

2020 Standards for Accreditation

The Northwest Commission on College and University Accreditation (NWCCU) Standards for Accreditation support the organization's mission to accredit institutions of higher education on a seven-year cycle by applying evidence-informed standards and processes to support continuous improvements and promote student achievement and success.

Design and Function

NWCCU's Standards for Accreditation define the quality, effectiveness, and continuous improvements expected of accredited institutions. The Standards serve as indicators by which institutions are evaluated by peers through a process of selection and evaluation that blends analysis and synthesis into a holistic examination of the institution's ability to fulfill its unique mission, deliver quality education, and promote student achievement.

Structure

Each Standard for Accreditation is designated by a number and title (e.g., Standard 1. Student Success and Institutional Mission and Effectiveness) and is further defined by elements of the Standard, which are designated by the number of the Standard followed by the element (e.g., 1.A Institutional Mission). Each Standard is introduced by a narrative summary intended only to provide direction and not to serve as a criterion for evaluation.

STANDARD ONE – STUDENT SUCCESS AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND EFFECTIVENESS

The institution articulates its commitment to student success, primarily measured through student learning and achievement, for all students, with a focus on equity and closing achievement gaps, and establishes a mission statement, acceptable thresholds, and benchmarks for effectiveness with meaningful indicators. The institution's programs are consistent with its mission and culminate in identified student outcomes leading to degrees, certificates, credentials, employment, or transfer to other higher education institutions or programs. Programs are systematically assessed using meaningful indicators to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and achieve stated student learning outcomes for all students, including underrepresented students and first-generation college students.

Institutional Mission

1.A.1 The institution's mission statement defines its broad educational purposes and its commitment to student learning and achievement.

Improving Institutional Effectiveness

1.B.1 The institution demonstrates a continuous process in assessing institutional effectiveness, including student learning and achievement and support services. The institution uses an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement.

1.B.2 The institution sets and ar

1.C.8 Transfer credit and credit for prior learning is accepted according to clearly defined widely published, and easily accessible policies that provide adequate safeguards to ensure

Governance

2.A.1 The institution demonstrates an effective governance structure (a board(s) or other governing body(ies) composed predominantly of members with no contractual employment relationship or personal financial interest with the institution. Such members shall also possess clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Institutions that are part of a complex system with multiple boards, a centralized board, or related entities shall have with respect to such boards, written and clearly defined contractual authority, roles, and responsibilities for all entities. In addition, authority and responsibility between the system and the institution is clearly delineated in a written contract, described on its website and in its public documents, and provides the NWCCU accredited institution with sufficient autonomy to fulfill its mission.

2.A.2 The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of authority, responsibility and accountability who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.

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2.C.1 The institutions 2.C

Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in an occupation or profession shall be included in such materials.

2.G.4 The institution provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information regarding the categories of financial assistance (such as scholarships, grants, and loans) is published and made available to prospective and enrolled students.

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Eligibility Requirements
for Candidates for Accreditation
and Accredited Higher Education Institutions

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)

licensure, and measures of postgraduation success. The indicators of student achievement are disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, generation college student, and any other institutionally meaningful categories that are used to help promote student achievement and close barriers to academic excellence and success (gaps)

7. NON-DISCRIMINATION The institution is governed and administered with respect for the individual in a nondiscriminatory manner while responding to the educational needs and legitimate claims of the constituencies it serves as determined by its mission

8. INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY The institution establishes and adheres to ethical standards in all of its academic programs, operations and relationships.

9. GOVERNING BOARD The institution has a functioning governing board(s) responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution and for each college/within a multiple unit district (UJ.42(4)3)

13. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS Consistent with its mission, the institution provides one or more educational programs all of which include appropriate content and rigor. The educational program(s) culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes and lead to degree(s) with degree designations consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

14. LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES Consistent with its mission, the institution employs qualified personnel and provides access to library and information resources with a level of currency, depth, and breadth sufficient to support and sustain the institution's mission, programs and services.

15. PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE The institution provides the facilities, equipment, and information technology infrastructure necessary to fulfill and sustain its mission and maintain compliance with all federal and applicable state and local law. The institution's planning includes emergency preparedness and contingency planning for continuity and recovery of operations should catastrophic events significantly interrupt normal institutional operations.

16. ACADEMIC FREEDOM Within the context of its mission and values, the institution adheres to and maintains an atmosphere that promotes, supports, sustains academic freedom and independence that protects its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment. Faculty, students, staff, and administrators are free to examine and test all knowledge and theories.

17. ADMISSIONS The institution publishes student admission policies which specify the characteristics and qualifications appropriate for its programs and adheres to those policies in its admissions procedures and practices.

18. PUBLIC INFORMATION The institution publishes current and accurate information regarding: its mission; admission requirements and procedures; grading policy; information on academic programs and courses; names, titles and academic credentials of administrators and faculty; rules and regulations for student conduct; rights and responsibilities of students; tuition, fees, and other program costs; refund policies and procedures; opportunities and requirements for

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