


CS-116: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT - 8.1
AN OVERVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES


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Session Overview

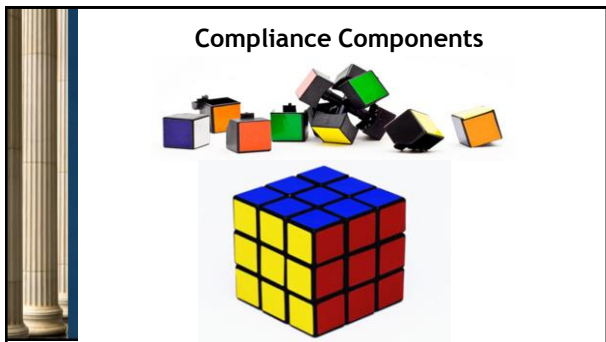
- I. CR 8.1: General Structure - Compliance Components
- II. Research Project: Institutional Responses to CR 8.1
 1. Measures / Criteria
 2. Thresholds of Acceptability*
 3. Goals
 4. Outcomes
 5. Publishing
- III. Concluding Remarks and Q&A



Compliance Components

- Embedded in the wording of the *Principles*
(and frequently signaled by numbers, commas, and the use of compound modifiers),
- the **compliance components** are
 - the **discrete elements** that must be addressed for each requirement and standard





Core Requirement 8.1: Student Achievement

The institution **identifies, evaluates, and publishes** GOALS and OUTCOMES for student achievement **appropriate** to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered.

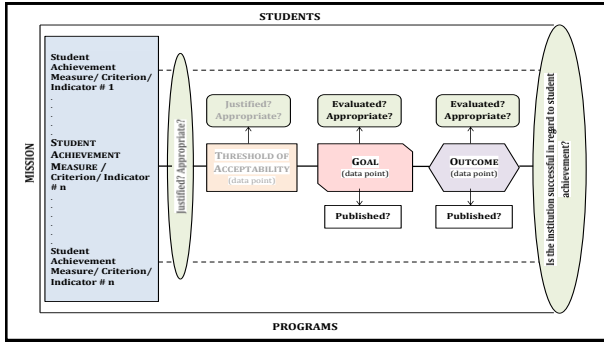
The institution uses **multiple MEASURES** to document student success.

+ Resource Manual Note
-thresholds of acceptability

8.1: Resource Manual Note (2018)


[I]t is expected that the institution will demonstrate its success with respect to student achievement and indicate the CRITERIA and THRESHOLDS OF ACCEPTABILITY used to determine that success...The institution is responsible for JUSTIFYING both the criteria it utilizes and the thresholds of acceptability it sets...

...In their reviews, SACSCOC committees will examine and analyze (1) documentation demonstrating success with respect to student achievement, (2) the APPROPRIATENESS of criteria and thresholds of acceptability used to determine student achievement, and (3) whether the data and other information to document student achievement is appropriately published. [emphases added]





II. RESEARCH PROJECT: Institutional Responses to CR 8.1



Review Sample and Purpose

- Institutional Compliance Certification Report *and* Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee Report narratives on Core Requirement 8.1 from Spring/Fall 2018 and Spring/Fall 2019.
- Descriptive, exploratory content analysis of common approaches to addressing/evaluating compliance components embedded in 8.1.
 - No evaluative judgment about the quality/strength of the case for compliance.

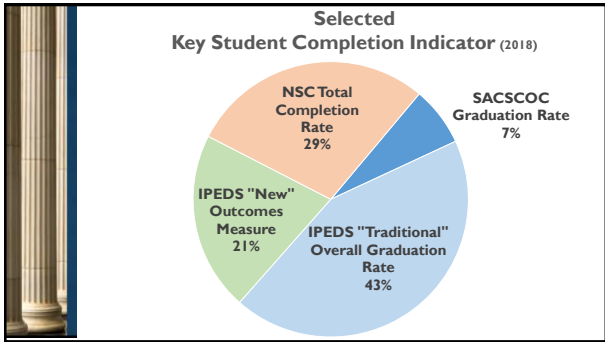
Measures of Student Achievement (2018)


