

# GUIDE TO EVALUATING & IMPROVING INSTITUTIONS

*A Publication of the  
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges,  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges*

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## Introduction

This *Guide to Evaluating and Improving Institutions* is designed to be used by institutions preparing their Self Evaluation Report, as well as by teams conducting an evaluation team visit. The *Guide* is meant to provoke thoughtful consideration about whether the institution meets the Accreditation Standards at a deeper level than mere compliance. It is intended also to provide some guidance for a holistic view of an institution and its quality. In that context, the *Guide* complements the *Manual for Institutional Self Evaluation*. The *Guide* is predicated on the belief that both institutional members and team evaluators use the Standards to evaluate the institution, and that they should have access to the same tools.

This *Guide* begins with "Background on Regional Accreditation," a description of the purpose and general process of accreditation. Readers should review this section each time they engage in activities associated with an institutional self evaluation process or an evaluation visit. It is important to be clear on the things accreditation seeks to accomplish. Many of the Accreditation Standards are predicated on regulations from the United States Department of Education, and a version of the ACCJC Standards that is cross-referenced with pertinent Federal Regulation is available under the Eligibility and Standards section of the ACCJC website ([www.accjc.org](http://www.accjc.org)).

The *Guide* also includes a section of information about distance education and correspondence education (DE/CE), reflecting the Commission's responsibility under Federal Regulation to review compliance with significant regulatory changes that have occurred over the past ten years.

The next section, "Evolution of the Standards," presents the history and evolving purpose of the Standards, from inception in the 1960's to the present iteration of the Standards, approved in 2014.

The "Characteristics of Evidence" section provides guidance on the nature of good evidence that institutions undergoing self evaluation will provide evaluation teams to use when verifying the institution meets Eligibility Requirements (ERs), Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies (together Commission's Standards). There are several different aspects of college policy and practice that are subject to review through evidence during an accreditation review: evidence of structure, evidence of resources, evidence of process, evidence of student achievement, and evidence of student learning. Each type of evidence requires careful consideration, and persons evaluating a college should be thoughtful about the kinds of evidence they consider and the degree to which their conclusions are supported by the appropriate evidence.

### Questions and Sources of Evidence

The major portion of this *Guide* is the Questions and Sources of Evidence. Here the reader will find the Accreditation Standards followed by **sample** questions about their application at an institution. Questions pertaining specifically to DE/CE are shaded in gray for ease of identification. For institutions with baccalaureate degrees, the standards for which there should be specific narrative and evidence about the degree are noted with the sample questions. The sample questions are designed to guide a thoughtful examination of institutional quality and are used by colleges preparing for self evaluation and by evaluation teams. There can be many other questions relevant to an institution's unique mission that institutions could develop to stimulate thorough self-reflection. Similarly, there may be other

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questions evaluation team members can and should ask to determine the degree to which the institution is meeting the Standards and ensuring institutional quality and improvement. The questions should not be used as a substitute for the Standards or as a substitute for thorough introspection and examination related to all elements of the Standards.

A list of potential sources of evidence follows each Standard. This non-exhaustive list is not meant to indicate which documents must be present, but that these might be sources of the evidence. There can be other evidence relevant to each college's unique mission and methods of operation that institutions should provide and evaluation teams should consider. Institutions should carefully select the evidence from their own ongoing practices to ensure it substantiates their own conclusions. Evaluation teams can also request additional evidence as appropriate to support institutional claims.

### **Citations of Effective Practice**

In addition to the questions and lists of possible evidence for use by both internal stakeholders and team evaluators, the *Guide* includes citations of effective practices (in boxed format following the questions and under the heading Effective Practices) related to specific Standards intended for internal stakeholders engaged in institutional self-evaluation for improving academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and, ultimately, student success. The citations are drawn from many years of applied research and experience among two-year colleges, as documented by higher education researchers and professional organizations. The citations are not exhaustive, and institutions are encouraged to explore the cited effective practices and others not cited through the following resources:

Community College Research Center (CCRC), Teachers College, Columbia University ([www.ccrcc.tc.columbia.edu](http://www.ccrcc.tc.columbia.edu))

Student Success Initiatives, University of Texas at Austin ([www.studentsuccessinitiatives.org](http://www.studentsuccessinitiatives.org))

Achieving The Dream ([www.achievingthedream.org](http://www.achievingthedream.org))

Center for Community College Student Engagement ([www.cccse.org](http://www.cccse.org))

American Association of Community Colleges ([www.aacc.org](http://www.aacc.org))

Association of Community College Trustees ([www.acct.org](http://www.acct.org))

The citations are not prescriptive and respond to the purpose of regional accreditation related to institutional improvement. The process of institutional self-evaluation responds to two essential questions: Does the institution meet the Commission's Standards, and how does the institution improve academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and student success? Institutional improvement is achieved through ongoing planning, evaluation and innovation, grounded by data analysis, and realized through changes to policies and practices. The cited effective practices should stimulate dialogue on possible changes to institutional policies and practices that will lead to improvement.

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## The Quality Focus Essay

When an institution undertakes self-evaluation for accreditation, it may identify policies, procedures, or practices in need of change or student outcomes it wishes to improve. An institution may make some changes or improvements immediately, before an evaluation team arrives. Other changes and strategies for improving outcomes will require a longer time to accomplish. These changes and strategies should be identified as the institution's plans for improvement (action plans), and should be integrated into the ongoing planning and decision-making processes at the college, with timelines for completion. Using the format of a Quality Focus Essay (QFE), an institution will identify two or three "action projects" for further study and action that have good potential for improving student outcomes. The projects should be related to Accreditation Standards, emerge from the institution's examination of its own effectiveness in accomplishing its mission in the context of student learning and student achievement, be based on the institution's analysis of data collected, and identify areas of needed change, development, and improvement. The *Guide* provides questions intended to stimulate discussion and assist the institution in selecting appropriate action projects for the QFE in boxed format preceded by the notation QFE. The QFE, with a 5,000 word limit, describes the projects in detail to include the following components:

- Identification of the Projects: The projects should be vital to the long-term improvement of student learning and achievement over a multi-year period;
- Desired Goals/Outcomes: The QFE should describe specific, well-defined goals expected to lead to observable results;
- Actions/Steps to be Implemented: The QFE (or an Appendix to the QFE) should provide the steps to be implemented for each project;
- Timeline: The QFE (or Appendix) should include a calendaring of all steps to be implemented;
- Responsible Parties: The QFE should provide clear lines of responsibility for implementation and sustainability;
- Resources: The QFE should include a realistic plan for the resources (human, physical, technology, or financial resources) the institution will need in order to implement and sustain the projects;
- Assessment: The QFE should include the institution's plan for evaluating the outcomes and effectiveness of the projects.

The comprehensive evaluation team and the Commission will review and provide constructive feedback on the QFE, with the goal of supporting institutional efforts to enhance student learning and achievement. At the Midterm, the institution will provide a progress report or, if the projects are completed, a final report on the outcomes of the projects.

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## Background on Regional Accreditation

Accreditation as a system of voluntary, non-governmental, self-regulation, and peer review is unique to American educational institutions. It is a system by which an institution evaluates itself in accordance with standards of good practice regarding mission, goals and objectives; the appropriateness, sufficiency, and utilization of resources; the usefulness, integrity, and effectiveness of its processes; and the extent to which it is achieving its intended student achievement and student learning outcomes, at levels generally acceptable for higher education. It is a process by which accreditors provide students, the public, and each other with assurances of institutional integrity and effectiveness and educational quality.

The purposes of regional accreditation include encouraging institutions to improve academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and, ultimately, student success. Although the Standards define general policies and practices relating to academic quality and institutional effectiveness, the Standards do not prescribe specific policy language, or how institutions develop and implement practices on teaching, learning, institutional leadership, and organization.

Each institution affiliated with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) accepts the obligation to participate in a cycle of periodic evaluation through institutional self evaluation and review by teams of peer evaluators. The heart of this obligation is conducting a rigorous self evaluation during which an institution appraises itself against the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies (together Commission's Standards) in terms of its stated institutional purposes by describing the policies, procedures, practices, and outcomes through which the institution meets the Commission's Standards. The cycle of evaluation requires a comprehensive self evaluation every seven years following initial accreditation and an evaluation visit by a team of peers. The cycle includes a mandatory Midterm Report in the fourth year, as well as any other reports required by the Commission. Any reports beyond the Institutional Self Evaluation Report every seven years may be followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

Teams conduct an evaluation review following completion of an institutional self evaluation in order to determine the extent to which an institution meets the Commission's Standards. Team members, selected for their expertise, make recommendations to meet the Commission's Standards, make recommendations for improvement, commend exemplary practices, and provide both the college and the Commission with a report of their findings.

It is the responsibility of the elected members of the Commission, as a decision making body, to determine the accredited status of an institution. In determining this status, the Commission uses the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the Evaluation Team Report, other reports/documents prepared for the Commission, documents relevant to institutional compliance with Standards, and the accreditation history of the institution. The Commission decision is communicated to the institution via an action letter and is made public through Commission announcements.



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## Information about Distance and Correspondence Education

### Definition of Distance Education and Correspondence Education

Distance education (DE) and correspondence education (CE) are common delivery mechanisms in American higher education. A sizable number of institutions that are campus-based offer some portion of the curriculum and programs in a distance education format, and there are a relatively small, but growing number of institutions that offer educational services solely through distance education. In 2006, the Higher Education Act revised regulations that had restricted the use of distance education by institutions eligible for Title IV financial aid. Effective July 1 of that year, institutions were no longer restricted to offering less than 50% of a degree program via distance education in order to retain eligibility. The regulatory changes have increased the number of programs campus-based institutions offer through distance education, as well as generating opportunities for some new, solely distance education-based institutions to emerge in the Western region.

The Commission's "Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education" (See *Accreditation Reference Handbook*) has been revised continuously to reflect the changes made to the 2006 Higher Education Act and to the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 that provides greater emphasis on Distance Education and Correspondence Education. The Commission Policy provides the following definitions of Distance Education and Correspondence Education. These definitions are congruent with the definitions in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. Note that correspondence education may be offered via the same delivery modes as distance education. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) focuses more closely on the nature of the interaction between instructor and student, and on aspects of the instruction delivered, to determine whether the course or program is distance education or correspondence education for purposes of Title IV.

#### **Definition of Distance Education**

*"Distance education is defined, for the purpose of accreditation review as a formal interaction which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and which supports regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. Distance education often incorporates technologies such as the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, in conjunction with any of the other technologies.*

#### **Definition of Correspondence Education**

**Correspondence education means:**

- (1) *Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor;*
- (2) *Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student;*
- (3) *Correspondence courses are typically self-paced; and,*
- (4) *Correspondence education is not distance education.*

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## ***A Correspondence course is:***

- (1) A course provided by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced;*
- (2) A course which is part correspondence and part residential training, the Secretary considers the course to be a correspondence course; and,*
- (3) Not distance education.”<sup>1</sup>*

The Commission and many of its member institutions have recognized distance education as a convenient, flexible, and effective means of providing quality education. Working students with multiple demands on their time often find that distance education meets their needs better than campus-based education.

A significant proportion of campus-based students are now taking at least part of their educational programming through distance education classes. For some institutions, the pedagogical strategies successfully used in distance education classes with distant students (for example, online chat rooms and electronic voting or feedback) have been incorporated into classroom programs and services offered on campus or provided for students who are physically on campus.

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<sup>1</sup> Language is from the Federal Register 8/6/2009, which clarifies the differences for purposes of federal financial aid funding.

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## Evolution of the Standards

In the early 1960s initial accreditation required evidence that basic structures and processes were in place and essential resources were available to operate an institution and deliver education services to students. For example, the existence of a mission statement, president, governing board, etc., provided evidence of structures; sufficient full-time faculty with appropriate training, sufficient funds, an adequate library, etc., provided evidence of resources sufficient to support college operations and delivery of education services. Evidence of processes for supporting academic freedom, curriculum development, governance, decision making was also required.

Beginning in the 1990s, accreditation added a requirement that colleges provide evidence that students had actually moved through college programs and were completing them. This student achievement data provided evidence that students were completing courses, persisting semester to semester, completing degrees and certificates, graduating, transferring, and getting jobs. The standards of this era also specified that institutions provide evidence that program review was conducted and that plans to improve education were developed and implemented.

The early focus on structures, resources, and processes was an approach to quality that was built on maintenance and consistency. It was not particularly education-oriented, but it was necessary to support education. The additional focus on student success in moving through the institution began to address the results of a college's efforts to produce student learning and achievement.

The ACCJC Accreditation Standards adopted in 2002 added another emphasis to accreditation's focus on student success: the focus on what students have learned as a result of attending college - student learning outcomes. This focus required that the institution provide evidence to:

- ensure learning is the institution's core activity;
- support and produce student learning;
- assess how well learning is occurring;
- make changes to improve student learning;
- organize its key processes to effectively support student learning;
- allocate its resources to effectively support student learning; and
- improve learning as an important means to institutional improvement.

In 2014, the Commission adopted revised Standards with increased emphasis on student learning and achievement, requiring institutions to set and assess standards for student achievement. In accreditation today, educational quality is linked with student success, measured both in learning and in achievement, as hallmarks of academic quality and institutional effectiveness. Institutions should demonstrate and teams should verify that students are learning and achieving their educational goals.

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## Characteristics of Evidence

Evidence is information upon which a judgment or conclusion may be based. It is presented in answer to questions that have been deliberately posed because an institution regards them as important. Evidence tells all stakeholders that an institution has investigated its questions and knows something about itself; it knows what it achieves. Good evidence is representative of what is, not just an isolated case, and it is information upon which an institution can take action to improve. It is, in short, relevant, verifiable, representative, and actionable.

It is important to note that evidence, per se, does not lead to confirmations of value and quality. Rather, the members of the college community, or of the higher education community, must arrive at the decisions about value and quality through active judgments. The purpose of good evidence is to encourage informed institutional dialogue that engages the college community through analysis, reflection, and documentation, leading to improvement of its processes, procedures, policies, and relationships, ultimately with the effect of improving student achievement and learning. Good evidence should provide the means for institutions and evaluators to make sound judgments about quality and future direction, and at the same time it will probably stimulate further inquiry about institutional quality.

Institutions report or store good evidence in many formats, and institutions engaged in self evaluation or evaluation teams may find good evidence in a number of sources, including institutional databases; documents such as faculty handbooks, catalogs, student handbooks, policy statements, program review documents, planning documents, minutes of important meetings, syllabi, course outlines, and institutional fact books. Good evidence can also be derived from survey results; from assessments of student work on examinations, class assignments, capstone projects, etc.; from faculty grading rubrics and assessment of student learning outcomes; and from special institutional research reports.

The comprehensive self evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation should be only one phase of on-going institutional evaluation. An evaluation team should be able to see how the institution develops and uses evidence of effectiveness as part of its ongoing evaluative processes. Institutions should gather and use both qualitative and quantitative evidence, and often must use indirect as well as direct measures to assess institutional effectiveness. Evidence can include data, which refers to categories of information that represent qualitative attributes of a variable or a series of variables. Good evidence used in evaluations has the following characteristics:

- It is intentional, and a dialogue about its meaning and relevance has taken place;
- It is purposeful, designed to answer questions the institution has raised;
- It has been interpreted and reflected upon, not just reviewed in its raw or unanalyzed form;
- It is integrated and presented in a context with other information about the institution that creates a holistic view of the institution or program;
- It is cumulative and is corroborated by multiple sources of evidence and/or data; and,
- It is coherent and sound enough to provide guidance for improvement.

The institution will provide to the Commission and the evaluation team members visiting the institution an electronic copy of the Self Evaluation Report and any included evidence in

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advance of the visit. **Evidence presented to the Commission must be in electronic format.** During the visit, the team members should also have access to the evidence and data upon which the institutional analysis is based at the time of the institution's submission of the Self Evaluation Report. Institutions should note that it is useful for readers when the electronic copy of the report contains hyperlinks to the relevant evidence provided on an electronic memory device.

## **Evidence on Student Achievement**

The evidence the institution presents should be about student achievement (student movement through the institution) and should include data on the following:

- Student preparedness for college, including performance on placement tests and/or placement;
- Student training, needs, including local employment training needs, transfer education needs, basic skills needs, etc.;
- Course completion data;
- Retention of students from term to term;
- Student progression to the next course/next level of course;
- Student program (major) completion;
- Student graduation rates;
- Student transfer rates to four-year institutions;
- Student job placement rates; and,
- Student scores on licensure exams.

