

Outcomes Assessment Forum

April 7, 2014

Middle States Requirements

Steven Schwarz, Associate Provost

Queens College

Selected criteria for the 7 proposed standards, from:

**MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCELLENCE
REVISED 2013
DRAFT: November 21, 2013
(from www.msche.org)**

Standard I: Mission and Goals

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, whom 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.

. . . 3. goals that focus on student learning and related outcomes that are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services, the institutional mission, and institutional improvement.

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.

. . . 9. periodic assessment of integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.

Standard III: Student Learning Opportunities

An institution provides students with learning opportunities characterized by rigor and coherence appropriate to program, certificate or degree level, and institutional mission. All learning opportunities, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting, are consistent with higher education and societal expectations.

. . . 5. a general education program that:

. . . 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, and technological competency. Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives;

c. provides evidence, in graduate programs that do not include general education, that, at admission, students can demonstrate appropriate general education skills

. . . 7. periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities.

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and 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, and completion 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.

. . . 7. periodic evaluation and improvement of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, across all levels and modalities of the learning experience, at graduation and at other appropriate points, the institution's students have achieved knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with their degree level, institutional goals, and appropriate higher education and societal expectations.

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. assessments demonstrating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program outcomes. These assessments include examples of the extent to which student work and performance demonstrate the achievement of stated learning outcomes;

Standard V (continued):

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;
- h. implementing other processes and procedures designed to improve educational programs and services;

Standard V (continued):

4. clear expectations for assessment activities that are institutionally supported, sustained, well-articulated, and communicated to stakeholders;

5. if applicable, adequate and appropriate institutional review and approval of assessment services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers; and

6. 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 structure are aligned with each other and sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

1. institutional objectives, both institution-wide and for individual units, that are clearly stated, measurable, 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 evidence-based, aligned with the institution's mission and goals, and clearly linked to the institution and unit strategic plans/objectives;
- . . . 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 and efficiently benefits the institution, its students, and the communities it serves.

. . . 4. an administration possessing or demonstrating:

. . . f. systematic procedures for evaluating administrative units and for using assessment data to enhance operations;

Excerpts (based on the current standards) from:

**Middle States Commission on Higher Education:
Information and Guidance**

**The City University of New York
Office of Academic Affairs**

December 2013 DRAFT

Standard 2 (Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal)

- * The college's strategic plan should grow out of and be tied to the stated mission of the college.
- * The strategic plan should state who is supposed to do what and when (with a realistic time frame), and what resources would be brought to bear.
- * There should be a strategic plan that is in effect, that is being used (including for budget allocations and related to enrollment management), and that is being continuously revised/updated according to what has happened since the plan was first finalized (see also Standard 7).

Standard 14 (Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes)

- Make sure that each department/program has a binder or online folder with syllabi with actual student learning outcomes, program assessment plans, data, and evidence of changes as a result of these data. Close the “loop” and make sure that findings are not displayed in pieces.
- Information is easy to read if it is presented in a matrix format. You can create a grid with a list of programs along the left side and then put along the top, the institution’s determination of the status for each program:

	Has learning goals for program level and each course syllabus	Has plan to assess	Has assessed some/all	Has Results	Using Results	Has documentation of how results were used
Program #1						
Program #2						
Program #3						
Program #4						
Program #5						
...Program #50						

- If everything has not yet been completed, the college should give details about when it will be and by whom and how.
- MSCHE will want to see assessment rubrics so they can see if they align with goals.
- here most institutions have the most trouble with assessment is in using the results to then make changes; the loop must be closed. The “loop closing” doesn’t have to be complicated- just shouldn’t be “we’re discussing this.”
- Focus should not be on assessment results themselves, but on using the results to improve.