

## **Do not accredit religious indoctrination**

Accreditation is authorised recognition/legitimisation of learning. Religious colleges and universities see it to give credibility to their religious "education" programmes.

The state should not recognise or fund religious indoctrination and theology as education. That violates secularism. It makes the state wade into the area of judging that an entity is a religion and that is messy.

The state should not award points to graduates of religious courses that state religious doctrine as the truth. Religion should accredit things itself if it wants to. The state should not take such accreditation as valid. It does not need to.

Let academic accreditation be removed from specifically theological "educational" (the word should be indoctrination) disciplines.

Accreditation is about verifying that a course fits facts and cares about evidence and truth. It is about recognising the person's knowledge not his or her fantasies or speculations or religious opinions. If it is not, then what use is it?

### *Cease academic accreditation for courses based on religious indoctrination*

"There are several reasons accreditation is important besides ensurance of quality and adherence to academic standards. Accreditation determines a school's eligibility for participation in federal (Title IV) and state financial aid programs, as well as eligibility for employer tuition assistance. Proper accreditation is integral for the acceptance and transfer of college credit, and is a prerequisite for many graduate programs. In addition, degrees attained from a school without regional accreditation may not be as accepted for professions that require licensure."

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The other problem is that religious programs often require you to sign a statement of doctrine before you can teach or study. Such programs are sectarian not educational. You will be discriminated against should you know the doctrine is wrong. That is not acceptable in an equal society. It is anti-truth.

If a new batty religion was created its programs will not get recognition from the state. The state should recognise no religious program as an education. It is only fair.

Yet if theology should get accreditation so should say astrology!

If you have problems with secularism, you will not have problems with the notion that the state should keep out of theology. It could be said that the reason is that it is not the state's expertise and there is a danger of giving one or more faiths special treatment.

And educating the public in science which is about testing and re-testing in order to determine truth, is what the state should put money into. Every penny put into religious "education" is wasted and misdirected money.

Academic accreditation needs to be removed from unproven treatments such as Reiki. Theology is not a science and so should get no accreditation. It is not true learning. If theology should be considered

learning then how can the contradictory theologies of Catholicism and Mormonism be accredited? The contradiction shows they are not learning at all but speculation and fantasy and wishful thinking.

Remember these programmes present themselves not as learning about religion but learning the truth as delivered by religion. No awards, titles or doctorates conferred by the Pontifical University in Rome should be recognised by the state.

Religious education and diplomas/degrees of theology should not be accredited. They are not education. Only fact based educational disciplines should be accredited. Theology is not fact. Theology is not a science. If it is then how come one can get accreditation in Muslim Apologetics which is the reverse of Christian Apologetics which is also accredited? Accrediting a Muslim theologian who denies that Jesus was crucified and accrediting a Catholic one who says he was makes no sense. It is also proven by the fact that the Muslim theologian will teach that Jesus never rose from the dead and the Catholic theologian will teach that he did. Theology and religious education is not about what can be known to be true or what can be tested with evidence. These disciplines may refer to facts but that is only incidental to their main purpose which is to get people to believe stuff without sensible evidence or real evidence.

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A state that funds a school of say Roman Catholic theology is being unfair to say Muslims for they will not be allowed to teach in it. To discriminate over nonsense or what religious guesses one makes is discrimination.

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Let state funding for such "education" and accreditation stop. In certain circumstances, you need more than just to not grant accreditation. You need to strongly say the course has no credibility or validity.

APPENDIX: From Chronicle of Higher Education

Why does accreditation matter? Aside from the traditional goal of conferring legitimacy on colleges and their programs, accreditation has taken on a far more consequential role: Students attending institutions that are not accredited are ineligible for federal financial aid, money that is indispensable to the budgets of most American colleges....

By awarding accreditation to religious colleges, the process confers legitimacy on institutions that systematically undermine the most fundamental purposes of higher education.

Skeptical and unfettered inquiry is the hallmark of American teaching and research. However, such inquiry cannot flourish—in many cases, cannot even survive—inside institutions that erect religious tests for truth. The contradiction is obvious....

Students giving tours at Wheaton College in Illinois are said to describe it as the Harvard of evangelical education. But unlike Harvard, Wheaton is one of the colleges that oblige their faculty members to complete faith statements. In other words, at Wheaton the primacy of reason has been abandoned by the deliberate and repeated choices of both its administration and its faculty.

Wheaton is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.... I asked [Wheaton] to justify the manifest disconnect between the bedrock principle of academic freedom and the governing regulations that corrupt academic freedom at Wheaton.... The process administrator's explanation, in full: "Federal regulations and commission policies require that the commission respect a wide range of institutional missions and belief systems in its accrediting processes."

This, in my view, can only be described as a scandal. Providing accreditation to colleges like Wheaton

makes a mockery of whatever academic and intellectual standards the process of accreditation is supposed to uphold. If accrediting agencies are playing by the rules in this continuing fiasco, then the rules have to be changed—or interpreted more aggressively, so that "respect" for "belief systems" does not entail approving the subversion of our core academic mission by this or that species of dogma.