

## STATEMENT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS DATA FORMS

The Commission recognizes its dual responsibilities of quality assurance (the public role) and quality improvement (the private role) must be kept in balance. Nowhere is this dual role more in play than in the area commonly summarized by the term ‘student assessment.’ The Commission’s *Standards for Accreditation*, especially Standard 8, *Educational Effectiveness*, speak to assessment for improving the academic program and services for students, and they also speak to the Commission’s public responsibility for ensuring an appropriate level of student achievement and in making the results used and known – part of its responsibility for being recognized by the federal government as a reliable authority on the quality of education.

To fulfill these responsibilities and provide a framework for institutions and useful information for teams and the Commission, the Commission has developed two sets of data forms.

- I: E-series Forms (Making Assessment More Explicit)** ask institutions to select and declare their basic approach to assessment and to summarize improvements made based on their findings.
- II: Data First Forms for Standard 8, *Educational Effectiveness***, afford institutions an opportunity to report information on progression, retention, and graduation rates; licensure passage and job placement rates; and other measures of success important to institutional mission.

The Commission approaches the goal for institutions to become increasingly explicit in the area of student achievement and success with the following assumptions:

- Given the diversity of institutions, there is no single way to achieve the goal; the system is best served when institutions can choose the method that best fits their approach;
- Greater regularity in how institutions report how they assess student learning and what they are finding out will be useful to institutions, visiting teams, and the Commission;
- It will be useful for all for the Commission to offer clear choices to institutions, with the understanding that the choices presented are subject to alternatives proposed by the institution and changes over time by the Commission, based on its experience;
- The Commission’s approach should not only provide a framework to record how institutions are assessing student learning but also encourage greater coherence in institutional approaches and greater sharing among institutions.

These forms are included with the institution’s comprehensive self-study and interim (fifth-year) report. Institutions are encouraged to complete the forms early in the report preparation process so they can incorporate data from the forms into their report. In the self-study, the Appraisal section provides a useful opportunity for institutions to reflect both on the success and achievement of their students and on their own progress in understanding what and how students are learning and in developing systems to collect and use the most important data on student success. The Projection section of the self-study affords institutions an opportunity to state commitments for improvement in the area of assessment, including the use of assessment results. In the interim report, information reported in the data forms can be incorporated into the Findings and Analysis and Appraisal and Projection sections of the Reflective Essay.

The two sets of data forms are further explained below.

## **I: E-SERIES FORMS (MAKING ASSESSMENT MORE EXPLICIT)**

In the E-Series forms, institutions are asked to declare their approach to the assessment of student learning and to summarize how the information is used for improvement. Four possible alternatives are listed below; if institutions wish to propose another alternative, they are invited to contact Commission staff. In all cases, the Commission expects that the alternative selected will provide the institution with the ability to present its assessment at the program and institutional level. The four alternatives are:

- **E1: Inventory:** In this alternative, the institution completes: Part A, an inventory of how programs assess student learning and use the results, and, as appropriate, Part B, an inventory of specialized accreditation. This alternative is based on a system used by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).
- **E2: College Portrait/VSA:** Here, the institution commits to the College Portrait/ Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) plus program review. This alternative builds on the system developed by APLU and AACSCU; because the VSA uses institutional level data, it is augmented for Commission purposes by information on program review. While the system was developed by and for public institutions, for the Commission's purposes, it may be selected by any institution.
- **E3: Institutional Claims:** Some institutions may elect a framework in which they state claims for the success or achievement of their students and provide evidence to validate the claims. This audit approach provides the institution great flexibility in stating the claims it makes to the public about student learning and student achievement and developing credible evidence to support the claims.
- **E4: Peer Comparison:** Many institutions already have complex systems to compare themselves with peer institutions, most often on matters of resources and processes; this alternative provides the opportunity to extend those comparisons to outcomes for student learning and success. Here the institution identifies key measures of student success (e.g., transfer or acceptance to graduate school) and compares its level of performance with that of its peers.

**Selecting the method:** In the periodic reviews, institutions are asked to declare which of the above four methods they wish to use. Alternatively, institutions may propose a fifth system or combination of the above. Such proposals should be forwarded to the President of the Commission early in the report-preparation process. The Commission staff will review the proposal and confer with the institution.

## II: DATA FIRST FORMS FOR STANDARD 8, *EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS*

These forms have been devised to enable institutions to present data on retention and graduation rates and other measures of student success appropriate to the institution's mission. Clearly, not every measure listed in the forms is appropriate for every institution. At the same time, some institutions may have multiple instances of a single item (e.g., licensure pass rates). In developing these forms, the Commission recognizes the value of trends in data, and the importance of the institution's own goals for success. Each form provides space for institutions to indicate definitions and the methodology used to calculate measures of student success.

By listing several ways to measure student success and achievement, the Commission encourages institutions to reflect on how they are using data to understand student success. In several cases, the forms provide institutions the opportunity to identify their goal for each measure of student success and the date by which the goal is expected to be attained. As always, the Commission expects that the institution's mission will provide helpful guidance in thinking about which measures of student success are most important and most useful. In brief, the forms are:

**8.1. Retention and Graduation Rates.** Here institutions are asked to provide information on their IPEDS-defined retention and graduation rates and data from the IPEDS Outcomes Measures survey, along with their goals for these indicators. Institutions can also provide additional retention and graduation indices, depending on their mission, program mix, and student population.

**8.2. Student Success and Progress Rates and Other Measures of Student Success.** The outcomes measures requested on the first part of this form come from the National Student Clearinghouse data and track outcomes for four cohorts of students. The second part of the form enables institutions to report other, mission-related measures of student success. For some institutions, the number of students who enter programs public service law may also represent indicators of institutional effectiveness with respect to their mission.

**8.3. Licensure Passage and Job Placement Rates and Completion and Placement Rates for Short-Term Vocational Programs.** Institutions that prepare students for specific careers will find it appropriate to record the success of their students in passing licensure examinations. This form also includes the provision to record the success of students –by academic major – in finding employment in the field for which they were prepared.

**8.4. Distance Education, and Off-Campus Locations.** Here, institutions with program, distance education programs, and/or off-campus locations report retention rates, graduation rates, time-to-degree, and course completion rates, as appropriate.