



ABHES BULLETIN

To: ABHES-Accredited Institutions and Programs
From: India Y. Tips, Executive Director
Date: January 29, 2021
Subject: Winter Updates

Happy New Year! We have been living through unprecedented and unpredictable times, but we made it through 2020 together and we are looking forward to new beginnings in 2021.

The guidance provided within this notice contains information that updates previous Bulletins. ABHES remains open to a range of flexible and creative solutions that support students enrolled in our accredited institutions and programs, including efforts made to ensure students meet required professional program competencies in compliance with applicable federal, state, and credentialing requirements for entry-level employment.

As the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to affect our institutions and their operations, institutions should continue to execute their emergency preparedness protocols and continuity education/operation plans. Institutions must continue to maintain documentation of any temporary waivers of regulations received from federal, state, or other regulatory bodies governing the operation of the institution and/or its program(s).

We are committed to working with you during these challenging times. Additional updates will continue to be provided when there is new or changing guidance.

ABHES Operations

The ABHES office continues to operate during its normal business hours of Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time. Staff continue to work remotely and are available to address any questions and provide support services via telephone or email. **As a reminder, all correspondence, and payments to ABHES must be submitted electronically. Please follow the [Submission Requirements](#) to ensure proper and timely processing. For questions, please contact info@abhes.org.**

At its meeting held January 13-15, 2021, the Commission reviewed and considered school actions. The results of the Commission's reviews will be provided in writing via email to the individual institutions on or before February 12, 2021. The Commission also considered comments it received regarding proposed revisions to the *Accreditation Manual* relative to distance education and simulated clinical (externship) experiences, which were posted for comment on November 16, 2020. Details regarding the final revisions approved by the Commission will be posted by February 15, 2020 to be effective July 1, 2021 with the option to adopt prior to the July 1, 2021 effective date. To view the current *Accreditation Manual*, effective January 1, 2021, visit <https://abhes.org/resources/#accredManual>.

New ABHES Staff

ABHES staff continue to accomplish amazing work on behalf of the organization. ABHES has had the good fortune of expanding its staff in the past 12 months and we are so pleased to introduce the following new staff members:



Crystal Calarusse

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Crystal Calarusse serves as the Associate Executive Director of Program Development and Innovation. Ms. Calarusse joined ABHES in August 2020. She oversees ABHES' Program Department and manages the review process for institutional changes, and ensures policies are consistently applied when analyzing and processing program-related applications. She is also responsible for leading initiatives relative to distance education and other higher education trends, including monitoring and tracking regulatory changes by state licensing, national credentialing and federal authorities that impact program-specific operations.

Ms. Calarusse has served almost 20 years in leadership positions in higher education accreditation, including Chief Executive Officer of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education, Chief Accreditation Officer at the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration, and as a board member of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors. She has published and presented widely on accreditation matters, in particular equity issues and globalization, and is currently seeking a PhD in public policy at the University of Maryland, College Park.



Stacie Hendrickson

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Stacie Hendrickson joined ABHES in August 2020 to serve as the Director of Institutional Review and Development. Ms. Hendrickson oversees ABHES' institutional changes related to maintaining accreditation, to include ownership, additional locations, continuing education courses and programs, mission, name, and teach-out plans. Other responsibilities include strategic planning related to institutional effectiveness, supporting the ABHES review process, and keeping abreast of accreditation issues in higher education that impact ABHES and its membership.

Ms. Hendrickson's background includes over 20 years of higher education operations, regulatory compliance management, project management, and leading change in operational processes and controls. Throughout her career, she has served as Chief Operations Officer, Vice President of Operations, Vice President of Compliance, Campus President, and various other compliance management and operational roles. In addition, she served on active duty in the U.S. Army.



Karim Frazier

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Karim Frazier joined ABHES in January 2021 as an Accreditation Coordinator. His primary responsibilities include coordinating and conducting on-site evaluation visits. He also provides support and interpretive guidance on accreditation standards to institutions and evaluators before, during, and after the on-site visit.

Mr. Frazier has a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Randolph College. He has over five years of experience in customer service and previously worked as an Admissions Counselor.



Ana Rogero

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Ana Rogero joined ABHES in January 2021 as an Accreditation Coordinator. Her primary responsibilities include coordinating and conducting on-site evaluation visits. She also provides support and interpretive guidance on accreditation standards to institutions and evaluators before, during, and after the on-site visit.

Ms. Rogero has a Bachelor of Business Administration from Trinity Washington University and previously worked as an Enrollment Broker for D.C. Healthy Families Program.



