditation can be met), or to discontinue the review process (when there is reason to believe that all Standards for accreditation cannot be met).

A recommendation that the accreditation process not continue suggests that the institution should examine carefully the cited concerns before deciding to resume the review process.

Concerns that the agency noted in its initial review are communicated in writing to the institution. AIJS staff is also available to discuss those concerns informally, through telephone or personal communication.

After reviewing the comments, the institution may decide to proceed with the accreditation review or to withdraw its application. This decision should be based on the institution's own evaluation of its ability to demonstrate compliance with the AIJS Standards.

Once the ISA report has been reviewed by the AIJS staff and accepted, a date for the site visit is set. AIJS forwards a copy of the report and related materials to each site team member, within a reasonable time to review the material prior to the visit.

SELECTION OF THE SITE VISITORS

Members of the site visit team are selected on the basis of their experience, expertise, and commitment to quality in Jewish Studies education. These teams will generally consist of three to five individuals with professional competence in such areas as academics, institutional administration, finance, and student services.

The critical element which guides the selection of the team is that they have demonstrated a commitment to quality in the field of post-secondary Jewish Studies. Any conflict of interest must be avoided when choosing site visitors (See the agency's Conflict of Interest Policy in Section 1 of this Handbook).

AIJS site visit teams are selected on the basis of individual members' expertise and capacity to objectively evaluate a candidate institution on the basis of its own stated mission and the presented Standards. In the case of institutions that offer, in addition to their core Judaic Studies curriculum, other professional studies, AIJS will supplement the site visit team with experts or practitioners specific to that field.

Prior to the site visit, AIJS will identify and appoint the members of the site visit teams. The names of the proposed site visitors, along with their institutional affiliations, will be shared with the institution prior to the scheduled visit. The institution may raise an objection to AIJS concerning a proposed visitor, citing a possible conflict of interest or other disqualifying reason. The final choice of site visit team members remains with AIJS.

Site visitors will receive training addressing their responsibilities as site visitors as well as detailed guidance on the AIJS accreditation standards. The training sessions are provided on an individual basis to ensure that site visitors receive training prior to assuming a role as a site visitor. Group site visitor training sessions are held annually to provide site visitors

with updates pertaining to AIJS accreditation standards and to the responsibilities of AIJS site visitors. Site visitors who are being considered as potential visitors for an upcoming site visit must undergo training if they have not attended individual or group training within the year prior to assuming responsibility as a site visitor.

THE SITE VISIT

The site visit of the institution is one of the important sources of information used by AIJS in determining compliance with its Standards for accreditation. The site visit provides an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of data provided in the ISA, and to resolve any questions or concerns resulting from a careful analysis of the institution's ISA. The site visitors will spend significant time in the institution reviewing documents and the conditions under which they are recorded, stored and saved, observing classes, touring the facilities, and interviewing members of the administration, faculty, students, Board and community members as well as other stakeholders in the institution such as employers of graduates of the institution. The site visitors will have scheduled time during the visit to meet as a team, compare notes and assess the institution's compliance to each of the AIJS Standards. The information and insights provided by the site visit team are important in formulating fair, impartial, and informed decisions on accreditation.

SITE VISIT REPORT

The chair of the site visit team submits a written report of the site visit to the agency, along with the completed score sheet for each of the ten standards. This report includes the site visit team's observations and recommendations regarding each of the ten Accreditation Standards. The observations in the report must be supported by factual information. The site visit report indicates the program's strengths and limitations and provides explanatory information. The agency forwards a copy of the site visit report to the institution within 45-60 days of the site visit.

The institution is given the opportunity to respond in writing within 14 days of receipt of the site visit report before it is submitted to the EAC for an accrediting decision. The EAC is given a copy of any institutional response to the site visit report to review and consider when making an accreditation decision.

ACCREDITATION (OR RE-ACCREDITATION) ACTION

AIJS completes an intensive review of all information collected, including:

- the ISA
- the site visit report
- the institution's response to the site visit report

All decisions regarding the accreditation or re-accreditation of an institution are made by the Executive Accreditation Council (EAC) of AIJS. Based on the information provided, and any additional information requested by the EAC, the EAC will evaluate each institution's compliance with the AIJS Accreditation Standards. If an institution is out of compliance with an AIJS Accreditation Standard, the EAC will assess a deficiency that must be corrected in a specific timeframe determined necessary by the EAC. If the institution is in compliance with an AIJS Accreditation Standard, but nonetheless is not fully complying with AIJS's policies or procedures related to the Accreditation Standard, the EAC will issue a recommendation for the institution to implement.

The EAC determines the term of re-accreditation for each accredited institution based on the following recommended guidelines:

Number of AIJS Standards with Deficiencies Identified by EAC	Number of AIJS Standards with Recommendations Identified by EAC*	Recommended Term of Re-Accreditation
0	5 or less	5 years
0	3 or less	7 years
0	0	10 years
1 – 3	5 or less	3-5 years***

*Excluding any recommendations that do not reach the level of a deficiency OR that have already been satisfactorily addressed by the institution, as determined by the EAC.

***An institution will only be granted re-accreditation upon the EAC's determination that any identified deficiencies in the institutions compliance with AIJS Accreditation are easily correctable within a time frame determined by the EAC. The timeframe to come into compliance with the AIJS Standards may not exceed two years, if the longest program offered by the institution is at least two years in length.

Additionally, the EAC reserves discretion as the decision-making body of the agency on all decisions to grant accreditation or re-accreditation and may grant a shorter accreditation period than indicated in the chart above or may condition the accreditation for institutions that have not achieved full compliance on (1) a satisfactory progress report; (2) a focused interim visit; and/or (3) may impose probation or continue probation for a specific period of time. AIJS will immediately initiate adverse actions, including denial or termination of re-accreditation, if the EAC determines that an institution's noncompliance with AIJS threatens educational quality and/or that such action is necessary to protect Title IV funds.

AIJS DECISIONS

The following is a list of decisions available to the agency with regard to an institution's accreditation:

- Grant accreditation
- Deny the institution for accreditation
- Renew accreditation of an accredited institution
- Condition the accreditation on a satisfactory progress report or a focused interim visit
- Impose probation or continue probation for a specific period of time
- Terminate an institution's accreditation

In addition to the formal actions listed above, AIJS reserves the right to initiate an inquiry, request information and/or explanation, or schedule a focused visit prior to taking any formal action, should it have any reason to suspect that the institution may not be in compliance with AIJS standards. The institution must comply with any such requests.

The length of an institution's accreditation is a decision made by the EAC when considering the institution's application for accreditation. The EAC will consider the level of compliance with each one of the AIJS standards and any particular concerns brought to the attention of the EAC through a review of the ISA and Site Visit Report. Typical terms of accreditation are 2-10 years. Initial accreditation is typically granted for a period of time that is in the range of 2 to a maximum of 3 years. Renewal of initial accreditation would typically be granted for a maximum of seven years.

Once the EAC has made a decision regarding an institution's accreditation, AIJS staff will notify the institution of the decision as promptly as possible. Notification of AIJS accreditation decisions will state the basis for the action and may also contain conditions that the institution must fulfill in order to maintain accreditation. Each condition will be clearly labeled as a recommendation or as a deficiency.

In addition, an addendum to the letter of accreditation, with any deficiencies in compliance, recommendations and suggestions made by the EAC, will accompany the decision letter. The addendum will delineate which recommendations will require documented follow-up within a specific timeframe, as well as other suggestions. The addendum will clearly identify which of the recommendations indicate a deficiency with the institution's compliance with an AIJS accreditation standard. The addendum may include recommendations that have already been satisfactorily addressed by the institution with a note indicating that the recommendations have been satisfied.

Adverse actions are accompanied by a notice that describes the basis for the action and includes a notification of the right and process of appeal.

Accredited institutions should acknowledge and disclose this status in their catalogs and other publications by publishing the following statement:

(Name of Institution) has been granted Accreditation status by the Association of Institutions of Jewish Studies (AIJS). Accreditation indicates that the institution has achieved recognition by AIJS, by demonstrating compliance with AIJS Accreditation Standards.

SECTION IV: ADDITIONAL ACCREDITATION ISSUES

CREDIT HOUR ASSIGNMENTS

Institutions that are accredited and those that are seeking accreditation by AIJS must assign credit hours for courses offered that conform to the commonly accepted practice of institutions of higher education, as described in Standard 2 of the AIJS Accreditation Standards. Institutions that offer specialized coursework such as Talmudic and Rabbinical Studies or courses that offer training in religious instruction would have to conform to the norms of that type of specialized coursework, as described in Standard 2 of the AIJS Accreditation Standards.

