ThinkCollege

NATIONAL COORDINATING CENTER

The National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup

Model Program Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability

September 30, 2020

These model program accreditation standards were developed by the 2015-2020 National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup and will be included in the Accreditation Workgroup Report that is forthcoming.

The report will be transmitted to:

United States Secretary of Education
United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States House of Representatives Committee on Education and Workforce
National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity

The Think College National Coordinating Center is funded by the Office of Postsecondary Education, US Department of Education to provide knowledge development, technical assistance, training and dissemination, and leadership and collaboration for Transition and Postsecondary Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grantees supporting the growth and enhancement of postsecondary options for students with intellectual disabilities throughout the United States.

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Disclaimer
The Model Program Accreditation Standards developed by the National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup on Model Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability reflects the views of the members of the Think College Accreditation Workgroup and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Secretary of Education or the US Department of Education.

INTRODUCTION

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) enacted in 2008 created exciting opportunities for students with intellectual disability (ID) to access federal financial aid and authorized both new model demonstration programs and a National Coordinating Center (NCC). The NCC, administered by Think College at the Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston, is charged with providing technical assistance, coordination, and evaluation of model demonstration programs.

The NCC is also required by HEOA to convene a Workgroup to develop and recommend model criteria, standards, and components of higher education programs for students with intellectual disability. The National Coordinating Center (NCC) Accreditation Workgroup issues a report in response to that statutory requirement.

The first NCC Accreditation Workgroup was convened from Fiscal Year 2011 to Fiscal Year 2016. That Workgroup developed draft standards, obtained significant public input, revised the model program standards and issued a report to Congress, the Secretary of Education and National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity on September 30, 2016.

The current NCC Accreditation Workgroup conducted a field test of these standards and significant public input that contributed substantially to the updated standards included herein. The revised model program accreditation standards also take into account progress in the field and new policy and implementation challenges and opportunities. The model standards include each area required by the federal regulations for the development of accreditation standards and have been developed to align with the requirements for a new accreditation agency. The Workgroup is currently preparing a new report on the standards that will be distributed when completed.

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MODEL PROGRAM ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

MISSION STANDARDS

Mission Standard 1:
The program has a written mission statement that is consistent with the Higher Education Act (HEA) requirements that the program is a "degree, certificate, or non-degree program at an accredited institution that is designed to support students with intellectual disabilities (ID) who are seeking to continue academic, career and technical, and independent living instruction" in order to obtain competitive integrated employment (CIE).

Mission Standard 2:
The written mission statement is communicated to prospective and current students, families, staff, faculty, and the public, and is reviewed at least every third year, or sooner if there are significant changes to the program.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

Student Achievement Standard 1:
The program has established a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy that includes criteria for evaluating student progress in academics, socialization, independent living and career development, and the impact of such evaluation on student advancement towards program completion. The program specifies how students' advance through a full course of study and maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Student Achievement Standard 2:
The program has established a program level Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) assessment plan and a process that allows it to measure student achievement in varied domains including academics, social, independent living, and career development.

Student Achievement Standard 3:
The program provides individualized learning plans for the student, for each college catalog course attended by the student, that identifies: what the student is expected to learn; how the student will be evaluated; and supports, strategies, accommodations or modifications that are needed for the student to master essential learning.

Student Achievement Standard 4:
The program provides students with a written report at the end of each "academic unit" (semester, trimester, etc.), understandable to the student, that clearly indicates evidence of student progress in the areas of academics, socialization, independent living, and career/employment.

Student Achievement Standard 5:
The program sets goals for student pace of completion and retention rates that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to the mission of the program. The program monitors and reports pace of completion and retention rates.

CURRICULUM STANDARDS

Curriculum Standard 1:
The program has an inclusive program of study that aligns with the statutory and regulatory requirements for a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program (CTP) in the HEA law and regulations and is consistent with the program's mission and program outcomes.

Curriculum Standard 2: The program utilizes and documents a person-centered planning approach that provides for maximum choice for the student within the inclusive program of study.

Curriculum Standard 3:
Students with intellectual disabilities participate in a wide array of postsecondary level courses from multiple disciplines and departmental/college units that are part of the curriculum for degree or certificate programs.

Curriculum Standard 4:
The inclusive program of study is delivered to students physically attending the institution, with some distance learning allowable if it is applicable to and benefits students with intellectual disability.

Curriculum Standard 5:
The inclusive program of study includes instruction, internships, apprenticeships, or work-based learning, and other career development activities necessary to enable students to achieve and sustain competitive integrated employment (CIE) aligned with person-centered goals.

Curriculum Standard 6:
The inclusive program of study includes student engagement in inclusive social experiences and other campus-based activities. Individualized support, instruction or activities necessary to enhance student social competence must be included in the inclusive program of study.

Curriculum Standard 7:
The inclusive program of study includes individualized support, instruction or other activities designed to support development of students' independent living skills and be guided by each student's person-centered plan.

FACULTY AND STAFF STANDARDS

Faculty and Staff Standard 1: Staff and other professionals that work directly for the program have education and training commensurate with their roles and responsibilities and participate in ongoing professional development and training.

Faculty and Staff Standard 2:
The program must ensure coordination of services and supports between the program and staff and other professionals who do not work directly for the institution, but serve in a support or instructional capacity for the students.

Faculty and Staff Standard 3:
Program staff receive a job description that lists roles and responsibilities. Performance criteria are clear and evaluation is conducted on a regular basis, consistent with the policies of the institution.

Faculty and Staff Standard 4:
Program management and leadership are retained for a reasonable period of time.

Faculty and Staff Standard 5:
Other individuals who work with students, such as peer mentors and pre-professionals or professionals-in-training (such as individuals training to become educators, counselors, speech and language pathologists, occupational or physical therapists) are trained and supervised.

Faculty and Staff Standard 6:
Training and technical assistance are provided to the institution's faculty and staff to develop learning environments, courses and instruction according to the principles of universal design for learning.

