



## THINK COLLEGE STANDARDS, QUALITY INDICATORS, AND BENCHMARKS FOR INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION

Think College at the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston has developed Standards, Quality Indicators, and Benchmarks for Inclusive Higher Education.

Institutes of higher education can use these standards to create, expand, or enhance high quality, inclusive postsecondary education to support positive outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID). Additionally, these standards can be used to as a framework to conduct and expand research on issues related to supporting students with ID in higher education. They are aligned with the definition of a comprehensive postsecondary and transition program for students with intellectual disabilities and reflect institutional and instructional practices that support a Universal Design for Learning framework as outlined in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

### STANDARD 1: ACADEMIC ACCESS

To facilitate quality academic access for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

**Quality Indicator 1.1: Provide access to a wide array of college course types that are attended by students without disabilities, including:**

- I.1A: Enrollment in non-credit-bearing, non-degree courses (such as continuing education courses) attended by students without disabilities.
- I.1B: Auditing or participating in college courses attended by students without disabilities for which the student does not receive academic credit.
- I.1C: Enrollment in credit-bearing courses offered by the institution attended by students without disabilities, when aligned with the student's postsecondary plans.
- I.1D: Access to existing courses rather than separate courses designed only for students with intellectual disabilities.
- I.1E: College course access that is not limited to a pre-determined list.
- I.1F: Participation in courses that relate to their personal, academic, and career goals as established through person-centered planning.
- I.1G: Collection of objective evaluation data on college course participation.

**Quality Indicator 1.2: Address issues that may impact college course participation, including:**

- I.2A: College policies regarding placement tests, ability-to-benefit testing and prerequisites that negatively impact college course participation access.
- I.2B: Access to and instruction in the use of needed public or personal transportation, such as public buses, taxis, para-transit, ride-sharing with other students, and other naturally occurring transportation options.
- I.2C: Access to college disability services for accommodations typically provided by that office.
- I.2D: Access to and instruction in the use of needed technology.
- I.2E: Access to educational coaches who receive ongoing training and supervision.
- I.2F: Access to peer support such as mentors, tutors, and campus ambassadors.
- I.2G: Faculty training on universal design for learning principles.

**Quality Indicator 1.3: Provide students with the skills to access ongoing adult learning opportunities, including:**

- I.3A: Knowledge of the adult learning opportunities available in their community, such as college courses, community education, etc.
- I.3B: Knowledge of resources available to assist them to access or fund adult learning opportunities in their community.

### STANDARD 2: CAREER DEVELOPMENT

To facilitate career development leading to competitive employment for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

**Quality Indicator 2.1: Provide students with the supports and experiences necessary to seek and sustain competitive employment, including:**

- 2.1A: The provision of person-centered planning to identify career goals.
- 2.1B: Access to job coaches and developers who receive ongoing training and supervision.
- 2.1C: Participation in time-limited internships or work-based training in settings with people without disabilities.
- 2.1D: Opportunity to participate in academically focused service learning experiences.
- 2.1E: Participation in paid work experiences related to personal choice and career goals, such as paid internships, work-study, service learning, or other paid work on or off campus.
- 2.1F: Connection with community rehabilitation and other adult service providers to sustain employment.
- 2.1G: Collection of objective evaluation data on student employment.

## **STANDARD 3: CAMPUS MEMBERSHIP:**

To facilitate campus membership for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

**Quality Indicator 3.1: Provide access to and support for participation in existing social organizations, facilities, and technology, including:**

- 3.1A: Campus programs, such as clubs and organizations, community service, religious life, student government, Greek system, co-curricular experiences, service learning, study abroad, student sports and entertainment events, recreational facilities and programs, etc.
- 3.1B: Residence life facilities and activities, including, when desired, the off-campus housing office.
- 3.1C: Technology for social communication, including email, texting, cell phone, Facebook, Twitter, Skype.
- 3.1D: Social activities facilitated by students without disabilities, who serve as natural supports.

## **STANDARD 4: SELF-DETERMINATION**

To facilitate the development of self-determination in students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

**Quality Indicator 4.1: Ensure student involvement in and control of the establishment of personal goals that:**

- 4.1A: Reflect student interests and desires as indicated by person-centered planning.
- 4.1B: Are reviewed regularly and modified as needed to reflect changes in student interests and preferences.
- 4.1C: Address accommodation and technology needs.
- 4.1D: Lead to outcomes desired by the student.
- 4.1E: Reflect family input when desired by the student.

**Quality Indicator 4.2: Ensure the development and promotion of the self-determination skills of students with intellectual disabilities as evidenced by students:**

- 4.2A: Monitoring their own progress toward their personal goals.
- 4.2B: Directing their choice of courses, activities, and employment experiences.
- 4.2C: Being involved in course registration, accommodation requests, and payment of tuition.
- 4.2D: Being involved in all aspects of employment, such as creating a resume, setting up job interviews, making follow-up phone calls, negotiating job changes, etc.
- 4.2E: Interacting directly with faculty and employers including the articulation of needed accommodations.
- 4.2F: Managing personal schedules that include courses, employment, and social activities.