The length of the program and each individual course within that program requires an appropriate number of hours to earn credit. The generally accepted calculation for a credit hour is referred to as the "Carnegie Unit," wherein one credit is awarded for a three-hour cluster which generally contains one hour of instructional time and presumes two hours of outside classroom work in the form of preparation, study, research, or writing. AIJS will be looking to see that the institution uses the standardized Carnegie definition or an alternative appropriate measure.

Alternative appropriate measures will be considered when the coursework is more suited to an alternative framework. For instance, in *Bais Medrash* study for Talmudic and Rabbinical subjects, *Chavrusa Study* (structured and supervised sessions with a study partner), and *Chabura studies* (several students studying in a cluster with a team leader), are the primary method of learning. Generally, augmented by formal lectures, these sessions contain a balanced mix of joint study of primary texts, followed by research of related sources, critical textual analysis of these sources, formulating hypothesis to address seeming contradictions and inconsistencies, peer review of conclusions, and development of original presentations in a group setting. In this context, AIJS will be looking to see that there is a minimum of three hours of such learning activities for each credit in the Chavrusa/Chabura modes. Another example of an alternative framework would include a Practicum learning experience. This includes students working in fields related to their course of studies and benefitting from supervision or mentorship. (See memo.) AIJS will review course syllabi to see how many hours per week the course meets and how many credits will be awarded for that course over the semester period. The daily schedule and academic calendar will be reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with credit hour assignments and to ensure that the minimum number of hours per credit is fulfilled.

An alternative measure would also be required for programs that do not lead to an Associate Degree, Bachelor's Degree or Professional Degree or Associate level or Bachelor level degree, unless each course within a program is acceptable for full credit toward completion of a single program offered by the school that does lead to one of these degrees. For these programs, there is a mandated credit hour to clock hour conversion that requires 30 clock hours per credit.

When reviewing an institution's credit hour measures, AIJS will be looking to see that the institution uses the standardized Carnegie definition or alternative appropriate measures

that meet the federal definition of a credit hour. AIJS will use the sampling method to do the review and evaluation of an institution's credit hour assignments.

If deficiencies are identified in the institution's determination of credit hours, the following actions will take place:

The institution will be advised that its credit hour assignments appear to be deficient and that it must submit an action plan, within a designated time frame, to review and correct said deficiencies to bring the institution in full compliance with agency standards for credit assignment. The institution should note that reassigning credit hour values may affect eligibility for HEA Programs. Failure of the institution to take the actions described above may result in adverse action by the agency, as per AIJS's Enforcement of Standards Policies and Procedures.

PERIODIC MONITORING

AIJS continually monitors its accredited member institutions to ensure that they remain in compliance with the accreditation standards. Accredited institutions are required to submit annual reports to AIJS. These annual reports provide the agency with current information appropriate to AIJS accreditation standards.

The institution's annual report includes: (a) enrollment data for the prior academic year (b) financial information with respect to institutional stability, (c) continuing measures of student achievement, such as completion rates and transfers to more advanced programs, and (d) records of student grievances.

In addition, the agency will expect the institution to include in this annual report any issues that may impinge upon the institution's compliance with the AIJS Standards, even if such an issue does not involve a substantive change. The annual report will reflect the institution's continued compliance with AIJS Standards. AIJS will expect its accredited institutions to notify AIJS of changes in the institution that relate to any of the accreditation standards that arise after the annual report has already been submitted or at any other time during the accreditation cycle. While such notification may take place via email or the like, AIJS has developed an institutional change form for this purpose to simplify the process and to determine if the change is a change that falls under the category of a Substantive Change requiring approval from AIJS, as outlined in the section on Substantive Change.

The annual reports for a given year are due to the agency by the last day of February. Institutions that are in the accreditation/re-accreditation process and were evaluated at a full site visit in the six months preceding the last day of February or are scheduled to be visited in the six months following the last day of February will submit a more limited version of the annual report for that year. AIJS analyzes the data provided by the institution in its annual report through the use of an Analysis of Annual Report Checklist and determines based on its analysis if further action is required to ensure that the institution remains compliant with accreditation standards.

SIGNIFICANT GROWTH

AIJS analyzes the enrollment data from the prior academic year and compares the numbers reported to determine if there is a 30% (or greater) increase in enrollment.

If the analysis of the data indicates that there was an increase of 30% or greater in the enrollment, which constitutes "significant growth", AIJS will review the fiscal and administrative capability of the institution including a review of the most recent financial statements provided by the institution in its annual report to determine if the increase has had a negative impact on the institution's financial health. Negative impact on financial stability would include an operating deficit, composite score that falls below the federal 1.5 composite score threshold, or substantial increase in short term liabilities. AIJS will also review the curriculum and syllabi, teacher- student ratio, student outcomes, and student complaints to ensure that the educational quality has not been negatively affected by the significant growth. Additionally, AIJS will review the administrative structure of the institution and its facilities and other circumstances of the increase in enrollment that might indicate that more frequent monitoring or other action is necessary to ensure that the institution continues to fulfill its obligations to its students and to fulfill its educational objective. AIJS staff will determine what additional steps are needed to assure the agency that the growth in enrollment has not diminished the educational quality of the program(s) offered by the institution and that the institution has the fiscal capability to handle the growth without compromising its fiscal stability. Additional follow up steps might include a request for updated financial statements reflecting the current fiscal year, an unannounced staff visit, more frequent monitoring, particularly with regard to monitoring student outcomes, student complaints and withdrawal rates.

A monitoring site visit will be held midway through the school's accrediting cycle. An Accreditation Specialist, possibly accompanied by another visitor selected by the AIJS staff with particular expertise in areas relating to the mission and type of institution, will visit each accredited institution to ensure that the institution continues to be in compliance with accreditation standards. In particular, they will review the last site visit report to see how any recommendations were attended to, conduct a brief tour of the facilities to ensure that it continues to meet AIJS standards for facilities, conduct meetings with key institutional academic and administrative personnel, review a sample of students' records, and examination of the institution's measures of student outcomes. An analysis of the items reviewed, and a report will be conducted to determine if follow-up action is required.

Additionally, AIJS may make unannounced visits to its accredited institutions at any point during the accrediting cycle to check or confirm compliance with any of the standards. This process affords the agency an opportunity to review, on a consistent basis, the institutions that it accredits. In this way, the agency's decision to grant accreditation is not a one-time action. Instead, the agency ensures that it maintains its ongoing responsibility to the public for assuring the quality of the institution.

REGULAR EVALUATIONS OF LOCATIONS

AIJS monitors the number of additional locations that an institution has to ensure that the quality of the education is not being compromised by the rapid growth of the institution. During an institution's re-accreditation cycle, AIJS will visit a representative sampling of 25% of the additional locations at which 50% or more of a program is offered to ensure that the quality of the education offered at each additional location. There is no pre-approval of additional locations.

AIJS strives to make biennial monitoring visits to each of the locations of any institution that has multiple additional locations, to ensure that educational quality of the programs or portion of programs offered at the additional locations continues to meet AIJS standards and that the location continues to have the personnel, facilities and resources described in the institution's application for approval of the additional location. These monitoring visits may be unannounced.

ONGOING MONITORING

AIJS continually monitors its accredited institutions to ensure that they remain in compliance with its accreditation standards. When an institution is found to be out of compliance with one or more Standards, AIJS will take an enforcement action.

Accredited institutions are required to submit annual reports to AIJS. These annual reports provide the agency with current information relating to AIJS accreditation standards. The annual reports are due to the agency each year by the last day of February of that year. The annual reports are reviewed, analyzed and compared to previous reports to ascertain if there are any areas of concern that requires follow-up.

On-site monitoring visits are held midway through the school's accreditation cycle. A member of the AIJS administrative staff, possibly accompanied by a site visitor with particular expertise in areas relating to the mission and type of institution, will visit each accredited institution and will take a tour of the facilities, meet with key institutional academic and administrative personnel, review a sample review of students' records, review the assessment of student outcomes, and review how the institution addressed previous recommendations.

It is the current AIJS practice, in addition to mid-cycle reviews, for a staff member to make a brief visit to each institution periodically to view a snapshot of the institution, and AIJS will continue this practice as long as is practically feasible. AIJS staff may request documentation about academic program development to review the quality of institution's educational offerings.

AIJS always reserves the right to make unannounced visits to its accredited institutions at any point during the accrediting cycle to check or confirm compliance with any of the standards. Following a site visit a staff analysis of the findings will be conducted to ascertain if any follow-up is required by the institution.

