

Draft 2024 Accreditation Standards

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Standard 1: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

The institution has a clearly defined mission that reflects its character, values, and organizational structure as well as its unique student and community demographics. The mission outlines the institution’s explicit commitment to equitable student achievement and serves as a guiding principle for institutional planning, action, evaluation, and improvement.

1. The institution’s mission defines its commitment to assuring equitable educational opportunities and outcomes for all students. The institution regularly reviews and disaggregates data to engage with its stakeholders to ensure that the mission reflects its unique character and identifies its broad educational purposes.
2. The institution establishes goals that are aligned with its mission and reflect pursuit of institutional excellence. The institution works to fulfill its mission with commitments to continuous quality improvement and equity-minded practices.
3. The institution’s mission directs resource allocation, innovation, and continuous quality improvement through ongoing systematic planning and evaluation of programs and services.
4. The institution holds itself accountable for achieving its mission and goals, and for closing opportunity gaps. It regularly reviews relevant, meaningfully disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate its progress and inform planning, improvement, and innovation.
5. The institution regularly communicates progress toward achieving its mission and goals with internal and external stakeholders in order to promote shared understanding of institutional strengths, priorities, and areas for continued improvement.

Checklist Items – Institutional Mission and Goals

Within the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, the institution will provide narrative and evidence that demonstrate the items below. Peer Review Teams will confirm these items during the comprehensive review process using a checklist.

- The institution has procedures/practices for periodic review of mission/mission-related statements, including provisions for revision if/when revisions are needed
- The institution’s procedures/practices for review and revision of mission/mission-related statements allow for participation of institutional stakeholders, as appropriate for the character and context of the institution
- The mission has been approved by the institution’s governing board
- Procedures/processes for setting institutional goals include relevant institutional stakeholders, as appropriate for the character and context of the institution
- The institution has established standards and goals for student achievement (i.e., institution-set standards), including standards and goals for course success, degree and certificate attainment, transfer, job placement rates, and licensure examination pass rates

Standard 2: Student Success

In alignment with its mission, the institution delivers high-quality academic and learning support programs that are designed to engage and support students through their unique educational journeys. Academic and learning support programs are structured to promote equity in student success, and the institution evaluates student learning and achievement data to inform improvements and advance equitable outcomes.

1. Academic programs at all locations and in all modes of delivery are offered in fields of study consistent with the institution’s mission and reflect breadth, depth, and rigor appropriate to higher education.
2. Academic programs are designed to support equitable attainment of student learning outcomes and achievement of educational goals.
3. All degree programs include a general education framework to ensure the development of broad knowledge, skills, and competencies and intellectual concepts. The institution’s general education program articulates the knowledge that the institution’s graduates will possess in order to participate in a diverse, quickly changing global society.
4. The institution establishes student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level. Learning outcomes reflect relevant discipline and industry standards as appropriate, and are consistently communicated to students.
5. The institution communicates clear, accurate, and accessible information regarding programs, services, and resources that foster success in students’ unique personal and educational journeys. The institution uses multiple communication methods to provide information to students when and where they need it.

6. The institution holds itself accountable for students' success by scheduling courses in a manner that ensures degree and certificate programs can be completed in the expected period of time.
7. The institution uses delivery modes and teaching methodologies that meet student and curricular needs and promote equitable student learning and achievement.
8. ~~The institution designs and delivers effective and equitable services and programs that support students in their educational journey, address academic and non-academic needs, and maximize their potential for success.~~

The institution designs and delivers equitable and effective services and programs that support students in their educational journey, address academic and non-academic needs, and maximize their potential for success. Such services include library and learning resources, academic counseling and support, disability services, and other services the institution identifies as appropriate for its mission and student needs.

9. The institution fosters a sense of belonging and community with its students by providing multiple opportunities for engagement with the institution, programs, and peers. Such co-curricular and/or student engagement activities reflect the varied needs of the student population and effectively support students' educational journey.
10. Faculty and others responsible for student learning regularly assess students' attainment of identified learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level. Analysis of assessment results supports institutional and curricular improvements that promote equitable attainment of outcomes.
11. The institution systematically conducts program review and learning outcomes assessment that advances the institutional mission and improves equitable student achievement.

Checklist Items – Student Success

Within the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, the institution will provide narrative and evidence that demonstrate the items below. Peer Review Teams will confirm these items during the comprehensive review process using a checklist.

- Policies and/or other documentation regarding transfer of credit
- Pre-collegiate curriculum is distinguished from college-level curriculum
- Verification of minimum degree requirements (60 units for AA, 120 units for BA)
- Compliance with Federal standards for clock-to-credit hour conversions
- Policies/procedures related to program discontinuance, demonstrating that institution provides enrolled students with opportunities for timely completion in the event of program elimination
- Policies related to catalog, communication, recruiting, enrollment, admissions, etc.
- The catalog includes information regarding the purpose, content, requirements, and expected learning outcomes of degree and certificate programs
- If applicable: Policies and/or other documentation related to expectation of conformity with specific codes of conduct, worldviews, or beliefs
- If applicable: Policies and/or other documentation related to credit for prior learning and competency-based credit
- Alignment with *ACCJC Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV*

- Policies/processes for student complaints are fair and clearly communicated to students
- Student complaints are addressed with due process
- All student records are stored permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provision for secure backup
- Required policies/practices for release of student records
- Documentation related to collaborations/agreements with other external parties regarding the provision of student and/or learning support services

Standard 3: Governance and Decision-Making

The institution engages in clear and effective governance practices that support the achievement of its mission. Governance roles and responsibilities are delineated in widely distributed policies, and institutional decision-making processes provide opportunities for meaningful participation and inclusion of relevant stakeholders.