**Quality Indicator 4.3: Have a stated process for family involvement that reflects:**

- 4.3A: Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for parents and students.
- 4.3B: A process for the provision of information to parents on resources, effective advocacy, and transition planning.
- 4.3C: Student control over how parents are involved with their experience.
- 4.3D: Adherence to the guidelines set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

## STANDARD 5: ALIGNMENT WITH COLLEGE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES

To facilitate alignment with college systems and practices for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

**Quality Indicator 5.1: As required in the HEOA, identify outcomes or offer an educational credential (e.g., degree or certificate) established by the institution for students enrolled in the program, including assurance that:**

- 5.1A: Outcomes established by the program for achievement of an educational credential are measurable.
- 5.1B: Program outcomes are publicly available (e.g., brochure, website, program application).
- 5.1C: Courses and internships are related to achieving and maintaining gainful employment.
- 5.1D: Outcomes/credentials established by the program also address engagement in college community life, service opportunities, etc.

**Quality Indicator 5.2: Provide access to academic advising that:**

- 5.2A: Uses person-centered planning in the development of a student's course of study (curriculum structure).
- 5.2B: Reflects the institution's policy for determining whether a student enrolled in the program is making satisfactory academic progress.
- 5.2C: Is aligned with the educational credential established by the institution for students enrolled in the program.

**Quality Indicator 5.3: Provide access to college campus resources, including:**

- 5.3A: Admissions, registration, and orientation.
- 5.3B: College identification cards.
- 5.3C: Health and counseling centers, athletic center, information technology, career services, dining services, Greek system, clubs, student organizations, student government, etc.
- 5.3D: Co-curricular activities including practicum and learning communities.
- 5.3E: Support for participating in existing on- and off-campus university-owned or university-affiliated housing.
- 5.3F: Orientation, training, and resources for parents of incoming students.
- 5.3G: Campus shuttle buses to different campuses and the community.

**Quality Indicator 5.4: Collaborate with faculty and staff, including:**

- 5.4A: Accessing existing professional development initiatives on campus (e.g., workshops on Universal Design for Learning principles).
- 5.4B: Offering expertise of the program staff and students to faculty, other college personnel, and students through trainings, course presentations, etc.

**Quality Indicator 5.5: Adhere to the college's schedules, policies and procedures, public relations, and communications as evidenced by:**

- 5.5A: Review of the college's code of conduct with students.
- 5.5B: Participation of students in courses and/or social events during afternoons, evenings, and weekends.
- 5.5C: Participation of students in graduation exercises and experiences.
- 5.5D: Observation of college vacations and holidays, not local education agencies (if dual enrollment) or that of outside agencies.
- 5.5E: Recognition of students with intellectual disabilities as a representative population in the IHE's diversity plan.
- 5.5F: The presence of students with ID on campus reflects the college's commitment to diversity and has a presence in college communications, strategic plan, mission statement, president's messages, and system reviews.

## STANDARD 6: COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

To facilitate collaboration and coordination, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

**Quality Indicator 6.1: Establish connections and relationships with key college/university departments, as evidenced by:**

- 6.1A: Students with ID effectively using campus resources, such as disability services, financial aid services, course registration, academic advising, health services, and career services.

- 6.1B: Program staff effectively using college infrastructure, such as IT support, maintenance, etc.
- 6.1C: Program staff being aware of the governance and administrative structures of the college or university that may impact the program.
- 6.1D: Program staff participating in faculty/staff governance or committees as part of their contribution to the college.

**Quality Indicator 6.2: Have a designated person to coordinate program-specific services of the comprehensive postsecondary education program, including:**

- 6.2A: Scheduling and implementing interagency team meetings.
- 6.2B: Conducting person-centered planning and ensuring that the results of those meetings are infused into the students' daily activities.
- 6.2C: Ensuring that data collection and program evaluation activities occur.
- 6.2D: Providing outreach to families.
- 6.2E: Providing training and supervision for educational coaches, job coaches, and job developers.

## STANDARD 7: SUSTAINABILITY

To facilitate sustainability, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

**Quality Indicator 7.1: Use diverse sources of funding, including:**

- 7.1A: Maintaining a relationship to the campus financial aid office.
- 7.1B: Ensuring that eligible students and families apply for financial aid.
- 7.1C: Providing information to students on sources of funds for tuition and other costs, such as National Service grants, work-study, use of Medicaid waiver funds, vocational rehabilitation, etc.
- 7.1D: Using state funds, IDEA funds, developmental services agency funds, family funds, private funds, and federal grant funds to provide core funding for the program.

**Quality Indicator 7.2: Have a planning and advisory team which:**

- 7.2A: Includes representatives from the college, including administrators (deans, provosts, department chair), disability services, and faculty, as well as disability-specific agencies, relevant community agencies, local business leaders, workforce development providers, families, and students.
- 7.2B: Supports collaboration between the college and the program and with outside entities.
- 7.2C: Addresses program policies and practices (costs, access, partnerships) and student outcomes (data review) to ensure sustainability.
- 7.2D: Communicates regularly.

## STANDARD 8: ONGOING EVALUATION

To facilitate quality postsecondary education services for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary program should:

**Quality Indicator 8.1: Conduct evaluation of services and outcomes on a regular basis, including:**

- 8.1A: Collection of data from key stakeholders, such as students with and without disabilities, parents, faculty, disability services, and other college staff.
- 8.1B: Collection of student satisfaction data.
- 8.1C: Collection of student exit data.
- 8.1D: Collection of student follow-up data.
- 8.1E: Review of all data compiled by the advisory team and other stakeholders.
- 8.1F: Implementation of program changes as a result of data review.

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