

NWCCU Revised Accreditation Standards

Adopted January 11, 2010

The revised accreditation standards are principle-based statements of expectations of quality and effectiveness for institutions accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. They function as: 1) indicators of educational quality and effectiveness by which institutions are evaluated; and 2) a framework for continuous improvement. Collectively they blend analysis and synthesis to enable holistic institutional self reflection and peer evaluation by examining the institution's mission, its interpretation and translation of that mission into practice; appraisal of its potential to fulfill its mission; and evaluation of the results of its efforts to achieve that mission.

Structure

Each of the five standards is designated by a number and title (e.g., Standard Four – Effectiveness and Improvement, etc.). A narrative overview, which is not a criterion for evaluation, accompanies each standard. Elements of the standard, some with subsections to highlight key components, are designated by the number of the standard followed by the letter and title of the element within that standard (e.g., 4.A Assessment). The criteria for evaluation are identified by the number of the standard, followed by the letter of the standard element, followed by the number of the criterion within that standard element (e.g., 4.A.1).

Standards

Standard One (*Mission, Core Themes* & Expectations*) examines institutional purpose and intentions. It requires a clear statement of institutional mission, articulation of mission fulfillment, and identification of core themes within that mission. It also requires a delineation of core theme objectives, each with assessable indicators of achievement and rationale for the selection of those indicators.

**A core theme is a manifestation of a fundamental aspect of institutional mission with overarching objectives that guide planning for contributing programs and services, development of capacity, application of resources to accomplish those objectives, and assessment of achievements of those objectives. Collectively, the core themes represent the institution's interpretation of its mission and translation of that interpretation into practice.*

Standard Two (*Resources & Capacity*) assesses institutional inputs. It requires an evaluation of major institutional functions, resources, and infrastructure to enable a determination of the institution's *potential* to succeed in fulfilling its mission.

Standard Three (*Planning & Implementation*) evaluates planning for the institution as a whole as well as planning to achieve the objectives of its core themes.

Standard Four (*Effectiveness & Improvement*) **evaluates the results of the institution's efforts. It assesses achievement of core theme objectives and achievement of goals or outcomes of programs and services. It also evaluates the institution's use of assessment results for improvement.**

Standard Five (*Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation & Sustainability*) evaluates fulfillment of institutional mission in light of the institution's own expectations (see Standard One). It assesses the institution's capacity to monitor its environment and its ability to forecast and adapt to patterns, trends, and circumstances with the potential to influence institutional viability and sustainability.