In sum, these monitoring tools afford AIJS the opportunity to monitor accredited institutions at frequent intervals. In this way, AIJS assures that its grant of accreditation is not a one-time action and provides ongoing assurance to the students of AIJS accredited

institutions, as well as other stakeholders and the public, of the ongoing high quality of AIJS accredited institutions.

If information results in a concern related to an institution's compliance with the agency's standards during a site visit, monitoring visit, other kind of visit to the institution, review of institution's Annual Report, document review, or communication with the institution, or is otherwise brought to the attention of AIJS, AIJS will follow its procedures for Determination of Non-Compliance.

DETERMINATION OF NON-COMPLIANCE

When a possible concern of noncompliance arises as a result of a monitoring visit, annual report, determinations resulting from an official complaint filed against an institution, or from any other source available, AIJS will send written notice of the concern to the institution within 30 days of determining that there is a possible concern. The notice to the school will specify in which of the AIJS Accreditation Standards, AIJS Policies and Procedures or any federal regulations the concern lies and will require the school to provide a response in writing within 30 days of receipt of the notice. AIJS may also schedule a staff visit to the institution.

The institution's response should provide explanation, clarification, and if necessary, documentation that demonstrates how the institution is in compliance or has come into compliance with the specific accreditation standards or AIJS policies and procedures or federal regulation identified in the notice of concern. AIJS staff will provide the notice and response to the EAC, and the EAC will review the response and will make a determination as to whether or not the institution is indeed out of compliance. The institution will be notified in writing of the results of the EAC's determination. If a determination of noncompliance is made, AIJS will follow its procedures for enforcement of standards.

Enforcement of Standards

AIJS requires its accredited institutions to remain in compliance with the AIJS Accreditation Standards. If an institution is found to be out of compliance with one or more of the AIJS accreditation standards, then one of the following actions will be taken by the agency. Determinations of non-compliance and of actions to be taken will be made by the Executive Accreditation Council.

Immediate Adverse Action

AIJS will immediately initiate adverse action if the EAC has determined and deemed to be necessary to protect educational quality and/or to protect Title IV funds. If it is not deemed to be necessary to take immediate action to protect educational quality or Title IV funds, the EAC will determine a deadline by which the institution must come into compliance, and a written timeframe deadline will be sent by AIJS to the institution.

Warning and Probation

An institution that is found to be out of compliance may be placed on Warning or may be placed on Probation and will be notified within thirty days of when the determination of noncompliance is made by the EAC and will be given a written time frame for coming back into compliance, as determined by the EAC. The maximum time frames allotted are based on federal regulation, as follows:

The maximum time frame that can be given by the EAC to an institution to come into compliance is based on the length of its longest program. If the longest program is less than one year, the maximum time frame that the institution will be given to come into compliance is 12 months. (At this time, AIJS does not accredit an institution whose longest program is less than one year). If the longest program offered by the institution is at least one year, but less than two years, the maximum time that the institution will be given to come into compliance is 18 months. If the longest program offered by the institution is at least two years in length, the maximum time that the institution will be given to come into compliance is two years.

The time period to come into compliance begins on the date that the institution was notified that it is out of compliance with an AIJS accreditation standard. This time period is known as the corrective period.

Warning and Probation are actions that are not appealable. Warning is a status that is generally given to an accredited institution that is found to be out of compliance with an accreditation standard which the EAC determines that the institution can correct within the time frame allotted.

Probation is a status that is generally given to an accredited institution that the EAC has determined to be out of compliance with an accreditation standard, and the EAC has determined that the noncompliance is substantial and has impact on the quality of the student learning experience. Probation is not considered an adverse action but is a status that is on public record.

During the warning or probationary period, AIJS will require the institution to provide a plan of action listing the various steps that the institution is taking to come into compliance and to provide quarterly progress reports. AIJS will review the progress reports and evaluate the institution's progress in resolving the non-compliance and will provide a report of its findings to the institution and assessment of approval or disapproval of the progress reports.

Good Cause Extension

The EAC of AIJS can extend the period allowed for achieving compliance, but only for good cause. Such determinations will only be made for extraordinary situations. Criteria for determining whether or not to grant an extension include circumstances beyond the institution's control such as natural disaster, death or tragedy. Extensions for good cause may not exceed 12 months from the end of the corrective period. In the event that AIJS grants an extension for good cause to an institution, AIJS will require the institution to provide a plan of action listing the various steps that the institution is taking to come into compliance and to provide quarterly progress reports. AIJS will review the progress reports and evaluate the institution's progress in resolving the non-compliance and will provide a report of its findings to the institution and assessment of approval or disapproval of the progress reports.

Adverse Action

If an institution fails to demonstrate compliance with the out of compliance issue identified within the timeframe allotted by the EAC, the institution shall be subject to Adverse Action.

An Adverse Action is a punitive action taken against an institution for non-compliance with AIJS Accreditation Standard(s). It modifies the status of an institution's accreditation and consists of one of the following actions, denial, withdrawal, suspension, revocation, or termination of accreditation

By federal regulation all adverse actions must be reported to the US Department of Education and the State Higher Education Agency.

The Institution will be notified in advance of any proposed adverse action and of the effective date. The imposition of an adverse action will follow due process of law procedures, and the Institution will be given opportunity to formally respond, including the right to legal counsel.

While AIJS must take adverse action against an institution that fails to come into compliance, it may maintain the institution's accreditation until the institution has had reasonable time to complete the activities in its teach-out plan or to fulfill the obligations of any teach-out agreement to assist students in transferring or completing their programs. An adverse action does not become final until after the appeals process period is completed.

AIJS may limit the adverse action to particular programs that are offered by the institution or to particular additional locations of an institution, without necessarily taking action against the entire institution and all of its programs, provided the noncompliance was limited to that particular program or location.

Adverse Actions are public actions which may be appealed - see the section on Appeals

NOTIFICATION OF PROBATION OR ADVERSE ACTION

If an institution has been placed on Probation, or an Adverse Action has been taken against an institution accredited by AIJS, AIJS will place a notice on the AIJS website indicating the probation or action taken. Any AIJS accredited institution placed on Probation or subject to an Adverse Action must disclose that it was placed on Probation or subject to an Adverse Action, to current and prospective students within seven business days of receipt of notification from the agency. AIJS will notify an institution of this requirement to disclose to current and prospective students within seven business days of notification from AIJS that it has been placed on probation or subject to adverse action, and AIJS will confirm that the required disclosures to current and prospective students were made.

While AIJS is not responsible for enforcing federal requirements in 34 CFR 668.14, 668.15, 668.16, 668.41, or 668.46, if, in the course of its work, AIJS identifies instances or potential instances of noncompliance with any of these requirements, it will notify the US Department of Education.

RE-APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION

An institution that was not granted initial accreditation may re-apply when it has corrected the deficiencies identified by the agency.

RE-ACCREDITATION

The AIJS re-accreditation process is similar to initial accreditation in that it requires a new ISA, a new site visit, and formal action by the EAC.

The institution shall begin preparing for re-accreditation one year before the current accreditation period ends. As a courtesy, AIJS sends the institution a reminder of its accreditation dates and notifies the institution that if it is planning to apply for re-accreditation, an ISA must be submitted to AIJS in enough time to allow time for AIJS staff to review the ISA and for the school to provide additional details, explanation and/or documentation for the ISA to be accepted. An ISA submitted for renewal of accreditation shall include a section on how the institution addressed prior recommendations from the last site review as well as a section on changes that have taken place at the institution since the last accreditation.

The institution shall submit a new ISA, which will be followed by a new site visit to the institution, and action by the EAC.

Institutions that have completed a full accreditation cycle and achieve full compliance with no deficiencies or recommendations noted in five out of ten standards will generally be granted five years of accreditation. Institutions that have completed a full accreditation cycle that have achieved full compliance with no deficiencies or recommendations noted in seven out of ten standards will generally be granted seven years of accreditation and mature institutions that have completed two cycles of accreditation and have achieved full compliance with no deficiencies or recommendations in all ten standards may be granted the maximum accreditation of ten years.

An institution will only be granted re-accreditation upon the EAC's determination that any identified deficiencies in the institutions compliance with AIJS Accreditation are easily correctable within a time frame determined by the EAC. The timeframe to come into compliance with the AIJS Standards may not exceed two years, if the longest program offered by the institution is at least two years in length.

