

This *Guide to Evaluating Institutions* is designed to be used by institutions preparing their Self Study Report as well as by teams conducting a comprehensive evaluation. The Guide is meant to provoke some thoughtful consideration about whether the institution meets the Accreditation Standards at a deeper level than mere compliance – it is intended to also provide some guidance for a holistic view of an institution and its quality. The common guide is predicated on the belief that both institutional members and outside evaluators use the standards to assess the institution, and that they ought to be using the same tools to conduct that assessment.¹

¹ Guide to Evaluating Institutions Using the 2004 Standards, *draft*, page 2

Excerpt from “Guide to Evaluating Institutions”²

A. Mission

Std #	Questions
A.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the institution’s mission statement say about its educational purposes? 2. Are these purposes appropriate to an institution of higher learning? Who are the college’s intended students? 3. How does the institution determine its intended population? 4. Is the identified population a reasonable match for the institution’s location, resources, and role in higher education? 5. What processes does the institution use to foster college-wide commitment to student learning? 6. Does the mission statement express this commitment?
A.1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Have discussions been held among key constituents regarding the relevance of the mission statement to student learning? 8. What statements about student learning are included in the mission statement? 9. How do these statements make explicit the purposes of the institution? 10. How does the institution know that it is addressing the needs of its student population? 11. What assessments of institutional effectiveness are undertaken?
A.2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. When was the current mission statement approved by the board?
A.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. How effective is the institution’s process for periodic review of the mission statement? 14. Does the process allow for incorporating the interest of the institutions stakeholders? 15. How does the institution know that the way the mission statement is developed, approved and communicated to all stakeholders is effective? 16. What circumstances prompt changes to the statement?
A.4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. How effectively does the mission statement prompt planning and decision-making? 18. To what extent is the mission statement central to the choices the college makes?

² Ibid., 11-14

B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

B.1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How has the college structured its dialogue? 2. How well does the college embrace and understand the purpose of the dialogue? 3. When, how, and about what subjects has the college engaged in dialogue? 4. What impact has the dialogue had on student learning? 5. Does the dialogue lead to a collective understanding of the meaning of data and research used in evaluation of student learning?
B.2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. What criteria does the college use to determine its priorities (set goals)? 7. Is there broad-based understanding of the goals and the processes to implement them? 8. Is there institutional commitment to achieve identified goals? 9. How well does the college implement its goals? 10. Are goals articulated so that the institution can later determine the degree to which they have been met? 11. To what extent does the college achieve its goals?
B.3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. To what extent does the institution understand and embrace the notion of ongoing planning? 13. Does the college have a planning process in place? 14. Is it cyclical, i.e., does it incorporate systematic evaluation of programs and services, improvement planning, implementation, and re-evaluation? 15. How is planning integrated? 16. To what extent are institutional data available and used for planning? 17. Are data analyzed and interpreted for easy understanding by the college community?

B.4	<p>18. What mechanisms exist for participation in college planning?</p> <p>19. How is broad involvement guaranteed?</p> <p>20. To what extent does the college allocate resources to fulfill its plans?</p> <p>21. When resources to fulfill plans are not available, does the college identify and follow strategies to increase its capacity, i.e., seek alternate means for securing resources?</p> <p>22. What changes have occurred as a result of implemented plans?</p>
B.5	<p>23. What assessment data does the college collect?</p> <p>24. By what means does the college publicize its statistics on student achievement and student learning to the public?</p> <p>25. How does the college assess whether this means is effectively communicating information about institutional quality to the public?</p>
B.6	<p>26. What processes does the institution use to assess the effectiveness of its cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation implementation, and re-evaluation?</p> <p>27. How effective is the college planning process for fostering improvement?</p>
B.7	<p>28. What mechanisms does the institution use to gather evidence about the effectiveness of programs and services?</p> <p>29. How effectively do evaluation processes and results contribute to improvement in programs and services?</p>

Standard I. Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

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

A. Mission

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

1. The institution establishes student learning programs and services aligned with its purposes, its character, and its student population.
2. The mission statement is approved by the governing board and published.
3. Using the institution's governance and decision-making processes, the institution reviews its mission statement on a regular basis and revises it as necessary.
4. The institution's mission is central to institutional planning and decision making.

B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

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

1. The institution maintains an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes
2. The institution sets goals to improve its effectiveness consistent with its stated purposes. The institution articulates its goals and states the objectives derived from them in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined and widely discussed. The institutional members understand these goals and work collaboratively toward their achievement.
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.

4. The institution provides evidence that the planning process is broad-based, offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.
5. The institution uses documented assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies.
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.
7. The institution assesses its evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review of their effectiveness in improving instructional programs, student support services, and library and other learning support services