Faculty and Staff Standard 7:
Information and support about the impact of an individual student's disability on learning, and strategies to support, instruct and assess the student, are offered to the institution's faculty and staff to improve and optimize the student's learning in courses taught by that faculty or staff.

FACILITY, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY STANDARDS

Facility, Equipment and Supply Standards 1:

Students in the program have access to institutional facilities, equipment and supplies consistent with other students with the same student status.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FISCAL CAPACITY STANDARDS

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 1:
The program is a part of a department or unit of the institution, with a recognized place within its administrative structure.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 2:
The program seeks and considers ongoing input on program development, policies and practices from a variety of stakeholders that includes students, alumni and parents.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 3:
Programs have a viable plan for current and future fiscal sustainability.

STUDENT SERVICES STANDARDS

Student Services Standard 1:
The admission policies and practices ensure that all students who are admitted meet the definition of "students with intellectual disabilities" in the HEA law and regulations.

Student Services Standard 2:
The program provides academic, employment, personal and other advising and counseling, based on person-centered planning and individual interests and needs, and in collaboration with existing institutional services.

Student Services Standard 3:
Students and families are included in the institution's general orientation programs and additional orientation is provided as needed.

Student Services Standard 4:
General information regarding the institution and the program is communicated to students and families on an ongoing basis. The program has a stated process for family engagement and communication that reflects clearly defined roles and responsibilities for students, families and staff.

Student Services Standard 5:
Students in the program have access to services, and social and recreational activities, consistent with other students with the same student status.

Student Services Standard 6:
Individualized supports are provided to students designed to enable the students to seek and sustain competitive, integrated employment (CIE). Supports are provided based on the student's interests and person-centered plan.

LENGTH AND STRUCTURE OF PROGRAM OF STUDY STANDARDS

Length and Structure of Program of Study Standard 1:
The program aligns with the college calendar and specifies the number of weeks of instructional time and the number of clock hours in the program, including the equivalent clock hours that fulfill requirements of the program credential

Length and Structure of Program of Study Standard 2:
The program clearly describes the educational credential or credentials offered (e.g., degree, certificate, or non-degree credential) that is issued by the institution.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS STANDARDS

Student Complaint Standard 1:
The program has established relationships with offices within the institution involved with student complaints or discipline, in order to facilitate communication and collaboration.

Student Complaints Standard 2:
The institution's grievance procedures are understandable, provided to, and discussed with, students in the program and their parents.

Student Complaints Standard 3:
Support is provided to students who have complaints lodged against them as well as students who seek to lodge a formal written complaint. Support is available throughout the grievance process and throughout any actions that result and if a student is at risk of being expelled or urged to exit the program.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND REVIEW STANDARDS

Program Development, Planning, and Review Standard 1:
The program, along with key stakeholders, evaluates its program components, student assessment practices, student services, policies, activities, student learning outcomes and program outcomes, at a minimum of every three years. The program implements program revisions based on the evaluation for continuous quality improvement.

Program Development, Planning and Review Standard 2:
The institution verifies that students who receive federal financial aid meet the definition of a student with an intellectual disability in the HEA law and regulations.

These standards, along with associated guidance, review requirements and next steps are included in the next section of this document.

MODEL PROGRAM ACCREDITATION STANDARDS
With Guidance, Review Requirements and Next Steps

MISSION STANDARDS

Mission Standard 1:
The program has a written mission statement that is consistent with the Higher Education Act (HEA) requirements that the program is a "degree, certificate, or non-degree program at an accredited institution that is designed to support students with intellectual disabilities (ID) who are seeking to continue academic, career and technical, and independent living instruction" in order to obtain competitive integrated employment (CIE).

Guidance

The mission statement must be consistent with the statutory and regulatory requirements in the HEA. However, a mission statement is not required to explicitly include the language from the definition of a "student with an intellectual disability" and the definition of a "Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities" (CTP) in the HEA. The intent of this standard is to ensure that the mission standard aligns with the law and does not contradict it. For instance, the HEA states that programs must serve students with ID. A mission statement that affirms that the program serves students with a variety of disabilities would be contradictory to the intent and language in the HEA. See glossary for CTP, ID, and CIE definitions.

The term "gainful employment" is used in the CTP definition in HEA. However, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) no longer considers CTPs to be gainful employment programs. The updated term "competitive integrated employment" is used instead, as it is defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and that definition may be found in the glossary.

Required for Review
- Provide the mission statement.
- Describe how the mission aligns to the HEA ID and CTP definitions.
- Provide documentation that the institution is accredited, including the name of the recognized accrediting agency that has accredited the institution.

Mission Standard 2:
The written mission statement is communicated to prospective and current students, families, staff, faculty, and the public, and is reviewed at least every third year, or sooner if there are significant changes to the program.
Guidance
The mission statement is communicated to a variety of stakeholders through multiple communication channels. There must be a process in place that outlines the schedule and

conditions under which the mission statement is reviewed by both internal and external stakeholders, and revised, if necessary, on a regular basis.

Required for Review
- Indicate how the mission statement is communicated to prospective students, students, families, staff, faculty, and the public.
- State when the current mission statement was written or last revised
- State the process and timeline for periodic evaluation of the mission statement.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

Student Achievement Standard 1:
The program has established a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy that includes criteria for evaluating student progress in academics, socialization, independent living and career development, and the impact of such evaluation on student advancement towards program completion. The program specifies how students' advance through a full course of study and maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Guidance
The federal definition of Satisfactory Academic Progress is: "A required measurement of a student's academic progress towards their academic goal. Progress must be measured by both grade-based (qualitative) and time/pace of completion (quantitative) standards. For programs lasting one year or less, SAP must be assessed at the end of each payment period. For programs lasting more than one year, SAP must be assessed annually (corresponding with the end of a payment period). SAP must be measured cumulatively."