5.9

Average/Mean Number of Identified Student Achievement Measures/Criteria (including Key Student Completion Indicator)

- Credential completion rates
- Retention/persistence rate
- Job placement/post-graduation employment/graduate school acceptance rates
- Licensure/certification exam pass rates
- Course completion pass/success rates

Key Student Completion Indicator






**Measures of Student Achievement:
Federal Expectations**


- Institution-Specific Measures
 - “Success with respect to student achievement...may include different standards for different institutions..., as established by the institution” (p. 8).
- Appropriateness of Measures
 - “The most important consideration should be the **alignment between student achievement measures or standards and the mission of the institution or program**” (p. 9).

2019 DoED Accreditation Handbook, Section 602.16 (a) (1) (i)




**Measures of Student Achievement:
Emerging Non-Compliance Factors**

- Justification of appropriateness of measures of student achievement
 - *“The institution...does not indicate how it ... evaluates these metrics as indicators of student achievement... [N]o rationale was offered for how each indicator is appropriate and aligned with the college’s mission, the students it serves, or the kinds of programs it offers.”*
(Excerpts from Peer Evaluation Committee Reports; emphases added)




**Appropriateness of Selected Measures:
Selected Good Practices**

- Reference to
 - Institutional Mission / Strategic Plan
 - Student Populations / Progression Patterns
 - Mix of Educational Programs
 - External Accountability Requirements
 - Peers/Commonly-Accepted Practices
 - Internal Process of Criteria Identification/Selection




2. Thresholds of Acceptability *

* 2018 Resource Manual Note




Thresholds of Acceptability: A Working Definition for Research Project Coding

- Reference data point for a given measure of student achievement that represents a **minimum** level of acceptable performance set by the *institution itself* in the context of its mission, programs, resources, and student populations.
- Level of performance below which the institution does not want to fall | Level of performance that triggers alarm.
 - In practice, thresholds often correspond to *baselines*.



Thresholds of Acceptability: Emerging Non-Compliance Factors

- Identification and Justification of Thresholds of Acceptability
- “[T]he institution did not provide a threshold of acceptability for this achievement goal...”
- “[T]here is no rationale offered for the thresholds of acceptability.”
(Excerpts from Peer Evaluation Committee Reports; emphases added)




**Justification of Thresholds of Acceptability:
Selected Good Practices**

- Reference to
 - Own *Baseline* / Trend Data
 - Peers
 - External Accountability Benchmarks/Standards
 - State/System Accountability
 - Programmatic Accreditors
 - Federal Requirements
 - *Internal Process of Threshold Setting*




3. Student Achievement Goals




Student Achievement Goals:
A Working Definition for Research Project Coding

- Reference data point for a given measure of student achievement that represents an attainable level of performance at which the *institution itself* aspires to be in the context of its mission, student populations, programs, resources, and strategic priorities.
- Level of performance that the institution is working to achieve.




Goals vs. Thresholds of Acceptability

- Both are *reference data points* set by the institution itself for a given measure.
 - Operational performance range
 - *Thresholds* - level of performance below which the institution does not want to fall.
 - *Goals* - level of performance that the institution is working to achieve.
- Instances where thresholds = goals




Student Achievement Goals: Emerging Non-Compliance Factors

- Identification and Evaluation of Appropriateness of Achievement Goals
 - “The institution ... identifies an increase in the graduation rate as a measure of student achievement. The institution provided five years of IPEDS data showing an increase in graduation rate from ~12% to ~32%. While the institution’s graduation rate is improving, it is **unclear what the institution’s goal is for student achievement in the area of graduation rates.**”
 - “The goal for the retention rate is **not fully articulated, but appears to be somewhere between the national average for open enrollment institutions (%) and the national average for private institutions (%), but no rationale for this goal is provided.**”
(Excerpts from Peer Evaluation Committee Reports; emphases added)




Evaluation of Goals: Selected Good Practices

- Reference to
 - Own Trend Data
 - Peers / National data
 - External Accountability Expectations
 - State/System Accountability Standards
 - Programmatic Accreditors
 - Student Populations
 - *Internal Process of Goal Setting*




4. Student Achievement Outcomes



Student Achievement Outcomes: A Working Definition for Research Project Coding


- Assessment results (data/evidence) documenting actual performance levels on a given measure of student achievement.