The evidence should be disaggregated by age, gender, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, delivery mode, instructional site, cohort group, and by other categories relevant to the institution's service area and mission. (Refer to the *Manual for Institutional Self Evaluation*, Section 5.4 "Requirements for Evidentiary Information" for a detailed description of evidence, and Appendix G in the *Manual* for the template used to report data.)

## **Institution-set Standards for Student Performance**

The institution must establish standards of success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission. Each institution will set expectations for course completion, licensing examination passage rates, and job placement rates. Institutions also will set standards of student performance for other indicators pertinent to the institution's mission, e.g., student persistence from term to term, degree and certificate completion, and transfer rates. The institution demonstrates that it gathers data on institution-set standards, analyzes results on student achievement, and makes appropriate changes/improvements to increase student performance, educational quality, and institutional effectiveness. Evaluation teams will identify these institution-set standards, determine their reasonableness, review the data and analyze the college's performance, describe the institution's overall performance, and determine whether the institution is meeting its standards.

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## Evidence on Student Learning

Student achievement and student learning are core to fulfillment of the mission of an institution of higher education. Student achievement notes completion points such as courses, certificates, degrees, and transfer, and progress points such as semester-to-semester persistence. Student achievement measures student performance in the aggregate or disaggregated by student populations, across the college as a whole, as well as within individual programs, by location, and by delivery method.

Student learning is the demonstrated attainment of knowledge and skills—competencies—through one or more experiences at the institution. The learning may be connected with the instruction in one portion of a class, or may represent the culmination of several years within a program of study. Student participation in institutional activities outside the classroom, and experience with student services and learning support services, also will contribute to attainment of identified learning. Learning will be measured at multiple points in a student's time at the institution. Individual student learning is assessed for various purposes, including student certificate and degree awards, acceptance of transferred credits, advising during a student's progression through the program of study, and increasingly for communication to employers. Aggregated student learning information, including information disaggregated by segments of the student population, will inform ongoing course adaptation, curriculum, pedagogy, and program revision, instruction and services planning and change, institution-wide decisions-- including allocation and reallocation of resources, and in the presentation of information about the institution and its programs to prospective students and the community.

The ACCJC Accreditation Standards adopted in 2002 created a significant emphasis on student learning outcomes and assessment, and the use of student learning results in planning and decision-making across the institution. In order to advance institutional development toward fully meeting the practices identified in the Standards, a Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness was promulgated in 2007. That Rubric provided examples of college practice at the awareness, development, proficiency, and continuous quality improvement stages of coming into full compliance with the Standards. Institutions were informed that they would be expected to be at the proficiency level by fall 2012. Over the 2012-2013 academic year, institutions were asked to submit a College Status Report on Student Learning Outcomes Implementation. After that point, colleges were expected to demonstrate compliance with the Standards in the area of student learning outcomes. By 2014, the Rubric was no longer being used in institutional evaluations; practice across the region had developed to a level where evaluation of student learning outcomes was conducted directly with the Standards, as were the evaluation of planning, program review, and the other elements of academic quality and institutional effectiveness.

With the ACCJC Accreditation Standards adopted in 2014, the 2002 Standards principles concerning student learning outcomes were carried forward and clarified. Expectations in the areas of student learning outcomes include the following:

- the institutional goals and objectives include student learning. Operational units of the institution support student learning through these institutional goals and objectives and their related unit goals;
- student learning outcomes are defined and assessed for all instructional programs, student support services and learning support services;

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- assessment data are used to organize institutional processes, analyze student learning gaps and implement strategies, allocate resources, and continuously evaluate the efficacy of the institution's efforts to support and improve student learning;
  - student learning outcomes results are communicated broadly across the institution and to external audiences, including prospective students, employers, and transfer institutions;
  - student learning outcomes results are used by students as they progress through their programs of study and engage in other activities of the institution;
  - the discussion of student learning is ongoing at both the institutional and programmatic levels, and is tied to data analysis, program review, planning, resource allocation and other institutional decision-making;
  - support and improvement of student learning outcomes are critical factors in institutional innovation and in implementing new processes;
  - student learning outcomes are in place for the institution's courses, programs, certificates and degrees, and are regularly assessed;
  - assessment of the students' attainment of the learning outcomes happens continuously at the course level for adaptation and enhancement of instruction and instructional delivery;
  - this assessment can also provide input into curriculum revision and course sequencing;
  - program-level assessment of student learning is designed and conducted to ensure the content and methods of instruction meet academic standards and expectations, are current, and support the institution's mission and goals for student success;
  - program-level assessment of student learning also provides information necessary for instruction-wide and institution-wide planning and decision-making; and,
  - Information about student learning outcomes assessment results is available at the appropriate levels of granularity for use by programs and across programs, and by the institution as a whole, in analysis and evaluation, planning and decision-making, and for implementing change.

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# Accreditation Standards

## Adopted June 2014

### Standard I:<sup>2</sup> Mission, Academic Quality<sup>3</sup> and Institutional Effectiveness, and Integrity

The institution demonstrates strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes student learning and student achievement. Using analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, the institution continuously and systematically evaluates, plans, implements, and improves the quality of its educational programs and services. The institution demonstrates integrity in all policies, actions, and communication. The administration, faculty, staff, and governing board members act honestly, ethically, and fairly in the performance of their duties.

#### A. Mission

1. The mission describes the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, the types of degrees and other credentials it offers, and its commitment to student learning<sup>4</sup> and student achievement.<sup>5</sup> (ER 6)<sup>6</sup>
  - *What does the institution's mission statement say about its educational purposes? Are the purposes appropriate to an institution of higher learning?*
  - *How does the mission statement inform institutional planning?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:<sup>7</sup>*

- *The baccalaureate degree program aligns with the institutional mission.*
- *Student demand for the baccalaureate degree demonstrates its correlation*

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<sup>2</sup> Each enumerated statement is an ACCJC accreditation standard (e.g., I.A.1, II.B.4, and so on). The standards are organized by subject matter into four chapters which are entitled Standard I, Standard II, Standard III, and Standard IV. The chapters are further divided by headings to help identify related groups of standards.

<sup>3</sup> Glossary- Academic Quality: A way of describing how well the learning opportunities, instruction, support, services, environment, resource utilization and operations of a college result in student learning and student achievement of their educational goals. The Accreditation Standards, collectively, are factors in determining academic quality in the context of institutional mission.

<sup>4</sup> Glossary- Student Learning: Competencies in skill and knowledge gained by students who are at the institution. The knowledge and competencies are expressed for segments of study or activity through measurable learning outcomes at the institutional, program, degree, and course levels.

<sup>5</sup> Glossary- Student Achievement: Student attainment that can be measured at defined points of completion, including successful course, certificate and degree completion, licensure examination passage, post-program employment, and other similar elements.

<sup>6</sup> Institutions that have achieved accreditation are expected to include in their Institutional Self Evaluation Report information demonstrating that they continue to meet the eligibility requirements. Accredited institutions must separately address Eligibility Requirements 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 in the Institutional Self Evaluation Report. The remaining Eligibility Requirements will be addressed in the institution's response to the relevant sections of the Accreditation Standards. The relevant sections of the Accreditation Standards are so noted by an (ER\_\_\_) designation.

<sup>7</sup> Baccalaureate Protocol - This notation is included for standards which should have specific narrative and evidence pertaining to the institution's baccalaureate degree, if there is one. Please note that institutions also have to separately address Eligibility Requirement 1, describing the institution's authorization by the state/government to offer a baccalaureate degree.



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*with the institutional mission.*

- *Who are the intended students for the courses offered in DE/CE format? Are they similar to or different from students studying in traditional learning mode?*

- *QFE: Is the institution reaching all segments of its intended student population; are any groups of students underrepresented; and how can the institution increase their participation and success?*

#### Effective Practices

Institutional leaders, including board members and faculty, are continuously engaged in fulfilling the institutional mission, which focuses on the success of students pursuing their educational goals.

Grounded by the mission, a sustained focus on student learning and achievement is practiced by all stakeholders and demonstrably informs the development of policies, procedures, and practices.

2. The institution uses data to determine how effectively it is accomplishing its mission, and whether the mission directs institutional priorities in meeting the educational needs of students.
  - *What data does the institution use to determine whether or not it is accomplishing its mission? What institutional processes does the institution use to evaluate the effectiveness and success of its mission? (Federal Regulation)*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree<sup>8</sup>:*

- *The assessment of date, in addition to measuring institutional effectiveness, must also demonstrate the effectiveness and success of the baccalaureate program.*

- *QFE: Has the institution identified groups of students whose educational needs are not currently being served or not being served adequately; how can the institution better serve these students?*

#### Effective Practices

A culture of evidence and inquiry is pervasive in the institution, including cohort tracking, using disaggregated data and strong support from the institutional research unit.

3. The institution's programs and services are aligned with its mission. The mission

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<sup>8</sup> This notation is included for standards which should have specific narrative and evidence pertaining to the institution's baccalaureate degree, if there is one. Please note that institutions also have to separately address Eligibility Requirement 1, describing the institution's authorization by the state/government to offer a baccalaureate degree.

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guides institutional decision-making, planning, and resource allocation and informs institutional goals for student learning and achievement.

- *How does the mission statement guide planning and decision making? To what extent is the mission statement central to the choices the college makes?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *The baccalaureate program is clearly aligned with the institutional mission.*
- *The institution has included the baccalaureate degree in its decision-making and planning processes, and in setting its goals for student learning and achievement.*
- *Has the institution considered in consultation with its key constituents if and how DE/CE is congruent with the mission? Does the mission include any statements related to its commitment to DE/CE?*

4. The institution articulates its mission in a widely published statement approved by the governing board. The mission statement is periodically reviewed and updated as necessary. (ER 6)

- *When was the current mission statement approved by the governing board?*
- *Has the mission been reviewed to reflect the commitment to DE/CE and what was the rationale for the changes to the statement?*

## **B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness**

### ***Academic Quality***

1. The institution demonstrates a sustained, substantive and collegial dialog about student outcomes, student equity, academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and continuous improvement of student learning and achievement.

- *How has the college structured its dialog?*
- *When, how, and about what subjects has the college engaged in dialog? What impact has the dialog had on student learning?*
- *Does the dialog lead to a collective understanding of the meaning of evidence, data, and research used in evaluation of student learning?*
- *What parties are involved in the institution's dialog about the continuous improvement of student learning through DE/CE mode and how it compares with student learning in traditional programs?*

- **QFE: In what ways can the institution increase broad and continuous faculty, staff, student, and community engagement and collaboration in support of student success?**

#### **Effective Practices**

The institution demonstrates broad and continuous faculty, staff, student, and community engagement and collaboration in support of student success.

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A sense of urgency drives a shared vision and communication around a focus on student learning and achievement with internal and external stakeholders.

2. The institution defines and assesses student learning outcomes for all instructional programs and student and learning support services. (ER 11)
- *What established policies and institutional processes guide the development and evaluation of courses, programs, certificates, and degrees? What is the role of faculty?*
  - *Does the institution use disaggregated data for analysis of student learning?*
  - *Are student learning outcomes and assessments established for each course, program, certificate, and degree (including non-credit)?*
  - *How are courses, programs, certificates, and degrees evaluated? How often? What are the results of the evaluations?*
  - *What improvements to courses, programs, certificates, and degrees have occurred as a result of evaluation?*
  - *How does the institution provide for systematic and regular review of its student and learning support services? How are the results used?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *Student learning outcomes for upper division baccalaureate courses reflect higher levels of depth and rigor generally accepted in higher education*
  - *Assessment must be accurate and distinguish the baccalaureate degree outcomes from those of other programs.*
- *What established policies and institutional processes guide the development and evaluation of courses and programs offered in DE/CE mode? Are they different from the policies and institutional processes that guide the development and evaluation of courses offered in traditional mode?*
  - *What is the role of faculty and how is discipline expertise or teaching knowledge and expertise in the field of DE/CE used for establishing quality for these courses?*
  - *What improvements to DE/CE courses and programs have occurred as a result of evaluation?*

3. The institution establishes institution-set standards<sup>9</sup> for student achievement, appropriate to its mission, assesses how well it is achieving them in pursuit of

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<sup>9</sup> Glossary- Institution-Set Standards: Performance metrics and measures set by institutions for student achievement, both in individual programs and for institution-wide student achievement. (A useful example of Institution-Set Standards could be the three-year averages of student performance metrics and performance targets set above the averages.) Both the definition and the level of expected performance are appropriate for assessing achievement of institutional mission, for determining actions of improvement, and for analyzing institutional results in the context of higher education. Institutions assess student performance against locally set standards in order to determine institutional effectiveness and academic quality and to inform planning and action for continuous improvement.

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continuous improvement, and publishes this information. (ER 11)

- *What criteria and processes does the college use to determine its priorities and set minimum expectations (institution-set standards) for student achievement, including required expectations of performance for course completion, job placement rates, and licensure examination passage rates? (Federal Regulation)*
- *Is there broad-based understanding of the priorities and the processes to implement strategies to achieve the desired outcomes?*
- *To what extent does the college achieve its standards? (Federal Regulation)*
- *How does the college use accreditation annual report data to assess performance against the institution-set standards?*
- *If an institution does not meet its own standards, what plans are developed and implemented to enable it to reach these standards? (Federal Regulation)*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *The institution has institution-set standards for the baccalaureate program and assesses performance related to those standards. It uses assessment to improve the quality of the baccalaureate program.*
- *Student achievement standards are separately defined and assessed for baccalaureate programs to distinguish them from associate degree programs.*
- *Has the college defined specific goals (institution-set standards) and objectives for the effectiveness of its DE/CE activities? How are these goals and objectives defined and communicated?*
- *What data and/or evidence are used to communicate and analyze institution-set standards relevant to DE/CE?*

4. The institution uses assessment data and organizes its institutional processes to support student learning and student achievement.
  - *How is assessment data incorporated into college planning to improve student learning and achievement? (Federal Regulation)*
  - *Are the data used for assessment and analysis disaggregated to reflect factors of difference among students?*

### ***Institutional Effectiveness***

5. The institution assesses accomplishment of its mission through program review and evaluation of goals and objectives, student learning outcomes, and student achievement. Quantitative and qualitative data are disaggregated for analysis by program type and mode of delivery.
  - *Does the college have a program review process in place? Is it cyclical, i.e., does it incorporate systematic, ongoing evaluation of programs and services using data on student learning and achievement, improvement planning, implementation, and re-evaluation? How does college budgeting of resources follow planning? How is planning integrated?*

- *To what extent are institutional data and evidence available and used for program review?*
- *Does the college have separate processes for the planning, approval, evaluation, and review of courses offered in DE/CE mode, or are the processes similar to those for courses offered in traditional face-to-face mode? How are these processes integrated into the college's overall planning process?*

6. The institution disaggregates and analyzes learning outcomes and achievement for subpopulations of students. When the institution identifies performance gaps, it implements strategies, which may include allocation or reallocation of human, fiscal and other resources, to mitigate those gaps and evaluates the efficacy of those strategies.

- *Does the institution identify significant trends among subpopulations of students and interpret their meaning?*
- *Has the institution set performance expectations (key performance indicators) for the subpopulations?*
- *How does it judge its achievement of the target outcomes?*
- *Is the institution performance satisfactory?*
- *What changes have been made or are planned as a result of the analysis of the data?*

- *QFE: What groups or subpopulations at the college need to be identified; how is information on their success/challenges determined?*
- *QFE: What strategies are needed to mitigate performance gaps among these groups of students?*

#### Effective Practices

An equity agenda is integrated with efforts to improve student learning and achievement.

7. The institution regularly evaluates its policies and practices across all areas of the institution, including instructional programs, student and learning support services, resource management, and governance processes to assure their effectiveness in supporting academic quality and accomplishment of mission.

- *What processes does the institution use to assess the effectiveness of its cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, and re-evaluation?*
- *How effective are the college planning processes for fostering improvement?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *The institutional evaluation policies and practices recognize the unique aspects and requirements of the baccalaureate program in relation to learning and student support services and resource allocation and management.*

- *What mechanisms does the institution use to gather evidence about the effectiveness of DE/CE learning programs and related student and learning support services?*

8. The institution broadly communicates the results of all of its assessment and evaluation activities so that the institution has a shared understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and sets appropriate priorities.