The preceding federal SAP definition addresses measurement of a student's *academic* progress, based on substantial public input, SAP for these programs must also address measurement of student progress in the areas of *socialization, independent living and career development*.

Required for Review
- Provide the institution's SAP, and describe how this is applied to students in the program.
- Provide the program SAP policy, including information about how SAP is measured in academics, socialization, career development and independent living.

Next Steps
We recommend that the U. S. Department of Education fund the development and dissemination of resources and strategies to use in determining what an individual student with ID is expected to learn, and how to assess progress in traditional classes, based on best practice. Such resources and strategies are needed to determine student progress in all areas (academic, career or technical, and independent living).

Student Achievement Standard 2:

The program has established a program level Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) assessment plan and a process that allows it to measure student achievement in varied domains including academics, social, independent living, and career development.

Guidance

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) articulate what students know and can do in various domains upon completion of the program. SLOs should be appropriate to the nature of the program, clear, concise, measurable, and observable. The process/plan will include written student learning outcomes expected of all students in the program, the methods to assess the extent to which the SLO's are met, and a schedule that indicates when data are collected and analyzed.

The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan must contain the following elements:
- Written Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), which include the following key elements:
  - Who: (the student) "Upon completion of this program, students will be able to…"
  - What: skill/information
  - How learning/attainment is demonstrated: Example: exam, project, presentation, portfolio, etc.
  - Description of the methods that will be used to assess the extent to which the SLOs are met, i.e. letter grades, rubric graded, pass/fail, etc.
- The data that will be collected; and
- A schedule that indicates when data are collected and analyzed (at least annually).

Required for Review
- State the student learning outcomes for the program.
- Describe the plan and process used to determine if the SLOs are achieved.
- Provide the schedule for collecting and analyzing the data.
- Indicate how the information regarding the achievement of student learning outcomes is shared and with whom.

Student Achievement Standard 3:

The program provides individualized learning plans for the student, for each college catalog course attended by the student, that identifies: what the student is expected to learn; how the student will be evaluated; and supports, strategies, accommodations or modifications that are needed for the student to master essential learning.

Guidance

All students in the program participating in college catalog courses must have a learning plan for the course. "College catalog course" refers to courses in the college catalog that are taken

by matriculating students for credit towards a degree or certificate. Supports, strategies, and accommodations identified in the student's person-centered plan are included in the learning plan.

Programs have a process to outline the individual learning goals and expectations for each student in each college class that is based on the course syllabi and the learning goals for all students in the class, with accommodations and modifications as needed. Note that modifications are only allowed if the course is being audited or otherwise not taken for credit towards a degree. The learning plan will be shared with the student and with the faculty member teaching the course. The program staff will support the student in learning the material, if needed, and to the extent possible will collaborate with the faculty member on evaluation of student learning.

The individual learning plans must be developed by a professional staff person or faculty member. If undergraduate or graduate students are involved they must be under the supervision of professional staff.

Required for Review
- Describe the process for analyzing syllabi and course expectations, identifying what individual students are expected to learn, and how they will be evaluated and supported.
- Provide several redacted examples of such plans, including the course syllabi upon which it is based.
- Indicate the position(s) of the individuals who conduct this process (such as faculty, program staff, graduate students, etc.).

Student Achievement Standard 4:
The program provides students with a written report at the end of each "academic unit" (semester, trimester, etc.), understandable to the student, that clearly indicates evidence of student progress in the areas of academics, socialization, independent living, and career/employment.

Guidance
The written reports are reviewed with the student at a minimum at the end of each academic unit. These records are retained for a period of seven years.

Required for Review
- Provide a description of the assessment processes used by the program to determine student achievement. i.e. rubrics, pass/fail, academic grades, portfolios, etc. in each area.
- Provide a copy of the report format that is reviewed with the student, the timeline for report review, and a description of how the report is made understandable to the student.

- Provide several samples of redacted student reports.

Student Achievement Standard 5:
The program sets goals for student pace of completion and retention rates that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to the mission of the program. The program monitors and reports pace of completion and retention rates.

Guidance
Completing the program within a reasonable period of time is important for student retention and success. Retention is also a key factor in determining if a program is meeting the needs of its students and for accountability purposes.

Required for Review
- Provide the goals set by the program for student pace of completion (the amount of time it takes students to complete the program). Provide the actual results – the number and percentage of students who completed the program on time during recent years. For students who did not complete the program on time, provide information about how long they took to complete. Such information must be provided by class (Freshman, etc.)
- Provide the goals set by the program for student retention rates (the number and percentage of students who remain in the program) by class (Freshman to Sophomore year, etc.) and the actual results for recent years. Indicate the reasons students provide for leaving the program prior to program completion.
- Documentation that the data are made publicly available.

CURRICULUM STANDARDS

Curriculum Standard 1:
The program has an inclusive program of study that aligns with the statutory and regulatory requirements for a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program (CTP) in the HEA law and regulations and is consistent with the program's mission and program outcomes.

Guidance
An "inclusive program of study" refers to the courses, expectations and requirements needed to earn the credential awarded by the program and for program completion. It must align with the HEA requirements in the definition of a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program (CTP), although it is not necessary to include the HEA language in the inclusive program of study description. An individual student's course of study within the program will be determined through a person-centered plan.

Specific aspects of the CTP definition are covered in various standards. With respect to the inclusion requirements in the CTP definition, students in the program must be socially and academically integrated with non-disabled students to the maximum extent possible. The

program must ensure and document that students meet the minimum 50% inclusion requirements in the HEA, which states that at least half of the students' time must focus on academic components through one or more of the following:

- Coursework with students without disabilities, including taking courses for credit, or auditing (or otherwise participating in courses for which the student does not receive regular, academic credit) or taking non-credit bearing, non-credit courses.
- Participating in internships or work-based training in settings with individuals without disabilities

The inclusive program of study describes a list of courses, additional learning experiences including campus membership, social engagement and independence development activities, and career development and employment activities that make up the requirements that all students must complete to earn the credential.