Additionally, the EAC reserves discretion as the decision-making body of the agency on all decisions to grant accreditation or re-accreditation and may condition the accreditation for institutions that have not achieved full compliance on (1) a satisfactory progress report; (2) a focused interim visit; and/or (3) may impose probation or continue probation for a specific period of time. AIJS will immediately initiate adverse actions, including denial or termination of re-accreditation, if the EAC determines that an institution's noncompliance with AIJS threatens educational quality and/or that such action is necessary to protect Title IV funds.

VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL FROM AIJS

If an institution decides to withdraw from AIJS accreditation, AIJS will notify the Secretary, the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, the appropriate accrediting agencies, and, upon request, the public, that the institution is withdrawing voluntarily from AIJS accreditation within 10 business days of receiving notification in writing from the institution that is withdrawing voluntarily from AIJS accreditation.

LAPSED ACCREDITATION

If an institution lets its accreditation lapse, AIJS will notify the Secretary, the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, the appropriate accrediting agencies, and upon request, the public, within 10 business days of the date on which its accreditation lapses.

APPEALS OF ADVERSE ACCREDITATION ACTION

When AIJS takes adverse action, a notice of the right to appeal and a copy of the current appeals procedures is sent to the institution. The institution may then appeal the decision to an appeals panel. If the institution wishes to appeal, it must submit its notice of intent to appeal within 30 days of the date of the AIJS decision.

No change is made in the institution's accreditation status during the appeal process and no public notice is made until all appeals are concluded.

If the institution does not submit a statement of intent to appeal within 30 days of the date of notification of the accreditation decision, then the decision of adverse action becomes final.

APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

AIJS policy allows institutions to appeal adverse actions taken by the agency, as long as the institution sends a notice of intent to appeal to the EAC within 30 days of the institution's receipt of the agency's decision.

SELECTION OF AN APPEALS PANEL

To consider a specific appeal, within 30 days of receipt of notice of intent to appeal, the Chairman of the Executive Accreditation Council of AIJS selects three potential members from a pool of people gathered and nominated by the Executive Council of the EAC who are experienced in the field of accreditation, and will include an academic, an administrator, and a public member. Any potential member of an appeals panel must confirm that he/she abides by the AIJS Conflict of Interest Policy and must sign a Conflict of Interest Form. None may be current members of the EAC. Potential members will be either retired EAC members, or AIJS approved site visitors, who have undergone training in the AIJS Accreditation Standards, or individuals from other accrediting body commissions or from site visitors for other accrediting bodies or from other individuals who have similar experience, such as retired state licensure officials, or other individuals who may qualify as representatives of the public. Members of an appeal panel must have undergone training in AIJS Standards and policies.

APPEALS PANEL PROCEDURES

After selecting three potential members from the agency's pool of eligible potential members, and determining the willingness of these persons to serve, the names will be transmitted to the appellant who may challenge any of the potential panelists for due cause (e.g. conflict of interest, and bias.) within 15 days of receipt of names of the potential members of the appeals panel. Within 15 days of receipt of a challenge to an appeals panel member(s), AIJS considers such challenges and informs the appellant of the outcome and

selects other potential members of the appeals panel in place of any of members that have been removed from the panel.

AIJS finalizes the three members of the appeals panel and designates one of them as chair of the appeals panel and informs the appellant of the appeals panel appointments. The appellant must confirm receipt of appointments within five business days of the notification from AIJS and must prepare and submit a written explanation of the grounds for appeal to the chair of the appeals panel within 30 days of the confirmed appeals panel appointments from AIJS.

An institution may appeal on any of the following grounds, or combination thereof:

- the decision was arbitrary, capricious;
- the decision was in disregard of AIJS Standards;
- the decision was not supported by substantial evidence in the record;
- the decision was erroneous as a matter of fact or law;
- there was substantial material oversight or omission;
- the procedures used to reach the decision were contrary to accreditation policies and procedures, or agency bylaws;
- procedural error prejudiced EAC consideration;
- the institution can prove current compliance

The panel chair schedules a hearing on the appeal within 45 days of receipt of the written explanation of the grounds to appeal and notifies the appellant and the AIJS Compliance Administrator of the time and place thereof. Each has the right to appear in person or by designated representative, and to present a statement or argument. Alternatively, each may present a statement or argument via telephone conference.

The appellant has the right to employ counsel to represent the institution during the appeal. The institution may make any presentation, written, oral, or by other means, on its behalf. In addition, the appellant may inform the panel chair in writing that it chooses to have the appeal considered on the basis of written documents only, without a hearing. If this option is chosen, the appeals panel will hold a meeting, within 60 days of receipt of the written explanation of the grounds to appeal, to consider the written record and reach a decision.

DECISION OF THE APPEALS PANEL

The appeals panel may affirm, amend, or remand the adverse action. A decision of the appeals panel to affirm, amend, or remand the adverse action is implemented by the Executive Accreditation Council (EAC). Although the appeals panel is more than advisory, it does not have independent authority to reverse an adverse action imposed by the EAC as the decision-making body.

The chair of the appeals panel will prepare a report of the appeals panel in which it will state its decision and the basis for it. Within 15 days of its decision, the appeals panel will transmit its written report to the appellant and to the EAC. (The decision must identify specific issues that the original decision-making body (EAC) must address.) Decisions of the appeals panel are implemented by the EAC. If the appeals panel upholds the decision of the EAC, that decision becomes final as of the date of the letter informing the appellant of the appeals panel decision.

If the appeals panel's decision is to remand the adverse action back to the EAC for further consideration, the appeals panel's report to the EAC must identify specific issues that the original decision-making body (EAC) must address. The EAC will convene a special meeting of the EAC meeting within 30 days of receipt of the written report from the Appeals Panel, to make a new accrediting decision based on the findings of the appeal panel. The institution will be notified of the new accrediting decision within ten days of the new decision of the EAC.

If the Appeals Panel amends the adverse action decision of the EAC, the EAC shall act on the amended decision of the Appeal Panel at its first meeting following the notice of amendment and apply the amended adverse action as of the date of that meeting.

The final decision will be transmitted to the US Department of Education and will be made available to the public.

AIJS requires institutions to disclose the final decision made by AIJS of an adverse action to current and prospective students within seven business days of receipt of notification of a final decision.

AIJS makes available to the Secretary, the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, and the public, no later than 60 days after the decision, a brief statement summarizing the reasons for the agency's decision and the official comments that the affected institution may wish to make with regard to that decision, or evidence that the affected institution has been offered the opportunity to provide official comment.

COSTS OF THE APPEAL

There is a filing fee for an appeal, as listed in the current schedule of AIJS fees. In addition, all agency costs incurred in connection with the appeal, including a per-diem rate for appeal panel members and their transportation and lodging, are chargeable to the appellant.

NEW FINANCIAL INFORMATION

An institution may present new financial information to the EAC to be reviewed as part of its appeal of an adverse action if the following conditions are met:

- The financial information was not available earlier to the institution;
- The financial information is significant and bears materially on the financial deficiencies identified in the agency's review of the institution;
- The only remaining deficiency cited by the agency supporting its adverse action is the institution's failure to meet the requirements of the agency's Standard 10: Financial Practices.

The EAC will review the new financial information to determine whether or not it provides the basis for reversing an adverse action. An institution may only provide new financial information once during an appeal and may not use the determination of AIJS's review of the financial information as a basis of another appeal.

DECISION OF STATES AND OTHER AGENCIES

As stated above in Section I, AIJS will not accredit an institution that lacks the legal authority under state law to offer post-secondary education.

In addition, the agency may not grant initial or renewed accreditation to any institution if the agency knows or has reasonable cause to know that the institution is the subject of any of the following actions:

- A pending or final action brought by a state agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw or terminate the institution's legal authority to provide post-secondary education in the state.
- A decision by another recognized agency to deny accreditation.
- A pending or final action brought by a recognized accrediting agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's accreditation.
- Probation or an equivalent status imposed by a recognized agency.

In special circumstances, AIJS may grant accreditation to an institution that is or was the subject of a decision by a recognized agency to deny accreditation or the subject of a pending of final action brought by a recognized accrediting agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's accreditation, or the subject of a probation or an equivalent status imposed by a recognized agency, if it provides AIJS with a thorough and reasonable explanation, consistent with its Standards, why the action of the other body does not preclude the agency's grant of accreditation.

In the event that AIJS accepts the explanation and decides to grant accreditation it will provide the Secretary within 30 days of the agency's action with a thorough and reasonable explanation, consistent with its standards, why the action of the other body does not preclude the agency's grant of accreditation.

