

Guide to Evaluating Postsecondary Institutions

FOR USE WITH THE ACS WASC
2009 STANDARDS



2010 EDITION

All rights reserved. ACS WASC retains full copyright ownership, rights and protection of all material contained in this document. ACS WASC authorizes you to electronically copy and download documents for WASC accreditation purposes only. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval systems, for all other purposes without permission in writing from ACS WASC.

© 2009 by ACS WASC. All rights reserved

10/22/09

Guide to Evaluating Postsecondary Institutions

FOR USE WITH THE ACS WASC
2009 STANDARDS

**Western Association of Schools and Colleges
Accrediting Commission for Schools
533 Airport Blvd., Suite 200
Burlingame, CA 94010**

**Western Association of Schools and Colleges
Accrediting Commission for Schools
43517 Ridge Park Drive, Suite 100
Temecula, CA 92590**



2010 EDITION

CONTENTS

Important Notice	iii
Preface	v
Introduction	
General Information about Accreditation	1
Benefits of Accreditation	1
Institutional Obligations.....	1
Visiting Team Obligations.....	1
Commission Obligations.....	1
The Standards.....	2
Related Criteria	2
Discussion Questions	3
Evidence.....	3
Areas of Strength and Key Issues to be Addressed	3
Self-Study Emphasis.....	3
Standards 1–10	
Standard I: Institutional Mission, Purpose, and Objectives.....	5
Standard II: Organizational Structure	7
Standard III: Evaluation and Planning.....	11
Standard IV: Educational Programs.....	15
Standard V: Program, Student, and Institutional Outcomes	19
Standard VI: Student Support Services.....	23
Standard VII: Human Resources	27
Standard VIII: Learning Resources	33
Standard IX: Financial Resources.....	35
Standard X: Physical Resources	39

Important Notice

The following condition must be met before an institution can host a Visiting Committee for pre-accreditation (candidacy), initial accreditation, or re-accreditation:

- For institutions seeking pre-accreditation (candidacy), initial accreditation, or re-accreditation, in order to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the institution's qualifications for pre-accreditation (candidacy), initial accreditation or re-accreditation, the institution being considered must give notice in the appropriate newspaper(s) and/or other media services. This notice for comments must be made prior to hosting a Visiting Committee for pre-accreditation (candidacy), initial accreditation, or re-accreditation. The notice must state that the institution is applying for accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Schools of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. In addition, it must state that persons wishing to make comments should write to:

Executive Director
Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC
533 Airport Blvd., Suite 200
Burlingame, CA 94010

Persons making comments must provide their names and mailing addresses.

For additional information on this requirement, please refer to Commission's *Policy Manual, Part II*, Section I, Paragraph 110.

Preface

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is one of six regional accrediting associations in the United States. The Commission provides assistance to educational institutions located in California, Hawaii, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and East Asia. This association is composed of three commissions:

1. Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities
2. Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
3. Accrediting Commission for Schools

The Accrediting Commission for Schools (ACS WASC) extends its services to public, independent, and religious K–12 schools and postsecondary institutions that are non-profit and non-degree-granting. ACS WASC does not accredit distance education postsecondary institutions.

Introduction

General Information about Accreditation

Accreditation as a system of voluntary, non-governmental self regulation and peer review is unique to American educational institutions. It is a system by which an institution evaluates itself in accordance with standards of good practice regarding its mission; the appropriateness, sufficiency, and utilization of resources; the usefulness, integrity, and effectiveness of its processes; and the extent to which it is achieving its intended institutional and student outcomes. It is a process by which accreditors provide students, the public, and each other with assurances of institutional integrity, quality, and effectiveness. Accreditation is intended to encourage institutions to plan for institutional improvement in quality and effectiveness.

Benefits of Accreditation

One major benefit from the accreditation process is that a Visiting Committee of professional colleagues during an on-site visit will validate the institution's self-study findings, as described in the self-study report, by reviewing the institution's operation, the educational programs, and the documents on file. Another benefit is the public recognition that comes with accreditation. Successful completion of the accrediting process signifies not only that the institution's services are sound and on a course of continuous improvement, but also that it is meeting its broader responsibility to the public.

Institutional Obligations

Each institution affiliated with ACS WASC accepts the obligation to undergo a cycle of periodic evaluation through institutional self study and professional peer review. The heart of this obligation is conducting a rigorous self study during which an institution appraises itself against the Commission's standards in terms of its stated institutional purposes. The cycle of evaluation requires a comprehensive self study every six years following initial accreditation or candidacy for accreditation, and a visit by a team of peers. The cycle included a mandatory midterm report in the third year as well as any other reports requested by the Commission. Additional site visits conducted by Commission representatives, including unannounced visits, may be required beyond the comprehensive self study.

Visiting Team Obligations

Visiting teams conduct a review following completion of a self study in order to determine the extent to which an institution meets the standards. Team members, selected for their expertise from member institutions, make recommendations for improvement to an institution, commend exemplary practices, and provide both the institution and the Commission with a report of their findings.

Commission Obligations

It is the responsibility of the thirty-two member Commission to determine the accredited status of an institution. In determining this status, the Commission uses the institutional self study

report, the visiting team report, and the accreditation history of the institution. The Commission decision is communicated to the institution by way of a letter from the Commission chair and is made public through the Commission's website. The Commission requires institutions to submit annual reports for review. Additional site visits may be conducted by Commission representatives, including unannounced visits, to determine the institution's continuing improvement process in meeting the Commission's standards.

The Standards

The ACS WASC standards encompass ten areas, all of which are designed to promote thoughtful reflection about student achievement, institutional performance, and student learning outcomes and how they relate to the institution's mission. The topics covered in the standards are:

1. Institutional Mission, Objectives, and Purpose
2. Organizational Structure
3. Evaluation and Planning
4. Educational programs
5. Program, Student, and Institutional Outcomes
6. Student Support Services
7. Human Resources
8. Learning Resources
9. Financial Resources
10. Physical Resources

The standards ask institutions to make a commitment in action to providing high quality education congruent with institutional mission. The first expression of this is in Standard I, which calls for an institutional mission statement that reflects the intended student population and the institution's commitment to student learning. Throughout the ten standards, the ACS WASC Commission asks that institutions ensure the consistency between mission and institutional goals and plans and ensure that the mission is more than a statement of intention — that it guides institutional action. The standards also ask that an institution commit to supporting student learning as its primary mission.