- *What mechanisms exist for participation in and communication about college planning and evaluation?*

9. The institution engages in continuous, broad based, systematic evaluation and planning. The institution integrates program review, planning, and resource allocation into a comprehensive process that leads to accomplishment of its mission and improvement of institutional effectiveness and academic quality. Institutional planning addresses short- and long-range needs for educational programs and services and for human, physical, technology, and financial resources. (ER 19)

- *What mechanisms does the institution use to gather evidence about the effectiveness of programs and services?*

- *How effectively do evaluation processes and results contribute to improvement in programs and services?*

- *Are the assessment data collected for DE/CE different from data collected for traditional face-to-face education? What is the rationale? What types of assessment data does the college collect on learning programs and support services offered in DE/CE format?*

- *QFE: What barriers exist at the institution that need to be overcome to enable integrated evaluation, planning, resource allocation, and re-evaluation to improve academic quality and student learning and achievement?*

#### Effective Practices

Planning and budgeting, including reallocation of resources, are aligned with the vision, priorities, and strategies defined for student success at the institution.

The institution has an agenda for student success that integrates all significant initiatives, including legislated programs, grants, strategic, planning, and accreditation.

### C. Institutional Integrity<sup>10</sup>

1. The institution assures the clarity, accuracy, and integrity of information provided to students and prospective students, personnel, and all persons or organizations related to its mission statement, learning outcomes, educational programs, and student support services. The institution gives accurate information to students and the public about its accreditation status with all of its accreditors. (ER 20)

<sup>10</sup> Glossary- Institutional Integrity: Concept of consistent and ethical actions, values, methods, measures, principles, expectations, and outcomes, as defined by institutions; and of clear, accurate, and current information available to the college community and public.

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- *How does the institution conduct regular review of its policies and practices regarding publications to ensure their integrity? Are electronic representations of the institution regularly reviewed?*
  - *Does the institution provide information on student achievement to the public? Is that information accurate and current?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *Information related to baccalaureate programs is clear and accurate in all aspects of this Standard, especially in regard to learning outcomes, program requirements, and student support services.*
- *Through what means does the institution represent itself about its DE/CE programs? How are these means evaluated? Are they effective in reaching the potential students for DE/CE programs? How does the institution know that they are effective?*
- *Does the institution provide information to the public on student achievement in DE/CE programs?*

2. The institution provides a print or online catalog for students and prospective students with precise, accurate, and current information on all facts, requirements, policies, and procedures listed in the “Catalog Requirements” (see endnote). (ER 20)

- *Is the catalog provided in both printed and electronic format?*
- *How does the institution assure that the catalog presents accurate, current, and detailed information to the public about its programs, locations, and policies? (Federal Regulation)*

- *How does the institution address issues of academic freedom, student financial aid, and available learning resources as they apply to DE/CE? Are the means applied differently from traditional education? What is the rationale?*
- *How does the catalog describe the instructional delivery applied in the DE/CE courses, programs, and degree offerings? How does the catalog present the interaction between faculty and students and the accessibility of faculty and staff to students?*

3. The institution uses documented assessment of student learning and evaluation of student achievement to communicate matters of academic quality to appropriate constituencies, including current and prospective students and the public. (ER 19)

- *What assessment data does the college collect?*
- *By what means does the college make public its data and analyses internally and externally?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *The assessment results of student learning and student achievement in the baccalaureate program is used in the communication of academic quality.*

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4. The institution describes its certificates and degrees in terms of their purpose, content, course requirements, and expected learning outcomes.
- *How does the institution assure that information about its programs is clear and accurate? Are degrees and certificates clearly described? Are student learning outcomes included in descriptions of courses and programs?*
  - *How does the institution verify that students receive a course syllabus that includes student learning outcomes?*
  - *How does the college verify that individual sections of courses adhere to the course learning outcomes?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *The purpose, content, course requirements, and learning outcomes of the baccalaureate program are clearly described.*
  - *How do students enrolled in DE/CE programs receive information about the institution's degrees and certificates and in what format is the information available for reference? How does the institution verify that DE/CE students receive a course syllabus that includes student learning outcomes, and that individual sections of courses adhere to the course objectives/learning outcomes? (Federal Regulation)*
5. The institution regularly reviews institutional policies, procedures, and publications to assure integrity in all representations of its mission, programs, and services.
- *What process does the institution use to evaluate its policies, procedures, and publications to ensure their integrity? Are the results communicated within the campus community? (Federal Regulation)*
6. The institution accurately informs current and prospective students regarding the total cost of education, including tuition, fees, and other required expenses, including textbooks, and other instructional materials.
- *How does the institution publish information on the total cost of education? (Federal Regulation)*
7. In order to assure institutional and academic integrity, the institution uses and publishes governing board policies on academic freedom and responsibility. These policies make clear the institution's commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, and its support for an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom exists for all constituencies, including faculty and students. (ER 13)
- *How is the policy on academic freedom implemented and monitored in DE/CE courses and programs?*
8. The institution establishes and publishes clear policies and procedures that promote honesty, responsibility and academic integrity. These policies apply to all constituencies and include specifics relative to each, including student behavior, academic honesty and the consequences for dishonesty.



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- *What mechanism does the institution have for informing and enforcing its policies on academic honesty for students and faculty?*
  - *Do board-approved policies on student academic honesty exist and are they made public?*
  - *Does the institution have any prevention strategies in place to promote student verification? Are faculty members encouraged to promote student verification in the design of DE/CE courses? Is academic integrity including student verification covered in staff training and development? (For practices on student verification refer to WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies at: <http://wcet.wiche.edu/wcet/docs/cigs/studentauthentication/BestPractices.pdf> (Federal Regulation))*
9. Faculty distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in a discipline. They present data and information fairly and objectively.
- *How does the college communicate its expectation that faculty distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in a discipline? What mechanisms does the college have for determining how effectively it is meeting this expectation?*
10. Institutions that require conformity to specific codes of conduct of staff, faculty, administrators, or students, or that seek to instill specific beliefs or world views, give clear prior notice of such policies, including statements in the catalog and/or appropriate faculty and student handbooks.
- *How are requirements of conformity to codes of conduct communicated?*
  - *If a college seeks to instill specific beliefs or world views, what policies does it have in place to detail these goals? How are the policies communicated to appropriate constituencies and carried out?*
11. Institutions operating in foreign locations operate in conformity with the Standards and applicable Commission policies for all students. Institutions must have authorization from the Commission to operate in a foreign location.
- *How well do curricula offered in foreign locations to non-U.S. students conform to the specifications of the Commission's "Policy on Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals?"*
  - *Does the institution promote its distance education in foreign locations? How does the promotion of these activities overseas align with the institution's mission and the objectives for its DE?*
  - *Does the institution enroll students who do not reside in the U.S. into programs? How does it ensure that the foreign students appropriately comply with the admission requirements for the programs? Are all students admitted to the programs recognized as U.S. students?*
12. The institution agrees to comply with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation
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Standards, Commission policies, guidelines, and requirements for public disclosure, institutional reporting, team visits, and prior approval of substantive changes. When directed to act by the Commission, the institution responds to meet requirements within a time period set by the Commission. It discloses information required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities. (ER 21)

- *Does the institution communicate matters of educational quality and institutional effectiveness to the public? Is the communication accurate? (Federal Regulation)*

13. The institution advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies, including compliance with regulations and statutes. It describes itself in consistent terms to all of its accrediting agencies and communicates any changes in its accredited status to the Commission, students, and the public. (ER 21)

- *What does documentation of the institution's past history with external agencies demonstrate about integrity in its relationship with those agencies? Has it responded expeditiously and honestly to recommendations or cited issues, are there citations indicating difficulty, etc.? (Federal Regulation)*
- *What is the institution's evidence of compliance with the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) regulations? (Federal Regulation)*

14. The institution ensures that its commitments to high quality education, student achievement and student learning are paramount to other objectives such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

- *Do the institution's policies and practices demonstrate that delivering high quality education is paramount to other objectives?*
- *How are the institution's priorities documented?*

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## Sources of Evidence: Examples for Standard I

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard I. There may be many other sources relevant to each college's unique mission that institutions should provide and teams should consider.

### Standard I: Mission, Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, and Integrity

#### A. Mission

- Evidence that analysis of how the institutional mission and goals are linked to the needs of the student population has taken place
- Evidence of analysis of how the mission statement is developed, approved and communicated to all stakeholders
- Evidence of analysis of the process used for the periodic review of the institution's mission; evidence that the process is inclusive
- Evidence that the mission statement provides the preconditions for setting institutional goals
- Evidence of analysis of how the cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation relates to the mission and is used for institutional improvement
- Evidence specifically pertaining to the baccalaureate degree, if the institution offers one
- Evidence of analysis of how the institution's mission statement is developed, approved, and communicated to all stakeholders taking the institution's commitment to DE/CE into consideration
- Evidence of the process used for identifying the students interested in enrolling in DE/CE
- Evidence of analysis of the relevance of DE/CE programs and services for the community
- List of the institution's DE/CE courses and programs

#### B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness

- Evidence that the institution has developed processes by which continuous dialogue about both student learning and institutional processes can take place
- Evidence of institution-set standards and analysis of results for improvement
- Evidence of broad-based participation in the dialogue
- Evidence that clearly stated, measurable goals and objectives guide the college community in making decisions regarding planning and allocation of resources as well as curriculum and program development
- Written, current institutional plans that describe how the institution will achieve its goals
- Evidence that the processes used in planning and institutional improvement are communicated and they provide the means by which the college community can participate in decision-making
- Evidence that goals are developed with the knowledge and understanding of the college community

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- Evidence there exists a current cycle in which evaluation results are utilized in integrating planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation
  - Evidence that data is both quantitative and qualitative
  - Evidence that well-defined, decision-making processes and authority facilitate planning and institutional effectiveness
  - Evidence of regular and systematic assessment of the effectiveness of all institutional services and processes
  - Evidence that the results of evaluations are disseminated to and understood by the college community
  - Evidence that results of regular and systematic assessments are used for institutional improvement
  - Evidence of current, systematic program reviews and use of results
  - Evidence that program review processes are systematically evaluated
  - Evidence specifically pertaining to the baccalaureate degree, if the institution offers one
  - Evidence of institutional dialog about the continuous improvement of student learning in DE/CE mode
  - Evidence that clearly stated and measurable goals and objectives guide the college community in making decisions regarding its priorities related to DE/CE
  - Evidence of evaluation of progress on the achievement of goals and objectives related to DE/CE
  - List of all DE/CE courses/programs
  - Evidence of quantitative and qualitative data that support the analysis of achievement of goals and objectives for DE/CE
  - Evidence of mechanisms for allocation of resources to plans for DE/CE
  - Evidence of periodic and systematic assessment of the effectiveness of DE/CE
  - Evidence that the assessment data is effectively communicated to the appropriate constituencies
  - Evidence of current reviews of programs and support services including library services related to DE/CE and examples of improvements

### **C. Institutional Integrity**

- Evidence that institutional policies are regularly reviewed to ensure integrity
- Evidence of a student authentication process to ensure the student enrolled in an online course is the same student that participates, completes the course, and receives the credit
- Evidence the institution maintains a file of student complaints/grievances
- Evidence specifically pertaining to the baccalaureate degree, if the institution offers one
- Evidence of policies and practices related to identification of students enrolled in DE/CE courses

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## Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Support Services

The institution offers instructional programs, library and learning support services, and student support services aligned with its mission. The institution's programs are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate for higher education. The institution assesses its educational quality through methods accepted in higher education, makes the results of its assessments available to the public, and uses the results to improve educational quality and institutional effectiveness. The institution defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry. The provisions of this standard are broadly applicable to all instructional programs and student and learning support services offered in the name of the institution.

### A. Instructional Programs

1. All instructional programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, including distance education and correspondence education, are offered in fields of study consistent with the institution's mission, are appropriate to higher education, and culminate in student attainment of identified student learning outcomes, and achievement of degrees, certificates, employment, or transfer to other higher education programs. (ER 9 and ER 11)
  - *How does the institution ensure that all course and program offerings align with the stated mission of the institution?*
  - *How does the institution choose the fields of study in which it offers programs? What evidence is there that student progress through and complete degrees and certificates, gain employment, or transfer to four-year institutions? How does the institution evaluate student progress and outcomes? By what means are programs assessed for currency, appropriateness within higher education, teaching and learning strategies, and student learning outcomes? (Federal Regulation)*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *The baccalaureate degree field of study aligns with the institutional mission.*
- *Student demand for the baccalaureate degree program demonstrates its correlation with the institutional mission.*
- *How does the institution choose the fields of study in which it offers DE/CE programs? What stakeholders are consulted about the choices of study in which the institution offers DE/CE and how are they consulted? (Federal Regulation)*

- *QFE: Does the institution provide clear pathways for students that lead to achievement of their goals?*

#### Effective Practices

Each student is given a clear roadmap to success, a pathway that leads to further education and/or employment.

Students are required to declare a major early, and the institution assists them in

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establishing milestones of accomplishment for each term.

2. Faculty, including full time, part time, and adjunct faculty, ensure that the content and methods of instruction meet generally accepted academic and professional standards and expectations. Faculty and others responsible act to continuously improve instructional courses, programs and directly related services through systematic evaluation to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and promote student success.
- *How does the college determine what delivery modes are appropriate for its students?*
  - *Have faculty discussed the relationship between teaching methodologies and student performance?*
  - *Do criteria used in program review include relevancy, appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, currency, planning for the future? Is this process consistently followed for all college programs, regardless of the type of program (collegiate, developmental, etc.)? (Federal Regulation)*
  - *What types of data are available for program review?*
  - *How is the relevancy of a program determined?*
  - *How are results of program review used in institutional planning? What changes/improvements in programs have occurred as a result of the consideration of program review?*
  - *How are competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes determined for DE/CE? Are they different from those selected for traditional programs? What is the rationale?*
  - *What is the role of faculty in this process? Has the institution established advisory committees with expertise in DE/CE, and if so what is their role?*
  - *What teaching methodologies are commonly used in DE/CE programs? How are methodologies selected? Do faculty discuss the relationship between the selected teaching methodologies and student performance?*
  - *Are there policies that dictate satisfactory progress in DE/CE courses/programs?*
  - *What types of data are available for DE/CE program evaluation? Does the evaluation include a curricular review?*
  - *How is the relevancy of a program offered in DE/CE mode determined?*
  - *How are results of evaluation of programs in DE/CE mode used in institutional planning?*
3. The institution identifies and regularly assesses learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates and degrees using established institutional procedures. The institution has officially approved and current course outlines that include student learning outcomes. In every class section students receive a course syllabus that includes learning outcomes from the institution's officially approved course outline.

- *Has the institution defined and assessed learning outcomes for all courses and programs? How are assessment results for learning outcomes used in course and program review?*
- *What role do faculty play in these decisions?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *Learning outcomes for baccalaureate courses, programs, and degrees are identified and assessed consistent with institutional processes.*

4. If the institution offers pre-collegiate level<sup>1</sup> curriculum, it distinguishes that curriculum from college level<sup>2</sup> curriculum and directly supports students in learning the knowledge and skills necessary to advance to and succeed in college level curriculum.

- *By what criteria and processes does the institution decide to offer developmental, pre-collegiate, continuing and community education, study abroad, short-term training, international student, or contract education?*
- *What is the process for establishing and evaluating each type of course and program? How does the college determine the appropriate credit type, delivery mode, and location of its courses and programs?*
- *What processes are in place to align pre-collegiate level curriculum with college level curriculum, in order to ensure clear and efficient pathways for students?*

- *By what criteria and processes does the institution decide to offer developmental, pre-collegiate, continuing and community education, short-term training, international student, or contract education programs in DE/CE mode? (Federal Regulation)*
- *Which of these (or other) categories of courses and programs does the institution offer in DE/CE mode?*

- *QFE: What is the success rate of students who enter the institution under-prepared for college level coursework, and how can the institution increase their success?*

#### Effective Practices

Redesign developmental education fundamentally, incorporating design principles emerging from community college research and practice, including acceleration, contextualization, compression, collaborative learning, and integrated student and

<sup>1</sup> Glossary- Pre-Collegiate Level: Curriculum and courses offered by the college, either credit or noncredit, that the college defines as below the level of curriculum that satisfies requirements for either degrees or transfer. Pre-collegiate curriculum usually refers to courses which may prepare a student to successfully complete degrees or transfer. Pre-collegiate curriculum may also refer to courses which provide technical preparation for individuals to attain entry level work without completing studies which would qualify for either a certificate that is part of a degree, a degree or transfer.