If AIJS learns that an institution it accredits is the subject of an adverse action by another recognized accrediting agency or has been placed on probation or an equivalent status by another recognized agency, it will promptly conduct a comprehensive review of its accreditation of the institution to determine if it too should take adverse action or place the institution on warning or show cause.

Procedures for conducting this comprehensive review are an unannounced visit or a request for documentation regarding the Standard for which another agency determined that the institution was not in compliance. AIJS will conduct a comprehensive review of the material and might require a focused site visit to determine if it too should take adverse action or place the institution on warning or show cause.

AIJS will, upon request, share with other appropriate, recognized accrediting agencies, and recognized state approval agencies, information about the accreditation status of an institution and any adverse actions it has taken against an accredited institution.

RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS

The agency defines a complaint as a documented statement alleging that an accredited institution is not in compliance with any of the Standards AIJS uses to measure eligibility for accreditation or as a complaint against AIJS or a complaint against implementation of any of AIJS policies. The agency will review in a timely, fair, and equitable manner any complaint that it receives against an AIJS accredited institution that is related to the agency's Standards or procedures. In the interest of fairness and due process, the agency will allow the institution sufficient opportunity to respond to the complaint, and will take appropriate action, as warranted, based on the results of its review.

Similarly, if the agency receives a complaint against AIJS itself, it will review the complaint in a timely, fair, and equitable manner, and take appropriate action, as warranted, based on the results of its review. Where the complaint is lodged against the agency itself, it may be necessary to refer the matter to legal counsel, or outside reviewers to recommend a suitable course of action.

Complaints may be submitted to AIJS via email or mail at the following addresses:

Association of Institutions of Jewish Studies
500 West Kennedy Boulevard
Lakewood, NJ 08701-2620
732.363.7330
Email: cstern@theaijs.com

Individuals with disabilities or any individual who needs assistance with filing a complaint may contact the Compliance Administrator of AIJS via email, mail or phone and will be assisted with the complaint process. The Compliance Administrator may be reached at the following addresses and phone number:

Compliance Administrator- Mrs. Chava Stern
Association of Institutions of Jewish Studies
500 West Kennedy Boulevard
Lakewood, NJ 08701-2620
732.363.7330
Email: cstern@theaijs.com

Complaints that are received by AIJS concerning an AIJS accredited institution will be handled according to the following procedures:

1. Within 10 days of receipt by AIJS, the complaint is screened to see if it has any face validity and if it is relevant to AIJS' role in accrediting and overseeing the institution.

2. If AIJS determines that the complaint does not fit into AIJS's responsibilities, the complaint will be acknowledged and replied to as being not within the purview of AIJS. As a courtesy, a copy of the complaint will be forwarded to the institution, and the case will be closed.

3. If AIJS determines that the complaint is relevant to its accreditation Standards or policies and falls within AIJS' oversight responsibilities, AIJS will contact the institution and forward the complaint to the institution. AIJS will then allow 30 days for the institution to respond to AIJS. The institution must provide, in its response to AIJS, an explanation of its actions, as well as a statement certifying that the institution followed its own published complaint policy.

4. AIJS will then review the institution's response and complaint policy.

5. If the institution informs AIJS in its response that the complainant did not follow the complaint policy of the school, AIJS will instruct the complainant to follow the complaint policy of the institution.

6. If the complainant claims to have followed the institution's published complaint policy, and the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, AIJS will make a determination as to whether or not the matter involves issues that question the institution's compliance with its own policies and/or AIJS Standards or policies. AIJS will launch an inquiry into the issue within 10 days. AIJS will ask for documentation from the complainant, substantiating the complaint; and an explanation of the disposition from the institution (which should document how the institution followed its own complaint policy and procedures as well as the steps taken to resolve the complaint.)

7. Within 10 days of the receipt of these above materials, AIJS will review the complaint file. If there is a question with regard to compliance with AIJS standards and policies, AIJS will contact the institution and allow the institution the

opportunity (30 days) to review the matter and provide an explanation and/or additional information to AIJS.

8. After receipt of the institution's response and a review of any additional documentation, AIJS administrative staff will bring the matter to the EAC for determination if the institution is not in compliance with AIJS standards and/or policies.

9. If the EAC makes a determination of non-compliance with an AIJS Standard(s) then the AIJS Policies on Non-Compliance, Enforcement of Standard, Warning and Probation, Immediate Adverse Action, Adverse Action will be followed, as applicable. If deemed required, the matter will be placed on the agenda of the EAC to determine if an adverse action, or other sanction should be initiated against the institution for noncompliance with AIJS' Standards of Accreditation.

10. If the EAC determines that there is no issue of non-compliance or if the EAC determines that the institutional response indicates resolution of any non-compliance, both the complainant and the institution will be so advised and the case will be closed.

11. AIJS will make a good faith effort to address credible anonymous complaints against an accredited institution or against AIJS itself and treat it in a similar manner to a regular complaint.

12. AIJS will respect the request of a complainant to protect the confidentiality of the complainant of the complainant if a complainant elects to keep their personally identifiable information confidential from the institution that is the subject of the complaint.

13. AIJS will redact any personally identifiable information and any information that could indicate the identity of the complaint in any communication to an institution or to the public.

14. AIJS will handle and store any confidential information in a manner that prevents unauthorized access or disclosure.

15. AIJS allows anonymous reporting of complaints and individuals who wish to remain anonymous may send anonymous letters via mail or email.

16. All complaints received by AIJS regarding an accredited institution will be filed and stored in an easy and accessible manner. Site visitors will be given access to the

file of an institution that is being reviewed, and any complaints on file in AIJS will be considered in the final decision of the EAC.

If a complaint is filed against AIJS directly, the complaint is recorded and acknowledged. Within 10 days of the receipt of the complaint, a member of the AIJS Administrative Staff will review the complaint and submit both the complaint and the review of the complaint to a member of the Executive Committee of the EAC to evaluate the validity of the complaint.

If the complaint is deemed justified, the Executive Committee of the EAC will instruct AIJS staff of the appropriate means to resolve the matter and will notify the complainant within 10 days of the review of the complaint. If the complainant is anonymous, no notification is necessary.

If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant may bring the matter directly to the EAC, by addressing the complaint to:

Chair, Executive Accreditation Council, AIJS
500 West Kennedy Boulevard
Lakewood, NJ 08701-2620
732.363.7330
Email: cstern@theaijs.com

PUBLIC NOTICE OF ACCREDITATION ACTIONS

The main purpose of AIJS accreditation is to grant recognition to those institutions of Jewish Studies that satisfy AIJS accreditation Standards. Maintaining public trust in the accreditation program and processes requires publication of the agency's actions relative to accreditation.

AIJS provides public notice that an institution is being considered for accreditation by the Executive Accreditation Council. The notice, which gives the public an opportunity for third-party comment, is placed on the official AIJS website, *www.theaijs.com* and in a general circulation newspaper that has a wide and broad national readership with readers who are likely to be concerned with the quality and offerings of post-secondary institutions with programs in traditional Jewish Studies.

AIJS will provide special written notice, within 30 days of the decision of its accrediting decisions to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, appropriate State licensing or authorizing agencies, and other appropriate accrediting agencies. AIJS provides notice to the public of its accrediting decisions by posting the actions on a special notice on the AIJS website *www.theaijs.com*.

AIJS will provide special written notice to the US Department of Education and the appropriate State agency and accrediting agencies of a final decision to place an institution or program on probation, to deny, withdraw, suspend, or terminate an institution's accreditation, or any other adverse action, at the same time that it notifies the institution, but no later than 30 days after the final decision.

AIJS will provide special written notice to the US Department of Education and the appropriate State agency and accrediting agencies when an appeal panel upholds an adverse decision, thereby making it a final adverse decision, at the same time that it notifies the institution, but no later than 30 days after the final decision.

AIJS will provide the public with written notice of a final decision to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke or terminate the accreditation of an institution, or other adverse action, within 24 hours of its notification to the institution. The agency will provide written notice to the public via its website *www.theaijs.com* and by placing a prominent notice in a newspaper that has widespread circulation in the Jewish community.

AIJS will make available to the Secretary, the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, accrediting agencies and the public, no later than 60 days after the decision to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke or terminate the accreditation of an institution, or other adverse action, a statement summarizing the reasons for AIJS's decision, including the official comments by the affected institution in response to the agency's decision. If the institution has not commented, AIJS will report that the affected institution has been offered the opportunity to comment.

