STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: CORE REQUIREMENT (CR) 8.1

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Student Achievement

Evidence of student Learning experience

Post- Graduation outcomes

Evaluation of student Academic performance

Session Agenda

I. CR 8.1: Structure - Compliance Components

II. Review Project: Institutional Responses to CR 8.1
   1. Measures
   2. Thresholds of Acceptability*
   3. Goals
   4. Outcomes
   5. Publishing

III. Concluding Remarks
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.

Compliance Components

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

It 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. REVIEW 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 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.

### Key Limitations and Delimitations

- Initial Reaffirmation Classes under the 2018 Principles
  - “Calibration” in interpretation and application
- Supporting Documentation
  - Focus on the Compliance Certification report narrative

### 1. Measures of Student Achievement
Measures of Student Achievement: Working Definitions

- Criteria (re: RM Note and 2012 Principles, FR 4.1) or indicators of student achievement identified by the institution itself given its mission, student populations, programs, resources, and strategic priorities.
  - Items to be measured
  - Items for which (i) goals/thresholds of acceptability are set and (ii) outcomes are reported.
- "Multiple measures"
  - Several distinct items - criteria, indicators, or dimensions of the complex construct of student achievement
  - Not multiple ways to measure or assess the same student achievement indicator.
  - A measures selected by the institution - Key Student Completion Indicator (KSCI) identified by the institution in Fall 2018.

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; emphasis added)
Measures of Student Achievement: Key Tasks and Discussion Questions

- Identify Measures
  - How does your institution operationally define the concept of "student achievement"?
  - How many measures (indicators/criteria) of student achievement does your institution assess, track, and report?

- Demonstrate Appropriateness of Selected Measures
  - How does your institution justify the appropriateness of selected measures?
  - Why was the particular set of student achievement measures selected?
  - How were the measures selected? Who decided? What was the process?

Appropriateness of Selected Measures of Student Achievement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Key Compliance Components</th>
<th>Sample Approach</th>
<th>Illustrative Example from Institutional Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refer to Institutional Mission / Strategic Plan</td>
<td>The institution's strategic plan sets the direction for student success, identifying key outcomes and measures to ensure alignment with the institution's mission. The plan outlines how the institution will track progress towards these measures and how the data will be used to inform decision-making.</td>
<td>The institution's strategic plan identifies improving graduation rates as a key performance indicator. An internal committee is tasked with monitoring progress and making adjustments as needed to align with the plan's goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to Student Progression Patterns</td>
<td>The institution establishes clear benchmarks for student progress, ensuring that students are on track to meet graduation requirements. This includes regular assessments and interventions to support student success.</td>
<td>The institution has established a progression model that includes mandatory milestones for students to achieve in their first year. Students who do not meet these milestones are provided with additional support and resources to help them succeed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to Specific Student Needs / Expectations</td>
<td>The institution acknowledges and addresses the unique needs of specific student populations to ensure equitable outcomes. This includes interventions tailored to the needs of underrepresented groups.</td>
<td>The institution recognizes the challenges faced by first-generation students and implements targeted support programs. These include mentorship opportunities and additional academic resources to help students navigate the college experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the average number of student achievement measures identified by the institutions? (2018)

A. 2 measures  
B. 4 measures  
C. 6 measures  
D. 8 measures

- 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SACSCOC Graduation Rate</th>
<th>IPEDS &quot;Traditional&quot; Overall Graduation Rate</th>
<th>IPEDS &quot;New&quot; Outcomes Measure</th>
<th>National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Total Completion Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tracked Student Cohort</td>
<td>First-Time/Full-Time 3 Years = Associate</td>
<td>First-Time/Full-Time 4/6 Years = Bachelorate</td>
<td>First-Time Full-Time 3/4 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 Years = Baccalaureate</td>
<td>8 Years = 6 Years</td>
<td>Full-Time Transfer-OUTs 6 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracked Reporting Timeline</td>
<td>3 Years = Associate 4/6 Years = Bachelorate</td>
<td>3/4 Years = 6 Years</td>
<td>3/4 Years Transfer-OUTs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal Credentials</td>
<td>UG Degrees</td>
<td>UG Degrees</td>
<td>UG Degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-Secondary Certificates</td>
<td>Post-Secondary Certificates</td>
<td>Diplomas &amp; Certificates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the most commonly selected Key Student Completion Indicator (KSCI)? (2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A. SACSCOC Graduation Rate</th>
<th>B. “Traditional” IPEDS Overall Graduation Rate (150% time)</th>
<th>C. “New” IPEDS Outcomes Measure (8 year award)</th>
<th>D. National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Total Completion Rate (6 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SACSCOC Graduation Rate</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IPEDS “Traditional” Overall Graduation Rate</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IPEDS “New” Outcomes Measure</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NSC Total Completion Rate</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Thresholds of Acceptability *