<sup>2</sup> Glossary- College Level: Curriculum and courses offered by the college which are degree applicable and meet college graduation requirements, including courses in certificate programs that qualify toward an associate degree and above.

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academic support.

Appropriate to student placement, require enrollment in developmental English and math courses during the first semester.

5. The institution's degrees and programs follow practices common to American higher education, including appropriate length, breadth, depth, rigor, course sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning. The institution ensures that minimum degree requirements are 60 semester credits or equivalent at the associate level, and 120 credits or equivalent at the baccalaureate level. (ER 12)
- *How does the institution demonstrate the quality of its instruction? What evidence exists that all programs are characterized by the variables cited in this standard?*
  - *What criteria does the college use to decide the breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning of each program it offers? (Federal Regulation)*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *A minimum of 40 semester credits or equivalent or total upper division coursework, including the major and general education, is required.*
- *The academic credit awarded for upper division courses within baccalaureate programs is clearly distinguished from that of lower division courses.*
- *The instructional level and curriculum of the upper division courses in the baccalaureate degree are comparable to those commonly accepted among like degrees in higher education and reflect the higher levels of knowledge and intellectual inquiry expected at the baccalaureate level.*
- *Student expectations, including learning outcomes, assignments, and examinations of the upper division courses demonstrate the rigor commonly accepted among like degrees in higher education.*
- *The program length and delivery mode of instruction are appropriate for the expected level of rigor.*
- *What is the process for establishing and evaluating each type of course and program offered in DE/CE mode? How does the college determine the appropriate credit type of its courses and programs offered in DE/CE mode? (Federal Regulation)*

6. The institution schedules courses in a manner that allows students to complete certificate and degree programs within a period of time consistent with established expectations in higher education.<sup>3</sup> (ER 9)
- *How well does the institution achieve and evaluate the effectiveness of learning at each level of a course sequence or program?*
  - *Does the institution schedule classes in alignment with student needs and*

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<sup>3</sup> Glossary- Established expectations in higher education (also, appropriate for, accepted in, common to, accepted norms in, etc): Shared and time honored principles, values and practices within the American community of higher education.



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*program pathways, allowing students to complete programs within a reasonable period of time? (Federal Regulation)*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *Baccalaureate courses are scheduled to ensure that students will complete those programs in a reasonable period of time.*

- *QFE: Can the institution re-design programs and class scheduling so that students can complete certificates and degrees and/or transfer within a reasonable time frame?*

7. The institution effectively uses delivery modes, teaching methodologies and learning support services that reflect the diverse and changing needs of its students, in support of equity in success for all students.
  - *How does the institution demonstrate it understands and is meeting the needs and learning styles of its students?*
  - *Do courses include multiple ways of assessing student learning? How does the college determine what delivery modes are appropriate for its students?*
  - *What teaching methodologies are commonly used? How are methodologies selected? Have faculty discussed the relationship between teaching methodologies and student performance?*
  - *Has the college evaluated the effectiveness of its delivery modes? How effective are delivery modes and instructional methodologies that the college uses in producing learning?*
  - *What assessment of student learning styles that relate to teaching in DE/CE mode has the college performed?*
  - *How does the institution demonstrate that it is meeting the needs and learning styles of its students? How are faculty and staff informed and kept up-to-date about learning needs and pedagogical approaches related to DE/CE?*
  - *Do courses in DE/CE mode include multiple ways of assessing student learning?*
  - *What teaching methodologies are commonly used in DE/CE programs? How are methodologies selected? Do faculty discuss the relationship between the selected teaching methodologies and student performance?*
8. The institution validates the effectiveness of department-wide course and/or program examinations, where used, including direct assessment of prior learning. The institution ensures that processes are in place to reduce test bias and enhance reliability.
  - *How does the institution ensure the use of unbiased, valid measures of student learning?*
9. The institution awards course credit, degrees and certificates based on student attainment of learning outcomes. Units of credit awarded are consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted norms or equivalencies in

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higher education. If the institution offers courses based on clock hours, it follows Federal standards for clock-to-credit-hour conversions. (ER 10)

- *Are course-level learning outcomes the basis for awarding credit? Are credits awarded consistent with accepted norms in higher education? (Federal Regulation)*
- *By what means does the institution ensure that achievement of stated programmatic learning outcomes are the basis for awarding degrees and certificates?*
- *Does the institution demonstrate it follows Federal standards for clock-to-credit-hour conversions in the award of credit? (Federal Regulation)*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *Baccalaureate degrees and the course credit in those programs are based on student learning outcomes. These outcomes are consistent with generally accepted norms and equivalencies in higher education, especially in relation to upper division courses.*
- *What policies does the institution have for the award of academic credit for DE/CE programs? Are the policies similar to the traditional programs? What is the rationale for the decision? Are these policies regularly reviewed, including review of the extent to which they are suited for DE/CE? (Federal Regulation)*

10. The institution makes available to its students clearly stated transfer-of-credit policies in order to facilitate the mobility of students without penalty. In accepting transfer credits to fulfill degree requirements, the institution certifies that the expected learning outcomes for transferred courses are comparable to the learning outcomes of its own courses. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements as appropriate to its mission. (ER 10)

- *What policies does the institution have to address transfer of coursework internally and externally, and how are they communicated to students? Are these policies regularly reviewed? (Federal Regulation)*
- *How does the institution develop, implement, and evaluate articulation agreements? (Federal Regulation)*
- *How does the institution meet the standard as to the baccalaureate degree, and how is this demonstrated in evidence?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *Policies for student transfer into the baccalaureate program ensure that all program requirements are fulfilled, including completion of the minimum required semester units, prerequisites, experiential activities, and general education.*
- *How does the institution develop, implement, and evaluate articulation agreements for DE/CE programs? What principles apply to the transfer of credit from other DE/CE programs where articulation arrangements do not*

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*exist? (Federal Regulation)*

- *What principles apply for the approval of granting of credit for prior work experience in the institution's DE/CE programs?*

11. The institution includes in all of its programs, student learning outcomes, appropriate to the program level, in communication competency, information competency, quantitative competency, analytic inquiry skills, ethical reasoning, the ability to engage diverse perspectives, and other program-specific learning outcomes.

- *What criteria does the college use to determine the breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning for each program it offers?*
- *How well are students achieving the intended outcomes?*
- *What does the institution do to promote student understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives?*
- *What are the information competencies that the institution purports to teach all students? What is the evidence that the institution acts purposefully to teach these competencies?*
- *How does the institution assess the competencies in information retrieval/use that it teaches students?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *Student learning outcomes in the baccalaureate program are consistent with generally accepted norms in higher education and reflect the higher levels expected at the baccalaureate level.*

12. The institution requires of all of its degree programs a component of general education based on a carefully considered philosophy for both associate and baccalaureate degrees that is clearly stated in its catalog. The institution, relying on faculty expertise, determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum, based upon student learning outcomes and competencies appropriate to the degree level. The learning outcomes include a student's preparation for and acceptance of responsible participation in civil society, skills for lifelong learning and application of learning, and a broad comprehension of the development of knowledge, practice, and interpretive approaches in the arts and humanities, the sciences, mathematics, and social sciences. (ER 12)

- *What evidence is found in the catalog of a faculty developed rationale for general education that serves as the basis for inclusion of courses in general education?*
- *How are student learning outcomes used to analyze courses for inclusion as general education?*
- *How is the general education philosophy reflected in the degree requirements?*

- *How does the institution meet the standard as to the baccalaureate degree, and how is this demonstrated in evidence?*
- *Do the requirements for the baccalaureate degree include at least 36 semester units (or equivalent) of general education?*
- *Are the general education requirements for the baccalaureate degree integrated and distributed to both lower division and upper division courses?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *At least 36 semester units or equivalent of lower division general education is required, including at least 9 semester units or equivalent of upper division general education coursework.*
- *At least 9 semester units or equivalent of upper division general education coursework is required.*
- *The general education requirements are integrated and distributed to both lower and upper division courses.*
- *The general education requirements are distributed across the major subject areas for general education; the distribution appropriately captures the baccalaureate level student learning outcomes and competencies.*
- *Are any of the institution's general education courses offered in DE/CE mode? What is the rationale for this decision and is it stated clearly in its catalog? How is it communicated to all stakeholders?*
- *What criteria does the college use to assure that the required skill level of students in DE/CE courses and programs meet collegiate standards and rigor?*
- *By what means does the institution ensure that the students develop the listed skills in DE/CE mode? How does the institution know that these means are effective?*

13. All degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry or in an established interdisciplinary core.<sup>4</sup> The identification of specialized courses in an area of inquiry or interdisciplinary core is based upon student learning outcomes and competencies, and includes mastery, at the appropriate degree level, of key theories and practices within the field of study.

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *The baccalaureate degree program includes a focused study on one area of inquiry or discipline at the baccalaureate level and includes key theories and practices appropriate to the baccalaureate level.*

14. Graduates completing career-technical certificates and degrees demonstrate technical and professional competencies that meet employment standards and other applicable standards and preparation for external licensure and certification.

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<sup>4</sup> Glossary- Interdisciplinary Core: A set of courses required of all students for completion of an interdisciplinary major or degree. The courses are identified on the basis of the skills, knowledge, and habits of mind that students within the interdisciplinary program of study are expected to attain and demonstrate.

- *How does the institution verify and maintain currency of employment opportunities and other external factors? (Federal Regulation)*
- *How are competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes determined? What is the role of faculty? What is the role of advisory committees for CTE programs?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *The CTE baccalaureate degree ensures students will be able to meet employment standards and licensure or certification as required in the field of study.*

15. When programs are eliminated or program requirements are significantly changed, the institution makes appropriate arrangements so that enrolled students may complete their education in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.
16. The institution regularly evaluates and improves the quality and currency of all instructional programs offered in the name of the institution, including collegiate, pre-collegiate, career-technical, and continuing and community education courses and programs, regardless of delivery mode or location. The institution systematically strives to improve programs and courses to enhance learning outcomes and achievement for students.
  - *How does the college evaluate the effectiveness of its courses and programs?*
  - *Do criteria used in program review include relevancy, appropriateness, achievement of student learning outcomes, currency, planning for the future? Is this process consistently followed for all college programs, regardless of the type of program (collegiate, developmental, etc.)?*
  - *What types of data are available for program evaluation? Does the evaluation include a curricular review? Does the evaluation include a comprehensive review of the program role in the overall college curriculum?*
  - *How are results of program evaluation used in institutional planning? What changes/improvements in programs have occurred as a result of the consideration of program evaluations?*
  - *How does the college evaluate the effectiveness of its courses and programs offered in DE/CE mode? Is the process similar to courses and programs offered in traditional mode? What is the rationale?*
  - *What types of data are available for DE/CE program evaluation? Does the evaluation include a curricular review?*
  - *How are results of evaluation of programs in DE/CE mode used in institutional planning? What changes/improvements in programs have occurred as a result of the consideration of program evaluations?*

## **B. Library and Learning Support Services**

1. The institution supports student learning and achievement by providing library, and other learning support services to students and to personnel responsible for student

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learning and support. These services are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety to support educational programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, including distance education and correspondence education. Learning support services include, but are not limited to, library collections, tutoring, learning centers, computer laboratories, learning technology, and ongoing instruction for users of library and other learning support services.

(ER 17)

- *What information about student learning needs is provided by instructional faculty and staff to inform the selection of library resources?*
- *How does the institution assess the effectiveness of its own library and learning support services in terms of quantity, quality, depth and variety?*
- *How does the institution know it has sufficient depth and variety of library materials to meet the learning needs of its students?*
- *Are all campus locations/all types of students/all college instructional programs equally supported by library services and accessibility?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *Learning support services to support the baccalaureate degree program are sufficient to support the quality, currency, rigor, and depth of the baccalaureate degree and reflect the unique needs of the program.*
  - *Resource collections are sufficient in regard to the rigor, currency, and depth expected of the baccalaureate level.*
  - *How are comparable services provided to DE/CE students and students at off-site locations? (Federal Regulation)*
  - *What is the availability of electronic access to library materials and learning support services? (Federal Regulation)*
- *QFE: Through curriculum redesign and scheduling, can the institution provide supplemental instruction and tutoring for academically at risk students, particularly in gatekeeper and developmental education courses?*

2. Relying on appropriate expertise of faculty, including librarians, and other learning support services professionals, the institution selects and maintains educational equipment and materials to support student learning and enhance the achievement of the mission.

- *What information about student learning needs is provided by instructional faculty and staff to inform the selection of educational equipment and materials to support student learning?*
- *How does the institution assess the effectiveness of its library and learning support equipment and materials in terms of quantity, quality, depth and variety?*
- *How does the institution know it has sufficient depth and variety of materials to meet the learning needs of its students?*

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- *What information about the learning needs of DE/CE students is provided by instructional faculty and staff to inform the selection of library resources?*
  - *What equipment to support student learning is available to students studying in DE/CE mode?*
  - *By what means is the library collection made available to students with remote access to the institution? How does the institution know that these means address the learning needs of the students?*
  - *What information does the library use to determine whether it is enhancing student achievement of identified learning outcomes for students studying in DE/CE mode?*

3. The institution evaluates library and other learning support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services includes evidence that they contribute to the attainment of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.

- *What methods does the institution use to evaluate its library and other learning support services? Does the evaluation assess use, access, and relationship of the services to intended student learning? Does the evaluation include input by faculty, staff and students?*

- *Does the evaluation of library and other learning support services include assessment of use, access, and relationship of the services to intended student learning outcomes for DE/CE programs? Does the evaluation include input by faculty, staff, and students?*

4. When the institution relies on or collaborates with other institutions or other sources for library and other learning support services for its instructional programs, it documents that formal agreements exist and that such resources and services are adequate for the institution's intended purposes, are easily accessible and utilized. The institution takes responsibility for and assures the security, maintenance, and reliability of services provided either directly or through contractual arrangement. The institution regularly evaluates these services to ensure their effectiveness. (ER 17)

- *What contracts, if any, exist for the provision of library and learning support services? What processes does the institution have for evaluating and ensuring the quality of those contracted services? How does the institution gather information to assess whether the services are being used and are effective? (Federal Regulation)*

## C. Student Support Services

1. The institution regularly evaluates the quality of student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery, including distance education and correspondence education, support student learning, and enhance accomplishment of the mission of the institution. (ER 15)

- *By what means does the institution assure the quality of its student support services? How does the institution demonstrate that these services support*

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*student learning?*

- *How does the institution identify the needs for support services related to DE/CE programs, and how does it ensure that these needs are addressed? By what means does the institution assure the quality of its student support? (Federal Regulation)*
- *How does the college prepare and monitor DE/CE students to be successful?*
- *Are counseling and other student support services available for DE/CE students?*

2. The institution identifies and assesses learning support outcomes for its student population and provides appropriate student support services and programs to achieve those outcomes. The institution uses assessment data to continuously improve student support programs and services.

- *What assessment methods are used to ascertain the effectiveness of student support services?*
- *How are evaluation results used to improve student services?*
- *Does the college know where its DE/CE students come from? Are there state authorization requirements if there are out-of-state students?*
- *How does the institution determine that students admitted to its DE/CE programs are able to benefit from these programs? How is this information taken into consideration in admissions policies and procedures?*
- *What improvements have been made to the effectiveness of these services? Do the student support services expand as the growth of DE/CE expands?*

3. The institution assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method. (ER 15)

- *How does the institution demonstrate that it assesses student needs for services regardless of location or mode of delivery, and provides for them?*
- *How are online and off-site location services evaluated? How well are services meeting the needs of students?*
- *How does the institution assure access to appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services, such as but not limited to orientation, tutoring, counseling, and delivery of materials to students with remote access to information? (Federal Regulation)*

- *QFE: What steps can the institution take to ensure all students (including DE and CE students and those enrolled at off-campus locations) have comparable access to learning and support services?*

Effective Practices

Increase students' understanding of admission requirements, application, and financial aid processes.



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Develop dual/concurrent enrollment opportunities for high school students.  
Permit students to take college placement assessments, including assessment preparation activities, while in high school.  
Permit students to enroll in college directly from high school.  
End late application and registration before classes begin.

4. Co-curricular programs and athletics programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the social and cultural dimensions of the educational experience of its students. If the institution offers co-curricular or athletic programs, they are conducted with sound educational policy and standards of integrity. The institution has responsibility for the control of these programs, including their finances.

