



Think College National Coordinating Center WEBINAR TAKEAWAYS



WHERE ARE WE NOW: PROGRAM ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Higher education relies on accreditation standards to hold institutions and programs of study accountable. Currently, there is no existing accreditation process for college programs for students with intellectual disability (ID). As Congress required, the Think College National Coordinating Center established a workgroup in 2011 to create model standards for higher education programs enrolling students with ID. From 2011-2020, two workgroups developed, refined, and finalized program accreditation standards. Colleges can now use these standards as guidelines to establish and strengthen high quality programs at their institutions. These standards will also form the foundation for a formal program accreditation process.

Recommendations to policy makers

- » Fund a new accrediting agency to accredit college programs for students with ID.
- » Provide accurate information on the definition of ID to ensure programs serve the correct student population.
- » Increase student participation by addressing barriers to funding sources, such as vocational rehabilitation, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), higher education benefits for children of veterans.

Key standards for program staff

- » Provide faculty information about the impact of a student's disability on learning, as well as strategies to support, instruct, and assess the student. Faculty and staff need professional development to provide individualized planning and supports to ensure success and retention of students with ID.
- » Establish program-level learning outcomes as well as individualized learning plans for each student enrolled in a college class.
- » Document inclusion and an inclusive program of study, student participation in a broad array of courses, student access to facilities and services, and supports for students in housing.
- » Give families information about expected roles and responsibilities for students, families, and staff. Gather input on program development, policies, and practices from students, alumni, parents, and other stakeholders.

If you missed this great webinar, you are in luck! We recorded it and you can watch it for FREE right here!



RESOURCES

[Model Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability](#)

[Executive Summary](#)

[Accreditation Workgroup 2021-2025](#)



When we first started this work, establishing program accreditation standards seemed like an insurmountable task. But low and behold, we are here today, and it is pretty cool that we now have the basis for quality assurance and improvement.

—Debra Hart, Co - principal Investigator, Think College



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