



Collaborative Implementation Project Documentation Roadmap

Documents, Processes, and Procedures

**Evidence of Institutional Ability to Meet the Expectations of the Standards for
Accreditation of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

Name of Institution:

Name of the Institution's Chief Executive Officer:

STANDARD I: Mission and Goals

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

Assemble the following, as appropriate.

- ☐ **Statements regarding institutional mission and goals**
- ☐ **Processes and procedures relevant to mission and goals**

In the (expandable) box below, list any other documentation demonstrating the institution's ability to meet the expectations of this standard that the institution has assembled.

This standard includes the following Criteria, which explicate the standard and specify particular characteristics or qualities that are incorporated in the standard. The Criteria are not a simple checklist. When an institution does not demonstrate evidence of a particular Criterion, it may demonstrate through alternative information that it meets the standard. This alternative information should be included in the expandable box above.

Complete the following table:

Standard I Criteria	
1. Clearly defined mission and goals that: a. are developed through appropriate collaborative participation by all who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional development and improvement b. address external as well as internal contexts and constituencies c. are approved and supported by the governing body d. guide faculty, administration, staff, and governing structures in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curricular development, and the definition of institutional and educational outcomes e. include support of scholarly inquiry and creative activity, at levels and of the type appropriate to the institution f. are publicized and widely known by the institution's internal stakeholders g. are periodically evaluated	
2. Institutional goals are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with mission	
3. Institutional goals focus on student learning and related outcomes and on institutional improvement; are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services; and are consistent with institutional mission	
4. Periodic assessment of mission and goals to ensure that they are relevant and achievable	

STANDARD II: Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

Assemble the following, as appropriate.

- ☐ Recruitment and marketing materials (printed and electronic)
- ☐ Public disclosure information required by the Commission and government entities (printed and electronic)
- ☐ Institutional by-laws, guidelines, and policies.
- ☐ Handbooks (student, faculty, employee, etc.)
- ☐ Processes and procedures relevant to ethics and integrity

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Complete the following table:

Standard II Criteria	
1. Commitment to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights	
2. A climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives	
3. A grievance policy that is documented and disseminated to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty, or staff. The institution's policies and procedures are fair and impartial, and assure that grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably	
4. The avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all activities and among all constituents	
5. Fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline and separation of employees	
6. Honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, as well as in internal communications	
7. As appropriate to mission, services or programs in place: a. to promote affordability and accessibility and b. to enable students to understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and methods to make informed decisions about incurring debt	
8. Compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements to include reporting regarding: a. The full disclosure of information on institution-wide assessments, graduation, retention, certification and licensure or licensing board pass rates b. The institution's compliance with the Commission's Requirements of Affiliation c. Substantive changes affecting institutional mission, goals, programs, operations, sites, and other material issues which must be disclosed in a timely and accurate fashion d. The institution's compliance with the Commission's policies	
9. Periodic assessment of ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented	

STANDARD III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence of all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

Assemble the following, as appropriate:

- ☐ **Student catalogs, handbooks, course catalogs, and other information regarding the student learning experience.**
- ☐ **Program development and approval procedures.**
- ☐ **Faculty review procedures**
- ☐ **Processes and procedures relevant to the design and delivery of the student learning experience**

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Complete the following table:

Standard III Criteria	
1. Certificate, undergraduate, graduate and/or professional programs leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential, designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning	
2. Student learning experiences that are: a. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and /or other appropriate professionals who are rigorous and effective in teaching, assessment of student learning, scholarly inquiry, and service, as appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and policies b. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and /or other appropriate professionals who are qualified for the positions they hold and the work they do c. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and /or other appropriate professionals who are sufficient in number d. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and /or other appropriate professionals who are provided with and utilize sufficient opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation e. designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty (full-time or part-time) and /or other appropriate professionals who are reviewed regularly and equitably based on written, disseminated, clear, and fair criteria, expectations, policies, and procedures	
3. Academic programs of study that are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution in a way that students are able to understand and follow degree and program requirements and expected time to completion	
4. Sufficient learning opportunities and resources to support both the institution's programs of study and students' academic progress	

5. At institutions that offer undergraduate education: A general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that: a. offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field; b. offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives; c. In non-US institutions that do not include general education, provides evidence that students can demonstrate general education skills.	
6. In institutions that offer graduate and professional education, opportunities for the development of research, scholarship, and independent thinking, provided by faculty and/or other professionals with credentials appropriate to graduate-level curricula	
7. Adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval on any student learning opportunities designed, delivered, or assessed by third party providers	
8. Periodic assessment of the programs providing student learning opportunities	

STANDARD IV: Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

Assemble the following, as appropriate:

- ☐ Reports from student support offices
- ☐ Student handbooks
- ☐ Analysis of enrollment management plan (admission, retention, and completion).
- ☐ Processes and procedures relevant to support of the student experience.

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Complete the following table:

Standard IV Criteria	
1. Clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success and are compatible with institutional mission, including: a. accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment, and refunds; b. a process by which students who are not adequately prepared for the study at the level for which they have been admitted are identified, placed, and supported in attaining appropriate educational goals; c. orientation, advisement, and counseling programs to enhance retention and guide students throughout their educational experience; d. processes designed to enhance the successful achievement of students' educational goals including certificate and degree completion, transfer to other institutions, and post-completion placement	
2. Policies and procedures regarding evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits, and credits awarded through experiential learning, prior non-academic learning, competency-based assessment, and other alternative learning approaches.	
3. Policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records	
4. If offered, athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities that are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all other programs	
5. If applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of student support services, designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers	
6. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience.	