AIJS RECORDS

AIJS maintains complete and accurate records of its review and decision-making activities concerning the institutions it accredits. There is a file for each institution that

has applied for accreditation that contains all current activity as well as the complete official record of the last accreditation review of an institution. These documents would include the institution's membership application, the institution's ISA and related documents, the site visit report, the institution's response to the site visit report, the accreditation or denial letter and the record of any institutional appeal and all EAC action letters.

Also, part of the institutional file is a record of all complaints received by AIJS against the institution and their resolution, periodic AIJS review reports of the institution, institutional annual reports, special reviews conducted by AIJS and any other pertinent correspondence relating to the accreditation of the institution.

Applications and institutional requests requiring an official action or EAC consideration, such as applications for approval of a Substantive Change, and their disposition, are kept on file going back to the institution's last accreditation cycle.

AIJS maintains recorded minutes of its EAC meetings and membership meetings. AIJS retains the resumes of AIJS EAC members, and the personnel records of the AIJS staff. AIJS financial records including income and expense records, bank statements, payroll registers, tax related documents, insurance related documents, and other agency related paperwork are kept on file, along with copies of AIJS's own annual external audits.

Also on file is all formal correspondence relevant to AIJS's Standards, all correspondence and submissions regarding AIJS's recognition status with the US Department of Education, and all complaints received against AIJS and their resolution.

The AIJS Bylaws are the legal document of the agency and is kept on file. The AIJS Handbook is the definitive document of AIJS accreditation procedures. A current copy is on file and available in both hard copy and electronic formats for distribution to interested parties. Also, on file and available are the Site Visitors Manual, the Guide to the ISA and other policy statements.

The general policy of AIJS is to keep records for a period of five years, except records relating to an institution's accreditation, which must be kept for a period that includes the

last full accreditation cycle. Physical records are kept in a locked office. Electronic records are secure and only accessible to AIJS staff members. They are backed up on a remote server.

ADDITIONAL REPORTING

The agency will transmit to the U.S. Department of Education the following information:

1. A report on the agency's major accrediting activities during the previous year.
2. Any proposed change in the agency's policies, procedures, or Standards that might alter its scope of recognition, and or compliance with criteria for recognition.
3. The name of any institution it accredits that the agency has reason to believe is failing to meet its Title IV, HEA program responsibilities, or is engaged in fraud or abuse.
4. Upon request by the Secretary, information that may bear upon an accredited institution's compliance with its Title IV, HEA program responsibilities.

AIJS has developed the following policy concerning the reporting to and disclosure of information to the Secretary of the US Department of Education.

As required by federal regulations, AIJS will disclose the name of any institution or program it accredits that AIJS believes to be failing to meet its Title IV HEA program responsibilities or is engaged in fraud or abuse. Along with the name, AIJS will state the agency's reasons for concern.

Upon request by the Secretary of Education, AIJS will disclose any information that may bear upon accredited institutions' compliance with its Title IV HEA program responsibilities, including information that pertains to the eligibility of the accredited institution to participate in Title IV HEA programs.

If the US Department of Education contacts the agency for information included in the above policy, AIJS will review, on a case-by-case basis, whether the circumstances surrounding the contact warrant that the contact remain confidential – and not be disclosed to the institution. This review will be done by the Chair of the Executive Accreditation Council, jointly, with AIJS administrative staff. The review will be focused

on answering the question as to whether or not the disclosure of the contact would be a breach of the agency's duties to act as a responsible gatekeeper and overseer of institutional integrity, and whether such a disclosure would jeopardize the function of AIJS in its own oversight activities. If the conclusion of the case-by-case review is that disclosure does not do so, AIJS will generally inform the institution of the US Department of Education's contact or request, unless specifically requested by the US Department of Education that the contract or request be kept confidential.

AIJS will provide special written notice, within 30 days of the decision of its accrediting decisions to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, appropriate State licensing or authorizing agencies, and other appropriate accrediting agencies. AIJS provides notice to the public of its accrediting decisions by posting the actions on a special notice on the AIJS website *theaijs.com*.

AIJS will provide special written notice to the US Department of Education and the appropriate State agency and accrediting agencies of a final decision to place an institution or program on probation, to deny, withdraw, suspend, or terminate an institution's accreditation, or any other adverse action, at the same time that it notifies the institution, but no later than 30 days after the final decision.
AIJS will provide special written notice to the US Department of Education and the appropriate State agency and accrediting agencies when an appeal panel upholds an adverse decision, thereby making it a final adverse decision, at the same time that it notifies the institution, but no later than 30 days after the final decision.

AIJS will provide the public with written notice of a final decision to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke or terminate the accreditation of an institution, or other adverse action, within 24 hours of its notification to the institution. The agency will provide written notice to the public via its website and by placing a prominent notice in a newspaper that has widespread circulation in the Jewish community.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

AIJS maintains and makes available to the public written materials describing:
(1) Each type of accreditation it grants;
(2) The procedures that institutions or programs must follow in applying for accreditation;

(3) The standards and procedures it uses to determine whether to grant, reaffirm, reinstate, restrict, deny, revoke, terminate, or take any other action related to each type of accreditation that it grants;
(4) The institutions and programs that AIJS currently accredits and, for each institution and program, the year the agency will next review or reconsider it for accreditation
(5) The names, academic and professional qualifications, and relevant employment and organizational affiliations of the members of the agency's policy and decision-making bodies; and the agency's principal administrative staff.

The AIJS Handbook is the primary document that outlines the entire scope of AIJS activities. The AIJS Handbook is available to the public on the AIJS website, *theaijs.com*. The Handbook is also available by written request to AIJS, 500 West Kennedy Boulevard, Lakewood, NJ 08701. The AIJS Handbook may also be obtained by contacting AIJS staff at (732) 363-7330.

The AIJS website *(www.theaijs.com)* contains the names of the members of the agency's policy and decision-making bodies, the Executive Accrediting Council. It also lists any appeal panel members; and the agency's principal administrative staff and provides information on how to obtain information regarding the academic and professional qualification and employment and organizational affiliation of EAC members, members of appeal panels and principal AIJS staff members.

Resumes of the EAC members and members of any appeals panel and the principal AIJS staff members are on file in the AIJS office and may be obtained upon written request to AIJS. Written requests should be addressed to AIJS, 500 West Kennedy Boulevard, Lakewood, NJ 08701.

The integrity of the accreditation process often requires that applicant institutions submit confidential information. In instances where an institution is inhibited in its ability to disclose such information or to conduct a meaningful self-study, the ability of the accrediting body to make sound judgments is compromised and the effectiveness of the accreditation process is diminished.

At the same time, decisions of accrediting bodies are used by various government agencies, employers, financial institutions, regulatory bodies and students as one basis for their decisions. In this regard, accrediting bodies serve as protectors of the public interest. The confidentiality needed to preserve the integrity of the accreditation process must be balanced against the needs of external constituencies for basic and essential information.

In determining which documents should be subject to public disclosure, AIJS accepts the principle that the primary consideration should be whether the information in question relates to compliance with established Standards. Advisory suggestions for program enhancement that result from a site visit, for example, are not viewed as critical for public disclosure.

In disclosing information relative to accreditation, AIJS will observe the following guidelines:

A. Information subject to full disclosure includes:
    - Information concerning the scope, evaluative criteria, procedures, and the process by which accreditation decisions are reached, as outlined in the agency's Handbook.
    - Lists of institutions that are accredited, that have had accreditation withdrawn; or that have been placed on probation.

B. Information available only from the institution or from AIJS with consent of the institutions includes:
    - Information supplied by the institution and/or AIJS in the course of the accrediting process, such as the ISA, the site visit report and site visitor recommendations, the institution's response to the site visit report, and correspondence between AIJS and the institution relating to the accreditation process.

ACCURACY IN PUBLIC DISCLOSURES

Any public disclosure made by the institution regarding its accredited status by AIJS must be accurate, and indicate the full name, address and phone number of AIJS:

Association of Institutions of Jewish Studies
500 West Kennedy Boulevard
Lakewood, NJ 08701-2620
732.363.7330

Any institution accredited, or currently being considered for accreditation by AIJS, may not make any public disclosure, either in its promotional literature, catalog, or any other literature or communication, that contains misleading or incorrect accrediting information, regarding:

(a) The accreditation status of the institution
(b) The contents of summaries of on-site reviews
(c) The agency's accrediting actions with respect to the institution

AIJS considers the publication of incorrect or misleading information by an institution concerning the accreditation status of the institution, and related actions, as a serious breach of both the public trust and the institution's integrity. This includes misrepresenting the accreditation status of the institution, mischaracterizing the contents of a site team report or misrepresenting AIJS' accrediting actions with respect to the institution.

