

Student Support Services

The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution's goals for students.

Context

The support of students toward their educational goals usually requires a well-organized and appropriate program of student services, complemented by good staff leadership and broad-based institutional commitment. Within the scope of the institutional mission, student services can reinforce and extend the college's influence beyond the classroom. These services promote the comprehensive development of the student, and they become an integral part of the educational process, helping to strengthen learning outcomes. Appropriate and comparable student services should support all student learning in the context of the institution's mission and chosen educational delivery system. Similarly, the institution should clearly convey to students their roles and responsibilities as partners in the educational process. The quality of campus life often contributes significantly to student learning; therefore, institutions, and particularly those with residential populations, should be attentive to a wide range of student life issues, including mental health and safety.

Framed by the institution's mission, services should be responsive to the full spectrum of diverse student needs, abilities, and cultures. Dependent upon institutional mission, support services may include but are not limited to admissions, financial aid, registration, orientation, advising, counseling, tutoring, discipline, health, housing, placement, student organization and activities, cultural programming, child care, security, and athletic activities.

Delivery of student support services should be flexible in nature and should vary depending on the modes and levels of educational delivery. Consistent with institutional mission, programs should be available to provide support to diverse student populations such as older students, students with disabilities, international students, distance and distributed learning students, and students at sites other than a main campus.

Recreational, intercollegiate, and intramural athletic programs should be consistent with, and actively supportive of, the institution's mission and goals and consistent with the academic success, physical and emotional well-being, and social development of those who participate.

Fundamental Elements of Student Support Services

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

- a program of student support services appropriate to student strengths and needs, reflective of institutional mission, consistent with student learning expectations, and available regardless of place or method of delivery;
- qualified professionals to supervise and provide the student support services and programs;
- procedures to address the varied spectrum of student academic and other needs, in a manner that is equitable, supportive, and sensitive, through direct service or referral;
- appropriate student advisement procedures and processes;
- if offered, athletic programs that are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles, norms, and procedures that govern other institutional programs;
- reasonable procedures, widely disseminated, for equitably addressing student complaints or grievances;
- records of student complaints or grievances;
- policies and procedures, developed and implemented, for safe and secure maintenance of student records ;
- published and implemented policies for the release of student information; and
- ongoing assessment of student support services and the utilization of assessment results for 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 support services available to students, including any distinctions among physical sites or modes of delivery and the particular support services those sites/modes require (instructional technology support, library/learning resources support, etc.)
- evidence of a structure appropriate to the delivery of student support services (organizational chart)
- review of student handbooks, catalogs, newspapers, and schedules, including materials showing availability and explaining the nature of services (published in print and/or available electronically)
- evidence of student grievances and resolutions, and review of such records to determine whether there are noteworthy patterns