STANDARD V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their programs of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

Assemble the following, as appropriate:

- ☐ **Documentation of an implemented, systematic, and sustained process to assess student learning at all levels and utilization of results**
- ☐ **Processes and procedures relevant to educational effectiveness assessment**

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Complete the following table:

Standard V Criteria	
1. Clearly stated student learning outcomes, at the institution and degree/program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution's mission	
2. Organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals. Institutions should: a. define meaningful curricular goals with defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals; b. articulate how they prepare students in a manner consistent with their missions for successful careers, meaningful lives, and, where appropriate, further education. They should collect and provide data on the extent to which they are meeting these goals; c. support and sustain assessment of student achievement and communicate the results of this assessment to stakeholders	
3. Consideration and use of assessment results for the improvement of educational effectiveness. Consistent with the institution's mission, such uses include some combination of the following: a. assisting students in improving their learning; b. improving pedagogy and curriculum; c. reviewing and revising academic programs and support services; d. planning, conducting, and supporting a range of professional development activities; e. planning and budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services; f. informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs; g. improving key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer, and placement rates; and, h. implementing other processes and procedures designed to improve educational programs and services.	
4. If applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of assessment services designed, delivered, or assessed by third party providers	
5. Periodic evaluation of the assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness	

STANDARD VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

Assemble the following, as appropriate:

- ☐ The institution's two most recent externally-audited financial statements, including management letters
- ☐ Financial projections for the next two years.
- ☐ Documentation of an implemented, systematic, and sustained institutional assessment process linking planning, assessment and resource allocation decisions.
- ☐ Institutional strategic planning documents.
- ☐ Processes and procedures relevant to planning, resources, and institutional improvement

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Complete the following table:

Standard VI Criteria	
1. Institutional objectives, both institution-wide and for individual units, that are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are used for planning and resource allocation	
2. Clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that provide for constituent participation and incorporate the use of assessment results	
3. A financial planning and budgeting process that is aligned with the institution's mission and goals, evidence-based, and clearly linked to the institution's	

and units' strategic plans/objectives	
4. Fiscal and human resources as well as the physical and technical infrastructure are adequate to support the institution's operations wherever and however programs are delivered	
5. Well-defined decision-making processes and there is clear assignment of responsibility and accountability	
6. Comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and is linked to the institution's strategic and financial planning processes	
7. An annual independent audit confirming financial viability with evidence of follow-up on any concerns cited in the audit's accompanying management letter	
8. Strategies to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals	
9. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources.	

STANDARD VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purposed, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Assemble the following, as appropriate:

- ☐ **By-laws and other institutional documents identifying the group legally responsible for the institution and its role in governance.**
- ☐ **Conflict of interest policies and other ethics policies of the Board.**
- ☐ **A list of current governing board members (name, affiliation, and occupation; members who are remunerated by the institution through salaries, wages or fees; members who are creditors of the institution, guarantors of institutional debt, or active members of businesses of which the institution is a customer).**
- ☐ **Organizational chart for the institution (names and titles of the individuals in each position)**
- ☐ **Succession planning for board members and senior leadership**
- ☐ **Processes and procedures relevant to governance, leadership, and administration**

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Complete the following table:

<u>Standard VII Criteria</u>	
1. A clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines its roles, responsibilities and accountability for decision making by each constituency, including governing body, administration, faculty, staff, and students	

2. A legally constituted governing body that :

- a. Serves the public interest, ensures that the institution clearly states and fulfills its mission and goals, has fiduciary responsibility for the institution, and is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution
- b. Has sufficient independence and expertise to ensure the integrity of the institution. Members must have primary responsibility to the accredited institution and not allow political, financial, or other influences to interfere with their governing responsibilities
- c. Ensures that neither the governing body nor individual members interferes in the day-to-day operations of the institution
- d. Oversees at the policy level the quality of teaching and learning, the approval of degree programs and the awarding of degrees, the establishment of personnel policies and procedures, the approval of policies and by-laws, and the assurance of strong fiscal management
- e. Plays a basic policy-making role in financial affairs to ensure integrity and strong financial management. This may include a timely review of audited financial statements and/or other documents related to the fiscal viability of the institution
- f. Appoints and regularly evaluates the performance of the Chief Executive Officer
- g. Is informed in all its operations by principles of good practice in board governance
- h. Establishes and complies with a written conflict of interest policy designed to ensure that impartiality of the governing body by addressing matters such as payment for services, contractual relationships, employment, and family, financial or other interests that could pose or be perceived as conflicts of interest
- i. Supports the Chief Executive Officer in maintaining the autonomy of the institution

3. A Chief Executive Officer who:

- a. Is appointed by, evaluated by, and reports to the governing body and shall not chair the governing body;
- b. Has appropriate credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization;
- c. Has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including developing and implementing institutional plans, staffing the organization, identifying and allocating resources, and directing the institution toward attaining the goals and objectives set forth in its mission;
- d. Has the assistance of qualified administrators, sufficient in number, to enable the Chief Executive Officer to discharge his/her duties effectively; and is responsible for establishing procedures for assessing the organization's efficiency and effectiveness.

4. An administration possessing or demonstrating: a. An organizational structure that is clearly documented and that clearly defines reporting relationships b. An appropriate size and with relevant experience to assist the Chief Executive Officer in fulfilling his/her roles and responsibilities; c. Members with credentials and professional experience consistent with the mission of the organization and their functional roles; d. Skills, time, assistance, technology, and information systems expertise required to perform their duties; e. Regular engagement with faculty and students in advancing the institution's goals and objectives; and, f. Systematic procedures for evaluating administrative units and for using assessment data to enhance operations	
5. Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration.	