Accreditation Standards Charted by Council/Committee

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS	Councils/Committees									
	Executive Cabinet	President's Cabinet	SPC	Faculty Senate	FASPC	HRSPC	IPC	SSPC	Curriculum Committee	LOC
Standard I. Mission, Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, and Integrity										
A. Mission			X							
B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness			X				X			X
Academic Quality			X				X			X
Institutional Effectiveness			X				X			
C. Institutional Integrity		X		X						
Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Support Services										
A. Instructional Programs							X		X	
B. Library and Learning Services							X			
C. Student Support Services								X		
Standard III: Resources										
A. Human Resources						X				
B. Physical Resources					X					
C. Technology Resources					X					
D. Financial Resources					X					
Planning					X					
Fiscal Responsibility and Stability					X					
Liabilities					X					
Contractual Agreements					X					
Standard IV: Leadership and Governance										
A. Decision-making Roles and Processes			X							
B. Chief Executive Officer	X									
C. Governing Board	X									
D. Multi-College Districts or Systems										

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Accreditation Standards

(Adopted June 2014)

Introduction[1]

The primary purpose of an ACCJC–accredited institution is to foster student learning and student achievement. An effective institution ensures that its resources, programs, and services, whenever, wherever, and however delivered, support student learning and achievement. The effective institution ensures academic quality and continuous improvement through ongoing assessment of learning and achievement and pursues institutional excellence and improvement through ongoing, integrated planning and evaluation.

There are four Standards that work together to define and promote student success, academic quality, institutional integrity, and excellence. The mission provides a framework for all institutional goals and activities. The institution provides the means for students to learn and achieve their goals, assesses how well learning is occurring, and strives to improve learning and achievement through ongoing, systematic, and integrated evaluation and planning (Standard I). Student learning programs and support services make possible the academic quality that supports student success (Standard II). Human, physical, technology, and financial resources enable these programs and services to function and improve (Standard III). Ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization guides the accomplishment of the mission and supports institutional effectiveness and improvement (Standard IV). Integrating the elements of the Standards gives institutions the means to develop a comprehensive assessment of academic quality, institutional integrity and effectiveness, and a path to continuous improvement.

Standard I: Mission, Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, and Integrity

The institution demonstrates strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes student learning and student achievement. Using analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, the institution continuously and systematically evaluates, plans, implements, and improves the quality of its educational programs and services. The institution demonstrates integrity in all policies, actions, and communication. The administration, faculty, staff, and governing board members act honestly, ethically, and fairly in the performance of their duties.

A. Mission

1. The mission describes the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, the types of degrees and other credentials it offers, and its commitment to student learning and student achievement. (ER 6)

[1] The Introduction section and opening paragraphs of each Standard are not intended for citation as standards. They are introductory in nature only.

2. The institution uses data to determine how effectively it is accomplishing its mission, and whether the mission directs institutional priorities in meeting the educational needs of students.

3. The institution's programs and services are aligned with its mission. The mission guides institutional decision-making, planning, and resource allocation and informs institutional goals for student learning and achievement.

4. The institution articulates its mission in a widely published statement approved by the governing board. The mission statement is periodically reviewed and updated as necessary. (ER 6)

B. Assuring Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness

Academic Quality

1. The institution demonstrates a sustained, substantive and collegial dialog about student outcomes, student equity, academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and continuous improvement of student learning and achievement.

2. The institution defines and assesses student learning outcomes for all instructional programs and student and learning support services. (ER 11)

3. 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. (ER 11)

4. The institution uses assessment data and organizes its institutional processes to support student learning and student achievement.

Institutional Effectiveness

5. The institution assesses accomplishment of its mission through program review and evaluation of goals and objectives, student learning outcomes, and student achievement. Quantitative and qualitative data are disaggregated for analysis by program type and mode of delivery.

6. The institution disaggregates and analyzes learning outcomes and achievement for subpopulations of students. When the institution identifies performance gaps, it implements strategies, which may include allocation or reallocation of human, fiscal and other resources, to mitigate those gaps and evaluates the efficacy of those strategies.

