

Institution and Team Guidance for ACCJC Standard I.B.3

ACCJC Standard I. B. 3. reads: "The institution establishes institution-set standards for student achievement, appropriate to its mission, assesses how well it is achieving them in pursuit of continuous improvement, and publishes this information."¹

As the college prepares its Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER), and as the team evaluates the institution, the following should be considered:

1. This Standard envisions that an institution will determine key performance measures by which it will both monitor (floor) and challenge (aspirational goal) its overall effectiveness in terms of student achievement. Rather than cede to an external body the authority to determine acceptable levels of performance, an institution takes into account its mission, constituencies, and programs to determine its own appropriate levels of performance.
2. The measures the institution will use will be:
 - a. Summative measures of student achievement, including completion rates, course completion, retention, degrees and certificates awarded, and other measures chosen by the institution in keeping with its mission. At minimum, the standards will include those key performance metrics that are tracked and posted by the US Department of Education's College Scorecard.
 - b. In keeping with the data definitions set by the system (if any) in which the institution operates.
 - c. Consistent in definition year-over-year to support meaningful trend analyses.
3. While baseline measures can be set by drawing on historic data, the institution will want to avoid viewing past performance as its future norm. The process for setting its standards should represent evidence that the institution, through extensive internal conversations, has envisioned making achievable improvements in these key measures. Making these measures broadly available to both internal and external constituencies, as required by the Standard, will help to focus institutional efforts to achieve them.
4. The process for setting institutional standards will include
 - a. An annual evaluation of the degree to which the institution has achieved them.
 - b. A determination in advance of the degree of substandard performance that will trigger specific planning to close the disproportional achievement gap.
 - c. A formal structure for focusing ongoing efforts to meet and exceed the institution's achievement standards.

¹ USDE General Guidance on 602.16(a)(1)(i): Whether institutionally-developed standards to demonstrate student success are being used by the accreditor in the accreditation assessment, and if so, whether the agency has mechanisms in place to assess these standards in the context of the agency's standards for accreditation.

For those accreditors whose accrediting standards for student achievement rely on accredited institutions to (1) demonstrate that the institution (on a recurring basis) collects student outcome data; (2) uses that data as part of conducting an institutional evaluation (assessment) of its success in meeting its institutional mission; and (3) uses the results of that evaluation in developing and implementing an institutional improvement plan --

* Whether such accreditors are able to demonstrate that they have criteria/processes for evaluating the institutional assessment/improvement activity, such as criteria for evaluating the objectives/goals established by the institution; for assessing the data collection activities and improvement plans; and for assessing the outcomes resulting from implementation of the improvement plans.

5. In reviewing the institution under Standard I.B.3, teams will appraise the process by which the standards have been set, the appropriateness of the standards themselves in terms of the considerations noted above, the availability of the set standards to institutional constituencies, initiatives (if so required) that have been put in place by the annual review of achievement data intended to improve institutional performance in areas where standards are not met, and the achievable improvements planned by the institution to increase its performance (exceed achievement standards) in areas where standards are met