* 2018 Resource Manual Note
Thresholds of Acceptability: A Working Definition

- 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)

Thresholds of Acceptability: Key Tasks and Discussion Questions

- Set Thresholds
  - Are thresholds of acceptability established for all identified measures of student achievement?
- Justify Appropriateness
  - How does your institution justify the appropriateness of established thresholds of acceptability?
### Justification of Thresholds of Acceptability

- **Reference to**
  - Own Baseline / Trend Data
  - Peers
  - State/System Accountability Benchmarks
  - Programmatic Accreditors Standards
  - Federal Requirements
  - **INTERNAL PROCESS OF THRESHOLD SETTING**

#### Table: Illustrative Examples from Institutional CG/Excerpts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compliance Components</th>
<th>Simple Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference to Own Baseline / Trend Data</td>
<td>The threshold of acceptability is set at 4% which is the college's lowest rate in the past six years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>The threshold of acceptability is set at 5% based on the institution's past three-year average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State/System Accountability Benchmarks</td>
<td>The institution's threshold of acceptability is set at 5% based on the state's three-year average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmatic Accreditors Standards</td>
<td>The institution's threshold of acceptability is set at 5% based on the accreditor's standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERNAL PROCESS OF THRESHOLD SETTING</strong></td>
<td>The college sets the threshold of acceptability for the threshold setting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Student Achievement Goals

- **Justification of Thresholds of Acceptability**
  - Reference to Own Baseline / Trend Data
  - Peers
  - State/System Accountability Benchmarks
  - Programmatic Accreditors Standards
  - Federal Requirements
  - **INTERNAL PROCESS OF THRESHOLD SETTING**
Student Achievement Goals:
A Working Definition

- 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 of 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 (8%) and the national average for private institutions (8%), but no rationale for this goal is provided.”

(Excerpts from Peer Evaluation Committee Reports; emphases added)
Student Achievement Goals:
Key Tasks and Discussion Questions

• Set Goals
  • Are goals established for all selected measures of student achievement?

• Demonstrate Appropriateness
  • How does your institution evaluate the appropriateness of established goals?

Evaluation of Student Achievement Goals

• Reference to
  • Own Trend Data
  • Peers
  • State/System Accountability Standards
  • Expectations of Programmatic Accreditors
  • Student Populations / Admissions Standards
  • Available Resources
  • INTERNAL PROCESS OF GOAL SETTING
4. Student Achievement Outcomes

Student Achievement Outcomes: A Working Definition

• 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 arena.”

(Excerpts from Peer Evaluation Committee Reports; emphases added)

Student Achievement Outcomes:
Key Tasks and Discussion Questions

- Report Outcomes
  - Are outcomes reported for all selected measures of student achievement?

- Evaluate Outcomes
  - How does your institution evaluate the outcomes?
    - Are outcomes appropriate given the institution’s mission, students, and programs?

Evaluation of Student Achievement Outcomes

- Discussion of Performance in the Context of Pre-Established Reference Points (Thresholds and/or Goals set by the institution)
- Discussion of Performance Dynamics/Change Over Time
  - Key Student Completion Indicator (KSCI)
- Discussion of Performance Outcomes vis-à-vis Peers (identified by the institution)
What % of institutions evaluate student achievement outcomes? (2018)

A. Less than 50%
B. 60%
C. 80%
D. 100%

Evaluation of Student Achievement Outcomes (2018)

84%
Juxtaposed outcomes with a reference data point (e.g., threshold of acceptability, achievement goal, peer/state/system/accreditor benchmark)

59%
DISCUSSED/INTERPRETED outcomes
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)

5. Publishing

• Disclose and disseminate to the public goals and outcomes for the measures of student achievement selected by the institution.
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: Key Tasks and Discussion Questions

- Publish in accessible location / via accessible media
  - Where does your institution publish goals and outcomes for selected student achievement measures?

- Make information user-friendly
  - How does your institution present outcomes data for selected student achievement measures?
    - Narratives, data tables, charts, bullet points, etc.
IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

What is a suggested minimum # of data points reported for each measure of student achievement?

A. 0
B. 1
C. 2
D. 3
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?
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