Should AIJS determine that this breach was inadvertent, accidental and unintentional; the institution is required to immediately and publicly correct this faulty information. AIJS expects that a prominent public notice be posted in a public common area within one business day to correct the inaccurate information, and a correction be posted on the institution's website, within one business day, if the institution has its own website. Posting this notice on a public bulletin board where important institutional notices are generally posted meets this requirement.

In addition, AIJS requires that within seven days the institution further publicize the correction utilizing the same manner as the original misinformation was publicized. For instance, if the misinformation appears in a press release, the institution must prepare a follow-up press release in substantially the same format as the original release and distribute it to all outlets the original misinformation was made available to.

Should AIJS determine that the inaccurate or misleading information was provided intentionally, the institution will be so informed in writing. In addition to complying with the procedures outlined above, the institution is required to explain its behavior to the AIJS Executive Accreditation Council (EAC) within seven days. After hearing from the institution, the EAC will determine what follow-up action will be taken by the EAC in light of this breach. Actions available to the EAC range from AIJS issuing its own correction, the EAC issuing a formal warning to the institution, and/or the EAC initiating an adverse action against institution.

REVIEW OF AIJS STANDARDS

AIJS will conduct a periodic and systematic review that demonstrates that its accreditation standards are adequate to evaluate the quality of higher education provided by the institutions it accredits, and relevant to the educational needs of students. This review will be conducted at least once every five years, or in response to new federal or state regulations, changing demographics, or some other pressing development. This program of review will be comprehensive and will examine each of the agency's accreditation Standards and the Standards as a whole.

The review will include all of the agency's relevant constituencies – students, faculty and administration at member institutions, as well as graduates of member institution and employers of graduates of member institutions and afford them a meaningful opportunity to provide input into the review. Members of the EAC and site visit teams, member institutions, and outside experts and consultants will be invited to take part in the review. The information and insights gathered in the review will determine if any modifications of the Standards are needed for measuring the quality of institutions accredited by AIJS.

If at any point during the review of AIJS Standards, the agency determines that it needs to make changes to its Standards, the agency will initiate action within 12 months to make the changes and will complete that action within a reasonable period of time, generally within 24 months.

Before finalizing any changes to its Standards, AIJS will provide notice of the proposed changes to all of its relevant constituencies and other parties that have made their interest in accreditation known to the agency. The agency's relevant constituencies, students, members of the faculty and members of the administration at member institutions, as well

as graduates of member institution and employers of graduates of member institutions and other interested parties will be given 30 days to comment on the proposed changes, and AIJS will take into account any comments on the proposed changes that are submitted on a timely basis by the relevant constituencies and other interested parties. The proposed revised standards will then be presented to the Executive Accreditation Council for discussion and vote. The revised standards that have been accepted by the EAC will be included in the Handbook which shall then be published and posted on the AIJS website. All subsequent accreditation activities will be conducted in accordance with the revised Standards.

TEACH-OUT PLANS

AIJS requires an institution it accredits to submit a teach-out plan to the agency for approval, upon the occurrence of any of the following events:

- For a nonprofit or proprietary institution, the Secretary notifies the agency of a determination by the institution's independent auditor expressing doubt about the institution's ability to operate as a going concern or indicating an adverse opinion or a finding of material weakness related to financial stability.
- AIJS acts to place the institution on probation or equivalent status.
- The Secretary notifies the agency that the institution is participating in title IV, HEA programs under a provisional program participation agreement and the Secretary has required a teach-out plan as a condition of participation.

AIJS will require an institution it accredits to submit a teach-out plan and, if practicable, teach-out agreements (as defined in 34 CFR 600.2) to the agency for approval upon the occurrence of any of the following events:

- The Secretary notifies the agency that it has placed the institution on the reimbursement payment method or the heightened cash monitoring payment method requiring the Secretary's review of the institution's supporting documentation
- The Secretary notifies AIJS that the Secretary has initiated an emergency action against the institution to limit, suspend, or terminate an institution participating in any title IV, HEA program;

- AIJS has withdrawn, terminated or suspended its accreditation of the institution;
- The institution has notified AIJS that it plans to cease operations or close a location;
- A state licensing or authorizing body notifies AIJS that the institution's license or legal authorization has been, or will be, revoked.

AIJS will evaluate the teach-out plan to ensure that it includes a list of currently enrolled students, academic programs offered by the institution, and the names of other institutions that offer similar programs and that could potentially enter into a teach-out agreement with the institution.

If AIJS approves a teach-out plan that includes a program that is accredited by another recognized accrediting agency, it will notify that accrediting agency of its approval.

AIJS may require the institution to enter into a teach-out agreement with another similar institution as part of its teach-out plan.

AIJS will require a closing institution to include in its teach-out agreement a complete list of students currently enrolled in each program at the institution and the program requirements each student has completed as well as a plan to provide all potentially eligible students with information about how to obtain a closed school discharge and, if applicable, information on state refund policies; a record retention plan to be provided to all enrolled students that delineates the final disposition of teach-out records (e.g., student transcripts, billing, financial aid records); information on the number and types of credits the teach-out institution is willing to accept prior to the student's enrollment; and a clear statement to students of the tuition and fees of the educational program and the number and types of credits that will be accepted by the teach-out institution.

Any institution accredited by AIJS that enters into a teach-out agreement, either on its own or at the request of AIJS must submit that teach-out agreement to AIJS for approval.

AIJS will only approve an institution's teach-out agreement if the agreement provides for the equitable treatment of students being served by ensuring that the teach out institution

has the necessary experience, resources, and support services to provide an educational program that is of acceptable quality and reasonably similar in content, delivery modality, and scheduling to that provided by the institution that is ceasing operations either entirely or at one of its locations. While an option via an alternate method of delivery may be made available to students, such an option is not sufficient unless an option via the same method of delivery as the original educational program is also provided;

AIJS will only approve an institution's teach-out agreement if the agreement is with an institution Has the capacity to carry out its mission and meet all obligations to existing students;

AIJS will only approve an institution's teach-out agreement if the agreement is with an institution that has a publicly disclosed transfer of credit policy that includes a statement of the criteria established by the institution for the transfer of credits earned at another institution, and a list of institutions with which the institution has established an articulation agreement and, if applicable, the written criteria used to evaluate and award credit for prior learning experience including, but not limited to, service in the armed forces, paid or unpaid employment, or other demonstrated competency or learning.
The teach-out institution must demonstrate that it can provide students access to the program and services without requiring them to move or travel substantial distances, and that it will provide students with information about additional charges, if any.

AIJS will not permit an institution to serve as a teach-out institution if the institution is subject to the conditions to any of the conditions listed above that would require it to submit a teach out plan, including but not limited to placement by the Secretary on reimbursement, placement on provisional certification, determination by an independent auditor expressing doubt about the institution's ability to operate as a going concern or indicating an adverse opinion or a finding of material weakness related to financial stability, on probation or equivalent status with its accrediting agency

AIJS will not permit an institution to serve as a teach out institution if the institution is under investigation, subject to an action, or being prosecuted for an issue related to academic quality, misrepresentation, fraud, or other severe matters by a law enforcement agency.

AIJS reserves the right to waive requirements regarding the percentage of credits that must be earned by a student at the institution awarding the educational credential if the student is completing his or her program through a written teach-out agreement or transfer.

AIJS requires the institution to provide copies of all notifications from the institution to students related to the institution's closure or to teach-out options to ensure the information accurately represents students' ability to transfer credits. AIJS may require corrections to the information provided to students and will require the institution to make the necessary corrections and provide notification to students.

If an institution accredited by AIJS closes without a teach-out plan, or agreement, the agency will work with the U.S. Department of Education and the appropriate state agency, to the extent feasible, to assist students in finding reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional charge.

SECTION V: ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS:

The following list is current as of September 2025. See www.theaijs.com/accreditedinstitutions for the most updated information.