Related Criteria

Related criteria within each standard are designed to encourage thoughtful dialogue and judgment about institutional quality by the institution's stakeholders engaged in the self-study and by peer evaluation teams assigned to affirm the quality of institutions. As either group seeks to evaluate an institution's ability to measure up to the ten Standards of Accreditation, inquiry — asking questions and seeking answers — is necessary before judgment is made. The questions within each standard are designed to provoke thoughtful reflection about institutional quality. The questions are designed to be asked by either the institution engaged in self-reflection as part of the self study, or by the peer evaluation team that visits the campus. Also provided are lists of possible sources of evidence that can be used to develop answers to the questions raised through the process of inquiry.

Discussion Questions

The discussion questions, and lists of possible evidence, are designed to inform discussions of *student achievement*, 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 institution's educational mission; and *student learning outcomes*, such as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that the intended students are to learn and which are defined by the institution as the intended learning outcomes. It should be kept in mind that there may be many other questions that institutions and team members can and should ask in order to assess institutional quality and effectiveness.

Evidence

Along with each standard, examples of potential sources of evidence are listed that will give institutions some guidance in presenting data upon which judgments or conclusions are based. For evidence to be useful, it must have undergone analysis and reflection by the institution's stakeholders. Good evidence is representative of what is, not just an isolated case, and it is information upon which an institution can take action to improve. That is, evidence should be relevant, verifiable, representative, and actionable.

Areas of Strength and Key Issues to be Addressed

After reviewing what is currently in place for each standard, major strengths should be listed for each of the ten standards. In addition, key issues that need to be addressed should also be listed. The most critical of the key issues should be included in the school's action plan.

Self-Study Emphasis

In summary, through the self-study process the institution's overarching emphasis is one in which it provides evidence of a conscious effort to:

- Make learning the institution's core activity
- Support and produce student learning
- Measure that learning
- Assess how well learning is occurring
- Make changes to improve student learning
- Organize its key processes to effectively support student learning
- Allocate its resources to effectively support student learning
- Improve learning as an important means to institutional improvement

Standards 1–10

Standard I: Institutional Mission, Purpose, and Objectives

The Standard: The institution that is designed for adult students, to demonstrate strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes achievement of student learning in vocational and avocational endeavors, 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.

Criterion 1: The institution has a statement of mission that defines its broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning.

- In what ways does the mission statement reflect the institution’s commitment to achieving student learning?

Criterion 2: The institution establishes student learning programs and services aligned with its purposes, its mission, and its student population.

- What discussions are held among key stakeholders 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?

Criterion 3: The mission statement is approved by the governing board and published.

- Who was involved in the development of the mission statement? How is the mission statement communicated to the institution’s constituents?

Criterion 4: Using the institution’s governance and decision-making processes, the institution reviews its mission statement on a regular basis and revises it as necessary.

- What circumstances prompt changes to the statement?
- What quantitative and qualitative data are used and analyzed in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation of the institution’s mission?

Criterion 5: 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 institution makes?

Sources of Evidence — Examples for Standard I: Institutional Mission, Purpose, and Objectives

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard I. There may be many other sources that institutions should provide and teams should request.

- Provide evidence of how the institution’s mission, goals, and objectives are linked to the needs of the student population.
- Provide evidence of how the mission statement is developed, approved, and communicated to all stakeholders.
- Provide evidence of the process used for the periodic review of the institution’s mission; evidence that the process is inclusive.
- Provide evidence that the mission statement establishes the preconditions for setting institutional goals.
- Provide evidence of how the cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation relates to the mission and is used for institutional planning.

Representative Samples of Exhibits for Standard I: Institutional Mission, Purpose, and Objectives

Documentation supporting each standard must be provided for the Visiting Committee to review. The following list is provided as an example of the types of exhibits that institutions may use to indicate ways the standard is being met.

- List of institutional committee members involved in the development of the mission statement and their relationship to the institution
- Minutes of institutional committees, board meetings, faculty meetings, administrative councils, and student committees
- The institution’s catalog
- Student handbooks
- The institution’s website
- Plans for disseminating information to the public about the institution and its mission
- Publications, promotional material, and other media that are used to provide information internally and externally about the institution and its mission

Areas of Strength and Key Issues to be Addressed

After reviewing what is currently in place for this standard, major strengths should be listed. In addition, key issues that need to be addressed should also be listed. The most critical of the key issues should be included in the school’s action plan.

Standard II: Organizational Structure

The Standard: The institution recognizes and utilizes the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for continuous improvement of the institution. The organizational structure and roles of governance are designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness, while acknowledging the designated responsibilities of the governing board and the chief administrator.

Criterion 1: The institution recognizes that ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization enables it to identify institutional values, set and achieve goals, learn, and improve.

- What do the statements about institutional goals tell you about the institution's commitment to excellence?
- Are the institution's goals and values clearly articulated and understood by all?
- Can the institution's staff identify what those goals and values are?
- Can staff describe their own roles in helping the institution achieve its goals?
- What information about institutional performance is circulated and available to staff and students? Is the information kept current? Is it easily accessed; is it understandable? Is it regularly used in institutional discussions and decision-making sessions?
- Do the institution's processes for institutional evaluation and review and planning for improvements provide venues where the evaluations of the institution's performance are made available to all staff?
- Do institutional planning efforts provide opportunity for appropriate staff participation?
- How does the institution articulate the responsibilities of individuals to develop ideas for improvements in their areas of responsibility?
- How do individuals and groups at the institution use the governance process to enhance student learning?

Criterion 2: The institution establishes and implements a written policy providing for faculty, staff, administrator, and student participation in the decision-making processes. The policy specifies the manner in which individuals bring forward ideas from their constituencies and work together on appropriate policy, planning, and special-purpose bodies. Faculty and administrators have a substantive and clearly defined role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise. Students and staff also have established mechanisms or organizations for providing input into institutional decisions.

- What do institutional policies and procedures describe as the roles for each group in governance, including planning and budget development?

Criterion 3: The institution relies on faculty, a curriculum committee, and administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services.

- What documents describe the official responsibilities and authority of the faculty and administrators in curricular and other educational matters?

Criterion 4: Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. These processes facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among the institution's constituencies.