Students use person centered planning to choose courses and other learning activities to participate in that support their personal goals, while still meeting the overall requirements of the inclusive program of study. Students complete the number of hours and the range of experiences that are required but have choice within that structure to the greatest extent possible. In the case where they are pursuing a course of study that leads to an industry recognized credential such as childcare assistant, there are likely to be specific courses required in order to earn the credential.

As indicated in the introduction, this standard applies whether or not the U.S. Department of Education has approved the program as a CTP for financial aid purposes. If the program has been approved as a CTP by the Department, evidence of meeting this standard must still be provided. CTP approval from the Department is not required in order for the program to be accredited.

Required for Review
- State the intended program outcomes for the program (broad program goals).
- Provide a description of the inclusive program of study that includes a clear and detailed outline that illustrates all required activities of the inclusive program of study that leads to a program credential.
- Provide the program of study description that clearly documents that the students spend at least half-time in courses with students without disabilities or internships or work-based learning experiences, which may include apprenticeships or paid jobs, in settings with individuals without disabilities.

Curriculum Standard 2:
The program utilizes and documents a person-centered planning approach that provides for maximum choice for the student within the inclusive program of study.

Guidance

In the context of inclusive higher education, person centered planning (PCP) is used as a framework to plan activities, courses, supports, problem-solving, etc. that include specific goals that serve as an action plan to achieve the student's vision for his or her future. A variety of planning tools may be used for PCP, and some programs develop their own tool. More information on PCP and a description of various PCP planning tools may be found at http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=103. If the tool that is used results in graphics, partial sentences, etc. then the PCP must be written in understandable, plain language.

The PCP is a "living document" that is reviewed and, if needed, updated each "academic unit" (semester, trimester, etc.). A few states have specific requirements regarding PCP for purposes such as the use of Self-Determination Funds. The PCP requirement in this standard is not intended to duplicate other PCPs the student may be involved in, nor is it intended to create bureaucratic requirements. Rather, the intent is to have the student's educational experience guided by a student-focused plan with specific goals and action steps that will lead to the student's vision for his or her future.

The PCP must include a description of "what works" for the student, including learning strategies, accommodations, and individualized supports and services. There is no expectation or requirement that the PCP be a lengthy document.

Required for Review
- State the tool that is used for person centered planning.
- If the program has developed a program-specific planning tool, share that tool.
- Describe how person-centered planning informs the individual course of study for each student (i.e. how does it inform course selection or employment experiences, social experiences, etc.)
- State how often the PCP's are reviewed and updated, as needed.
- Share several completed PCPs, with personal information redacted.

Curriculum Standard 3:

Students with intellectual disabilities participate in a wide array of postsecondary level courses from multiple disciplines and departmental/college units that are part of the curriculum for degree or certificate programs.

Guidance

Students must have a wide array of course options from which to choose. Limiting students to a few options, such as only physical education courses, is not acceptable.

However, some programs may have a set curriculum that leads to a credential in a specific career, which would by necessity limit choice in terms of academic courses. In those cases, the required curriculum may be used, but the program must still meet the requirements in the law,

as outlined in Curriculum Standard 1, that students spend at least 50% of their time in courses with non-disabled students or work settings with non-disabled individuals.

Required for Review
- If restrictions exist that limit course access for students in the program at the institution, state the access policy.
- Provide a list of the college catalog courses that are part of the curriculum for degree or certificate programs that are, or have been, taken (for credit, audit, or other participation) by students in the program, indicating how many students in the program have taken these courses in the recent past.
- The list must indicate the course department or discipline. The college catalog courses included in the list must not be "specialized" courses only for students with ID.
- Share several examples of redacted transcripts that clearly show the college catalog courses taken by the students.
- If a set curriculum is used for a career-specific certificate, provide the curriculum and information about how the students' participation meets the minimum 50% requirement.

Curriculum Standard 4:
The inclusive program of study is delivered to students physically attending the institution, with some distance learning allowable if it is applicable to and benefits students with intellectual disability.

Guidance
The CTP definition in the HEA regulations states that the program "(2) Is delivered to students physically attending the institution". The preamble to the HEA Title IV regulations states "The Department does not wish to regulate to preclude all distance courses for students with intellectual disability and may permit a limited number of courses to be delivered via distance, as long as the institution explains why it believes the course is applicable to, and benefits, students with intellectual disability. Similarly, we wish to clarify that a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program may include an internship for students or other activities that are located off-campus--the physically-attending requirement does not exclude these activities."

Therefore, the program may offer off-campus learning opportunities including internships, apprenticeships, or other work experiences. A limited number of courses may be permitted via distance learning, as long as the institution explains why it believes the course is applicable to, and benefits, students with intellectual disability. Learning may also include some online aspects of in-person classes.

The requirement limiting distance learning does not apply when the institution of higher education is closed for public health reasons or due to a natural disaster. In such cases, distance learning is allowed however institutions must still provide social and academic inclusion, and individualized supports for students.

Required for Review
- Indicate if students participate in any distance learning, and if so, detail what percentage of students' time is spent in distance learning.
- For any distance-learning courses, indicate why the course is applicable to, and benefits, students in the program.
- If the institution is or was closed due to a natural disaster or public health reason, indicate how distance learning is occurring and how students are provided social and academic inclusion as well as individualized supports.

Curriculum Standard 5:
The inclusive program of study includes instruction, internships, apprenticeships, or work-based learning, and other career development activities necessary to enable students to achieve and sustain competitive integrated employment (CIE) aligned with person-centered goals.

Guidance
The instruction and activities must be geared towards enabling the student to achieve CIE, instead of non-work, sheltered work and/or work at subminimum wage. See glossary for CIE definition.

Required for Review
- Describe the portion of the inclusive program of study related to internships, apprenticeships, work-based learning, or other practices that will enable students to achieve and sustain competitive integrated employment.
- Provide a list of internships, volunteer or paid employment, or apprenticeships, and other employment-related instruction and practices provided in the current and previous three years.
- Provide data on the employment outcomes of program alumni for the past two years, including data on the number and percentage of students who obtain CIE.