Student Achievement Outcomes: Emerging Non-Compliance Factors

- Evaluation of Outcomes
 - “[T]he Committee could not find evidence that the institution actually evaluates ... the level of student achievement on the identified measures.”
 - “While the university supplied data for several indicators, the university did not provide sufficient evaluation of its goals and outcomes for student achievement.”


(Excerpts from Peer Evaluation Committee Reports; emphases added)



**Student Achievement Outcomes:
Emerging Non-Compliance Factors**

- Discussion of performance dynamics on the selected **Key Student Completion Indicator**
 - “Additionally, the institution did not provide data or speak to the [key student completion indicator] they selected for student achievement.”
 - “The Committee was unable to find a discussion of the metric the institution has chosen to address graduation rates or strategies envisioned to improve student success in this [area].”


(Excerpts from Peer Evaluation Committee Reports; emphases added)



Outcomes Are Not Self-Evaluated


“Here you can find a selection of key scores for [Institution]’s academic programs and the comparison scores for all the [schools] that use the [standardized assessment instrument]... We hope this helps you make your own assessment of the value of a [Institution] education.”

(An excerpt from one institution’s Compliance Certification Report; emphasis added)




**Evaluation of Outcomes:
Selected Good Practices**

- Discussion of Current Performance in the Context of **Pre-Established Reference Points** (Thresholds and/or Goals set by the institution)
- Discussion of Performance **Dynamics/Change Over Time**
- Discussion of Performance Outcomes vis-à-vis **Peers** (identified by the institution)




Evaluation of Outcomes:
Key Student Completion Indicator

- Identification
- Discussion
 - Current performance vis-à-vis
 - *Baseline* reference data point
 - *Target* reference data point
- Disaggregation
 - Rationale
- Improvement Actions (if appropriate)
 - Targeted interventions based on disaggregation analysis




5. Publishing



Publish:
A Working Definition for Research Project Coding


- Disclose *and* disseminate to the public goals and outcomes for the measures of student achievement selected by the institution.
 - Make information *discoverable*



**Publishing Goals and Outcomes:
Emerging Non-Compliance Factors**


- **Accessibility**
 - *“The institution included *** Summaries, which contain achievement data and benchmarks, it was not clear to the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee that these are published anywhere.”*
 - *“For each of these goals, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to find information regarding how the institution publishes these goals and outcomes for student achievement such that it is accessible to the public, a target level for student achievement, and present data reflecting student achievement or evaluation.”*

(Excerpts from Peer Evaluation Committee Reports; emphases added)

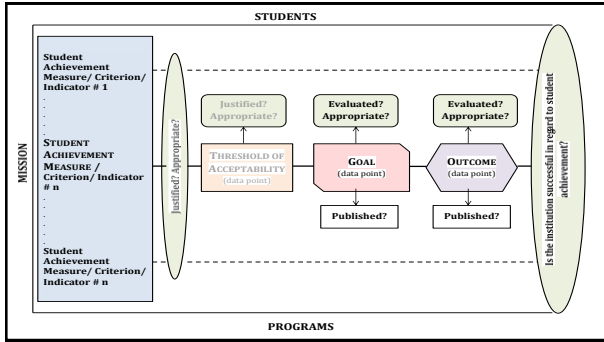


**Publishing Goals and Outcomes:
Selected Good Practices**

- Publish in accessible location / via accessible media
 - A single, dedicated place
- Make information user-friendly
 - Organized
 - Effectively presented
 - Narratives, data tables, charts, bullet points, etc.
- Update as necessary



IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS



Key Pointers

- Addressing *multiple* dimensions of student achievement.
- Justifying *appropriateness* of selected measures and established thresholds/goals.
- Contextualizing, self-evaluating and interpreting outcomes.

Overall Question

➤ Is my institution **successful** in regard to student achievement?

❖ If applicable, how does my institution address the situation of **consistently falling short of meeting** self-identified thresholds or goals for measures of student achievement?