



WASC Standards and Criteria for Review (CFRs)

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Standard 1. Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives.

The institution defines its purposes and establishes educational objectives aligned with its purposes and character. It has a clear and conscious sense of its essential values and character, its distinctive elements, its place in the higher educational community and its relationship to society at large. Through its purposes and educational objectives, the institution dedicates itself to higher learning, the search for truth, and the dissemination of knowledge. The institution functions with integrity and autonomy.

Criteria for Review	Guideline
Institutional Purposes	
1.1 The institution’s formally approved statements of purpose and operational practices are appropriate for an institution of higher education and clearly define its essential values and character.	The institution has a published mission statement that clearly describes its purposes. The institution’s purposes fall within recognized academic areas and/or disciplines, or are subject to peer review within the framework of generally recognized academic disciplines or areas of practice.
1.2 The institution develops indicators for the achievement of its purposes and educational objectives at the institutional, program, and course levels. The institution has a system of measuring student achievement, in terms of retention, completion, and student learning. The institution makes public data on student achievement at the institutional and degree level, in a manner determined by the institution.	The institution has published educational objectives that are consistent with its purposes.
1.3 The institution’s leadership creates and sustains a leadership system at all levels that is marked by high performance, appropriate responsibility, and accountability.	

Criteria for Review	Guideline
Integrity	
1.4 The institution publicly states its commitment to academic freedom for faculty, staff, and students, and acts accordingly. This commitment affirms that those in the academy are free to share their convictions and responsible conclusions with their colleagues and students in their teaching and in their writing.	The institution has published or has readily available policies on academic freedom. For those institutions that strive to instill specific beliefs and world views, policies clearly state conditions, and ensure these conditions are consistent with academic freedom. Due process procedures are disseminated, demonstrating that faculty and students are protected in their quest for truth.
1.5 Consistent with its purposes and character, the institution demonstrates an appropriate response to the increasing diversity in society through its policies, its educational and co-curricular programs, and its administrative and organizational practices.	The institution has demonstrated institutional commitment to the principles enunciated in the WASC Statement on Diversity.
1.6 Even when supported by or affiliated with political, corporate, or religious organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.	The institution has no history of interference in substantive decisions or educational functions by political, religious, corporate or other external bodies outside the institution's own governance arrangements.
1.7 The institution truthfully represents its academic goals, programs, and services to students and to the larger public; demonstrates that its academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion and treats students fairly and equitably through established policies and procedures addressing student conduct, grievances, human subjects in research and refunds.	The institution has published or readily- available policies on student grievances and complaints, refunds, etc. and has no history of adverse findings against it with respect to violation of these policies. Records of student complaints are maintained for a six-year period. The institution clearly defines and distinguishes between the different types of credits it offers and between degree and non-degree credit, and accurately identifies the type and meaning of the credit awarded in its transcripts.
1.8 The institution exhibits integrity in its operations as demonstrated by the implementation of appropriate policies, sound business practices, timely and fair responses to complaints and grievances, and regular evaluation of its performance in these areas.	The institution has published or readily-available grievance procedures for faculty, staff, and students. Its finances are regularly audited by external agencies.
1.9 The institution is committed to honest and open communication with the Accrediting Commission, to informing the Commission promptly of any matter that could materially affect the accreditation status of the institution	

Standard 2. Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions

The institution achieves its institutional purposes and attains its educational objectives through the core functions of teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity, and support for student learning. It demonstrates that these core functions are performed effectively and that they support one another in the institution's efforts to attain educational effectiveness.

Criteria for Review	Guidelines
Teaching and Learning	
2.1 The institution's educational programs are appropriate in content, standards, and nomenclature for the degree level awarded, regardless of mode of delivery, and are staffed by sufficient numbers of faculty qualified for the type and level of curriculum offered.	The content, length, and standards of the institution's academic programs conform to recognized disciplinary or professional standards and are subject to peer review.
2.2 All degrees—undergraduate and graduate—awarded by the institution are clearly defined in terms of entry-level requirements and in terms of levels of student achievement necessary for graduation that represent more than simply an accumulation of courses or credits.	Competencies required for graduation are reflected in course syllabi for both General Education and the major.
Baccalaureate programs engage students in an integrated course of study of sufficient breadth and depth to prepare them for work, citizenship, and a fulfilling life. These programs also ensure the development of core learning abilities and competencies including, but not limited to, college-level written and oral communication; college-level quantitative skills; information literacy; and the habit of critical analysis of data and argument. In addition, baccalaureate programs actively foster an understanding of diversity; civic responsibility; the ability to work with others; and the capability to engage in lifelong learning.	The institution has a program of General Education that is integrated throughout the curriculum, including at the upper division level, consisting of a minimum of 45 semester credit hours (or the equivalent), together with significant study in depth in a given area of knowledge (typically described in terms of a major).
Baccalaureate programs also ensure breadth for all students in the areas of cultural and aesthetic, social and political, as well as scientific and technical knowledge expected of educated persons in this society. Finally, students are required to engage in an in-depth, focused, and sustained program of study as part of their baccalaureate programs.	