Curriculum Standard 6:
The inclusive program of study includes student engagement in inclusive social experiences and other campus-based activities. Individualized support, instruction or activities necessary to enhance student social competence must be included in the inclusive program of study.

Guidance
The program adheres to the HEA requirements that students must receive individual supports and services for academic and social inclusion in academic courses, extracurricular activities, and other aspects of the institution of higher education's regular postsecondary program. This standard is intended to address how student engagement is a part of the inclusive program of study, not just what students are *allowed* to do or access.

The standard also addresses the requirement that individualized support for active campus membership, social engagement, and the development of social competence must be provided and guided by each student's person-centered plan.

Social competence refers to the ability to handle social interactions effectively and involves communicating and interacting appropriately and effectively with others. Factors in achieving social competence include the development of social skills, self-regulation, interpersonal knowledge and skills, positive self-identity, and planning and decision-making skills. Social engagement includes developing and maintaining reciprocal, meaningful relationships. Social competence and engagement improves the quality of inter-personal relationships and the ability to live interdependently in the community, and is an important factor in employment success.

Required for Review
- Describe how student engagement is incorporated in the inclusive program of study.
- Describe how campus membership is supported in the inclusive program of study.
- Provide a list of clubs, teams, student activities or other campus activities each student has participated in for the past two years. Indicate if any students did not participate in any campus activities, and if so, why not.
- Describe how social engagement and meaningful relationships are facilitated and by whom.
- Describe how your program addresses improvement in each student's social engagement and social competence in a manner that is individualized, planned, facilitated, and evaluated.

Curriculum Standard 7:
The inclusive program of study includes individualized support, instruction or other activities designed to support development of students' independent living skills and be guided by each student's person-centered plan.

Guidance
The CTP definition in HEA includes supporting students with intellectual disabilities who are seeking to continue independent living instruction. Various programs utilize a variety of approaches to support students in increasing their independence through, for example, individualized learning activities such as instruction in technology tools. Nothing in this standard is intended to require the use of separate classes to teach independent living skills.

Examples of areas of independent living skills include, but are not limited to, skills in the following areas that help individuals live and work in the community: self-advocacy and self-determination; "soft skills" competencies such as critical thinking and problem solving; financial management; personal care and management of the home, health and safety, nutrition, and use of transportation.

Required for Review
- Describe how students are supported to become more independent through aspects of the inclusive program of study, for example, individualized learning activities such as instruction in the use of technology tools, or using calendars to schedule activities and classes, etc.
- Indicate what specific areas of independent living skills are considered for each student.
- Describe how improvement in each student's independent living skills is addressed by your program in a manner that is individualized, planned, facilitated, and evaluated and guided by person-centered planning.

FACULTY AND STAFF STANDARDS

Faculty and Staff Standard 1:
Staff and other professionals that work directly for the program have education and training commensurate with their roles and responsibilities and participate in ongoing professional development and training.

Guidance
This standard does not refer to IHE faculty who teach college catalogue courses that the students attend. It refers to the staff and other professionals that work directly for the program, such as a director, academic support staff, administrative and support staff, job specialist, job developer, or job coach.

Professional development and training must include information about intellectual disability and how ID may impact students' learning, communication, written and oral language, and behavior and strategies for effectively supporting students such as positive behavior supports, communication strategies, effective use of technology tools, universal design for instruction, etc.

Required for Review
- Provide an organizational chart that illustrates your program staffing.
- Provide resumes or CVs for all staff.
- Share information on professional development and training provided, including materials, schedules and evaluations of the training.

Faculty and Staff Standard 2:
The program must ensure coordination of services and supports between the program and staff and other professionals who do not work directly for the institution, but serve in a support or instructional capacity for the students.

Guidance

It is essential that meaningful coordination occurs. This standard refers to those programs that have agreements with non-institution agencies, organizations, school districts or individuals to instruct or support students in the program. Examples are school district employees who act as educational coaches, personnel that provide assistance in activities of daily living, or job specialists, etc. who work for an outside agency. This standard does not apply to individual therapists, etc. who work with an individual student at the student's request.

Required for Review

- Indicate if any staff or professionals or outside agencies work directly with the students as part of the program.
- If so, describe the coordination that takes place between the agency and the program.
- Share MOU if they have been established between agencies and the program.

Faculty and Staff Standard 3:

Program staff receive a job description that lists roles and responsibilities. Performance criteria are clear and evaluation is conducted on a regular basis, consistent with the policies of the institution.

Guidance

The program must provide a clear job description in writing, and performance criteria and procedures for evaluation at the onset of the evaluation period. Evaluations must be regular, fair and objective and the results shared with staff in writing in a timely manner.

Required for Review

For each position, provide the following:
- A job description that includes roles and responsibilities.
- A description of the education and training required for this position
- The process for regular evaluation of this position.

Faculty and Staff Standard 4:

Program management and leadership are retained for a reasonable period of time.

Guidance

Retaining program management and leadership is one of the hallmarks of a quality program. It is recognized that graduate teaching assistants serving in management or leadership roles may leave for other positions upon receiving their graduate degree and are not necessarily expected to remain with the program. The program plans for and manages staff turnover and succession.

Required for Review

- Indicate the program management and leadership positions (such as Director, Program Coordinator, etc.) and indicate how long the person currently in that position has been serving in that role.

Faculty and Staff Standard 5:

Other individuals who work with students, such as peer mentors and pre-professionals or professionals-in-training (such as individuals training to become educators, counselors, speech and language pathologists, occupational or physical therapists) are trained and supervised.

