

About Accreditation

Many candidates seeking to utilize the **HOJ-ICBS Curriculum Package** often ask about the issue of ‘accreditation.’ Since the inauguration of providing education materials for use in a Bible College environment this question has been repeatedly considered and reviewed. The following article is a general commentary on our current position as it relates to this sensitive but important topic.

Accreditation Defined

In general, ‘accreditation’ is the act of certifying that an educational institution maintains suitable standards; the granting of approval to an institution of learning by an official review board after the school has met certain requirements. Specifically, accreditation is the review of a school's course offerings and procedures by **a group of its peers** to certify that that school is meeting its own stated objectives and offering its students the education it promises them.

Accreditation is **“a review by your peers”** that ensures that you are offering a quality program. Schools connected with **HOJ-ICBS** are expected to meet this criterion within our collegium organization.

The U.S. Department of Education is a secular, government agency, and therefore its worldview and standards do not necessarily reflect biblical principles. As such they cannot be considered ‘a review by your peers.’ There are many government requirements that simply cannot be accomplished by those affiliated with **HOJ-ICBS**. Especially items such as requiring that teachers must have accredited degrees themselves and even publish articles regularly to be considered worthy to teach at a ‘college’ level.

Many would argue that Jesus of Nazareth was the greatest, most effective teachers who ever lived. Yet, because He did not have an accredited degree nor record and publish His words Himself, He would not be considered qualified to teach at a government-approved, higher education institution. **HOJ-ICBS** feels that any standard that bars Christ from being an instructor is unbiblical and unacceptable. Therefore, **HOJ-ICBS** has chosen not to pursue government-recognition as an accrediting association, believing it would damage the Spirit-anointed programs God has asked our members to pioneer. We will neither seek accreditation from the US government nor from any other.

At the present time **HOJ-ICBS** schools only teach ministry-related courses such as Bible, ministry, missions, and evangelism. Government-recognized accreditation is not necessary to succeed in these vocations. If **HOJ-ICBS** affiliates begin to offer classes beyond this narrow scope, then it will be necessary to revisit and review this issue. As a result of the **HOJ-ICBS Curriculum Package** being utilized by so many

different denominational fellowships and independent congregations no effort has been made to acquire accreditation from denominational organizations.

Individuals seeking employment in government-licensed positions such as public-school teachers, state-licensed psychologists or psychiatrists, and non-church-related counselors need government-recognized accredited degrees. Generally, people working in ministry positions do not need a government-accredited degree. In fact, several church organizations have taken a stand against the Church voluntarily placing itself under government regulations and control.

Does Government Approval Guarantee Higher Quality Education?

Our experience with government-recognized “accredited” institutions does not make us believe that it is superior to being “certified” or being accredited by a religious accrediting institution. The opposite is true. Most graduates from a government-recognized accredited college, have experienced first-hand their lack of expertise in helping reach their spiritual and ministerial goals. Having examined the values of government-recognized accrediting agencies, we believe that new standards are required. **HOJ-ICBS** administration have established curriculum guidelines that ensure that affiliated institutions provide an exceptional Christian education that glorifies Jesus Christ, based upon the Scriptures of the Old Testament and the testimony of the New Testament.

Another question that is critical to this discussion is: “How well is the U.S. Department of Education fulfilling its responsibility to guarantee quality education in U.S. schools, kindergarten through college?” Does their accreditation improve the quality of education provided? This question might also be asked of any secular governmental agency or bureau.

SAT (Student Achievement Tests) scores have been on a continual decline for years. The 1992 literacy rate of 77 percent for Americans over age 16 was 20 points lower than the 97 percent literacy rate for the World War II generation -- the last highly literate citizens produced by American public schools. Half of America's government accredited high-school graduates cannot read sixth-grade lessons; two-thirds can't read ninth-grade lessons.

Tabulations in the World Data section of the 1996 Britannica Yearbook show that 24 countries in the Western Hemisphere -- including Mexico -- have workforce literacy percentages at or above 90 percent. Nine more “New World” nations have resident literacy rates over 80 percent. Only seven of the 40 nations in North, Central, and South America or the Caribbean have adult reading rates below 80 percent. Six of the seven are very poor, disadvantaged countries. Four have experienced civil wars. These six are Haiti with 53 percent literacy, Guatemala with 56 percent, Nicaragua with 66 percent, Belize with 70 percent, Honduras with 72 percent, and El Salvador with 74 percent. But the seventh nation with an adult literacy percentage

below 80 percent has the most expensive public schools in the world -- costing \$280 billion in 1995. The 1992 NALS test scores show that only 77 percent of Americans over 16 can read.

According to Lauro Cavazos, former U.S. Secretary of Education, when compared to their peers in other industrialized nations, our students rank near the bottom in math and science scores; the top five percent of our high school students know less about math than the average high school student in Japan; our best high school students, those bound for college, rank near the bottom of students from 13 advanced countries in chemistry and physics; and our students finish last in biology.

The U.S. ranked next to last in literacy in a 1995 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) comparison of literacy in seven countries: Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. Results of the first International Adult Literacy Survey reported that only Poland had a higher percentage of its population at the lowest level of literacy.

In 1998, OECD released a follow-up report, Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society, which compares the literacy skills of adults in 12 countries -- the original seven in the first report as well as Australia, Belgium, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. The report found that, relative to many other nations, larger percentages of the U.S. population are at the lowest literacy level (Level 1).

In addition, the love and joy of reading has tragically been removed from student's hearts. One-third of high school graduates never read another book for the rest of their lives; 58% of the U.S. adult population never reads another book after high school; 42% of college graduates never read another book after college. How is it possible that Western schooling could so totally kill the joy of learning?

Perhaps 50 years ago, there may have been an educational prestige in being approved by and listed with the U.S. Department of Education. However, it has become evident that that situation no longer exists.

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