Criteria for Review	Guideline
<p>Graduate programs are consistent with the purpose and character of their institutions; are in keeping with the expectations of their respective disciplines and professions; and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the several levels of graduate and professional degrees offered. Graduate curricula are visibly structured to include active involvement with the literature of the field and ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate high-level professional practice and training experiences. Additionally, admission criteria to graduate programs normally include a baccalaureate degree in an appropriate undergraduate program.</p>	<p>Institutions offering graduate-level programs demonstrate sufficient resources and structures to sustain these programs and create a graduate-level academic culture.</p>
<p>2.3 The institution's student learning outcomes and expectations for student attainment are clearly stated at the course, program and, as appropriate, institutional level.</p>	<p>The use of information and learning resources beyond textbooks is evidenced in syllabi throughout the undergraduate and graduate curriculum.</p>
<p>2.4 The institution's expectations for learning and student attainment are developed and widely shared among its members (including faculty, students, staff, and where appropriate, external stakeholders). The institution's faculty takes collective responsibility for establishing, reviewing, fostering, and demonstrating the attainment of these expectations.</p>	
<p>2.5 The institution's academic programs actively involve students in learning, challenge them to achieve high expectations, and provide them with appropriate and ongoing feedback about their performance and how it can be improved.</p>	
<p>2.6 The institution demonstrates that its graduates consistently achieve its stated levels of attainment and ensures that its expectations for student learning are embedded in the standards faculty use to evaluate student work.</p>	
<p>2.7 In order to improve currency and effectiveness, all programs offered by the institution are subject to review, including analyses of the achievement of the program's learning objectives and outcomes. Where appropriate, evidence from external constituencies such as employers and professional societies is included in such reviews.</p>	<p>The institution incorporates its assessment of educational objectives results with respect to student achievement, including program completion, license examination, and placement rates results.</p>

Criteria for Review	Guideline
2.7 All programs offered by the institution are subject to systematic program review. The program review process includes analysis of the achievement of the program's learning objectives and outcomes, program retention and completion, and, where appropriate, results of licensing examination and placement and evidence from external constituencies such as employers and professional organizations.	
Scholarship and Creative Activity	
2.8 The institution actively values and promotes scholarship, curricular and instructional innovations, and creative activity, as well as their dissemination at levels and of the kinds appropriate to the institution's purposes and character.	Where appropriate, the institution includes in its policies for faculty promotion and tenure recognition of scholarship related to teaching, learning, assessment, and co-curricular learning.
2.9 The institution recognizes and promotes appropriate linkages among scholarship, teaching, student learning and service.	
Support for Student Learning	
2.10. The institution collects and analyzes student data disaggregated by demographic categories and areas of study. It tracks achievement, satisfaction, and campus climate to support student success.	The institution's policy on grading and student evaluation is clearly stated, and provides opportunity for appeal as needed; and periodic analyses of grades and evaluation procedures are conducted to assess the rigor and impact of these policies.
2.11 Consistent with its purposes, the institution develops and assesses its co-curricular programs.	
2.12. The institution ensures that all students understand the requirements of their academic programs and receive timely, useful, and regular information and advising about relevant academic requirements.	Recruiting and admission practices, academic calendars, publications, and advertising are accurate, current, disclosing, and are readily available to support student needs.
2.13. Student support services—including financial aid, registration, advising, career counseling, computer labs, and library and information services—are designed to meet the needs of the specific types of students the institution serves and the curricula it offers.	
2.14. Institutions that serve transfer students assume an obligation to provide clear and accurate information about transfer requirements, ensure equitable treatment for such students with respect to academic policies, and ensure that such students are not unduly disadvantaged by transfer requirements.	

Standard 3. Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability

The institution sustains its operations and supports the achievement of its educational objectives through its investment in human, physical, fiscal and information resources and through an appropriate and effective set of organizational and decision-making structures. These key resources and organizational structures promote the achievement of institutional purposes and educational objectives and create a high quality environment for learning.

Criteria for Review	Guidelines
Faculty and Staff	
3.1 The institution employs personnel sufficient in number and professional qualifications to maintain its operations and to support its academic programs, consistent with its institutional and educational objectives.	
3.2. The institution demonstrates that it employs a faculty with substantial and continuing commitment to the institution sufficient in number, professional qualifications, and diversity to achieve its educational objectives, to establish and oversee academic policies, and to ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs wherever and however delivered.	The institution systematically engages full-time faculty in such processes as assessment, program review, and faculty development.
3.3. Faculty and staff recruitment, orientation, workload, incentive, and evaluation practices are aligned with institutional purposes and educational objectives.	
3.4. The institution maintains appropriate and sufficiently supported faculty development activities designed to improve teaching and learning consistent with its educational objectives and institutional purposes.	The institution provides training and support for faculty members teaching by means of technology-mediated instruction.
Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources	
3.5. The institution has a history of financial stability, unqualified independent financial audits and has resources sufficient to ensure long-term viability...If an institution has an accumulated deficit, it has realistic plans to eliminate the deficit.	The institution has a history of financial stability, appropriate independent audits, and realistic plans to eliminate any accumulated deficits and to build sufficient reserves to support long-term viability.