- Do the written policies on governance procedures specify appropriate roles for all staff and students?
- Do these policies specify the academic roles of faculty in areas of student educational programs and services planning?
- Are staff and students well informed of their respective roles?
- Does staff participate as encouraged by these policies?
- Do the various groups work in a collaborative effort on behalf of institutional improvement?
- Is the result of this effort actual institutional improvement?
- Is there effective communication at the institution that is clear, understood, widely available, and current?
- Does staff at the institution know essential information about institutional efforts to achieve goals and improve learning?

Criterion 5: The institution advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies. It agrees to comply with ACS WASC standards, policies and guidelines, and Commission requirements for public disclosure, self-study, as well as other reports, team visits, and prior approval of substantive changes. The institution moves expeditiously to respond to recommendations made by the Commission.

- What does documentation of the institution's past accreditation show about integrity in its relationship with the Commission; has it responded expeditiously and honestly to recommendations?
- Are the institution's communications of institutional qualities or effectiveness to the public accurate?

Criterion 6: The role of leadership and the institution's governance and decision-making organization, structures, and processes are regularly evaluated to ensure their integrity and effectiveness. The institution widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.

- What process does the institution use to evaluate its organization, governance, and decision-making structures?
- Are the results communicated within the campus community?
- How does the institution use identified weaknesses to make needed improvements?

Sources of Evidence — Examples for Standard II: Organizational Structure

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard II. There may be many other sources that institutions should provide and teams should request.

- Provide evidence that shows board, administrative, and other governance structures, policies, and descriptions of the participation of constituencies in the decision-making process.
- Provide evidence that includes copies of governance policies, organization charts and procedures, the composition of governance bodies, minutes of meetings, and documents showing the roles academic staff plays in reviewing and planning student learning programs and services.
- Provide evidence that includes evaluations and analyses the institution conducts of its governing and decision-making processes and the form of communication of same to stakeholders.
- Provide evidence that includes documents describing the authority of the board, the absence of any external, higher authority than the board, descriptions of the board appointment and replacement process.
- Provide evidence that includes the published bylaws.
- Provide evidence that includes the policy on board membership, appointment, and replacement.

- Provide evidence that includes the board’s policy and instruments used for self evaluation, analyses and reports.
- Provide evidence that includes the board policy statement of ethics.
- Provide evidence that includes board minutes, the board policy manual, and any agreements or policies that specify delegation of authority.

Representative Samples of Exhibits for Standard II: Organizational Structure

Documentation supporting each standard must be provided for the Visiting Committee to review. The following list is provided as an example of the types of exhibits that institutions may use to indicate ways the standard is being met.

- License, charter, or legislative authorization to operate, if applicable
- Addresses of all campuses affiliated with the institution
- List of the institution’s governing board members by name, title, and professional and/or business affiliations
- Policies of the governing board
- Organizational charts
- Copy of any contract between the institution and any agency, corporation, institution, or individual that involves processing financial aid, instruction, administration, recruiting, or placement services, etc.

Areas of Strength and Key Issues to be Addressed

After reviewing what is currently in place for this standard, major strengths should be listed. In addition, key issues that need to be addressed should also be listed. The most critical of the key issues should be included in the school’s action plan.

Standard III: Evaluation and Planning

The Standard: The institution demonstrates a conscious effort to produce and support student learning, measures that learning, evaluates how well learning is occurring, and plans for 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.

Criterion 1: The institution maintains an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes.

- How has the institution established a means by which self-reflective dialogue, evaluation, and planning sessions can take place?
- When, how, and about what subjects has the institution engaged in dialogue, evaluation, and planning?
- What impact has this process had on student learning?
- Does this process lead to a collective understanding of the meaning of data and research used in evaluation of student learning?

Criterion 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 to the degree that 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 institution use to determine its priorities (set goals)?
- 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 institution implement its goals?
- Are the goals articulated so that the institution can later evaluate them and determine the degree to which they have been met?
- To what extent does the institution achieve its goals?

Criterion 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.

- To what extent does the institution understand and embrace the notion of ongoing planning?
- Does the institution have a planning process in place?
- Is the planning process cyclical, i.e., does it incorporate systematic evaluation of programs and services, improvement planning, implementation, and re-evaluation? How is planning integrated?
- To what extent are institutional data available and used for planning? Are data analyzed and interpreted for easy understanding by the institution's stakeholders?

Criterion 4: The institution provides evidence that the planning process is broad-based, offers opportunities for input by appropriate stakeholders, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

- What mechanisms exist for participation by stakeholders in institutional planning?
- How is broad involvement by stakeholders guaranteed?
- To what extent does the institution allocate resources to fulfill its plans?
- When adequate resources to fulfill plans are not available, does the institution identify and follow strategies to increase its capacity, i.e., seek alternate means for securing resources?

Criterion 5: The institution uses documented assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate stakeholders.

- What assessment data does the institution collect?
- By what means does the institution make public its data and analyses internally and externally?
- How does the institution assess whether it is effectively communicating information about institutional quality to the public?

Criterion 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 institution’s planning process for fostering improvement?

Criterion 7: The institution assesses its evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review of their effectiveness in improving instructional programs, student support services, 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?
- How does it impact classroom instruction?

Sources of Evidence — Examples for Standard III: Evaluation and Planning

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard III. There may be many other sources that institutions should provide and teams should request.

- Provide evidence that the institution has developed processes by which continuous dialog about both student learning and institutional processes can take place.
- Provide evidence of broad-based participation in dialog, planning, and evaluation.
- Provide evidence that clearly-stated, measurable goals and objectives guide the institution in making decisions regarding planning and allocation of resources as well as curriculum and program development.
- Provide written, current institutional plans that describe ways in which the institution will achieve its goals.
- Provide evidence that the processes used in planning and institutional improvement are communicated and that they provide the means by which the institution and its stakeholders can participate in decision-making.
- Provide evidence that goals are developed with the knowledge and understanding of the institution’s stakeholders.
- Provide evidence that there exists a current cycle in which evaluation results are utilized in integrating planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation.
- Provide evidence that data is both quantitative and qualitative.
- Provide evidence that well-defined, decision-making processes serve to facilitate planning and institutional effectiveness.
- Provide evidence that the results are disseminated to and understood by the institution’s stakeholders.
- Provide evidence that results of periodic and systematic assessment are utilized for improvement.
- Provide evidence that program review processes are systematically evaluated.

Representative Samples of Exhibits for Standard III: Evaluation and Planning

Documentation supporting each standard must be provided for the Visiting Committee to review. The following list is provided as an example of the types of exhibits that institutions may use to indicate ways the standard is being met.

