

Introduction to the Accreditation Standards

Shaping the Dialogue

The primary purpose of an ACCJC-accredited institution is to foster learning in its students. An effective institution ensures that its resources and processes support student learning, continuously assesses that learning, and pursues institutional excellence and improvement. An effective institution maintains an ongoing, self-reflective dialogue about its quality and improvement.

An institution-wide dialogue must be at the heart of the self-evaluation process for the college community to gain a comprehensive perspective of the institution. Although the standards are presented in four parts, they work together to facilitate this dialogue on the institution's effectiveness and on ways in which it may improve. The self study provides the Commission with the institution's assessment of itself as a whole.

The institutional mission provides the impetus for achieving student learning and other goals that the institution endeavors to accomplish. The institution provides the means for students to learn, assesses how well learning is occurring, and strives to improve that learning through ongoing, systematic, and integrated planning (Standard I). Instructional programs, student support services, and library and learning support services facilitate the achievement of the institution's stated student learning outcomes (Standard II). Human, physical, technology, and financial resources enable these programs and services to function and improve (Standard III). Ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization guides the accomplishment of the mission and supports institutional effectiveness and improvement (Standard IV).

A college-wide dialogue that integrates the elements of the Standards provides the complete view of the institution that is needed to verify integrity and to promote quality and improvement.

**Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)
Western Association of Schools and Colleges**

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Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

B. Student Support Services

The institution recruits and admits diverse students who are able to benefit from its programs, consistent with its mission. Student support services address the identified needs of students and enhance a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, learning, and success. The institution systematically assesses student support services using student learning outcomes, faculty and staff input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of these services.

1. The institution assures the quality of student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance achievement of the mission of the institution.^{1, 2}
2. The institution provides a catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate, and current information concerning the following:
 - a. General Information
 - Official Name, Address(es), Telephone Number(s), and Web Site Address of the Institution
 - Educational Mission
 - Course, Program, and Degree Offerings
 - Academic Calendar and Program Length
 - Academic Freedom Statement
 - Available Student Financial Aid
 - Available Learning Resources
 - Names and Degrees of Administrators and Faculty
 - Names of Governing Board Members
 - b. Requirements
 - Admissions
 - Student Fees and Other Financial Obligations
 - Degree, Certificates, Graduation and Transfer

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- c. Major Policies Affecting Students
 - Academic Regulations, including Academic Honesty
 - Nondiscrimination
 - Acceptance of Transfer Credits
 - Grievance and Complaint Procedures
 - Sexual Harassment
 - Refund of Fees
 - d. Locations or publications where other policies may be found
3. The institution researches and identifies the learning support needs of its student population and provides appropriate services and programs to address those needs.
- a. 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.¹
 - b. The institution provides an environment that encourages personal and civic responsibility, as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all of its students.
 - c. The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates counseling and/or academic advising programs to support student development and success and prepares faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising function.
 - d. The institution designs and maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services that support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity.
 - e. The institution regularly evaluates admissions and placement instruments and practices to validate their effectiveness while minimizing biases.

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- f. 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.
- 4. The institution evaluates student support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.

C. Library and Learning Support Services

Library and other learning support services for students are sufficient to support the institution's instructional programs and intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural activities in whatever format and wherever they are offered. Such services include library services and collections, tutoring, learning centers, computer laboratories, and learning technology development and training. The institution provides access and training to students so that library and other learning support services may be used effectively and efficiently. The institution systematically assesses these services using student learning outcomes, faculty input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of the services.

Standard IIB--Student Support Services

Standard IIC--Library and Learning Support Services

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

1. The institution supports the quality of its instructional programs by providing library and other learning support services that are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety to facilitate educational offerings, regardless of location or means of delivery.¹
 - a. 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 of the institution.
 - b. The institution provides ongoing instruction for users of library and other learning support services so that students are able to develop skills in information competency.
 - c. The institution provides students and personnel responsible for student learning programs and services adequate access to the library and other learning support services, regardless of their location or means of delivery.¹
 - d. The institution provides effective maintenance and security for its library and other learning support services.
 - e. 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 performance of these services is evaluated on a regular basis. The institution takes responsibility for and assures the reliability of all services provided either directly or through contractual arrangement.
2. The institution evaluates library and other learning support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.