

# Standards for Accreditation

## Institutional Context

### Standard 1

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### Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The institution's mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and explains whom the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals and objectives, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission, goals, and objectives are developed and recognized by the institution with its members and its governing body and are utilized to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.

#### Context

The mission, developed by broad representation from all sectors of the institution and formally ratified by its primary governing body, defines the institution, delineates the scope of the institution, explains the institution's character and individuality, and articulates values as appropriate. The basic aims of higher education, and any additional aims and emphases that reflect the institution's particular character and individuality, such as research or community service, should be addressed within the statement of mission. The mission may be accompanied by related statements, such as a statement of institutional philosophy or institutional vision.

In addition to the mission, an effective institution has clearly articulated operational and educational goals that define the actions planned to meet the needs and expectations of the institution's mission and the institutional community. Goals are derived from the mission; they are based upon the appropriate aspirations of the institution in service to its students, faculty, staff and community. Goals also may incorporate elements of best practice in higher education to ensure quality, relevance and accomplishment. The statement of the institution's goals can be used to identify and communicate on-going and emerging issues specific to the institution, as well as to support relevant institutional development and self-evaluation.

Institutional objectives are outcomes-based and capable of being evaluated, and institutional assessment provides a mechanism for on-going review and refinement of goals. Educational goals and objectives particularly should be stated in terms of the outcomes they seek to achieve (e.g., the academic and personal changes and/or competencies the institution seeks to foster in its students).

The goals and objectives should be sufficiently flexible for the institution to be able to respond to opportunities and changes, including emerging academic disciplines, changes within disciplines, and the use of new instructional methods and technologies.

While an institution is expected to aspire to excellence, it is also expected to operate within realistic goals reflective of its mission and its financial, human, and physical resources. Moreover, mission, goals, and objectives are most effective when they are part of an institution-wide effort to improve and integrate the activities and operations of all elements and aspects of the institution. As an institution continually evaluates itself and improves, the institution should continue to review its mission to consider its implications and to keep it current.

## **Fundamental Elements of Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by:

- clearly defined mission, goals, and objectives that:
  - ◆ guide faculty, administration, staff and governing bodies in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curriculum development, and definition of program outcomes;
  - ◆ include support of scholarly and creative activity, at levels and of the kinds appropriate to the institution's purposes and character;
  - ◆ are developed through collaborative participation by those who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional improvement and developments;
  - ◆ are formally approved, publicized and widely known by the institution's members;

- mission, goals, and objectives that relate to external as well as internal contexts and constituencies;
- institutional goals and objectives that are consistent with mission; and
- goals and objectives that focus on student learning, other outcomes, and institutional improvement.

### **Optional Analysis and Evidence**

In addition to the evidence inherent within or necessary to document the fundamental elements above, the following, although not required, may facilitate the institution's own analysis relative to this accreditation standard:

- analysis of how institutional goals are applied at different levels within the institution and how the implementation of goals is coordinated
- analysis of the processes used to develop goals and objectives and for the periodic review of mission, goals, and objectives
- review of policies and processes used to disseminate mission and goals to new faculty, staff, students, and members of the governing body and efforts intended to maintain awareness and commitment among continuing members of these groups
- evidence of curriculum review used to change and improve educational programs, consistent with institutional values, purpose, and goals