- Minutes of meetings when dialog, planning, and evaluation occurred; list those present and their relationship to the institution
- Documentation that program outcomes are assessed regularly
- Studies of enrollment trends
- Studies of community employment trends and needs
- Copies of institutional action plans with identified priorities
- Copies of institutional strategic plans
- Copies of qualitative and quantitative assessment data and related analysis
- Copies of course outlines with objectives; samples of lesson plans and competency tests

Areas of Strength and Key Issues to be Addressed

After reviewing what is currently in place for this standard, major strengths should be listed. In addition, key issues that need to be addressed should also be listed. The most critical of the key issues should be included in the school's action plan.

Standard IV: Educational Programs

The Standard: The institution offers high-quality educational programs in recognized and emerging fields of study that culminate in identified student outcomes leading to certificates, licensure, or other indicators of program completion. Educational programs are systematically assessed in order to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and achieve stated student learning outcomes. The provisions of this standard are broadly applicable to all instructional activities offered by the institution.

Criterion 1: The institution demonstrates that all educational programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, address and meet the mission of the institution and uphold its integrity.

- How does the institution ensure that all institutional offerings fit the stated mission of the institution?
- How does the institution ensure that its programs and services are high quality and appropriate to an institution of its type?
- How does the institution choose the fields of study in which it offers programs?
- What are the student achievement outcomes of the institution's programs; i.e., to what extent do students progress through to program completion?
- By what means are programs assessed for currency, teaching and learning strategies, and student learning outcomes?

Criterion 2: The institution identifies and seeks to meet the varied educational needs of its students through programs consistent with their educational preparation and the diversity, demographics, and economy of its communities. The institution relies upon research and analysis to identify student learning needs and to assess progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes.

- What research is conducted to identify student learning needs?
- What means does the institution use to assess students' educational preparation and their ability to benefit from what the institution offers?
- How is it determined if students are achieving stated learning outcomes?

Criterion 3: The institution utilizes delivery systems and modes of instruction compatible with the objectives of the curriculum and appropriate to the current and future needs of its students.

- How does the institution determine that delivery of instruction fits the objectives and content of its courses?
- How are delivery methods evaluated for their effectiveness in meeting student needs?

- What dialogue takes place about delivery systems and modes of instruction?
- How effectively are delivery systems and modes of instruction facilitating student learning?

Criterion 4: The institution identifies student learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates, licensure exams, and other completion indicators; assesses student achievement of those outcomes; and uses assessment results to make improvements.

- What student learning outcomes has the institution identified for its courses, its programs, its certificates, its licensure courses, and other completion indicators?
- How and by whom are student learning outcomes and strategies for attaining them created?
- How and by whom are student learning outcomes and program outcomes assessed? How are the results used for improvement?
- What dialogues have occurred about using assessment results to guide improvements to courses, programs, etc.? What improvements have resulted?

Criterion 5: The institution assures the quality and improvement of all instructional courses and programs offered including continuing and community education, short-term training courses and programs, and contract or other special programs, regardless of type of credit awarded, delivery mode, or location.

- By what criteria and processes does the institution decide to offer courses such as ESL, continuing and community education, or contract education programs?
- By what means does the institution ensure that all of its instructional courses and programs are of high quality?
- What is the process for establishing and evaluating each type of course and program?
- How does the institution determine the appropriate credit type, delivery mode, and location of its courses and programs?
- Does the institution use evaluation of courses and programs effectively for improvement?

Sources of Evidence — Examples for Standard IV: Educational Programs

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard IV. There may be many other sources that institutions should provide and teams should request.

- Provide evidence that all instructional offerings are in keeping with the institution's mission regardless of where and how they are taught
- Provide evidence that the quality of all programs is consistently determined to meet a high standard

- Provide evidence of analytical reviews demonstrating that instructional programs are relevant to the interest, needs, goals, and aspirations of the students served by the institution
- Provide evidence that students are achieving stated learning outcomes
- Provide evidence of assessment of student learning and program outcomes
- Provide evidence of review of assessment results and utilization for improvement of student learning
- Provide evidence that an institutional process exists for determining the quality of all courses and programs
- Provide evidence that established procedures are used to develop courses and programs and that faculty plays a major role in this endeavor
- Provide evidence of the role played by advisory committees
- Provide evidence that the institution concerns itself with pedagogy that addresses student needs and learning styles
- Provide evidence that evaluation results are used for improvement
- Provide evidence that results of evaluation are disseminated
- Provide evidence that students who complete vocational and occupational programs and certificates meet employment competencies, are prepared for certification by external agencies, are prepared for licensure
- Provide evidence that clear and complete information about certificates and program completion requirements is made available to students in publications and course syllabi
- Provide evidence that students are able to complete programs that undergo change or are eliminated and are advised on what they must do to complete such programs
- Provide evidence that publications and other representations of the institution are regularly reviewed for clarity, accuracy, and integrity
- Provide evidence that the institution provides the public with information about student achievement

Representative Samples of Exhibits for Standard IV: Educational Programs

Documentation supporting each standard must be provided for the Visiting Committee to review. The following list is provided as an example of the types of exhibits that institutions may use to indicate ways the standard is being met.

- Institution's catalog
- Student handbook
- Brochures and other recruiting materials

- Plans for recruitment
- Schedules for classes
- Program syllabi and/or comprehensive outlines
- Program examinations
- Written procedures for admission of students on “ability to benefit” basis and documented evidence on use of the procedures
- Written procedures for adding or dropping programs
- Documentation of advisory committee input (including potential employers) regarding requirements for admission, program content, program length, program objectives, competency tests, instructional materials, equipment, method of evaluation, level of skills and/or proficiency required for each program
- List of advisory committee members by program giving name, title, professional/business affiliation
- Copies of minutes of advisory committee meetings
- Documentation that program outcomes are assessed regularly

Areas of Strength and Key Issues to be Addressed

After reviewing what is currently in place for this standard, major strengths should be listed. In addition, key issues that need to be addressed should also be listed. The most critical of the key issues should be included in the school’s action plan.

Standard V: Program, Student, and Institutional Outcomes

The Standard: The institution uses established procedures to design, identify student learning outcomes for, approve, administer, deliver, and evaluate courses and programs. The institution recognizes the central role of its faculty for establishing quality and improving courses, programs, and student learning outcomes.