Associated Beth Rivkah Schools-Division of Higher Learning
461 East New York Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11225
Programs offered:
Classical Torah Studies Certificate
Classical Torah Studies Degree
Advanced Classical Torah Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: May 22, 2013
Current Accreditation: March 10, 2022- March 10, 2029
Next Review: 2029

Bais Medrash of Dexter Park
445 South Pascack Road
Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977
Programs offered:
First Talmudic Degree
Classical Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: November 21, 2018
Current Accreditation: August 11, 2026- August 11, 2033
Next Review: 2033

Bais Medrash Mayan Hatorah
101 Milton Street
Lakewood, NJ 08701
Programs offered:
Bachelor of Talmudic Studies Degree
Associate of Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: July 28, 2016
Current Accreditation: May 15, 2024- May 15, 2031
Next Review: 2031

Bet Midrash Ohel Torah
455 Manetta Avenue
Lakewood, New Jersey 08701
Programs offered:
Bachelor of Talmudic Studies Degree
Associate of Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: May 1, 2023
Current Accreditation: February 25, 2026- February 25, 2034
Next Review: 2034

Bnos Zion of Bobov Seminary
5000 14th Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11219
Programs offered:
Classical Torah Studies Certificate
Classical Torah Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: November 23, 2015
Current Accreditation: Nov 5, 2025- November 5, 2035
Next Review: 2035

Central Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim- Lubavitz
885 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11213
Programs offered:
Classical Talmudic Studies Degree
Advanced Classical Torah Studies Degree
First Rabbinic Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: July 23, 2019
Current Accreditation: June 23, 2026- June 23, 2036
Next Review: 2036

Derech Hachaim Seminary
5A Israel Zupnick Drive
Monroe, NY 10950
Programs offered:
Classical Torah Studies Degree
Classical Torah Studies Certificate
Date of Initial Accreditation: April 30, 2018
Current Accreditation: February 25, 2026- February 25, 2034
Next Review: 2034

Eisek HaTorah D'Rachmistrivka
60 Sunset Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10314
Programs offered:
First Talmudic Degree
Intermediate Talmudic Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: November 9, 2021
Current Accreditation: November 6, 2024- November 6, 2032
Next Review: 2032

Keser Torah- Mayan Hatalmud
218 Joe Parker Road
Lakewood, NJ 08701
Program offered:
Bachelor of Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: February 13, 2018
Current Accreditation: January 10, 2022- January 10, 2029
Next Review: 2029

Mechon L'Hoyroa
168 Maple Avenue
Monsey, NY 10952
Program offered:
Classical Talmudic Law Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: March 10, 2015
Current Accreditation: January 21, 2025- January 21, 2033
Next Review: 2033

Mosdos Yaakov V'Yisroel
1951 New Central Avenue
Lakewood, NJ 08701
Programs offered:
Associate of Talmudic Studies Degree
Associate of Classical Torah Studies Degree
Classical Torah Studies Certificate
Bachelors of Talmudic Studies Degree
Bachelors of Classical Torah Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: July 23, 2019
Current Accreditation: February 25, 2025- February 25, 2032
Next Review: 2032

The New York Seminary
911 McDonald Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11218
Programs offered:
Classical Torah Studies Degree
Classical Torah Studies Certificate
Date of Initial Accreditation: July 18, 2018
Current Accreditation: June 23, 2026- June 23, 2036
Next Review: 2036

Ohel Margulia Seminary
22 Ashel Lane
Monsey, NY 10952
Programs offered:
Classical Torah Studies Certificate
Classical Torah Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: February 13, 2018
Current Accreditation: February 25, 2026- February 25, 2033
Next Review: 2033

Rabbinical College of Yeshiva and Kolel Bais Medrosh Elyon Association
73 Main Street
Monsey, NY 10952
Programs offered:
First Talmudic Degree
Classical Talmudic Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: February 13, 2018
Current Accreditation: February 7, 2023- February 7, 2030
Next Review: 2030

Rabbinical Seminary M'kor Chaim
160 Locust Street
Lakewood, NJ 08701
Program offered:
Bachelor of Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: November 25, 2019
Current Accreditation: Nov 3, 2022- Nov 3, 2032
Next Review: 2032

Seminar L'Moros Bais Yaakov
4420 Fifteenth Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11219
Programs offered:
Classical Torah Studies Certificate
Classical Torah Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: May 22, 2013
Current Accreditation: February 25, 2025- February 25, 2035
Next Review: 2035

Seminary Bnos Chaim
222 South Clover Street
Lakewood, NJ 08701
Programs offered:
Associate of Classical Torah Studies
A 60 credit course of study over two years leading to an Associate degree in Classical Judaic Studies
Certificate of Classical Torah Studies
Date of Initial Accreditation: March 21, 2017
Current Accreditation: June 23, 2026- June 23, 2033
Next Review: 2033

Torah Temimah Talmudical Seminary
3323 Richmond Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10312
Programs offered:
Classical Torah Studies Degree
First Talmudic Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: December 27, 2023
Current Accreditation: December 27, 2023- December 27, 2028
Next Review: 2028

Yeshiva Bais Aharon
905 Park Avenue
Lakewood, New Jersey 08701
Program offered:
Bachelor of Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: July 18, 2018
Current Accreditation: June 14, 2023- June 14, 2030
Next Review: 2030

Yeshiva Chemdas Hatorah
950 Massachusetts Avenue
Lakewood, NJ 08701
Programs offered:
Bachelor of Talmudic Studies Degree
Associate of Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: July 28, 2016
Current Accreditation: May 15, 2024- May 15, 2034
Next Review: 2034

Yeshiva Gedola Amidei Dgirsa
89 Throop Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11206
Programs offered:
First Talmudic Degree
Classical Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: May 1, 2023
Current Accreditation: April 19, 2026- April 19, 2033
Next Review: 2033

Yeshiva Gedola Tiferes Yaakov Yitzchok
65 Cross Street
Lakewood, NJ 08701
Programs offered:
Associate of Talmudic Studies Degree
Bachelor of Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: April 30, 2018
Current Accreditation: April 19, 2026- April 19, 2036
Next Review: 2036

Yeshiva Gedola Tiferes Yerachmiel
911 Somerset Avenue
Lakewood, NJ 08701
Programs offered:
Associate of Talmudic Studies Degree
Bachelor of Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: July 13, 2017
Current Accreditation: July 4, 2022- July 4, 2029
Next Review: 2029

Yeshiva Gedolah Keren Hatorah
1083 Brook Road
Lakewood, NJ 08701
Programs offered:
Associate of Talmudic Studies Degree
Bachelor of Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: July 28, 2016
Current Accreditation: January 10, 2022- January 10, 2029
Next Review: 2029

Yeshiva Gedolah Tiferes Boruch
21 Rockview Avenue
North Plainfield, NJ 07060
Program offered:
Bachelor of Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: July 28, 2016
Currrent Accreditation: August 23, 2021- August 23, 2028
Next Review: 2028

Yeshiva and Kollel of Karlsburg
1556 53rd Street
Brooklyn, New York 11219
Programs offered:
First Talmudic Degree
Classical Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: May 1, 2023
Current Accreditation: April 19, 2026- April 19, 2033
Next Review: 2033

Yeshiva of Ocean
7120 Highway 52
Greenfield Park, NY 12435
Programs offered:
Classical Torah Studies Degree
First Talmudic Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: March 21, 2017
Current Accreditation: March 10, 2022- March 10, 2032
Next Review: 2032

Yeshiva Ohr Naftoli
701 Blooming Grove Turnpike
New Windsor, NY 12553
Programs offered:
Classical Talmudic Studies Degree
First Talmudic Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: July 28, 2016
Current Accreditation: January 10, 2022- January 10, 2029
Next Review: 2029

Yeshiva Ohr Zechariah
199 Joe Parker Road
Lakewood, NJ 08701
Programs offered:
Associate of Talmudic Studies Degree
Bachelor of Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: April 30, 2018
Current Accreditation: March 22, 2023- March 22, 2030
Next Review: 2030

Yeshiva Shaarei Torah of Rockland
91 West Carlton Road
Suffern, NY 10901
Programs offered:
First Talmudic Degree
Classical Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: December 31, 2017
Current Accreditation: Dec 28, 2022- Dec 28, 2029
Next Review: 2029

Yeshivas Be'er Yitzchok
165 Conant Street
Hillside, NJ 07205
Program offered:
Bachelor of Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: December 20, 2016
Current Accreditation: November 6, 2024- November 6, 2031
Next Review: 2031

Yeshivas Emek Hatorah
395 Kent Road
Howell, NJ 07731
Program offered:
Bachelor of Talmudic Studies Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: February 23, 2017
Current Accreditation: January 21, 2025- January 21, 2033
Next Review: 2033

Yeshivat Hechal Shemuel
1719 Avenue P
Brooklyn, NY 11229
Programs offered:
Classical Torah Studies Degree
First Talmudic Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: December 31, 2017
Current Accreditation: August 11, 2026- August 11, 2033
Next Review: 2033

Yeshivath Zichron Moshe
84 Zichron Moshe Way
Fallsburg, NY 12733
Programs offered:
Classical Talmudic Studies Degree
First Talmudic Degree
Date of Initial Accreditation: December 20, 2016
Current Accreditation: October 26, 2026 – October 26, 2036
Next Review: 2036