
Questions to Use in Institutional Evaluation

This *Guide* is designed to provoke thoughtful dialogue and judgment about institutional quality by college communities engaged in self evaluation and by external evaluation teams assigned to affirm the quality of institutions. As either group seeks to evaluate an institution's ability to meet the Accreditation Standards, inquiry – asking questions and seeking answers – is necessary before judgment is made. The following questions are designed to provoke thoughtful reflection about institutional quality and may be asked by either the institution engaged in self-reflection for self evaluation, or by the External Evaluation Team that visits the college. The *Guide* also provides a list of possible sources of evidence that can be used to develop answers to the questions raised through the process of inquiry.

The questions, and lists of possible evidence, are designed to inform discussions of student achievement and learning, such as number of graduates, number of transfer students, retention rates, course completion rates, job placement rates; institutional performance such as the presence and effective use of institutional resources, structures, and policies, to achieve the institutions educational mission; and student learning outcomes such as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that the institution intended students to learn and which are defined by the institution as the intended learning outcomes. There may be many other questions that institutions and team members can and should ask in order to assess educational quality and institutional effectiveness relevant to each college's unique mission.

Standard III B

B. Physical Resources

Physical resources, which include facilities, equipment, land, and other assets, support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. Physical resource planning is integrated with institutional planning.

1. The institution provides safe and sufficient physical resources that support and assure the integrity and quality of its programs and services, regardless of location or means of delivery.
 - Against what criteria and by what processes does the institution evaluate the safety of its facilities?
 - What evidence and/or data does the institution use to determine the sufficiency of its classrooms, lecture halls, laboratories, and other facilities? What mechanisms does the college use to evaluate how effectively facilities meet the needs of programs and services?
 - How well does the institution meet its facilities needs? Does the institution use the same criteria and processes for determining safety and sufficiency of facilities at off-campus sites? To what extent are off-campus sites safe and sufficient?
 - How does the college use the results of facilities evaluations to improve them? Does the college use similar processes to assure the safety and sufficiency of its equipment?
 - How does the institution support the equipment needs of the distance delivery modes it offers? Are institutional needs for equipment met?
- a. The institution plans, builds, maintains, and upgrades or replaces its physical resources in a manner that assures effective utilization and the continuing quality necessary to support its programs and services.
 - 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?
 - How does the institution evaluate effectiveness of facilities and equipment in meeting the needs of programs and services?
 - How effectively does the institution use its physical resources?
- b. The institution assures that physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and services 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?

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2. 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?
- a. 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?
- b. Physical resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. The institution systematically assesses the effective use of physical resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement.
- How does the institution ensure that facilities decisions are developed from program review results, institutional needs, and plans for improvement?
 - What evidence is there that the institution bases its physical resource decisions on the results of evaluation of program and service needs? How does the institution prioritize needs when making decisions about equipment purchases?
 - How does the institution determine that physical resource needs in program and service areas are met effectively? How effectively are those needs met?

Evidence Examples

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