Criterion 1: The institution has established policies and institutional processes to guide the development and evaluation of courses and programs. These procedures lead to the assessment of quality and improvement.

- Who is responsible for identifying appropriate student learning outcomes?
- Are student learning outcomes established for each course and program?
- What processes exist to approve and administer courses and programs? Are the processes effective?
- How are courses and programs evaluated? How often? What are the results of the evaluations?
- What improvements to courses and programs have occurred as a result of evaluation?

Criterion 2: The institution relies on faculty expertise and the assistance of advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, programs, and certificates. The institution regularly assesses student progress toward achieving those outcomes.

- How are competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes determined? What is the role of faculty? What is the role of advisory committees?
- How has the institution structured the relationship between student learning outcomes and competency levels for certificates, programs, and courses?
- Do students have a clear path to achieving the student learning outcomes required of a course, program, and certificate?
- How well does the institution achieve and evaluate the effectiveness of learning at each level?

Criterion 3: High-level instruction and appropriate breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning characterize all programs.

- How does the institution demonstrate the quality of its instruction?
- What institutional dialogue has occurred to enhance understanding and agreement about the quality and level of its programs?

- What criteria does the institution use in deciding on the breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning of each program it offers?

Criterion 4: The institution uses delivery modes and teaching methodologies that reflect the diverse needs and learning styles of its students.

- How does the institution demonstrate that it is meeting the needs and learning styles of its students?
- What do faculty and staff know about learning needs and pedagogical approaches?
- Do courses include multiple ways of assessing student learning? What teaching methodologies are commonly used? How are methodologies selected?
- Has faculty discussed the relationship between teaching methodologies and student performance?

Criterion 5: The institution evaluates all courses and programs through an ongoing systematic review of their relevance, appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, currency, and future needs and plans.

- To what extent are institutional data available and used for planning? Are data analyzed and interpreted for easy understanding by the institution's constituents?
- How is the relevancy of a program determined?
- How are results of program evaluation used in institutional planning? What changes or improvements in programs have occurred as a result of the consideration of program evaluations?

Criterion 6: The institution engages in ongoing, systematic evaluation and integrated planning to assure currency and measure achievement of its stated student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, and programs. The institution systematically strives to improve those outcomes and makes the results available to appropriate constituencies.

- To what extent does the institution understand and embrace the notion of ongoing planning?
- Does the institution 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? Does the institution's budgeting of resources align with planning?

Sources of Evidence — Examples for Standard V: Program, Student, and Institutional Outcomes

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard V. There may be many other sources that institutions should provide and teams should request.

- Provide evidence that the institution considers how instruction is delivered and assesses how the delivery is both appropriate and current
- Provide evidence of the development of student learning outcomes and strategies for attaining those outcomes at the course, program, and certificate levels
- Provide evidence for a faculty-driven assessment plan that includes systematic evaluation and integrated planning of student learning outcomes for all courses, programs, and certificates
- Provide evidence that elements assessed include measures of student learning
- Provide evidence for an assessment plan that includes systematic evaluation and integrated planning of overall institutional outcomes that align with the institution's mission, goals, and objectives

Representative Samples of Exhibits for Standard V: Program, Student, and Institutional Outcomes

Documentation supporting each standard must be provided for the Visiting Committee to review. The following list is provided as an example of the types of exhibits that institutions may use to indicate ways the standard is being met.

- Written plan for placement of students
- Written plan for follow-up of students
- Placement and follow-up data and studies
- Documentation showing percentage of completers for each program
- Documentation showing pass rate for each program requiring a licensure exam
- Copy of forms used in placement and follow-up
- File of employers and employment opportunities
- Instruments used to assess program, student, and institutional outcomes

Areas of Strength and Key Issues to be Addressed

After reviewing what is currently in place for this standard, major strengths should be listed. In addition, key issues that need to be addressed should also be listed. The most critical of the key issues should be included in the school's action plan.

Standard VI: Student Support Services

The Standard: 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.

Criterion 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.

- How does the institution determine that admitted students are able to benefit from its programs? How is this information applied to admissions policies and procedures?
- By what means does the institution assure the quality of its student support services? How does the institution demonstrate that these services support student learning?

Criterion 2: The institution provides a catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate, and current information concerning the following:

- The institution's official name, address(es), telephone number(s), website
- Educational mission
- Course, certificate, and program offerings
- Academic calendar and program length
- Available student financial aid
- Available learning resources
- Names of administrators and faculty
- Names of governing board members
- Admissions requirements
- Student fees and other financial obligations
- Academic regulations, including academic honesty
- Nondiscrimination statement
- Acceptance of transfer credits
- Grievance and complaint procedures

- Sexual harassment statement
- Refund of fees policy
- Access to academic and personal records policy

Criterion 3: The institution provides information on the locations or publications where other policies may be found.

- Is the institution's catalog current, complete, clear, easy to understand, easy to use, well-structured?
- How is the catalog reviewed for accuracy and currency?
- What process does the institution use to ensure that the information in its publications is easily accessible to students, prospective students, and the public?
- When policies are not included in the catalog, are the publications in which they are found easily accessible?
- Does the institution maintain records of student complaints/grievances and make them available to the visiting team?

Criterion 4: The institution researches and identifies the learning support needs of its student population and provides appropriate services and programs to address those needs.

- By what means does the institution determine the support needs of its students? How well does it address these needs?
- What evidence is provided that the institution assesses student needs for services regardless of location and provides for them?
- How are on-line services and services at off-site locations evaluated? How well are these services meeting the needs of students?

Criterion 5: 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.

- Does the institution develop, implement, and evaluate counseling and/or academic advising?
- Does the evaluation of counseling and/or academic advising include how it enhances student development and success?
- Are those responsible for counseling/advising trained? How does training take place?

Criterion 6: 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.

- What institutional policies govern the maintenance of student records? Are records secure?
- Does the institution have a policy for release of student records?

Criterion 7: 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.

- How does the institution provide for systematic and regular review of its student support services? How are these results used?
- Does the evaluation assess how student support services contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes?
- How are evaluation results used to improve services?

Sources of Evidence — Examples for Standard VI: Student Support Services

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard VI. There may be many other sources that institutions should provide and teams should request.