- *How does the institution determine what co-curricular programs are appropriate to its mission and students?*
- *How does the institution evaluate the quality and effectiveness of its co-curricular programs?*

5. The institution provides counseling and/or academic advising programs to support student development and success and prepares faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising function. Counseling and advising programs orient students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.

- *Does the institution develop, implement, and evaluate counseling and/or academic advising?*
- *Does the evaluation of counseling and/or academic advising include how it enhances student development and success?*
- *Are these or comparable services available to online students and students attending other locations?*
- *How does the institution develop, implement, and evaluate counseling and/or academic advising and how do these initiatives ensure that the needs of DE/CE students are effectively addressed?*
- *Does the evaluation of counseling and/or academic advising include how it enhances DE/CE student development and success?*

- *QFE: What steps can the institution take to ensure all students (including DE and CE students and those enrolled at off-campus locations) have comparable access to learning and support services? Such services may include college orientation, ongoing academic advising, success in college courses, mentoring, monitoring student progress and providing feedback and support?*

Effective Practices

Mandate orientation to college and ongoing advising for students, including a course

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on success in college.

Engage faculty and staff across typical silos to map pathways and design integrated support for students.

Monitor student progress, providing frequent feedback and support.

6. The institution has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs. The institution defines and advises students on clear pathways<sup>5</sup> to complete degrees, certificate and transfer goals. (ER 16)

For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:

- *The prerequisites and other qualifications for the baccalaureate degree are appropriately communicated and applied to students.*

- *QFE: What steps can the institution take to provide clear pathways for students to achieve their goals (completion of degrees, transfer, or job readiness)? These can include simplified choices for students, a first-year experience to assist students in selecting a major, learning communities, or cohort groups?*

#### Effective Practices

Construct coherent, structured pathways to certificate and degree completion and transfer.

Simplify choices for students, using defaults that give students a recommended program of study that can be customized.

Structure the first-year experience to help students who are undecided about a major to choose a field of study.

Develop learning communities (cohort learning groups) around developmental education courses and a course on student success in college.

7. The institution regularly evaluates admissions and placement instruments and practices to validate their effectiveness while minimizing biases.
- *What processes are used to evaluate the effectiveness of practices and tools of admissions and placement? What evaluations of placement processes are used to ensure their consistency and effectiveness?*
  - *What processes are used to evaluate the effectiveness of practices and tools of admissions for DE/CE programs? Are they different from the tools and practices used for traditional programs? What is the rationale?*

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<sup>5</sup> Glossary- Pathways: The specific selection and progression of courses and learning experiences students pursue and complete and they progress in their education toward a certificate, degree, transfer, or other identified educational goal.

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8. The institution maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provision for secure backup of all files, regardless of the form in which those files are maintained. The institution publishes and follows established policies for release of student records.

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## Sources of Evidence: Examples for Standard II

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard II. There may be many other sources relevant to each college's unique mission that institutions should provide and teams should consider.

### Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

#### A. Instructional Programs

- Evidence that all instructional offerings align with the institution's mission regardless of where and how they are taught
- Evidence that the quality of all programs is consistently determined to meet a high standard and rigor appropriate for higher education
- Evidence of analytical reviews demonstrating that instructional programs are relevant to the interests, needs and educational goals of the students served by the institution
- Evidence students are achieving stated learning outcomes
- Evidence the institution considers how instruction is delivered and how it assesses that delivery is both appropriate and current
- Evidence of the development of student learning outcomes and strategies for attaining those outcomes at the course, program, certificate and degree level
- Evidence of assessment of student learning and program outcomes
- Evidence of assessment of student achievement data
- Evidence of institution-set standards
- Evidence of analysis of assessment results and use for improvement of student learning
- Evidence that an institutional process exists for determining the quality of all courses and programs
- Evidence that established procedures are used to develop courses and programs and that faculty play a major role in this endeavor
- Evidence of a faculty-driven assessment plan that includes systematic evaluation and integrated planning of student learning outcomes for all courses, programs certificates, programs, and degrees
- Evidence that systematic evaluation and review of student progress toward achieving learning outcomes take place
- Evidence of the role played by advisory committees
- Evidence instructional offerings are in appropriate areas of academic study given the institution's mission
- Evidence programs are appropriately sequenced to provide the bases for success in subsequent courses
- Evidence courses are of sufficient content, breadth, and length to permit the student to learn and practice expected knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Evidence the institution concerns itself with pedagogy that addresses student needs and learning styles
- Evidence that diverse methods of instruction are used and that students are exposed to a variety of points of view

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- Evidence of regular, systematic evaluation and review of instructional courses and programs, using consistent and valid research strategies
  - Evidence evaluation results are used for improvement
  - Evidence that elements assessed include measures of student achievement and learning
  - Evidence for an assessment plan that includes systematic evaluation and integrated planning of student learning outcomes for all courses, programs, certificates and degrees
  - Evidence that results of evaluation are communicated and disseminated
  - Evidence that results of evaluation are used for improvement
  - Evidence of a process for validating the effectiveness of examinations that assess student learning
  - Evidence that placement tests are examined for biases
  - Evidence the institution has developed a means for awarding credit based on student learning outcomes
  - Evidence that credits awarded are consistent with accepted higher education practices
  - Evidence the college uses student achievement of stated learning outcomes in awarding credit for degrees and certificates
  - Evidence that a consistent process for examining student learning outcomes is used to analyze courses for inclusion as general education
  - Evidence that the rationale for general education is communicated to students, employers, and other constituencies
  - Evidence that content and methodology is determined by appropriate discipline faculty
  - Evidence the institution has determined standards for the skills in general education
  - Evidence students who complete general education programs are proficient in general education skills
  - Evidence the program of general education includes student learning outcomes concerning values, ethics, civic responsibility, and diverse perspectives
  - Evidence that students who complete vocational and occupational degrees and certificates meet employment competencies, are prepared for certification by external agencies, are prepared for licensure
  - Evidence that clear and complete information about degrees and certificates is made available to students in publications and course syllabi
  - Evidence that transfer policies are made available to students
  - Evidence that transferred courses accepted are comparable to the college's student learning outcomes for courses
  - Evidence that articulation agreements exist and are regularly evaluated
  - Evidence students are able to complete programs that substantially change or are eliminated
  - Evidence students are advised on what they must do to complete the programs above
  - Evidence that publications and other representations of the college are regularly reviewed for clarity and accuracy
  - Evidence the institution provides the public with information about student achievement

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- Evidence of board-approved and distributed policies on academic freedom and student academic honesty
  - Evidence that the policies above are followed
  - Evidence of faculty awareness and commitment to fair and objective presentation of knowledge
  - Evidence that a college's declaration of specific world views or codes of conduct policies are clear in publications provided in advance of enrollment or employment
  - Evidence specifically pertaining to the baccalaureate degree, if the institution offers one
  - Evidence that DE/CE offerings align with the institution's mission
  - Evidence that the quality of all DE/CE programs is consistently assessed to determine that it meets a high standard
  - Evidence of the annual growth in headcount enrollment into DE/CE programs\*
  - Evidence of analytical reviews demonstrating that instructional programs are relevant to the interest, needs, and goals of the students served in DE/CE courses and programs offered by the institution
  - Evidence that students are achieving stated learning outcomes developed for the DE/CE programs
  - Evidence of assessment of student achievement data for students enrolled in DE/CE programs
  - Evidence of institution-set standards for student achievement and student learning
  - Evidence that the institution considers how instruction is delivered and how it assesses that delivery of DE/CE programs is both appropriate and current
  - Evidence that data has been analyzed for DE/CE and face-to-face students in order to compare student achievement and attainment of expected learning outcomes?
  - Evidence of review of assessment results from DE/CE programs and utilization for improvement of student learning and student achievement
  - Evidence of procedures to design, identify learning outcomes for, approve, administer, deliver and evaluate DE/CE courses and programs. Evidence of the role played by advisory committees and faculty with expertise in DE/CE
  - Evidence of the role played by advisory committees and faculty with expertise in DE/CE
  - Evidence that DE/CE programs are appropriately sequenced to provide the bases for subsequent courses
  - Evidence that DE/CE courses are of sufficient content, breadth, and length to permit the student to learn and practice expected knowledge, skills, and abilities
  - Evidence that diverse methods of instruction are used that address student needs, and learning styles are appropriate for DE/CE
  - Evidence of regular, systematic evaluation and review of DE/CE courses and programs
  - Evidence that evaluation results are used for improvement
  - Evidence that the rationale for offering general education in DE mode is communicated to students, employers, and other constituencies

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Accreditors are required by the USDE to monitor overall growth of the institutions it accredits at least annually and collect headcount enrollment data, including for DE/CE programs.

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- Evidence that clear and complete information about degrees and certificates offered in DE/CE mode is made available to students in publications and course syllabi
  - Evidence that transfer policies are made available to students and how they apply to DE/CE
  - Evidence that articulation agreements including DE/CE courses exist and are regularly evaluated
  - Evidence that publications and other representations of the college that relate to its DE/CE activities are clear and accurate
  - Evidence that the college has appropriate and effective mechanisms in place to verify that the students registered are the students participating in the DE/CE courses/programs and receiving the credit (student identity)
  - Evidence that student attendance in DE/CE courses/programs is monitored
  - Evidence that the mechanisms for student verification appropriately protect the students' privacy
  - Evidence of how these policies on academic honesty are disseminated to students enrolled in DE/CE programs
  - Evidence that the college's admission policies are applied to students who do not reside in the U.S and who are not U.S. nationals

## **B. Library and Learning Support Services**

- Evidence that includes the evaluation instruments, their analysis, conclusions and plans for improvement of the library and learning support services (LSS), evidence that improvements are planned and implemented
- Evidence that demonstrates quantity, quality, depth and variety:
- Description of quantity: Number of volumes, number of periodicals, description of number and kinds of technological resources or equipment, including computers, microfiche machines, video equipment, audio tapes, CD ROM's and other data source, number of student stations available in library and learning resource center (LRC)
- Evidence that demonstrates ongoing instruction:
- List of courses, workshops and other training held each academic year and the attendance
- Course or workshop outlines, materials used in training, including identified learning outcomes
- Evidence the library evaluates the effectiveness of student learning during courses, workshops on information competency and use of the library and LSS
- Evidence that data links purchases to educational programs and SLOs defined by educational programs and by assessments of student learning
- A description of library acquisition plans related to educational plans
- Data and analyses of the institutional evaluations of library holdings by faculty (or disciplines or programs), students, and any external reviewers
- Other analyses showing relationship between library use and student learning
- Evidence that includes a description of hours of operation or access, description of remote access to library and LRC holdings, capacity of the remote means of

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delivery, any contingencies on turnaround time, limits to access relative to on campus students

- Evidence that holdings are related to educational programs and that all educational program needs have adequate materials in the library
- Evidence there is access to library and LSS for remote students/staff and institutional policies on remote access, including personnel policies that describe access provided to educational staff
- Description of remote access practice that is computer based, circulation of volumes, etc., for each remote site or population
- Description of use of library and LSS by remote users - students, faculty
- Evidence that includes institutional maintenance schedules, capital improvement plans, a description of security provisions for library holdings, and any institutional self-assessments of adequacy
- Institutional plans for improvement of library and LSS
- Evidence that includes the formal agreements or contracts themselves, and evidence therein of the accredited institution's expectations for services
- Description of the contracted/collaborated services quantity, quality, depth and currency, as in a, b, c and d, above
- Results of evaluation of the contracted/collaborated library and LSS
- Provisions of the contract that provide for accredited institution's control of quality or ability to influence quality of contracted/collaborated service
- Evidence the institution complies with the Commission's "Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations"
- Evidence specifically pertaining to the baccalaureate degree, if the institution offers one
- Evidence that the library and other student learning support services (LSS) promote DE/CE courses/programs and take into the account the needs of students
- Evidence that the library and LSS provide support in a timely manner
- Evidence that evaluations of library resources include and address the needs of students with remote access to the library and LSS
- Evidence that the library and LSS enhance achievement for students studying in DE/CE mode
- Evidence that the college provides appropriate instructions for the use of the library and LSS to students enrolled in DE/CE courses
- Evidence that there is access to library and LSS for remote students/staff, and there are institutional policies on remote access, including personnel policies that describe access provided to educational staff
- Description of remote access practice, i.e., computer based, circulation of volumes, etc., for each remote site or population
- Evidence of the effectiveness of the remote access to LSS
- Description of use of library and LSS by remote users - students and faculty



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## C. Student Support Services

- Evidence the institution systematically evaluates its student support services in light of its stated mission
- Evidence student support services support learning
- Evidence that the catalog contains items specified in Standards
- Evidence the institution assesses student needs for services and provides for them
- Evidence the institution assesses student needs for services regardless of location or mode of instructional delivery and provides them
- Evidence activities encouraging personal development are made available to students
- Evidence the institution develops, implements, and evaluates counseling and/or academic advising
- Evidence that evaluation of counseling and/or academic advising includes how it enhances student development and success, including online students and students at off-campus locations
- Evidence that those responsible for counseling/advising are appropriately trained
- Evidence the institution develops, implements, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity
- Evidence admissions practices and placement instruments are regularly evaluated
- Evidence placement instruments are valid and minimize bias
- Evidence that student records are kept confidential and secure
- Evidence for how student records are released
- Evidence that review of student service programs is regularly conducted and results are used for improvement
- Evidence that analysis of review of student service programs includes verification that services contribute to student learning outcomes
- Evidence specifically pertaining to the baccalaureate degree, if the institution offers one
- Evidence that student support services promote successful learning in DE/CE courses/programs
- Evidence that the catalog containing the specified items and other policies are made available to DE/CE students in an appropriate format
- Description of the services provided that are developed to address the needs of students with remote access to the institution
- Data on use of support services by remote users, students as well as faculty
- Evidence that the institution assesses DE/CE student needs for services and effectively provides them
- Evidence of how the college considers and ensures that equitable access includes it students enrolled in DE/CE courses/programs
- Evidence that the means used to ensure equitable access are regularly evaluated and that they are effective
- Evidence that activities encouraging personal development are appropriately made available to students with remote access to the institution

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- Evidence that the institution develops, implements, and evaluates counseling and/or academic advising that takes into account the needs of students enrolled in DE/CE programs
  - Evidence that those responsible for counseling/ advising are trained to address the needs of students enrolled in DE/CE programs and address these needs in a timely manner
  - Evidence that the institution develops, implements, and evaluates the effectiveness of services in enhancing student understanding and appreciation of diversity that are adapted to the online teaching and learning environment
  - Evidence that admissions practices and placement instruments are regularly evaluated and that they are effective for DE/CE students
  - Evidence that analysis of review of student service programs includes verification that services contribute to student learning outcomes achieved through DE/CE programs
  - Evidence that the institution maintains a file of student complaints/grievances that identify complaints/grievances filed by DE/CE students

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## Standard III: Resources

The institution effectively uses its human, physical, technology, and financial resources to achieve its mission and to improve academic quality and institutional effectiveness. Accredited colleges in multi-college systems may be organized so that responsibility for resources, allocation of resources, and planning rests with the district/system. In such cases, the district/system is responsible for meeting the Standards, and an evaluation of its performance is reflected in the accredited status of the institution(s).