Guidance

Peer mentors, pre-professionals, and professionals-in-training, provide a variety of important supports and activities in programs and may be paid or volunteer. This standard is intended to address the need for appropriate roles, training and supervision of such individuals. While these peers and professionals-in-training often play a critical and meaningful role within programs, it is important that they are assigned responsibilities that take into account their current level of experience and knowledge. All such students working directly with students in the program must be regularly supervised by professional staff. For instance, while a peer mentor may be a good academic coach, a professional must develop meaningful learning strategies, accommodations and modifications for students.

Required for Review
- Provide training schedules and agendas, roles and responsibilities, job postings and recruitment materials. Indicate who is responsible for providing the training and supervision.
- Provide supervision practices and schedules.

Faculty and Staff Standard 6:

Training and technical assistance are provided to the institution's faculty and staff to develop learning environments, courses and instruction according to the principles of universal design for learning.

Guidance

While programs are not in a position to require higher education faculty to deliver instruction in any particular manner, training and technical assistance by individuals knowledgeable about UDL and how it can support the learning of students with ID must be provided to meet this standard. UDL training and technical assistance may be provided by the program, the institution, or an outside agency or individuals.

For information on the principles of universal design for learning see www.udlcenter.org or http://udloncampus.cast.org/home#.VgWtcOm4nx4

Required for Review
- Indicate who is providing the training and technical assistance.
- Provide training agendas, schedules and evaluations.
- If provided by the program, indicate how many faculty/staff are trained per year.

Faculty and Staff Standard 7:

Information and support about the impact of an individual student's disability on learning, and strategies to support, instruct and assess the student, are offered to the institution's faculty and staff to improve and optimize the student's learning in courses taught by that faculty or staff.

Guidance

Faculty and Staff Standard 1 addresses general UDL training. This standard addresses information and technical assistance regarding individual students and may include UDL as well as other areas. Information regarding "what works" for individual students is developed with student input and the student must agree to the information being shared prior to the information being provided to others. This is part of the person-centered planning that is conducted for each student and is designed to ensure that the student is well-supported by all campus faculty and staff and not just program staff. This kind of respectful and positive information about students will allow them to become full members of the campus community and be understood by a wide range of people on campus.

Information and technical assistance may be provided by the program, the disabilities services office, or by other trained professionals. Such information and technical assistance may involve academic, behavioral, communication, technology or other types of support. It is not appropriate for undergraduate students to provide technical assistance to faculty and staff.

While the program or institution shall offer information and technical assistance, it is recognized that a program is not in a position to require faculty and non-program staff to utilize it.

Required for Review
- Describe the process the program uses to ensure that faculty and staff are provided such information and technical assistance.
- Indicate the professionals who provide the information and technical assistance, including their titles and qualifications to do so.
- Provide information about the type of information and technical assistance that is provided.
- Describe how the student is involved in developing the information relevant to them self that is shared with the faculty

FACILITY, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY STANDARDS

Facility, Equipment and Supply Standards 1:
Students in the program have access to institutional facilities, equipment and supplies consistent with other students with the same student status.

Guidance

"Student status" refers to the status of the student in the institution, such as matriculating, degree, non-degree, certificate, continuing education, etc.

This standard addresses facilities, equipment such as computers, and supplies ONLY. See Student Services Standard 5 to address services, social and recreational activities. Institutions are not in a position to require outside entities such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) to change their rules. However, except in situations controlled by outside entities, students in the program must, at a minimum, have access to institutional facilities consistent with other students with the same student status.

Required for Review
- Document that students in the program have student identification cards that provide access to institutional facilities consistent with other students with the same student status.
- Provide a checklist of the institution's facilities and indicate which facilities are accessible to students in the program on the same basis as other students with the same student status.
- Indicate the student status of the students in your program. If student status limits access, indicate how it does so.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FISCAL CAPACITY STANDARDS

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 1:
The program is a part of a department or unit of the institution, with a recognized place within its administrative structure.

Guidance
The program must be embedded within the institution's organizational structure. The head of the department or unit is aware of the program and its role within the department/unit.

Required for Review
- An organizational chart or other description of the institution's administrative structure that indicates the department or unit in which the program resides.
- Provide evidence of engagement with key administrators such as deans, etc. of the administrative unit where the program is located.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 2:
The program seeks and considers ongoing input on program development, policies and practices from a variety of stakeholders that includes students, alumni and parents.

Guidance
The program has a demonstrated process for soliciting and using stakeholder input at least

annually, including input from current and former students and family members. The program must demonstrate how the input impacts program development, policies and practices, or how student and family input is addressed if not implemented.

Required for Review
- Describe which categories of stakeholders are consulted at least annually, in addition to current and former students and parents. For example, faculty, administrators, peer mentors, community leaders, employers, employment support agencies, etc. Examples are for illustrative purposes only and each category is not specifically required.
- Provide evidence showing how input is obtained through, for example, an advisory committee, focus groups, surveys, interviews, etc. and the schedule for doing so.
- Describe any supports or accommodations provided to ensure the meaningful participation of individuals with disabilities and family members.
- Identify what specific changes to program development, policies, practices or outcomes have resulted from the input.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 3:
Programs have a viable plan for current and future fiscal sustainability.

Guidance
Financial resources are adequate and available to meet obligations to students, staff and other contractual parties. Sustainability plans are adequate, reviewed annually, and updated as needed.

Required for Review
- Provide the program's fiscal sustainability/business plan.
- A description of the funding structure for the program, including sources of income and expenses
- The current and following year's program budget including income, expenses, reserves, emergency funds, etc.
- If grant funding is currently received, indicate how the program will be funded when the grant ends.
- If the program has any contracts, MOUs, or partnership agreements with third parties, indicate the nature of any obligations to which these private or public partners have agreed. Examples of public partners include school districts, vocational rehabilitation adult services and Medicaid agencies.

Next Steps
Develop informational materials and strategies to support the development of fiscal sustainability plans.

STUDENT SERVICES STANDARDS

Student Services Standard 1:

The admission policies and practices ensure that all students who are admitted meet the definition of "students with intellectual disabilities" in the HEA law and regulations.