- Provide evidence that the institution systematically evaluates its student support services in light of its stated mission
- Provide evidence that student support services support learning
- Provide evidence that the catalog contains items specific in *Criterion 2*
- Provide evidence that the institution assesses student needs for services and implements them
- Provide evidence that the institution assesses student needs for services regardless of location and delivers them
- Provide evidence that the institution develops, implements, and evaluates counseling and/or academic advising
- Provide evidence that those responsible for counseling/advising are trained
- Provide evidence that admissions practices and placement instruments are regularly evaluated
- Provide evidence that student records are kept confidential and secure
- Provide evidence for how student records are released

- Provide evidence that review of student service programs is regularly conducted and that the results are used for improvement
- Provide evidence that the institution maintains a file of student complaints/grievances

Representative Samples of Exhibits for Standard VI: Student Support Services

Documentation supporting each standard must be provided for the Visiting Committee to review. The following list is provided as an example of the types of exhibits that institutions may use to indicate ways the standard is being met.

- Written procedures for furnishing students, completers, employers, and others with transcripts
- Written procedures for access to student records
- Student personnel records, including admission and scholastic records
- List of student advisors
- List of the types of student services provided
- Placement and follow-up data and studies
- Student-generated publications (if any)
- List of student complaints filed in accordance with the institution's student grievance policy since the most recent accreditation visiting committee visit (format to include name of complainant, data filed, nature of the complaint, and resolution of the complaint)
- Plan for emergency medical care
- Emergency/disaster plan
- Copy of system and forms used in reporting accidents
- Written plan and evaluation on the effectiveness of student personnel services

Areas of Strength and Key Issues to be Addressed

After reviewing what is currently in place for this standard, major strengths should be listed. In addition, key issues that need to be addressed should also be listed. The most critical of the key issues should be included in the school's action plan.

Standard VII: Human Resources

The Standard: The institution employs qualified personnel to support student learning programs and services wherever offered and by whatever means delivered, to ensure institutional effectiveness. Personnel are treated equitably, are evaluated regularly and systematically, and are provided opportunities for professional development. Consistent with its mission, the institution demonstrates its commitment to the significant educational role played by persons of diverse backgrounds by making positive efforts to encourage such diversity. Human resource planning is integrated with institutional planning.

Criterion 1: The institution assures the integrity and quality of its programs and services by employing personnel who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience to provide and support these programs and services.

- What methods does the institution use to assure that qualifications for each position are closely match to specific programmatic needs? What analyses and discussions have led the institution to agree on those needs?
- Are the institution's personnel sufficiently qualified to guarantee the integrity of programs and services?

Criterion 2: Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated. Job descriptions are directly related to institutional mission and goals and accurately reflect position duties, responsibilities, and authority. Criteria for selection of faculty include knowledge of the subject matter or service to be performed, effective teaching, and potential to contribute to the mission of the institution.

- How does the institution decide on hiring criteria?
- How is faculty involved in the selection of new faculty?
- How does the institution decide if an applicant is well qualified?
- How does the institution know that the faculty selected has knowledge of the subject matter?
- By what methods does the institution define and evaluate “effective teaching” in its hiring processes? How is that effectiveness judged?
- How are jobs advertised?
- By what means does the institution verify the qualifications of applicants and newly hired personnel?
- What evidence is there that hiring processes yield highly qualified employees?
- What safeguards are in place to assure that hiring procedures are consistently applied?

Criterion 3: The institution assures the effectiveness of its human resources by evaluating all personnel systematically and at stated intervals. The institution establishes written criteria for evaluating all personnel, including performance of assigned duties and participation in institutional responsibilities and other activities appropriate to their expertise. Evaluation processes seek to assess effectiveness of personnel and encourage improvement. Actions taken following evaluations are formal, timely, and documented.

- What process is in place to assure that evaluations lead to improvement of job performance?
- What is the connection between personnel evaluations and institutional effectiveness and improvement?
- Do evaluation criteria measure the effectiveness of personnel in performing assigned duties?

Criterion 4: Faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes maintain as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes.

- What are the roles of teachers and other staff in producing student learning outcomes?
- What discussions have faculty engaged in about how well students are learning in their courses and programs? What measures have they created or selected to measure that learning?
- What discussions have faculty had about how to improve learning? What plans have been made?
- What changes have faculty made in teaching methodologies to improve learning?
- What changes in course content or sequencing have resulted from analyses of how well students are mastering course content?
- What methods has the institution developed to evaluate effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes? Are these methods yielding meaningful and useful results?
- How does the institution use analysis of assessment results to improve student learning outcomes?
- How has staff development supported faculty performance in satisfactory development and assessment of student learning outcomes?

Criterion 5: The institution upholds a written code of professional ethics for all of its personnel.

- How does the institution foster ethical behavior in its employees?
- Does the institution have a written code of professional ethics for all its personnel?

Criterion 6: The institution maintains a sufficient number of qualified faculty. The institution has a sufficient number of staff and administrators with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support the institution's mission and purposes.

- By what means does the institution determine appropriate staffing levels for each program and service?
- How does the institution decide on the organization of administrative and support staffing?
- How effectively does the number and organization of the institution's personnel work to support its programs and services? How does the institution evaluate this effectiveness?

Criterion 7: The institution systematically develops personnel policies and procedures that are available for information and review. Such policies and procedures are equitably and consistently administered.

- What processes does the institution use to develop and publicize its personnel policies?
- How does the institution ensure that it administers its personnel policies and procedures consistently and equitably? Do these policies and processes result in fair treatment of personnel?
- What are the institution's provisions for keeping personnel records secure and confidential?
- How does the institution provide employees access to their records?

Criterion 8: The institution provides all personnel with appropriate opportunities for continued professional development, consistent with the institutional mission and based on identified teaching and learning needs. The institution plans professional development activities to meet the needs of its personnel. The institution systematically evaluates professional development programs and uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.

- What professional development programs does the institution support?
- How does the institution identify teaching and learning needs of its faculty and other personnel?

- What processes ensure that professional development opportunities address those needs?
- How does the institution ensure meaningful evaluation of professional development activities?
- What impact do professional development activities have on the improvement of teaching and learning? How does the institution evaluate that improvement?

Criterion 9: Human resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. The institution systematically assesses the effective use of human resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement.

- By what process does the institution assess the use of its human resources?
- How does the institution ensure that human resource decisions emanate from institutional needs and plans for improvement? What evidence is there that the institution bases its human resource decisions on the results of evaluation of program and service needs?
- How does the institution determine that human resource needs in program and service areas are met effectively?

Sources of Evidence — Examples for Standard VII: Human Resources

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard VII. There may be many other sources that institutions should provide and teams should request.