### A. Human Resources

1. The institution assures the integrity and quality of its programs and services by employing administrators, faculty and staff who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience to provide and support these programs and services. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated and address the needs of the institution in serving its student population. Job descriptions are directly related to institutional mission and goals and accurately reflect position duties, responsibilities, and authority.
  - *How does the institution develop hiring criteria?*
  - *How are faculty involved in the selection of new faculty?*
  - *How are positions advertised?*
  - *By what means does the institution verify the qualifications of applicants and newly hired personnel?*
  - *How does the college check the equivalency of degrees from non-U.S. institutions?*
  - *What methods does the institution use to assure that qualifications for each position are closely matched to specific programmatic needs? What analyses and discussions have led the institution to agree on those needs?*
  - *What safeguards are in place to assure that hiring procedures are consistently applied?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *The job descriptions for faculty members teaching in the baccalaureate degree accurately reflect the duties and responsibilities associated with that position.*
- *Does the institution advertise specifically for personnel with expertise and experience in DE/CE?*
  - *How does the college decide whether an applicant is well qualified in the field of DE/CE? Has the institution formulated specific selection criteria?*
  - *To what extent does the institution involve personnel with experience in DE/CE in the recruitment of new personnel?*

2. Faculty qualifications include knowledge of the subject matter and requisite skills for the service to be performed. Factors of qualification include appropriate degrees, professional experience, discipline expertise, level of assignment,

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teaching skills, scholarly activities, and potential to contribute to the mission of the institution. Faculty job descriptions include development and review of curriculum as well as assessment of learning. (ER 14)

- *How does the college know that the faculty selected for hire have adequate and appropriate knowledge of their subject matter?*
- *By what methods does the college define and evaluate effective teaching in its hiring processes? How is that effectiveness judged?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *The qualifications for faculty teaching upper division courses in the baccalaureate degree include the requirement for a master's degree (or academic credentials at least one level higher than a baccalaureate degree) or doctoral degree, in an appropriate discipline.*
  - *In cases where no Master's degree is available for the field of study, the qualifications for faculty teaching upper division courses in the baccalaureate degree include a bachelor's degree in the discipline or closely related discipline, and a Master's degree in any discipline, and demonstrated industry work experience in the field for a minimum of six years, and commonly required industry-recognized certification or professional licensure.*
  - *The Commission may require some faculty in non-career technical education baccalaureate programs to have a recognized terminal degree in the field of study.*
- *How does the college identify faculty expertise in DE/CE instruction?*
  - *What analyses and discussions have led the institution to determine the qualifications of faculty and staff involved in offering DE/CE?*
  - *By what methods does the college define and evaluate "effective teaching" in its hiring processes for faculty to be involved in DE/CE? How is that effectiveness judged?*

3. Administrators and other employees responsible for educational programs and services possess qualifications necessary to perform duties required to sustain institutional effectiveness and academic quality.
4. Required degrees held by faculty, administrators and other employees are from institutions accredited by recognized U.S. accrediting agencies. Degrees from non-U.S. institutions are recognized only if equivalence has been established.
  - *By what means does the institution verify the qualifications of applicants and newly hired personnel?*
  - *How does the college check the equivalency of degrees from non-U.S. institutions?*
  - *What evidence is there that hiring processes yield highly qualified employees?*
  - *What analyses and discussions have led the institution to determine the qualifications of faculty and staff involved in offering DE/CE?*

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5. The institution assures the effectiveness of its human resources by evaluating all personnel systematically and at stated intervals. The institution establishes written criteria for evaluating all personnel, including performance of assigned duties and participation in institutional responsibilities and other activities appropriate to their expertise. Evaluation processes seek to assess effectiveness of personnel and encourage improvement. Actions taken following evaluations are formal, timely, and documented.
- What process is in place to assure that evaluations lead to improvement of job performance?
  - What is the connection between personnel evaluations and institutional effectiveness and improvement?
  - Do evaluation criteria measure the effectiveness of personnel in performing their duties?
  - *Do evaluation criteria specifically measure the effectiveness of personnel in performing their duties related to DE/CE activities?*
  - *To what extent do the evaluation processes identify areas for improvement of duties related to DE/CE activities, including faculty's interest in future involvement in this field or need for development?*
6. The evaluation of faculty, academic administrators, and other personnel directly responsible for student learning includes, as a component of that evaluation, consideration of how these employees use the results of the assessment of learning outcomes to improve teaching and learning.
- *What in-depth thinking have faculty, as individuals and collectively, engaged in about how well students are learning in their courses and programs? What measures have they, as individuals and collectively, created or selected to measure that learning? Are these measures different for DE/CE students?*
  - *What discussions have faculty had about how to improve learning? What plans have been made?*
  - *What changes have faculty made in teaching methodologies to improve learning?*
  - *After analyzing appropriate data, what discussions have faculty had about the need to, and how to improve learning outcomes in DE/CE? What plans have been made?*
  - *What changes have faculty made in teaching methodologies to improve learning in DE/CE mode after evaluation and analysis of evidence of effectiveness?*
7. The institution maintains a sufficient number of qualified faculty, which includes full-time faculty and may include part-time and adjunct faculty, to assure the fulfillment of faculty responsibilities essential to the quality of educational programs and services to achieve institutional mission and purposes.
- *By what means does the institution determine appropriate staffing levels*
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*for each program and service?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *There is at least one full-time faculty member assigned to the baccalaureate program.*
- *By what means does the institution determine appropriate staffing levels for each program and service involved in the offering of programs and courses in DE/CE mode?*
- *How does the institution decide on the organization of administrative and support staffing for DE/CE mode?*
- *How effectively does the number and organization of the institution's personnel work to support its DE/CE programs and services? How does the institution evaluate this effectiveness?*

8. An institution with part time and adjunct faculty has employment policies and practices which provide for their orientation, oversight, evaluation, and professional development. The institution provides opportunities for integration of part time and adjunct faculty into the life of the institution.
  - *What policies and practices demonstrate that part-time and adjunct faculty meet the criteria of this Standard?*
9. The institution has a sufficient number of staff with appropriate qualifications to support the effective educational, technological, physical, and administrative operations of the institution. (ER 8)
  - *How does the institution determine the appropriate number and qualifications for support personnel?*
10. The institution maintains a sufficient number of administrators with appropriate preparation and expertise to provide continuity and effective administrative leadership and services that support the institution's mission and purposes. (ER 8)
  - *How does the institution determine the appropriate number, qualifications, and organization of administrators?*
11. The institution establishes, publishes, and adheres to written personnel policies and procedures that are available for information and review. Such policies and procedures are fair and equitably and consistently administered.
  - *What processes does the institution use to develop and publicize its personnel policies?*
  - *How does the institution ensure that it administers its personnel policies and procedures consistently and equitably? Do these policies and processes result in fair treatment of personnel?*
  - *What processes does the institution use to develop and publicize its*

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*personnel policies?*

- *How does the institution ensure that it administers its personnel policies and procedures consistently and equitably? Do these policies and processes result in fair treatment of personnel?*
12. Through its policies and practices, the institution creates and maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services that support its diverse personnel. The institution regularly assesses its record in employment equity and diversity consistent with its mission.
- *How effective are the institution's policies and practices in promoting understanding of equity and diversity issues? How does the institution know these policies and practices are effective?*
  - *How does the institution determine what kinds of support its personnel need?*
  - *What programs and services does the institution have to support its personnel? How effective are these programs?*
  - *Are the programs, practices, and services evaluated on a regular basis?*
  - *How does the institution track and analyze its employment equity record? How does it use this information?*
  - *How does the institution ensure that its personnel and students are treated fairly?*
13. The institution upholds a written code of professional ethics for all of its personnel, including consequences for violation.
- *How does the institution foster ethical behavior in its employees?*
  - *Does the institution have a written code of professional ethics for all its personnel?*
14. The institution plans for and provides all personnel with appropriate opportunities for continued professional development, consistent with the institutional mission and based on evolving pedagogy, technology, and learning needs. The institution systematically evaluates professional development programs and uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.
- *What professional development programs does the institution offer and/or support?*
  - *How does the institution identify professional development needs of its faculty and other personnel?*
  - *What processes ensure that professional development opportunities address those needs?*
  - *How does the college ensure meaningful evaluation of professional development activities?*
  - *What impact do professional development activities have on the*

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*improvement of teaching and learning? How does the institution evaluate that improvement?*

- *What professional development programs relevant for DE/CE personnel does the institution support and/or provide?*
- *How does the institution determine the professional development needs of its personnel involved in DE/CE?*

Effective Practices

Professional development, inclusive of board members, CEO, leadership throughout the institution, full-time and adjunct faculty, and staff, is aligned with the priorities and strategies of the institutional focus on student success.

15. The institution makes provision for the security and confidentiality of personnel records. Each employee has access to his/her personnel records in accordance with law.
- *What are the institution's provisions for keeping personnel records secure and confidential?*
  - *How does the institution provide employees access to their records?*

## B. Physical Resources

1. The institution assures safe and sufficient physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and learning support services. They are constructed and maintained to assure access, safety, security, and a healthful learning and working environment.
- *How does the institution assure access to its facilities?*
  - *How does the institution ensure it maintains sufficient control over off-site facilities to ensure their quality?*
  - *What research and analysis process does the institution use to identify the need for equipment and other facilities to support and assure the integrity and quality of its programs and services provided in DE/CE mode?*
  - *What mechanisms does the college employ to evaluate how effectively equipment and facilities meet the needs of programs and services in DE/CE mode?*
2. The institution plans, acquires or builds, maintains, and upgrades or replaces its physical resources, including facilities, equipment, land, and other assets, in a manner that assures effective utilization and the continuing quality necessary to support its programs and services and achieve its mission.
- *How does the institution consider the needs of programs and services when planning its buildings?*
  - *What processes ensure that program and service needs determine equipment replacement and maintenance?*



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- *How does the institution evaluate effectiveness of facilities and equipment in meeting the needs of programs and services?*
  - *What processes are used to ensure that program and service needs determine equipment replacement and maintenance for DE/CE?*
  - *How well does the institution meet its equipment needs for distance education? Are the equipment needs included in the facilities evaluations that the institution conducts?*
3. To assure the feasibility and effectiveness of physical resources in supporting institutional programs and services, the institution plans and evaluates its facilities and equipment on a regular basis, taking utilization and other relevant data into account.
- *What process does the institution use to assess the use of its facilities? How often does the evaluation occur?*
  - *How does the college use the results of the evaluation to improve facilities or equipment?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *The facilities and other physical resources utilized by the baccalaureate program are evaluated for feasibility and effectiveness for the program on a regular basis.*
  - *What evaluation process does the institution use to assess the use of its facilities? Does the process also include the needs for equipment used for course offerings in DE mode? How often does the evaluation occur?*
4. Long-range capital plans support institutional improvement goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment.
- *What process does the institution follow to develop capital plans? How are long-range capital projects linked to institutional planning?*
  - *What elements comprise the definition of "total cost of ownership" that the institution uses when making decisions about facilities and equipment?*
  - *How do planning processes ensure that capital projects support college goals? How effective is long-range capital planning in advancing the college improvement goals?*
  - *How do long range capital plans support improvement goals and reflect projections related to equipment needed for DE/CE?*

## **C. Technology Resources**

1. Technology services, professional support, facilities, hardware, and software are appropriate and adequate to support the institution's management and operational functions, academic programs, teaching and learning, and support services.
- *How does the institution ensure that its various types of technology needs are identified?*

- *How does the institution evaluate the effectiveness of its technology in meeting its range of needs? How effectively are those needs met?*
- *How does the institution make decisions about technology services, facilities, hardware, and software?*
- *Whether technology is provided directly by the institution or through contractual arrangements, are there provisions for reliability, disaster recovery, privacy, and security?*
- *How does the institution make decisions about use and distribution of its technology resources?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *Technology services, support, facilities, hardware, and software utilized by the baccalaureate program are appropriate and adequate for the program.*
- *How does the institution evaluate the effectiveness of technology in meeting its range of needs? How effectively are those needs met? (Federal Regulation)*
  - *How does the institution make decisions about technology services, hardware, and software to ensure that the needs of faculty responsible for DE/CE are met?*
  - *Whether technology is provided directly by the institution or through contractual arrangements, are there provisions for reliability, disaster recovery, privacy, and security to ensure that the technology platform for distance education courses and programs is reliable and sustainable? (Federal Regulation)*

2. The institution continuously plans for, updates and replaces technology to ensure its technological infrastructure, quality and capacity are adequate to support its mission, operations, programs, and services.
  - *What provisions has the institution made to ensure a robust, current, sustainable, and secure technical infrastructure that provides maximum reliability for students and faculty?*
  - *What evidence is there that the institution bases its technology decisions on the results of evaluation of program and service needs?*
  - *How does the institution prioritize needs when making decisions about technology purchases? How effectively are those needs met?*
  - *How does the institution make decisions about use and distribution of its technology resources in relation to DE/CE?*
  - *What provisions has the institution made to assure a robust and secure technical infrastructure, providing maximum reliability for students and faculty when offering its DE/CE courses and programs? (Federal Regulation)*
  - *What evidence is there that the institution bases its technology decisions on*

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*the results of evaluation of program and service needs and that the evaluation includes the needs related to DE/CE?*

3. The institution assures that technology resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and services are implemented and maintained to assure reliable access, safety, and security.
  - *How has the institution provided for the management, maintenance, and operation of its technological infrastructure and equipment?*
  - *Does the college provide an appropriate system for reliability and emergency backup?*
  
4. The institution provides appropriate instruction and support for faculty, staff, students, and administrators, in the effective use of technology and technology systems related to its programs, services, and institutional operations.
  - *How does the institution assess the need for information technology training for students and personnel?*
  - *What technology training does the institution provide to students and personnel? How does the institution ensure that the training and technical support it provides for faculty and staff are appropriate and effective? How effective is the training provided? How is the training evaluated?*
  - *How does the institution assess the need for information technology training related to DE/CE?*
  - *What technology training and information does the institution provide to students and personnel engaged in DE/CE courses and programs? Is the training different from training and information to students and personnel engaged in a traditional teaching mode? What is the rationale?*
  
5. The institution has policies and procedures that guide the appropriate use of technology in the teaching and learning processes.
  - *How does the institution make decisions about use and distribution of its technology resources?*
  - *What provisions has the institution made to assure a robust and secure technical infrastructure, providing maximum reliability for students and faculty when offering its DE/CE courses and programs?*

## **D. Financial Resources**

### **Planning**

1. Financial resources are sufficient to support and sustain student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, allocation and reallocation, and enhancement of programs and services. The institution plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability.

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(ER 18)

- *Does it have sufficient revenues to support educational improvement and innovation?*
- *Are the institution's finances managed with integrity in a manner that ensures financial stability?*
- *Does the resource allocation process provide a means for setting priorities for funding institutional improvements?*
- *Are institutional resources sufficient to ensure financial solvency?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *The financial resources allocated to the baccalaureate program are sufficient to support and sustain program student learning and effectiveness.*
- *Financial resources allocated to the baccalaureate program ensure the financial stability of the program.*
- *Does the institution's budget provide sufficient resources for the effective planning, maintenance, implementation and enhancement of DE courses, programs and services as well as personnel development?*

2. The institution's mission and goals are the foundation for financial planning, and financial planning is integrated with and supports all institutional planning. The institution has policies and procedures to ensure sound financial practices and financial stability. Appropriate financial information is disseminated throughout the institution in a timely manner.
- *Does the institution review its mission and goals as part of the annual fiscal planning process?*
  - *Does the institution identify goals for achievement in any given budget cycle?*
  - *Does the institution establish priorities among competing needs so that it can predict future funding? Do institutional plans exist, and are they linked clearly to financial plans, both short-term and long-range?*
  - *Does the financial planning process rely primarily on institutional plans for content and timelines?*
  - *Can the institution provide evidence that past fiscal expenditures have supported achievement of institutional plans?*
  - *Does the governing board and other institutional leadership receive information about fiscal planning that demonstrates its links to institutional planning?*
  - *What is the ending balance of unrestricted funds for the institution's immediate past three years? Is this amount sufficient to maintain a reserve needed for emergencies?*
  - *How does the institution receive its revenues? Does this receipt pose cash-flow difficulties for the college? If so, how does the college address cash-flow difficulties? (e.g., Certificates of Participation (COPS), loans)?*

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- *Has the institution sufficient insurance to cover its needs? Is the institution self-funded in any insurance categories? If so, does it have sufficient reserves to handle financial emergencies?*
3. The institution clearly defines and follows its guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development, with all constituencies having appropriate opportunities to participate in the development of institutional plans and budgets.
- *Where or how are the processes for financial planning and budget recorded and made known to college constituents?*
  - *What mechanisms or processes are used to ensure constituent participation in financial planning and budget development?*

### **Fiscal Responsibility and Stability**

4. Institutional planning reflects a realistic assessment of financial resource availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements.
- *Do individuals involved in institutional planning receive accurate information about available funds, including the annual budget showing ongoing and anticipated fiscal commitments?*
  - *Does the institution establish funding priorities in a manner that helps the institution achieve its mission and goals? Are items focused on student learning given appropriate priority? What other documents are used in institutional planning?*
5. To assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of its financial resources, the internal control structure has appropriate control mechanisms and widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision making. The institution regularly evaluates its financial management practices and uses the results to improve internal control systems.
- *Are funds allocated, as shown in the budget, in a manner that will realistically achieve the institution's stated goals for student learning?*
  - *What do the audit statements say about financial management?*
  - *Is the institutional budget an accurate reflection of institutional spending and does it have credibility with constituents?*
  - *Are audit findings communicated to appropriate institutional leadership and constituents?*
  - *Does the institution have an annual external audit to provide feedback on its processes?*
  - *Does the institution review the effectiveness of its past fiscal planning as part of planning for current and future fiscal needs?*
6. Financial documents, including the budget, have a high degree of credibility and accuracy, and reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support student learning programs and services.
- *Are funds allocated, as shown in the budget, in a manner that will*

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- realistically achieve the institution's stated goals for student learning?*
- *What do the audit statements say about financial management?*
  - *Does the institution provide timely corrections to audit exceptions and management advice?*
  - *Is the institutional budget an accurate reflection of institutional spending and does it have credibility with constituents?*
  - *Are audit findings communicated to appropriate institutional leadership and constituents?*
7. Institutional responses to external audit findings are comprehensive, timely, and communicated appropriately.
- *What information about budget, fiscal conditions, financial planning, and audit results is provided throughout the college? Is this information sufficient in content and timing to support institutional and financial planning and financial management?*
  - *Does the institution provide timely corrections to audit exceptions and management advice?*
  - *Has the institution received any audit findings or negative reviews during the last six years? Have these been addressed in a timely manner?*
8. The institution's financial and internal control systems are evaluated and assessed for validity and effectiveness, and the results of this assessment are used for improvement.
- *Are the institution's special funds audited or reviewed by funding agencies regularly?*
  - *Do the audits demonstrate the integrity of financial management practices?*
  - *Are expenditures from special funds made in a manner consistent with the intent and requirements of the funding source? Are bond expenditures consistent with regulatory and legal restrictions?*
  - *Does the institution review its internal control systems on a regular basis? Does the institution respond to internal control deficiencies identified in the annual audit in a timely manner?*
9. The institution has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, support strategies for appropriate risk management, and, when necessary, implement contingency plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences.
- *What is the level of the institution's unrestricted fiscal reserve?*
10. The institution practices effective oversight of finances, including management of financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contractual relationships,

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auxiliary organizations or foundations, and institutional investments and assets.