Guidance

Institutions must adhere to the statutory and regulatory requirements regarding the definition of a student with an intellectual disability (ID) in order to be accredited and must document that it enrolls students who meet the ID definition in HEA. If the educational records for student being considered for admission do not identify the student as having an intellectual disability, then the institution must obtain documentation establishing that the student has an ID such as (1) A documented comprehensive and individualized psycho-educational evaluation and diagnosis of an intellectual disability by a psychologist or other qualified professional; or (2) A record of the disability from a local or State educational agency, or government agency, such as the Social Security Administration or a vocational rehabilitation agency, that identifies the intellectual disability.

Documentation of the student meeting the HEA ID definition must be retained for a period of seven years. See the glossary for the definition of students with intellectual disabilities in the HEA and the regulatory language that explains how to document an ID if the student has not been so identified in K-12.

Admissions requirements must not be so "challenging" that students with ID are unlikely to be admitted. Consider if your admission requirements are unlikely to be met by anyone with more than a mild intellectual disability or mild support needs. Note that admissions requirements that require students to be fully independent prior to admission are not acceptable, since supporting students in gaining independent living skills and abilities is one of the components of CTPs in the HEA.

Required for Review
- Provide admission requirements and policies.
- Provide a description of the admissions process.
- Provide information about the documentation used to determine that student has ID.
- Provide assurance that documentation records are retained for at least seven years.

Student Services Standard 2:

The program provides academic, employment, personal and other advising and counseling, based on person-centered planning and individual interests and needs, and in collaboration with existing institutional services.

Guidance

Students need ongoing advice, counsel and support in all aspects of their program and postsecondary experience. This includes advice, counsel and support for students who live in dormitories or other residential life settings, if students have that opportunity.

Required for Review
- Describe the types of advising and counseling (academic, career, social, interpersonal, independent living, conflict resolution, etc.) students are provided.
- List who is providing each type of advising/counseling and how the individuals are trained and supervised, including in resident life settings, if any.
- Describe collaboration with existing IHE services.

Next Steps

Develop recommendations about the various types of academic and non-academic advising and counseling important to students and options for how such advising and counseling should be provided and by whom.

Student Services Standard 3:

Students and families are included in the institution's general orientation programs and additional orientation is provided as needed.

Guidance

Students and their families are included in general IHE orientation programs and the program may provide additional orientations for students and families as needed. Pre-arrival and ongoing orientation is provided (1) to support students in their adjustment to the program and institution and (2) to help them understand the program and institutions rules, policies and procedures, as well as health and safety issues.

For students without families, or whose families are not able to be involved, other supporters may be included.

Communication regarding FERPA and individual students is addressed in Student Services Standard 4.

Required for Review
- Provide documentation regarding the orientation programs and activities in which the students participate.

Student Services Standard 4:

General information regarding the institution and the program is communicated to students and families on an ongoing basis. The program has a stated process for family engagement and communication that reflects clearly defined roles and responsibilities for students, families and staff.

Guidance

General information about the institution and the program is provided on a regular basis to students and families. The program also shares a written process to engage and communicate with families that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of students, families and staff. Students and families are informed in plain language about requirements in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), student control over parental involvement, and the option for students to waive FERPA requirements and how to do so.

For students without families, or whose families are not able to be involved, other supporters designated by the student may be provided such general information.

Required for Review
- Provide information about the ongoing communication regarding the institution and program that is provided to students and families.
- Provide the information that is given to students and families regarding the defined roles and responsibilities of students, parents and staff.
- Provide the plain language FERPA information that is shared with students and families and indicate how it is provided. Information buried in large documents or a website link is not sufficient.

Next Steps

Seek clarification on the role of guardianship with respect to FERPA.

Student Services Standard 5:

Students in the program have access to services, and social and recreational activities, consistent with other students with the same student status.

Guidance

"Student status" refers to the status of the student in the institution, such as matriculating, degree, non-degree, certificate, continuing education, etc.

This standard addresses access to services, social and recreational activities only. See Facility, Equipment and Supply Standards 1 for access to facilities. Institutions are not in a position to require outside entities such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) or fraternities or sororities to change their rules. Typically fraternities and sororities require their members to be degree-seeking students. However, except in situations controlled by outside entities, students in the program must have, at a minimum, access to the same services, social and recreational activities, as do students with the same student status.

If needed, support is provided so students may meaningfully access services, social and recreational activities. Programs may also provide services that supplement those provided by the institution.

Required for Review
- Indicate the student status of the students in your program. If student status limits access, indicate how it does so.
- Provide a checklist of the institution's services, social and recreational activities and indicate which ones are accessible to students in the program.
- Provide assurance that students in the program have student identification cards that provide access to all appropriate services, social and recreational activities.

Next Steps
- Further research is needed on the impact of student status on access and participation in services and social and recreational activities, how the accreditation process affects this issue, and best-practice guidelines.

Student Services Standard 6:
Individualized supports are provided to students designed to enable the students to seek and sustain competitive, integrated employment (CIE). Supports are provided based on the student's interests and person-centered plan.

Guidance
One of the key goals of college programs for students with ID is to prepare students for employment. This employment, as described in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), is competitive work in integrated settings. Therefore, the supports must be individualized to meet the student's career goals, as indicated in the student's person-centered plan. See the glossary for definitions of WIOA and CIE.

Required for Review
- Provide information about the program's employment preparation/career activities and services.
- Indicate how supports are individualized to meet students' needs and career goals.
- Provide data on employment outcomes for students after program completion.

LENGTH AND STRUCTURE OF PROGRAM OF STUDY STANDARDS

Length and Structure of Program of Study Standard 1:
The program aligns with the college calendar and specifies the number of weeks of instructional time and the number of clock hours in the program, including the equivalent clock hours that fulfill requirements of the program credential.
Guidance
A clock hour is defined as a period of time consisting of 1. a 50- to 60-minute class, lecture, or recitation in a 60-minute period; 2. a 50- to 60-minute faculty-supervised laboratory, shop training, or internship in a 60-minute period; or 3. sixty minutes of preparation in a correspondence course.