Criteria for Review	Guideline
3.6. The institution holds, or provides access to, information resources sufficient in scope, quality, currency, and kind to support its academic offerings and the scholarship of its members. These information resources, services and facilities are consistent with the institution's educational objectives and are aligned with student learning outcomes.	
3.7. The institution's information technology resources are sufficiently coordinated and supported to fulfill its educational purposes and to provide key academic and administrative functions.	
Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes	
3.8. The institution's organizational structures and decision-making processes are clear, consistent with its purposes, and sufficient to support effective decision making.	The institution establishes clear roles, responsibilities, and lines of authority, which are reflected in an organization chart.
3.9. The institution has an independent governing board or similar authority that, consistent with its legal and fiduciary authority, exercises appropriate oversight over institutional integrity, policies, and ongoing operations, including hiring and evaluating the chief executive officer.	The governing body regularly engages in self-review and training to enhance its effectiveness.
3.10. The institution has a full-time chief executive officer and a chief financial officer whose primary or full-time responsibility is to the institution. In addition, the institution has a sufficient number of other qualified administrators to provide effective educational leadership and management.	
3.11. The institution's faculty exercises effective academic leadership and acts consistently to ensure both academic quality and the appropriate maintenance of the institution's educational purposes and character.	The institution clearly defines the governance roles, rights, and responsibilities of the faculty.

Standard 4. Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement

The institution conducts sustained, evidence-based, and participatory discussions about how effectively it is accomplishing its purposes and achieving its educational objectives. These activities inform both institutional planning and systematic evaluations of educational effectiveness. The results of institutional inquiry, research, and data collection are used to establish priorities at different levels of the institution, and to revise institutional purposes, structures, and approaches to teaching, learning, and scholarly work.

Criteria for Review	Guidelines
Strategic Thinking and Planning	
<p>4.1. The institution periodically engages its multiple constituencies in institutional reflection and planning processes which assess its strategic position; articulate priorities; examine the alignment of its purposes, core functions and resources; and define the future direction of the institution. The institution monitors the effectiveness of the implementation of its plans and revises them as appropriate.</p>	<p>A clear charge to planning bodies with a regular schedule and the existence of an understandable and coherent plan for assessing the attainment of educational objectives must be developed. Evidence of the ways the results of planning and evaluation are linked to decision-making is demonstrable.</p>
<p>4.2. Planning processes at the institution define and, to the extent possible, align academic, personnel, fiscal, physical, and technological needs with the strategic objectives and priorities of the institution.</p>	
<p>4.3. Planning processes are informed by appropriately defined and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data, and include consideration of evidence of educational effectiveness, including student learning.</p>	
<p>4.4. The institution employs a deliberate set of quality assurance processes at each level of institutional functioning, including new curriculum and program approval processes, periodic program review, ongoing evaluation, and data collection. These processes include assessing effectiveness, tracking results over time, using comparative data from external sources, and improving structures, processes, curricula, and pedagogy.</p>	

Criteria for Review	Guideline
Commitment to Learning and Improvement	
<p>4.5. The institution has institutional research capacity consistent with its purposes and objectives. Institutional research addresses strategic data needs, is disseminated in a timely manner, and is incorporated in institutional review and decision-making processes. Included in the institutional research function is the collection of appropriate data to support the assessment of student learning. Periodic reviews are conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the research function and the suitability and usefulness of data.</p>	<p>The institution exhibits existence of clear institutional research capacities with appropriate reporting lines and support appropriate to the institution's size and scope. Institutional research or equivalent databases are developed that are sufficient to meet all external reporting needs (e.g. IPEDS), and there are appropriate ways to access or disseminate this information through publications, reports, or widely-accessible databases.</p>
<p>4.6 Leadership at all levels is committed to improvement based on the results of the processes of inquiry, evaluation and assessment used throughout the institution. The faculty take responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and use the results for improvement. Assessments of the campus environment in support of academic and co-curricular objectives are also undertaken and used, and are incorporated into institutional planning.</p>	<p>The institution has clear, well-established policies and practices for gathering and analyzing information that leads to a culture of evidence and improvement.</p>
<p>4.7. The institution, with significant faculty involvement, engages in ongoing inquiry into the processes of teaching and learning, as well as into the conditions and practices that promote the kinds and levels of learning intended by the institution. The outcomes of such inquiries are applied to the design of curricula, the design and practice of pedagogy, and to the improvement of evaluation means and methodology.</p>	
<p>4.8. Appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, and others defined by the institution, are involved in the assessment of the effectiveness of the educational programs.</p>	