- What processes does the institution use to assess its use of financial resources?
- How does the institution demonstrate compliance with Federal Title IV regulations and requirements? (Federal Regulation)
- *How does the institution ensure that it assesses its use of financial resources systematically and effectively?*
- *How does the institution use results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement?*

## Liabilities

11. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both short-term and long-term financial solvency. When making short-range financial plans, the institution considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. The institution clearly identifies, plans, and allocates resources for payment of liabilities and future obligations.
  - *What evidence of long-term fiscal planning and priorities exists?*
  - *Does the institution have plans for payments of long-term liabilities and obligations, including debt, health benefits, insurance costs, building maintenance costs, etc.? Is this information used in short-term or annual budget and other fiscal planning?*
  - *Does the Institution allocate resources to the payment of its liabilities and funds/reserves to address long-term obligations? Are resources directed to actuarially developed plans for Other Post-Employment Benefit (OPEB) obligations?*
12. The institution plans for and allocates appropriate resources for the payment of liabilities and future obligations, including Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB), compensated absences, and other employee related obligations. The actuarial plan to determine Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) is current and prepared as required by appropriate accounting standards.
  - *Is the institution fully funding its annual OPEB obligation (Annual required contribution [ARC])? At what level is the contribution being funded?*
13. On an annual basis, the institution assesses and allocates resources for the repayment of any locally incurred debt instruments that can affect the financial condition of the institution.
  - *What is the level of locally incurred debt?*
  - *What percentage of the budget is used to repay this debt?*
  - *Does the locally incurred debt repayment schedule have an adverse impact on meeting all current fiscal obligations?*
14. All financial resources, including short- and long-term debt instruments (such as bonds and Certificates of Participation), auxiliary activities, fund-raising efforts, and grants, are used with integrity in a manner consistent with the intended purpose of the funding source.

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- *Is there an annual assessment of debt repayment obligations, and are resources allocated in a manner that ensures stable finances?*
15. The institution monitors and manages student loan default rates, revenue streams, and assets to ensure compliance with federal requirements, including Title IV of the Higher Education Act, and comes into compliance when the federal government identifies deficiencies.
- *What is the default rate for the past three years?*
  - *Is the default rate within federal guidelines?*
  - *Does the institution have a plan to reduce the default rate if it exceeds federal guidelines?*
  - *Are student loan default rates, revenues, and related matters monitored and assessed to ensure compliance with Federal Regulation?*

### **Contractual Agreements<sup>16</sup>**

16. Contractual agreements with external entities are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, governed by institutional policies, and contain appropriate provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution and the quality of its programs, services, and operations.
- *What contractual agreements exist, and are they consistent with institutional mission and goals?*
  - *Does the institution have appropriate control over these contracts? Can it change or terminate contracts that don't meet its required standards of quality?*
  - *Are external contracts managed in a manner to ensure that federal guidelines are met?*

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<sup>16</sup> Glossary- Contractual Agreements: Arrangements for educational services that are either: (1) provided by the college/district/system for remuneration under contracts with business or other agencies, or (2) received by the college/district/system under contracts with businesses or other agencies. Contractual arrangements for delivery of educational services may include, but are not limited to, curriculum, learning support services, student support services, and instruction.



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## Sources of Evidence: Examples for Standard III

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard III. There may be many other sources relevant to each college's unique mission that institutions should provide and teams should consider.

### Standard III: Resources

#### A. Human Resources

- Evidence about how the institution determines human resource needs of programs and services
- Evidence the institution uses analyses in determining hiring priorities
- Evidence, such as planning meeting minutes, that the institution systematically considers and relies on needs of programs and services in determining hiring priorities
- Evidence the institution has a reasonable means for deciding what employee qualifications are needed for each position
- Evidence the institution uses a clear and reasonable process for determining personnel selection criteria
- Evidence that hiring procedures are written and consistently applied
- Evidence the institution verifies employee degrees, experience, and references of newly hired personnel
- Evidence of a systematic process for determining personnel evaluation criteria
- Evidence evaluation criteria are based on job responsibilities
- Evidence evaluation processes are written and followed
- Evidence evaluations are conducted regularly
- Evidence the institution uses the results of personnel evaluations for improvement
- Evidence the institution evaluates the effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes of faculty, tutors, and others involved in the teaching-learning process
- Evidence the institution applies an ethics document or documents for all personnel
- Evidence the institution employs a core of full-time faculty
- Evidence the institution employs qualified administrators and support staff in sufficient numbers
- Evidence the institution administers its personnel policies consistently and fairly
- Evidence the institution maintains personnel records appropriately
- Evidence about how the institution provides employees access to their records
- Evidence the institution has written policies on equity and diversity
- Evidence the institution is sensitive to issues of equity and diversity
- Evidence that programs and services are designed to provide for the range of personnel needs at the institution
- Evidence about how the institution tracks, analyzes, and uses its employment equity record
- Evidence about how the institution interacts with its personnel and students fairly
- Evidence about how the institution uses identified teaching and learning needs to determine professional development opportunities, including instruction via a mode of electronic delivery

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- Evidence the institution evaluates professional development needs of its personnel
  - Evidence the institution bases its programs on identified needs
  - Evidence about how participants are involved in the programs' evaluation
  - Evidence the institution assesses the use of its human resources
  - Evidence the institutional plans determine human resource allocation priorities
  - Evidence that human resource decisions are based on the results of program review and the evaluation of program and service needs, and are integrated with institutional planning
  - Evidence specifically pertaining to the baccalaureate degree, if the institution offers one
- Evidence about how the institution determines human resource needs of DE/CE programs and services
  - Evidence the institution has a reasonable means for deciding what employee qualifications are needed for positions with teaching responsibility for DE/CE courses
  - Evidence there are practices in place to determine that an applicant is well qualified to teach DE/CE courses
  - Evidence that personnel evaluation includes issues related to online teaching and that the institution uses the results of personnel evaluation for improvement
  - Evidence the institution evaluates the effectiveness developing student learning outcomes and assessment of teachers, tutors, and others involved in DE/CE teaching-learning process
  - Evidence that professional development supports faculty performance in developing and assessing student learning outcomes in DE/CE mode
  - Evidence the institution applies an ethics document or documents for all personnel that appropriately addresses aspects of teaching in DE/CE mode into consideration
  - Evidence about how the institution uses identified teaching and learning needs to determine professional development opportunities for faculty involved in online DE/CE

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## B. Physical Resources

- Evidence about how the institution evaluates the safety and sufficiency of its facilities
- Evidence the institution provides adequate facilities for its programs and services
- Evidence that off campus sites are adequate to support courses, programs and services provided at those sites
- Evidence that equipment supports the needs of its programs and services
- Evidence that equipment supports the needs of the distance modes of delivery the college offers
- Evidence demonstrating that the institution plans and maintains its facilities
- Evidence the institution has considered the total cost of ownership when making decisions about facilities and equipment
- Evidence the institution's bases its building plans on the needs of programs and services
- Evidence the institution has replacement and maintenance plans for equipment
- Evidence the institution uses its facilities and equipment effectively
- Evidence demonstrating that the institution constructs and maintains its facilities at all locations
- Evidence demonstrating that the institution evaluates its facilities
- Evidence demonstrating that the institution evaluates the physical resources needs of its programs and services
- Evidence demonstrating that the institution plans its facilities
- Evidence demonstrating that the institution makes decisions about equipment purchases
- Evidence that long range capital projects are based on institutional planning
- Evidence the institution assesses the use of its physical resources
- Evidence that institutional plans determine physical resource priorities
- Evidence that physical resource decisions are based on the results of program review and evaluation of program and service needs and are integrated with institutional planning
- Evidence specifically pertaining to the baccalaureate degree, if the institution offers one
- List of sites where the institution offers 50% or more of a program degree or certificate by DE/CE\*
- Evidence a substantive change review request was submitted to ACCJC
- Evidence that the institution provides adequate facilities and equipment for its DE programs and services
- Evidence that equipment supports the needs of the DE/CE modes of delivery the college offers
- Evidence the institution has considered the cost related to the maintenance and sustainability of its DE/CE offerings when making decisions about facilities and equipment

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\* These sites are considered additional learning sites and will be subject to a visit by the evaluation team according to USDE regulations.

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- Evidence the institution has replacement and maintenance plans for online equipment, teaching and services.
  - Evidence the institution uses its facilities and equipment, including those related to DE/CE, effectively
  - Evidence of procedures for approving proctored sites

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## C. Technology Resources

- Evidence demonstrating that the institution evaluates how well its technology meets the needs of its programs and services
- Evidence demonstrating that the institution evaluates how well its technology meets the need for college-wide communications, research, and operational systems
- Evidence demonstrating that the institution makes decisions about technology services, facilities, hardware, and software
- Evidence about how the institution evaluates the effectiveness of its technology
- Evidence the institution assesses the need for information technology training for students and personnel
- Evidence that training is designed to meet the needs of students and personnel
- Evidence about how the institution plans and maintains its technology, infrastructure, and equipment
- Evidence the institution bases its technology plans on the needs of programs and services
- Evidence the institution has replacement and maintenance plans for its technology
- Evidence demonstrating how the institution uses and distributes its technology resources
- Evidence the institution assesses the technology needs of its programs and services
- Evidence the institution assesses the use of its technology resources
- Evidence that institutional program reviews and plans determine technology resource priorities
- Evidence that technology resource decisions are based on program review results and evaluation of program and service needs and are integrated with institutional planning
- Evidence specifically pertaining to the baccalaureate degree, if the institution offers one
- Evidence about how the institution evaluates how well its technology meeting the needs of its DE/CE programs and services
- Evidence about how the institution makes decisions for the needs of technology services, facilities, hardware, and software related to DE/CE programs
- Evidence about how the institution evaluates the effectiveness of its technology and ensures that the technology used for its DE/CE offerings is current
- Evidence the institution assesses the need for information technology training for students and personnel involved in distance education
- Evidence that training is designed to meet the needs of students and personnel involved in DE/CE
- Evidence that the training is provided in a format that best suits the needs of students and personnel involved in DE/CE
- Evidence that sufficient and timely support is provided to personnel and students
- Data on the use of the technology support provided by the institution
- Evidence the institution bases its technology plans on the needs of DE/CE programs and services
- Evidence about how the institution includes the needs related to online teaching and learning in the assessment of the technology needs of its programs and services
- Evidence that technology resource decisions related to online teaching are based on the results of evaluation of program and service needs

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## D. Financial Resources

- Evidence that includes copies of the annual budget, audits for past three years, financial plans associated with institutional plans, budget documents prepared for grant and other external funding, data showing financial planning is regularly evaluated and the results of that evaluation, documents showing institutional fiscal commitments for foreseeable future, including contracts for services, employee agreements, loans and other debt
- Other debt evidence includes actuarial plans for the repayment of Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) and funding plans to address the obligation
- Evidence that the mission and goals are used in short and long-range financial planning, such as a list of financial goals, a grid showing financial contributions to meeting goals, or an introductory text to fiscal documents such as annual budgets, long-range capital plans, long-range financial plans, etc., that show the relationship to educational goals as identified through institutional assessment and planning
- Evidence showing that fiscal planning follows institutional planning (in time sequence), and funds are used to achieve institutional plans and goals
- Evidence that fiscal planning is evaluated on the basis of its contribution to achievement of institutional goals, not solely on the basis of accounting principles of good practice. Evidence that the financial plans, including annual budgets, capital plans, and long-term fiscal plans undergo periodic review and evaluation
- Evidence of a fiscal planning process, documents describing the financial planning, and budgeting processes, and minutes or other records showing the institution has followed those processes
- Evidence the institution monitors student financial aid obligations such as student loan default rates and compliance with all Federal Regulation that impact the institution
- Evidence the institution ensures that financial decisions are developed from program review results, institutional needs, and plans for improvement
- Evidence the institution bases its financial decisions on the results of evaluation of program and service needs
- Evidence the institution determines that financial needs in program and service areas are met effectively
- Evidence the institution prioritizes needs when making financial decisions
- Evidence specifically pertaining to the baccalaureate degree, if the institution offers one
- Copies of the institution's costs or a separate budget for DE/CE
- Evidence that fiscal planning takes into consideration the short-term as well as long-term investment needs related to the teaching through electronic means
- Evidence of appropriate control and quality mechanisms for external contracts for the provision of technology and/or support needed for DE/CE

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## Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

The institution recognizes and uses the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for promoting student success, sustaining academic quality, integrity, fiscal stability, and continuous improvement of the institution. Governance roles are defined in policy and are designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness, while acknowledging the designated responsibilities of the governing board and the chief executive officer. Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. In multi-college districts or systems, the roles within the district/system are clearly delineated. The multi-college district or system has policies for allocation of resources to adequately support and sustain the colleges.