For purposes of determining clock hours, programs for students with ID may count a broad range of activity. Audited courses, individualized instruction to support independent living, meetings with a career adviser, participating in college clubs, or attending campus events with a peer mentor are all things that could count towards the program clock hours. If these activities fulfill requirements of the program credential, they can be counted as clock hours in the program. All activities included in clock hours must have a grading/evaluation process.

Required for Review
- Evidence showing that the program's calendar aligns with the institution's calendar.
- Indicate the total number of clock hours in the program, inclusive of all aspects of the program of study, such as college courses, specialized courses, internships and other required learning activities.

Length and Structure of Program of Study Standard 2:
The program clearly describes the educational credential or credentials offered (e.g., degree, certificate, or non-degree credential) that is issued by the institution.

Guidance
The credential(s) must have been approved through a formal process at the institution. In some cases, a credential may be approved through a state agency, commission, licensure board, or industry-recognized credential approval process. In every case, the institution must agree to issue the credential.

Required for Review
- State the name of the credential(s) and whether it is a degree, non-degree or certificate credential.
- Indicate that the credential(s) has undergone an official approval process at the institution, a state agency, commission, licensure board or industry.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS STANDARDS

Student Complaint Standard 1:
The program has established relationships with offices within the institution involved with student complaints or discipline, in order to facilitate communication and collaboration.

Guidance
The program has proactively developed ongoing relationships with various campus offices to promote a better understanding of students in the program and to develop plans for collaboration in supporting the students. Working relationships with campus security, the Title IX office and the office that deals with student code of conduct are required. Programs may also wish to work with other offices such as student affairs, residence life and the legal department.

Required for Review
- Describe the relationships with offices within the institution involved with student complaints or discipline, including campus security, the title IX office and student complaint office.
- Share information about any agreements made with these offices, or other offices, to facilitate support for students in the program who wish to file a complaint or who have a complaint filed against them, or other relevant concern.

Student Complaints Standard 2:
The institution's grievance procedures are understandable, provided to, and discussed with, students in the program and their parents.

Guidance
An accessible (i.e., written at an accessible reading level, uses graphics, explains abstract concepts, etc.) version of the code of conduct, including Title IX requirements, is provided to students and parents or other supporters, if applicable. Program staff review the code of conduct with students, related to both academic rights and responsibilities and expected student behavior in various contexts.

Required for Review
- Accessible version of code of conduct.
- Communication/information dissemination plan for sharing code of conduct with students and parents.

Student Complaints Standard 3:
Support is provided to students who have complaints lodged against them as well as students who seek to lodge a formal written complaint. Support is available throughout the grievance process and throughout any actions that result and if a student is at risk of being expelled or urged to exit the program.

Guidance
Support must be provided for a student when a complaint is filed against a student in the program, or when a student files a complaint, or when a student is in danger of being suspended, expelled or asked to exit a program prior to program completion. Students may request support from/involvement of their parents/designated supporters in complaint procedures. Reasonable accommodations must be provided, as applicable. All due process procedures that are established by the IHE for students involved in complaints must be followed for students in the program, with support as needed.

Required for Review
- Document the procedures the program uses to help the student understand the complaint, and to support the student through the entire grievance process, including

facilitating written and oral communication between the student, the family (if the student has signed a FERPA waiver), and the institution.

- Explain the process that is used to provide a clear explanation of the grievance process and assistance provided when a student wants to file a complaint.
- Provide copies of understandable materials regarding grievance procedures that are shared with the student. Documentation must include how written and oral communication is facilitated between the student, the family parents/designated supporters (if the student has signed a FERPA waiver), and the institution.
- Indicate how information is provided to the student and the parents/designated supporters (if the student has signed a FERPA waiver) when there is a violation or difficulty that could lead to suspension, expulsion, or encouragement to leave the program prior to completion.
- State the procedures followed if a student violates a program rule or institution code of conduct, or is at risk of suspension, expulsion or early exit for other reasons, such as academic or behavioral difficulties, and what steps are taken to support the student prior to dismissal or encouragement to exit the program.

Next Steps
Develop best practice policies and materials related to accessibility of IHE documents, support for students with ID who file complaints or have complaints filed against them, and methods of supporting students with ID at risk of expulsion.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND REVIEW STANDARD

Program Development, Planning, and Review Standard 1:
The program, along with key stakeholders, evaluates its program components, student assessment practices, student services, policies, activities, student learning outcomes and program outcomes, at a minimum of every three years. The program implements program revisions based on the evaluation for continuous quality improvement.

Guidance
Program evaluation and continuous program improvement are an important component of quality programs. Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 2 addresses stakeholder input, including input from current and former students and family members. This standard addresses how that input and other ongoing program evaluation is used for continuous improvement.

Required for Review
- Documentation of program evaluation, including stakeholder involvement.
- The date the last program evaluation took place and the schedule for the next evaluations.

Program Development, Planning and Review Standard 2:

The institution verifies that students who receive federal financial aid meet the definition of a student with an intellectual disability in the HEA law and regulations.

Guidance
Only students with an intellectual disability may receive federal financial aid under the CTP provisions of the HEA. Institutions provide evidence to accrediting agencies that only students with an intellectual disability receive Title IV aid under the HEA provisions for students with intellectual disabilities. Records must be retained for 7 years.

The definition of ID in the HEA is in the glossary. It includes obtaining a record from a local educational agency that the student is or was found eligible for special education services under IDEA. If the educational record does not identify the student as having an intellectual disability, then the institution must obtain documentation as outlined in the HEA regulations and described in Student Services Standard 1.

Required for Review
- Provide documentation that only students with intellectual disability are receiving federal student aid.
- Explain the process used for verification of intellectual disability.
- Indicate where records are stored and for how long the records are retained.

Next Steps
Address what period of time should be considered reasonable to retain records.

END