

Program Review
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)

NWCCU statements and Standards (2003 Accreditation Handbook) dealing with Program Review:

Institutional Self-Study:

Institutional Self-Study is regarded as the most significant part of the accreditation process. The **benefits** to the institution will be proportional to the incisiveness of the inquiry. The aim of the self-study is **to understand, evaluate, and improve** -- not merely to defend what already exists...

Self-study should be viewed as an **on-going** process to:

- Analyze the resources and effectiveness of the institution in fulfilling its mission;
- Demonstrate that student achievement is commensurate with the...degrees...awarded;
- Appraise the relationship of all the institution's activities to its purposes; and
- Provide a sound basis for institutional planning and improvement.

It is important that the institutional self-study assess educational outcomes or results as well as address structure and process...Prime consideration is to be placed on performance in achieving institutional mission and goals.

Standard One: Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning and Effectiveness
Standard 1.A. - Mission and Goals

The institution's mission and goals define the institution...

Standard 1.B. - Planning and Effectiveness

The institution engages in ongoing planning to achieve its mission and goals. It also evaluates how well, and in what ways, it is accomplishing its mission and goals and **uses the results for broad-based continuous planning and evaluation**. Through its planning process, the institution asks questions, seeks answers, analyzes itself, and revises its goals, policies, procedures, and resource allocation.

Standard 1.B.1. The institution clearly **defines its evaluation and planning processes**. It develops and implements procedures to evaluate the extent to which it achieves institutional goals.

Standard 1.B.2. The institution engages in **systematic planning for, and evaluation of, its activities, including teaching, research, and public service** consistent with institutional mission and goals.

Standard 1.B.4. The institution **uses the results** of its systematic evaluation activities and ongoing planning process to **influence resource allocation and to improve its instructional programs, institutional services, and activities**.

Standard 1.B.5. The institution **integrates** its evaluation and planning **processes to identify institutional priorities for improvement.**

Standard 1.B.9. The institution uses information from its planning and evaluation processes to **communicate evidence of institutional effectiveness to its public.**

Required documentation...Evidence that demonstrates the analysis and appraisal of institutional outcomes. Examples may include: annual goals and assessment of success...studies of alumni...studies regarding effectiveness of programs and their graduates;...success in placing graduates...pre- and post-test comparisons of student knowledge, skills, and abilities; survey of satisfaction - students, alumni, and employers. Institutional short term, strategic, or long term plans. Suggested: Planning studies,...enrollment projections, program need analysis.

Standard Two: Educational Program and Its Effectiveness

Standard 2.A. - General Requirements

The institution offers collegiate level programs that culminate in **identified student competencies**...The achievement and maintenance of **high quality programs** is the primary responsibility of an accredited institution; hence the **evaluation of educational programs and their continuous improvement is an ongoing responsibility.**

Standard 2.A.2. The goals of the institution's educational programs, **whenever and however offered**, including instructional policies, methods, and delivery systems, are compatible with the institution's mission. They are developed, approved, and **periodically evaluated**...through a clearly defined process.

Standard 2.B. - Education Program Planning and Assessment

Educational program planning is based on **regular and continuous assessment** of programs in light of the needs of the disciplines, the fields or occupations for which programs prepare students, and other constituencies of the institution.

Standard 2.B.1. The institution's processes for **assessing its educational programs** are **clearly defined, encompass all of its offerings, are conducted on a regular basis, and are integrated into the overall planning and evaluation plan.**

Standard 2.G. - Continuing Education and Special Learning Activities

Standard 2.G.1. ...**all** off-campus, continuous education...programs are...**periodically evaluated** under established institutional procedures.

Required Documentation...Instruments and procedures used to measure educational program effectiveness. Inventory of documents that demonstrate the appraisal of education program outcomes...Self-study and evaluation committee reports from external reviews and the most recent professional accreditation visits and documentation of resulting actions.

Throughout the other standards, program evaluation is linked to planning and program improvement.

(Emphases added.)