### A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

1. Institutional leaders create and encourage innovation leading to institutional excellence. They support administrators, faculty, staff, and students, no matter what their official titles, in taking initiative for improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When ideas for improvement have policy or significant institution-wide implications, systematic participative processes are used to assure effective planning and implementation.
  - *What do the statements about institutional mission and goals reveal about the institution's commitment to student success and educational excellence?*
  - *Are the institution's goals and values clearly articulated and understood by all? Can college staff list what those goals and values are?*
  - *What information about institutional performance is available to staff and students? How is the information kept current? Is it easily accessed, is it understandable? Is it regularly used in institutional dialog and decision-making sessions?*
  - *Do the institution's processes for institutional evaluation and review, and planning for improvements, provide venues where the evaluations of the institution's performance are made available to all staff?*
  - *Do institutional planning efforts provide opportunity for appropriate staff participation?*
  - *How do individuals bring forward ideas for institutional improvement?*
  
2. The institution establishes and implements policy and procedures authorizing administrator, faculty, and staff participation in decision-making processes. The policy makes provisions for student participation and consideration of student views in those matters in which students have a direct and reasonable interest. Policy specifies the manner in which individuals bring forward ideas and work together on appropriate policy, planning, and special-purpose committees.
  - *What do institutional policies and procedures describe as the roles for each group in governance, including planning and budget development?*
  - *What evidence demonstrates that these policies and procedures are functioning effectively?*

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- *What documents describe the official responsibilities and authority of the faculty and of academic administrators in curricular and other educational matters?*
  - *What provisions are made for student involvement in the decision-making processes?*
3. Administrators and faculty, through policy and procedures, have a substantive and clearly defined role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise.
- *What do institutional policies and procedures describe as the roles for each group in governance, including planning and budget development?*
4. Faculty and academic administrators, through policy and procedures, and through well-defined structures, have responsibility for recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs and services.
- *What institutional policies and procedures describe as the official responsibilities and authority of the faculty and of academic administrators in curricular and other educational matters?*
  - *What evidence demonstrates that these policies and procedures are functioning effectively?*

*For institutions with a baccalaureate degree:*

- *The faculty and academic administrators assigned to the baccalaureate program have responsibility for making recommendations to appropriate governance and decision-making bodies about the curriculum, student learning programs, and services for the program.*
  - *Have programs, degrees, and certificates available 50% or more via DE/CE been reviewed through the ACCJC Substantive Change process?*
5. Through its system of board and institutional governance, the institution ensures the appropriate consideration of relevant perspectives; decision-making aligned with expertise and responsibility; and timely action on institutional plans, policies, curricular change, and other key considerations.
- *Do the written policies on governance procedures specify appropriate roles for all staff and students? Do these policies specify the academic roles of faculty in areas of student educational programs and services planning?*
  - *Are staff and students well informed of their respective roles? Do staff participate as encouraged by these policies? Do the various groups work in collaborative effort on behalf of institutional improvements? Is the result of this effort actual institutional improvement?*
  - *Is there effective communication at the college - clear, understood, widely available, current?*
  - *Do staff at the college know essential information about institutional*



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*efforts to achieve goals and improve learning?*

6. The processes for decision-making and the resulting decisions are documented and widely communicated across the institution.
  - *What process does the institution use to document and communicate these decisions?*
7. Leadership roles and the institution's governance and decision-making policies, procedures, and processes are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. The institution widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.
  - *What process does the institution use to evaluate its governance and decision-making structures? Are the results communicated within the campus community?*
  - *How does the institution use identified weaknesses to make needed improvements?*

## **B. Chief Executive Officer**

1. The institutional chief executive officer (CEO) has primary responsibility for the quality of the institution. The CEO provides effective leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness.
  - *What does the CEO do to communicate institutional values, goals (institution-set standards) and direction?*
  - *How familiar is the CEO with data and analyses of institutional performance?*
  - *How does the CEO communicate the importance of a culture of evidence and a focus on student learning?*
  - *Where does the research office report in the institution; does it have easy access to the CEO's office?*
  - *What mechanisms has the CEO put in place to link institutional research, particularly research on student learning, to institutional planning processes, and resource allocation processes?*
  - *How does the district chief executive officer follow the component parts of this Standard in the role of providing effective district leadership?*
2. The CEO plans, oversees, and evaluates an administrative structure organized and staffed to reflect the institution's purposes, size, and complexity. The CEO delegates authority to administrators and others consistent with their responsibilities, as appropriate.
3. Through established policies and procedures, the CEO guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by:
  - *establishing a collegial process that sets values, goals, and priorities;*

- *ensuring the college sets institutional performance standards for student achievement;*
- *ensuring that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and analysis of external and internal conditions;*
- *ensuring that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and allocation to support student achievement and learning;*
- *ensuring that the allocation of resources supports and improves achievement and learning; and*
- *establishing procedures to evaluate overall institutional planning and implementation efforts to achieve the mission of the institution.*
- *What does the CEO do to communicate institutional values, goals (institution-set standards) and direction?*
- *How familiar is the CEO with data and analyses of institutional performance?*
- *How does the CEO communicate the importance of a culture of evidence and a focus on student learning?*
- *What mechanisms has the CEO put in place to link institutional research, particularly research on student learning, to institutional planning processes, and resource allocation processes?*
- *How does the district chief executive officer follow the component parts of this Standard in the role of providing effective district leadership?*

Effective Practices

The CEO uses data in decision making, identifying priorities, and measuring progress in building a culture of evidence and inquiry.

The CEO directs the hiring of faculty, administrators, and staff who are committed to student learning and achievement.

4. The CEO has the primary leadership role for accreditation, ensuring that the institution meets or exceeds Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies at all times. Faculty, staff, and administrative leaders of the institution also have responsibility for assuring compliance with accreditation requirements.
  - *How does the CEO take a lead role in accreditation processes?*
  - *How does the CEO ensure others on campus also understand accreditation?*
5. The CEO assures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and governing board policies and assures that institutional practices are consistent with institutional mission and policies, including effective control of budget and expenditures.
6. The CEO works and communicates effectively with the communities served by the institution.

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## C. Governing Board

1. The institution has a governing board that has authority over and responsibility for policies to assure the academic quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution. (ER 7)
  - *Does the institution have a policy manual or other compilation of policy documents that demonstrate that the governing board's role in academic quality, integrity, and effectiveness of learning programs and services, and financial stability? Are these policies reviewed on a regular basis?*
  - *What statements about quality of programs, integrity of institutional actions, and about effectiveness of student learning programs and services are to be found in the institution's board-established policies, mission statement, vision or philosophy statement, planning documents, or other statements of direction?*
2. The governing board acts as a collective entity. Once the board reaches a decision, all board members act in support of the decision.
  - *How does the Board demonstrate its support for its own policies and decisions?*
3. The governing board adheres to a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the CEO of the college and/or the district/system.
  - *What is the established board process for conducting search and selection processes for the chief administrator? Are those processes documented?*
  - *Has the board used these processes in its most recent chief administrator searches?*
  - *What mechanisms does the board use in its evaluation of the chief administrator's performance on implementation of board policies and achievement of institutional goals?*
  - *How does the board set clear expectations for regular reports on institutional performance from the chief administrator?*
  - *What is the written policy describing selection and evaluation of the chief administrator? Has the board followed it?*
4. The governing board is an independent, policy-making body that reflects the public interest in the institution's educational quality. It advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or political pressure. (ER 7)
  - *Is the governing board appropriately representative of the public interest and lacking conflict of interest? Does the composition of the governing board reflect public interest in the institution?*

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5. The governing board establishes policies consistent with the college/district/system mission to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them. The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity and stability.

- *What policies, institutional goals or other formal statements exist that describe governing board expectations for quality, integrity and improvement of student learning programs and services?*
- *Is the governing board aware of the institution-set standards and analysis of results for improvement of student achievement and learning?*
- *Is the governing board independent? Are its actions final and not subject to the actions of any other entity?*
- *Is the governing board aware of the institution-set standards and the analysis of results for improvement of student achievement and learning?*

Effective Practices

The governing board supports resource allocation (and re-allocation) for capacity building within the institution to promote and sustain student learning, equity, success, and achievement.

6. The institution or the governing board publishes the board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures.
7. The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The board regularly assesses its policies and bylaws for their effectiveness in fulfilling the college/district/system mission and revises them as necessary.
- *Do the records of governing board actions (minutes, resolutions) indicate that its actions are consistent with its policies and bylaws?*
  - *Does the governing board have a system for evaluating and revising its policies on a regular basis? Is this system implemented?*
8. To ensure the institution is accomplishing its goals for student success, the governing board regularly reviews key indicators of student learning and achievement and institutional plans for improving academic quality.
- *What data on student performance does the Board regularly evaluate?*

Effective Practices

Include an item on each board agenda relevant to improving academic quality and student learning and achievement, closing the achievement gaps, and increasing success and completion of educational goals.

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9. The governing board has an ongoing training program for board development, including new member orientation. It has a mechanism for providing for continuity of board membership and staggered terms of office.
- *What is the governing board's program for development and orientation?*
  - *Does the board have a formal, written method of providing for continuing membership and staggered terms of office?*
10. Board policies and/or bylaws clearly establish a process for board evaluation. The evaluation assesses the board's effectiveness in promoting and sustaining academic quality and institutional effectiveness. The governing board regularly evaluates its practices and performance, including full participation in board training, and makes public the results. The results are used to improve board performance, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness.
- *What is the board self evaluation process as defined in its policies? Does the process as described present as an effective review?*
  - *Does the governing board policy call for regular self evaluation? Does the institution's board regularly evaluate its own performance?*
11. The governing board upholds a code of ethics and conflict of interest policy, and individual board members adhere to the code. The board has a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code and implements it when necessary. A majority of the board members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. Board member interests are disclosed and do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution. (ER 7)
- *What is the board's stated process for dealing with board behavior that is unethical? Does the governing board implement this process? Is there evidence of results?*
  - *Are less than half of the board members owners of the institution? Are a majority of governing board members non-owners of the institution?*
12. The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEO to implement and administer board policies without board interference and holds the CEO accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively.
- *How is the board delegation of administrative authority to the chief administrator defined? (In policy documents? In a contract with the chief administrator?)*
  - *Is this delegation clear to all parties?*
  - *How effective is the governing board in focusing at the policy level?*
  - *What mechanisms does the board use in its evaluation of the chief administrator's performance on implementation of board policies and achievement of institutional goals?*

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- *How does the board set clear expectations for regular reports on institutional performance from the chief administrator?*
  - *How does the board set expectations for sufficient information on institutional performance to ensure that it can fulfill its responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity?*
13. The governing board is informed about the Eligibility Requirements, the Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, accreditation processes, and the college's accredited status, and supports through policy the college's efforts to improve and excel. The board participates in evaluation of governing board roles and functions in the accreditation process.
- *What training is provided to the board about the accreditation process and Accreditation Standards?*
  - *How does the board participate appropriately in institutional self-evaluation and planning efforts?*
  - *How do board actions indicate a commitment to improvements planned as part of institutional self evaluation and accreditation processes?*
  - *How do board actions reflect the commitment to supporting and improving student learning outcomes as reflected in the Accreditation Standards and expectations for institutional improvement?*
  - *Is the board informed of institutional reports due to the Commission, and of Commission recommendations to the institution?*
  - *Is the board knowledgeable about Accreditation Standards, including those that apply to the board?*
  - *Does the board assess its own performance using Accreditation Standards?*
  - *Does the governing board development program address the need to learn about Accreditation Standards and expectations?*

## **D. Multi-College Districts or Systems**

1. In multi-college districts or systems, the district/system CEO provides leadership in setting and communicating expectations of educational excellence and integrity throughout the district/system and assures support for the effective operation of the colleges. Working with the colleges, the district/system CEO establishes clearly defined roles, authority and responsibility between the colleges and the district/system.
  - *What policies and practices demonstrate the delineation of roles and responsibilities for the district/system and the colleges?*
2. The district/system CEO clearly delineates, documents, and communicates the operational responsibilities and functions of the district/system from those of the colleges and consistently adheres to this delineation in practice. The district/system CEO ensures that the colleges receive effective and adequate district/system provided services to support the colleges in achieving their missions. Where a district/system has responsibility for resources, allocation of resources, and planning, it is evaluated against the Standards, and its performance is reflected in the accredited status of the institution.

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- *Does the district/system have a written delineation of responsibilities? Are institutional and district/system staff knowledgeable of this delineation?*
  - *Is the delineation of responsibilities evaluated for effectiveness?*
  - *What feedback mechanisms does the district/system have in place to provide assessment of the effectiveness of district/system services?*
  - *Is the assessment of district/system services data driven? Does it reflect the needs and priorities of the institutions?*
  - *Are district/system services regularly evaluated with regard to their support for institutional missions and functions?*
3. The district/system has a policy for allocation and reallocation of resources that are adequate to support the effective operations and sustainability of the colleges and district/system. The district/system CEO ensures effective control of expenditures.
- *What is the district/system's method of distributing resources to its institutions? Is the district/system based in a realistic assessment of needs of each institution? Is it a fair process? Is it well-understood across the district/system?*
  - *Is the district/system's resource distribution method data-driven? Does it reflect the needs and priorities of the institutions?*
  - *What do the institution's most recent annual independent audit reports and audited financial statements reveal about control of expenditures?*
4. The CEO of the district or system delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEOs of the colleges to implement and administer delegated district/system policies without interference and holds college CEO's accountable for the operation of the colleges.
- *What policies and practices demonstrate delegation of authority to college CEO's that meets the criteria of the Standard?*
5. District/system planning and evaluation are integrated with college planning and evaluation to improve student learning and achievement and institutional effectiveness.
- *How are planning and evaluation integrated between district/system and the colleges?*
  - *How do the district/system and the colleges determine the effectiveness of the integrated planning?*
6. Communication between colleges and districts/systems ensures effective operations of the colleges and should be timely, accurate, and complete in order for the colleges to make decisions effectively.
- *What methods of working jointly do the district/system and institutions use?*
  - *Do these methods result in clear and timely communications in all directions?*
  - *Are the institutions well informed about district/system issues, governing board actions and interests that have an impact on operations, educational*
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*quality, stability or ability to provide high quality education?*

7. The district/system CEO regularly evaluates district/system and college role delineations, governance and decision-making processes to assure their integrity and effectiveness in assisting the colleges in meeting educational goals for student achievement and learning. The district/system widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.
- *What are the district/system's methods for evaluating its effectiveness?*
  - *Does it conduct regular assessments? How does it communicate the results?*
  - *What changes/improvements have been made as a result of these evaluations?*



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## Sources of Evidence: Examples for Standard IV

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard IV. There may be many other sources relevant to each college's unique mission that institutions should provide and teams should consider.

### Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

#### A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

- Evidence that demonstrates board and other governance policies and descriptions of the participation of constituencies in decision-making bodies
- Evidence that includes documents showing the transmission of recommendations from faculty and academic administrators to decision-making bodies, and descriptions of the institution's information and decision-making process
- Evidence that includes copies of governance policies and procedures, the composition of governance bodies, minutes of meetings, and documents showing the roles academic staff play in reviewing and planning student learning programs and services
- Evidence that includes evaluations and analyses the institution conducts of its governing and decision-making processes, and the form of communication of same to the college community
- Evidence that includes the policy manual, institutional statement of mission, vision or philosophy, and institutional planning documents
- Evidence specifically pertaining to the baccalaureate degree, if the institution offers one
- Evidence that includes copies of governance policies and procedures, the composition of governance bodies, minutes of meetings, and documents showing the roles relevant faculty play in reviewing and planning student learning including in DE/CE programs and services
- Evidence that the governance structures, processes and practices include opportunities for staff, faculty and students involved in DE/CE to provide input to the development of the institution
- Evidence that a Substantive Change Proposal was submitted to the Commission when 50% or more of a program, degree, or certificate is offered through DE/CE

#### B. Chief Executive Officer

- Evidence that includes budget documents and independent audit reports and audited financial statements showing ending year balances, and audit exceptions (if any)
- Evidence that includes the results of surveys, other evaluations of the president's activities directed toward the communities served by the institutions
- Evidence that includes surveys and other evaluative instruments, and the results of evaluation. Evidence that includes descriptions of funding rules or formulas, committee minutes or other documents demonstrating that the system has assessed the needs of each institution
- Evidence that includes financial policies and manuals, the content of internal audits and reviews, annual independent external audits, fiscal program reviews conducted by other agencies, and the annual budget documents

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- Evidence that includes any formal delineation of responsibilities that might be found in district/college documents, including descriptions of job duties, descriptions contained in employment contracts, and the district mapping provided to the institutions and the Commission
  - Evidence of other documented or recorded communications
  - Evidence that would include institutional analyses of performance, including fact books, reports, website data, portfolios, and publications that describe research on institutional performance
  - Evidence of documented information about institutional planning processes, minutes of meetings, records of participation in institutional evaluation and planning sessions

### C. Governing Board

- Evidence that includes published statements of institutional goals that reference the governing board's expectations for student learning and quality of education
- Evidence that includes documents describing the authority of the governing board; the absence of any external, higher authority than the board; descriptions of the board appointment and replacement process
- Evidence of the published bylaws
- Evidence of board minutes or a schedule showing board evaluation of policies
- Evidence of the materials from board training workshops
- Evidence of the policy on board membership, appointment and replacement
- Evidence that includes the board's policy and instruments used for self evaluation, analyses and reports on the last few self-evaluations completed
- Evidence of the governing board policy statement of ethics
- Evidence that includes board minutes, statements to college constituents on the delegation of authority, the board policy manual, any contracts with administrators that specify delegation of authority, board agreements with faculty bodies regarding delegation of authority
- Evidence the governing board has taken the quality of the institution's DE/CE into consideration in the development of the relevant policies.
- Examples of governing board statements on DE/CE program quality and integrity.

### D. Multi-College Districts or Systems

- Evidence that includes the district/system's evaluation instruments, the results of the evaluation, and plans for improvement increasing
- Evidence the multi-college district/system has developed a "functional map" or description of district and college functions that delineates and distinguishes roles and responsibilities clearly