- Provide evidence that the institution uses analyses in determining hiring priorities
- Provide evidence, such as planning meeting minutes, that the institution systematically considers and relies on needs of programs and services in determining hiring priorities
- Provide evidence that the institution has a reasonable means for deciding what employee qualifications are needed for each position
- Provide evidence that the institution uses a clear and reasonable process for determining personnel selection criteria
- Provide evidence that hiring procedures are written and consistently applied
- Provide evidence that the institution verifies employee qualifications, experience, and references of newly hired personnel
- Provide evidence of a systematic process for determining personnel evaluation criteria
- Provide evidence that evaluation processes are written and followed
- Provide evidence that evaluations are conducted regularly

- Provide evidence that the institution uses the results of personnel evaluations for improvement
- Provide evidence that the institution administers its personnel policies consistently and fairly
- Provide evidence that the institution safely maintains personnel records
- Provide evidence about how the institution provides employees access to their records
- Provide evidence about how the institution uses identified teaching and learning needs to determine professional development opportunities
- Provide evidence that the institution evaluates professional development needs of its personnel
- Provide evidence that the institution bases its programs on identified personnel needs
- Provide evidence that the institutional plans determine human resource allocation priorities
- Provide evidence that human resource decisions are based on the results of evaluation of program and service needs

Representative Samples of Exhibits for Standard VII: Human Resources

Documentation supporting each standard must be provided for the Visiting Committee to review. The following list is provided as an example of the types of exhibits that institutions may use to indicate ways the standard is being met.

- Minutes of planning meetings
- Document listing hiring procedures
- Personnel evaluation forms
- Faculty handbook
- Faculty orientation programs
- Job descriptions
- Resumé of each instructional and administrative staff member
- Copies of annual written formal evaluations for each staff member
- Plan for staff evaluation
- Plan for professional growth of faculty
- Documentation of faculty participation in professional growth activities\

Areas of Strength and Key Issues to be Addressed

After reviewing what is currently in place for this standard, major strengths should be listed. In addition, key issues that need to be addressed should also be listed. The most critical of the key issues should be included in the school's action plan.

Standard VIII: Learning Resources

The Standard: Learning resources for students are sufficient to support the institution's educational programs and other activities in whatever format and wherever they are offered. Such services include library services and collections appropriate to the size and scope of the institution, its courses and programs. There are tutoring programs, learning centers, computer laboratories, and learning technology development and training. The institution provides access and training to students so that learning resources may be used effectively and efficiently. The institution systematically assesses these resources using student learning outcomes, faculty input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of the resources.

Criterion 1: The institution supports the quality of its instructional programs by providing library, technology, and other learning resources that are sufficient in quantity, currency, and variety to facilitate educational offerings.

- What information about student learning needs is provided by instructional faculty, librarians, and other staff to inform selection of library, technology, and other learning resources?
- How does the institution assess the effectiveness of its own library collection in terms of quantity, quality, depth, and variety?
- How does the institution make sure that its various types of technology needs are identified?
- How does the institution evaluate the effectiveness of its technology in meeting its range of needs? How effectively are those needs met?

Criterion 2: The institution provides ongoing instruction for users of library, technology, and other learning resources so that students are able to develop skills in information competency.

- What are the information competencies that the institution purports to teach all students?
- How does the institution assess the competencies in information retrieval and use that it teaches students?
- What are the hours of operation of the library, technology laboratories, and other resource centers?
- Are all campus locations, all types of students, and all instructional programs equally supported by the institution's learning resources and accessible to students?
- What methods does the institution use to evaluate its library, technology, and other learning resources? Does the evaluation assess the use, access, and relationship of the services to intended student learning? Does the evaluation include input by faculty, staff, and students?

Sources of Evidence — Examples for Standard VIII: Learning Resources

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard VIII. There may be many other sources that institutions should provide and teams should request.

- Provide evidence that includes the evaluation instruments, their analysis, conclusions and plans for improvement of the library, technology, and other learning support services; evidence that improvements are planned and implemented
- Provide evidence that includes a description of hours of operations or access to library, technology devices, and other student support services
- Provide evidence that data linking purchases to educational programs and student learning outcomes is defined by educational programs and by assessments of student learning
- Provide evidence that library holdings, technology, and other learning resources are adequate to meet educational program needs
- Provide evidence about how the institution makes decisions about technology services, facilities, hardware, and software
- Provide evidence that the institution assesses the need for information technology training for students and personnel
- Provide evidence that the institutional plans determine technology resource priorities
- Provide evidence that technology resource decisions are based on results of evaluation of program and service needs

Representative Samples of Exhibits for Standard VIII: Learning Resources

Documentation supporting each standard must be provided for the Visiting Committee to review. The following list is provided as an example of the types of exhibits that institutions may use to indicate ways the standard is being met.

- Plan for media services (including library, technology, and other resources)
- Plan for evaluating media services
- Copy of media resources inventory
- Budget for media services
- Schedule of library hours
- Schedule of computer lab hours

Areas of Strength and Key Issues to be Addressed

After reviewing what is currently in place for this standard, major strengths should be listed. In addition, key issues that need to be addressed should also be listed. The most critical of the key issues should be included in the school's action plan.

Standard IX: Financial Resources

The Standard: Financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of programs and services. The institution plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both short-term and long-term financial solvency. Financial resources planning is integrated with institutional planning.

Criterion 1: The institution relies upon its mission and goals as the foundation for financial planning. Financial planning is integrated with and supports all institutional planning.

- What is the institution's overall budget?
- Does it have sufficient revenues to support educational improvements?
- Does the resource allocation process provide a means for setting priorities for funding institutional improvements?
- Does the institution review its mission and goals as part of the annual fiscal planning process?
- Does the institution identify goals for achievement in any given budget cycle?
- Does the institution establish priorities among competing needs so that it can predict future funding? Do institutional plans exist, and are they linked clearly to financial plans, both short-term and long-term?
- Does the financial planning process rely primarily on institutional plans for content and timelines?
- Can the institution provide evidence that past fiscal expenditures have supported achievement of institutional plans?
- Does the board and other institutional leadership receive information about fiscal planning that demonstrates links to institutional planning?

Criterion 2: Institutional planning reflects realistic assessment of financial resource availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements.