Stephen Sonon

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Stephen Sonon joined ABHES in January 2021 as an Accreditation Coordinator. His primary responsibilities include coordinating and conducting on-site evaluation visits. He also provides support and

interpretive guidance on accreditation standards to institutions and evaluators before, during, and after the on-site visit.

Mr. Sonon has a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts from Villanova University. He served as a Project Coordinator for the Catholic Foundation and as a part-time Pharmacy Clerk.

Virtual Visits

In accordance with the [U.S. Department of Education Guidance released December 11, 2020](#), regarding temporary flexibilities that help accrediting agencies serve institutions and students through the period of COVID-19 interruption, ABHES has suspended business travel and continues to follow its virtual visit policy for institutions and programs required to undergo site visits February through May 2021. Each institution that is required to undergo a virtual visit during this timeframe will be contacted directly within the next thirty days and provided with details regarding scheduling, preparation requirements, fees, and other essential information.

Virtual visits continue to permit ABHES to meet its obligations for quality assurance of accredited institutions and programs and permit applicants to continue to progress through the initial accreditation process. The objective of the virtual visit is to assess, in a virtual environment, each accreditation standard normally reviewed and evaluated during an on-site visit.

Further, although ABHES may take a final accreditation action based upon a virtual visit, a follow up limited in-person site visit will be required. This limited site visit need not replicate the virtual visit, or elements thereof, and need not include the full team that participated in the virtual site visit but could be conducted through a limited visit performed by ABHES staff or a single qualified ABHES evaluator. This follow up visit is to be conducted as soon as practicable, generally within 180 days following a declaration that the COVID-19 national emergency has ended.

If a site visit within six months after a change of ownership is conducted virtually, a follow up in-person visit must be conducted within 90 days following a declaration that the COVID-19 national emergency has ended. Similarly, the required site visits to be conducted within six months of an ABHES-approved new non-main campus and separate educational center, where at least 50 percent of an education program, may also be conducted virtually and within 180 days following a declaration that the COVID-19 national emergency has ended. Institutions will be informed of this requirement with notice of the action.

Distance Education

All temporary distance education approvals issued throughout 2020 expired on December 31, 2020, and ABHES resumed its normal procedures for reviewing the distance education applications submitted by institutions and programs intending to offer new or expanded distance education methods. ABHES approval of the distance education delivery methods will be included within the current grant of accreditation. Current distance education applications are available for download at <https://www.abhes.org/resources/#Applications>.

Institutions and programs that receive distance education approval but do not wish to continue utilizing such methods once limitations attributable to COVID-19 are lifted may relinquish such approval by submitting a completed *Notification of Discontinuation of Program and/or Distance Education Delivery Method* available for download at <https://abhes.org/resources/#Forms>. **For questions related to program and delivery method approvals, please contact Crystal Calarusse at ccalarusse@abhes.org.**

Accreditation Workshops

ABHES will host its next three scheduled Accreditation Workshops virtually on February 25, 2021, March 23, 2021, and July 21, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time. Those who wish to register may do so by visiting <https://abhes.org/events/>. The cost of the workshop is \$650 which includes a second registration at no additional cost when registering at the same time.

Annual Membership Business Meeting

ABHES will hold its Annual Membership Business Meeting via webinar from **1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., Eastern Time, on Wednesday, March 10, 2021**. The meeting brings together Commissioners and staff to brief ABHES members on any pertinent issues, including the financial status of ABHES. This meeting is open to all interested parties. For details and to register, visit <https://abhes.org/events/>. **For questions, please contact Holly Doering at hdoering@abhes.org.**

Call for ABHES Evaluators!

ABHES is seeking qualified administrative team leaders and program specialists (both educators and practitioners) to serve as volunteer reviewers on institutional and programmatic visitation teams. If you or any members of your staff and faculty are interested in serving as an evaluator for ABHES, please review the [Education, Experience, and Training Requirements](#) on our website; and visit [Becoming an Evaluator](#) to download the ABHES Evaluator Application. Once completed, please submit the completed ABHES Evaluator Application and a current resume or curriculum vitae to evaluator@abhes.org. Once all required documents are processed, evaluators will be contacted regarding upcoming training opportunities.

Questions

Please contact ABHES staff with specific questions concerning your institution or program's compliance or accreditation. Please visit the [Our Staff](#) page on the ABHES website for specific staff member contact information. **If you are unsure of where to direct your questions, please contact Denise Thelemaque, Office Manager, at (703) 917-9503 or email info@abhes.org.**