

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

The institution demonstrates strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes achievement of student learning and to communicating the mission internally and externally. The institution uses analyses of quantitative and qualitative data and analysis in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation to verify and improve the effectiveness by which the mission is accomplished.

A. Mission

The institution has a statement of mission that defines the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning.

- What does the institution's mission statement say about its educational purposes? Are these purposes appropriate to an institution of higher learning?
 - Who are the college's intended students? How does the institution determine its intended population? Is the identified population a reasonable match for the institution's location, resources, and role in higher education?
 - What processes does the institution use to foster college wide commitment to student learning? Does the mission statement express this commitment?
1. The institution establishes student learning programs and services aligned with its purposes, its character, and its student population.
 - Have discussions been held among key constituents regarding the relevance of the mission statement to student learning?
 - What statements about student learning are included in the mission statement? How do these statements make explicit the purposes of the institution?
 - How does the institution know that it is addressing the needs of its student population?
 - What assessments of institutional effectiveness are undertaken?
 2. The mission statement is approved by the governing board and published.
 - When was the current mission statement approved by the board?
 3. Using the institution's governance and decision-making processes, the institution reviews its mission statement on a regular basis and revises it as necessary.
 - How effective is the institution's process for periodic review of the mission statement? Does the process allow for incorporating the interests of the institutions' stakeholders?
 - How does the institution know that the way the mission statement is developed, approved and communicated to all stakeholders is effective? What circumstances prompt changes to the statement?
 4. The institution's mission is central to institutional planning and decision making.
 - How effectively does the mission statement prompt planning and decision making? To what extent is the mission statement central to the choices the college makes?

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B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

The institution demonstrates a conscious effort to produce and support student learning, measures that learning, assesses how well learning is occurring, and makes changes to improve student learning. The institution also organizes its key processes and allocates its resources to effectively support student learning. The institution demonstrates its effectiveness by providing 1) evidence of the achievement of student learning outcomes and 2) evidence of institution and program performance. The institution uses ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine its key processes and improve student learning.

1. The institution maintains an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes.
 - How has the college structured its dialogue? How well does the college embrace and understand the purpose of the dialogue?
 - When, how, and about what subjects has the college engaged in dialogue? What impact has the dialogue had on student learning?
 - Does the dialogue lead to a collective understanding of the meaning of evidence, data, and research used in evaluation of student learning?
2. The institution sets goals to improve its effectiveness consistent with its stated purposes. The institution articulates its goals and states the objectives derived from them in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined and widely discussed. The institutional members understand these goals and work collaboratively toward their achievement.
 - What criteria does the college use to determine its priorities and set goals (institution-set standards)?
 - Is there broad-based understanding of the goals and the processes to implement them? Is there institutional commitment to achieve identified goals?
 - How well does the college implement its goals?
 - Are goals articulated so that the institution can later determine the degree to which they have been met?
 - To what extent does the college achieve its goals?
 - What evidence is used to demonstrate progress toward achieving college goals?
3. The institution assesses progress toward achieving its stated goals and makes decisions regarding the improvement of institutional effectiveness in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. Evaluation is based on analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data.

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- To what extent does the institution understand and participate in ongoing and integrated planning?

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- Does the college have a planning process in place? Is it cyclical, i.e., does it incorporate systematic evaluation of programs and services, improvement planning, implementation, and re-evaluation? How does college budgeting of resources follow planning? How is planning integrated?
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- To what extent are institutional data and evidence available and used for planning? Are data analyzed and interpreted for easy understanding by the college community?
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 - What data and/or evidence is used to communicate and analyze institution-set standards.
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4. The institution provides evidence that the planning process is broad-based, offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.
 - What mechanisms exist for participation in college planning?
 - How is broad involvement guaranteed?
 - To what extent does the college allocate resources to fulfill its plans?
 - When resources to fulfill plans are not available, does the college identify and follow strategies to increase its capacity, i.e., seek alternate means for securing resources?
 - What changes have occurred as a result of implemented plans?
 5. The institution uses documented assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies.
 - What assessment data does the college collect?
 - By what means does the college make public its data and analyses internally and externally?
 - How does the college assess whether it is effectively communicating information about institutional quality to the public?
 - How does the institution communicate its institution-set standards?
 6. The institution assures the effectiveness of its ongoing planning and resource allocation processes by systematically reviewing and modifying, as appropriate, all parts of the cycle, including institutional and other research efforts.
 - What processes does the institution use to assess the effectiveness of its cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation implementation, and re-evaluation?
 - How effective is the college planning process for fostering improvement?
 7. The institution assesses its evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review of their effectiveness in improving instructional programs, student support services, and library and other learning support services.
 - 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?

Sources of Evidence: Examples for Standard IA & B

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.

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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

B. Improving 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
- 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