- Do individuals involved in institutional planning receive accurate information about available funds, including the annual budget showing ongoing and anticipated fiscal commitments?
- Does the institution establish funding priorities in some manner that helps the institution achieve its goals in reasonable fashion? Are the items focused on student learning given appropriate priority? What other documents describing funding priorities are used by institutional planners?
- What evidence of long-term fiscal planning priorities exists?

- Does the institution have plans for payments of long-term liabilities and obligations, including debt, health benefits, insurance costs, building maintenance costs, etc? Is this information used in short-term or annual budget and other fiscal planning?
- Where or how are the processes for financial planning and budget recorded and made known to the institution's constituents?

Criterion 3: To assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of financial resources, the financial management system has appropriate control mechanisms and widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision making.

- Are funds allocated, as shown in the budget, in a manner that will realistically achieve the institution's stated goals for student learning?
- What do the audit statements reveal about financial management?
- Does the institution provide timely corrections to audit exceptions and management advice?
- What is the ending balance of unrestricted funds for the institution's immediate past three years? Is this amount sufficient to maintain a reserve needed for emergencies?
- How does the institution receive its revenues? Does this receipt pose cash flow difficulties for the institution? If so, how does the institution address this issue?
- Has the institution sufficient insurance to cover its needs? Is the institution self-funded in any insurance categories? If so, does it have sufficient reserves to handle financial emergencies?

Criterion 4: The institution practices effective oversight of finances, including management of financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations or foundations, and institutional investments and assets.

- What are the institution's procedures for reviewing fiscal management? Are those regularly implemented?
- What evidence about fiscal management is provided by external audits and financial program reviews?
- Has the institution received any audit finds or negative reviews during the last six years?

Criterion 5: The institution regularly evaluates its financial management processes, and the results of the evaluation are used to improve financial management systems.

- Does the institution have an annual external audit to provide feedback on its processes?

- Does the institution review the effectiveness of its past fiscal planning as part of planning for current and future fiscal needs?

Criterion 6: The institution systematically assesses the effective use of financial resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement.

- What processes does the institution use to assess its use of financial resources?
- How does the institution ensure that it assesses its use of financial resources systematically and effectively?
- How does the institution use results of the evaluations as the basis for improvement?

Sources of Evidence — Examples for Standard IX: Financial Resources

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard IX. There may be many other sources that institutions should provide and teams should request.

- Provide evidence that includes copies of annual budget, audits for the past two years, financial plans associated with institutional plans, budget documents prepared to grant and other external funding
- Provide evidence showing that financial planning is regularly evaluated and the results of that evaluation
- Provide evidence showing institutional fiscal commitments for foreseeable future, including contracts for services, employee agreements, loans, and other debt
- Provide evidence that the mission and goals are used in short and long range financial planning, such as a list of financial goals, a grid showing financial contributions to meeting goals, or an introductory text to fiscal documents such as annual budgets, long range capital plans, and long range financial plans that show relationships to educational goals as identified through institutional assessment and planning
- Provide evidence showing the fiscal planning follows institutional planning in time sequence, and that funds are used to achieve institutional plans
- Provide evidence that fiscal planning is evaluated on the basis of its contribution to achievement of institutional goals, not solely on the basis of accounting principles of good practice
- Provide evidence that financial plans, including annual budget, capital plans, and long-term fiscal plans undergo periodic review and evaluation
- Provide evidence of a fiscal planning process and documents describing the financial planning and budgeting processes with minutes or other records showing the institution has followed those processes

Representative Samples of Exhibits for Standard IX: Financial Resources

Documentation supporting each standard must be provided for the Visiting Committee to review. The following list is provided as an example of the types of exhibits that institutions may use to indicate ways the standard is being met.

- Copy of the institution's past, present, and projected budgets
- Financial management policies and procedures
- Routine purchasing policies and procedures
- Emergency purchasing procedures and policies
- Student financial aid records and procedures
- Copy of financial statements including notes audited by an independent certified public accountant (or other as required by state law for public institutions) for the two most recent fiscal years

Areas of Strength and Key Issues to be Addressed

After reviewing what is currently in place for this standard, major strengths should be listed. In addition, key issues that need to be addressed should also be listed. The most critical of the key issues should be included in the school's action plan.

Standard X: Physical Resources

The Standard: 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.

Criterion 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?
- Upon what data has the institution determined the sufficiency of its classrooms, laboratories, and other facilities. What mechanisms does the institution employ 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?

Criterion 2: 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 facilities?
- 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?

Criterion 3: 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 that it has sufficient control over off-site facilities to maintain their quality?

Criterion 4: 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.

- By what process does the institution assess the use of its facilities? How often does the evaluation occur?
- How does the institution use the results of the evaluation to improve facilities or equipment?
- What process does the institution follow to make capital plans? How are long-range capital projects linked to institutional planning?
- How do planning processes ensure that capital projects support institutional goals?

Criterion 5: 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 emanate from 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?

Sources of Evidence — Examples for Standard X: Physical Resources

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard X. There may be many other sources that institutions should provide and teams should request.

- Provide evidence of how the institution evaluates the safety and sufficiency of its facilities
- Provide evidence that the institution provides adequate facilities for its programs and services
- Provide evidence that off-campus sites are adequate to support programs conducted at those sites
- Provide evidence that equipment supports the needs of programs and services
- Provide evidence about how the institution plans and maintains its facilities
- Provide evidence that the institution has replacement and maintenance plans for equipment
- Provide evidence that the institution uses its facilities and equipment effectively
- Provide evidence about how the institution evaluates its facilities

- Provide evidence about how the institution makes decisions about equipment purchases
- Provide evidence that institutional plans determine physical resource priorities
- Provide evidence that physical resource decisions are based on the results of program and service needs, and the mission of the institution

Representative Samples of Exhibits for Standard X: Physical Resources

Documentation supporting each standard must be provided for the Visiting Committee to review. The following list is provided as an example of the types of exhibits that institutions may use to indicate ways the standard is being met.

- Plan for facility maintenance
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the maintenance program
- Plan for facility custodial care
- Reports of safety inspections
- Insurance policies for facilities
- Copy of facilities lease agreements
- Copy of safety and security plan for real, threatened, or impending danger
- Evaluations of the safety and security plan
- Earthquake and other natural disaster preparedness and evacuation plans

Areas of Strength and Key Issues to be Addressed

After reviewing what is currently in place for this standard, major strengths should be listed. In addition, key issues that need to be addressed should also be listed. The most critical of the key issues should be included in the school's action plan.