1. The institution upholds an explicit commitment to principles of academic freedom, academic integrity, and freedom of inquiry.
2. The governing board has responsibility for the overall quality of the institution and supports its distinct character. The governing board regularly monitors progress towards the institution's mission and goals, and monitors its fiscal health.
3. The governing board establishes and regularly reviews policies to ensure the realization of the institutional mission. The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEO to implement policies, and refrains from involvement in the day-to-day operations of the institution.
4. Members of the governing board fulfill their legal and fiduciary responsibilities, acting in the best interest of the institution. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, and/or other external parties.
5. The governing board functions collaboratively and effectively as a collective entity to promote the institution's values and mission. The governing board demonstrates an ability to self-govern in adherence to its bylaws and expectations for best practices in board governance.
6. The governing board systematically develops, ensures, and improves its own effectiveness through orientation, professional development, and regular board self-evaluation.
7. The institution's decision-making structure and processes are clearly defined, aligned with the mission, and include opportunities for the participation of appropriate institutional stakeholders. Roles, responsibilities, and authority for decision-making are delineated as appropriate to the institution's structure.
8. The institution periodically reviews its decision-making structure and processes to ensure that they are being used consistently and effectively to advance the mission, ensure appropriate participation from institutional stakeholders, and promote equitable student success.

Checklist Items – Governance and Decision-Making

Within the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, the institution will provide narrative and evidence that demonstrate the items below. Peer Review Teams will confirm these items during the comprehensive review process using a checklist.

- The institution has clearly-defined policies/procedures for selecting and regularly evaluating the CEO of the college and/or district/system
- The institution’s governing board has established policies/procedures/bylaws related to Board Ethics
- The institution’s governing board has established policies/procedures/bylaws related to conflict of interest

Standard 4: Infrastructure and Resources

The institution supports its educational services and operational functions with effective infrastructure, qualified personnel, and stable finances. The institution organizes its staffing and allocates its physical, technological, and financial resources to improve its overall effectiveness and promote equitable student success. The institution actively monitors and assesses resource capacity to inform improvements to infrastructure and ensure long-term health and stability.

1. The institution employs qualified faculty, staff, administrators, and other personnel to support and sustain educational services and improve student success. The institution maintains appropriate policies and regularly assesses its employment practices to promote and improve equity, diversity, and mission fulfillment.
2. The institution supports employees with professional learning opportunities aligned with the mission and institutional goals. These opportunities are regularly evaluated for overall effectiveness in promoting equitable student success and in meeting institutional and employee needs.
3. Employees are evaluated regularly, using clear criteria that align with their professional responsibilities and support the institution’s mission and goals. Evaluation feedback supports employees’ ongoing development and improvement.
4. The institution develops, maintains, and enhances its educational services and operational functions through the effective use of fiscal resources. Financial resources support and sustain the mission and promote equitable achievement of student success.
5. The institution’s mission and goals are the foundation for financial planning. Financial information is disseminated to support effective planning and decision-making and provide opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the development of plans and budgets.
6. The institution assures the integrity and responsible use of its financial resources and regularly evaluates its financial management practices to promote institutional mission fulfillment.
7. The institution assures a reasonable expectation of financial solvency. When making short-range financial plans, the institution considers its long-range financial priorities and future obligations to ensure sustained fiscal stability.

8. The institution constructs and maintains physical resources to support and sustain educational services and operational functions. The institution assures safe and effective physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and learning support services.
9. The institution implements, enhances, and secures its technology resources to support and sustain educational services and operational functions. The institution clearly communicates requirements for the safe and appropriate use of technology to students and employees and employs effective protocols for network and data security.
10. The institution has appropriate strategies for risk management and has policies and procedures in place to implement contingency plans in the event of financial, environmental, or technological emergencies and other unforeseen circumstances.

Checklist Items – Infrastructure and Resources

Within the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report, the institution will provide narrative and evidence that demonstrate the items below. Peer Review Teams will confirm these items during the comprehensive review process using a checklist.

- Written policies and procedures for human resources, including hiring procedures
- Employee handbooks or similar documents that establish communicate expectations to employees
- If applicable, written code of professional ethics for all personnel including consequences for violations
- Annual financial audit reports (3 prior years, including any auxiliary organizations)
- Practices for resource allocation and budget development (including budget allocation model for multi-college districts/systems)
- Policies around Title IV including the most recent three-year student loan default rates
- Policies guiding fiscal management (e.g., related to reserves, budget development)
- Any agreements that fall under ACCJC's policy on contractual relationships with non-accredited organizations
- Policies, procedures or agreements (e.g., AUAs) related to appropriate use of technology systems