Accreditation of Postsecondary Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability

Stephanie Smith Lee, Chair, Accreditation Workgroup
Cate Weir, Program Director, Think College
2017 State of the Art Conference

• Brief history of Accreditation Workgroup
• Why program accreditation is important
• Accreditation Report and model standards
• Current Workgroup activities and Next Steps
• Opportunity to volunteer for field testing
Importance of Program Accreditation

- Benchmarks are useful for quality assurance and improvement.
- Valuable for institutions of higher education, federal student aid offices, accrediting agencies, students with ID and their parents.
- Implementation will validate and strengthen programs.
- Accreditation MAY replace the current Comprehensive Transition Program approval process.
Goals for the Model Standards

Responsive to public input
Reflect a sufficient level of quality
Clear and understandable
Align with ED regulations, HEOA, & WIOA
Include information from HEOA for clarity
Include guidance and needed next steps
Used by accrediting agencies
Model Standards in Ten Areas

- Mission
- Student Achievement
- Curriculum
- Faculty
- Facility, Equipment and Supply
- Administrative and Fiscal Capacity
- Student Services
- Length and Structure of Program of Study
- Student Complaints
- Program Development, Planning, and Review

Recommendations to Department of Education

- Consider the role of the FSA approval process for CTPs, if any, once program accreditation is implemented.
- Provide guidance to school districts, comprehensive transition programs, and families about the determination of “intellectual disability” with respect to admissions and to financial aid.
- Fund the development and dissemination of various resources and strategies
Accreditation Workgroup 2016-2020

Stephanie Smith Lee, Chair, Senior Policy Advisor, National Down Syndrome Congress

Carol Britton-Laws, PhD, MSW, FAAIDD, Assistant Clinical Professor in Disability Studies, Director, Destination Dawgs Inclusive Post-Secondary Education at UGA, University of Georgia

Roberta L. Derlin, PhD, Representing the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity

Jon Fansmith, Director, Government Relations, Division of Government and Public Affairs, American Council on Education

Wilbert L. Francis, MBA, Project Director, Open the Doors to College, UCLA Tarjan Center

Meg Grigal, Ph.D., Principal Investigator, Think College National Coordinating Center

Debra Hart, M.S., Co-Principal Investigator, Think College National Coordinating Center

James D. King, M.Ed., Vice Chancellor, Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) & Senior Staff Member, Tennessee Board of Regents

David Michael Mank, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Indiana University

Elise McMillan, JD, Co-Director, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

Deborah J. Amsden Micklos, MS, CFCS, Project Coordinator, Center on Assessment Research and Translation, University of Delaware

Rachel Quenemoen, M.S., Senior Research Associate, Retired, University of Minnesota

Tracy Rand, Managing Director, Office of Specialized Services, Turning Point Program, Bergen Community College, Paramus, NJ
Workgroup Subcommittees

Accreditation Self-Study Process
- Work with the field on guidance and a protocol for implementing the standards.

Accreditation Outreach
- Research and consider feasibility of existing accrediting agencies using model standards or creating a new accrediting agency.

Student Assessment and Learning Outcomes
- Recommend standards and guidance related to how student learning outcomes are assessed.
Accreditation Self Study Process

• Prepare recommendations for a self-study process for full Workgroup consideration in December
• Based on Workgroup recommendations, develop protocol for selection of sites for self-study, dates for trainings, in-person or virtual visits with IHEs, etc.
• Develop materials and any training needed for self-study and conduct training.
• Field test the Self-study process with several college programs

Accreditation Outreach

• Approaching possible existing accreditors and considering the feasibility of an existing accreditor or possible need for a new accrediting agency.

Student Assessment and Learning Outcomes

• Researching current practice and developing draft language for student learning standard (based on NACIQI recommendation)
Webinar Presentation: Measuring Student Learning Outcomes

The recording is available to all, but copying or duplication of any materials mentioned or shared in the presentation without permission of relevant program staff is strictly prohibited.

Additional Work 2018 - 2020

• Address other recommendations from first Report
• Develop technical guidance to accompany standards
• Consider options for utilizing model accreditation standards
• Tweak existing model standards if needed
• Submit Report as required in Year 5 (2020)
Interested in becoming a Self-Study Site?

Email thinkcollege@umb.edu and indicate your interest!

“Accreditation Self Study” in the subject line

Be sure to let us know what program you are with, where it is located (IHE, City, State)