7. The institution regularly evaluates its policies and practices across all areas of the institution, including instructional programs, student and learning support services, resource management, and governance processes to assure their effectiveness in supporting academic quality and accomplishment of mission.

8. The institution broadly communicates the results of all of its assessment and evaluation activities so that the institution has a shared understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and sets appropriate priorities.

9. The institution engages in continuous, broad based, systematic evaluation and planning. The institution integrates program review, planning, and resource allocation into a comprehensive process that leads to accomplishment of its mission and improvement of institutional effectiveness and academic quality. Institutional planning addresses short- and long-range needs for educational programs and services and for human, physical, technology, and financial resources. (ER 19)

C. Institutional Integrity

1. The institution assures the clarity, accuracy, and integrity of information provided to students and prospective students, personnel, and all persons or organizations related to its mission statement, learning outcomes, educational programs, and student support services. The institution gives accurate information to students and the public about its accreditation status with all of its accreditors. (ER 20)

2. The institution provides a print or online catalog for students and prospective students with precise, accurate, and current information on all facts, requirements, policies, and procedures listed in the "Catalog Requirements" (see endnote). (ER 20)

3. The institution uses documented assessment of student learning and evaluation of student achievement to communicate matters of academic quality to appropriate constituencies, including current and prospective students and the public. (ER 19)

4. The institution describes its certificates and degrees in terms of their purpose, content, course requirements, and expected learning outcomes.

5. The institution regularly reviews institutional policies, procedures, and publications to assure integrity in all representations of its mission, programs, and services.

6. The institution accurately informs current and prospective students regarding the total cost of education, including tuition, fees, and other required expenses, including textbooks, and other instructional materials.

7. In order to assure institutional and academic integrity, the institution uses and publishes governing board policies on academic freedom and responsibility. These policies make clear the institution's commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, and its support for an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom exists for all constituencies, including faculty and students. (ER 13)

8. The institution establishes and publishes clear policies and procedures that promote honesty, responsibility and academic integrity. These policies apply to all constituencies and include specifics relative to each, including student behavior, academic honesty and the consequences for dishonesty.

9. Faculty distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in a discipline. They present data and information fairly and objectively.

10. Institutions that require conformity to specific codes of conduct of staff, faculty, administrators, or students, or that seek to instill specific beliefs or world views, give clear prior notice of such policies, including statements in the catalog and/or appropriate faculty and student handbooks.

11. Institutions operating in foreign locations operate in conformity with the Standards and applicable Commission policies for all students. Institutions must have authorization from the Commission to operate in a foreign location.

12. The institution agrees to comply with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, guidelines, and requirements for public disclosure, institutional reporting, team visits, and prior approval of substantive changes. When directed to act by the Commission, the institution responds to meet requirements within a time period set by the Commission. It discloses information required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities. (ER 21)

13. The institution advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies, including compliance with regulations and statutes. It describes itself in consistent terms to all of its accrediting agencies and communicates any changes in its accredited status to the Commission, students, and the public. (ER 21)

14. The institution ensures that its commitments to high quality education, student achievement and student learning are paramount to other objectives such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Support Services

The institution offers instructional programs, library and learning support services, and student support services aligned with its mission. The institution's programs are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate for higher education. The institution assesses its educational quality through methods accepted in higher education, makes the results of its assessments available to the public, and uses the results to improve educational quality and institutional effectiveness. The institution defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry. The provisions of this standard are broadly applicable to all instructional programs and student and learning support services offered in the name of the institution.

A. Instructional Programs

1. All instructional programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, including distance education and correspondence education, are offered in fields of study consistent with the institution's mission, are appropriate to higher education, and culminate in student attainment of identified student learning outcomes, and achievement of degrees, certificates, employment, or transfer to other higher education programs. (ER 9 and ER 11)

2. Faculty, including full time, part time, and adjunct faculty, ensure that the content and methods of instruction meet generally accepted academic and professional standards and expectations. Faculty and others responsible act to continuously improve instructional courses, programs and directly related services through systematic evaluation to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and promote student success.

3. The institution identifies and regularly assesses learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates and degrees using established institutional procedures. The institution has officially approved and current course outlines that include student learning outcomes. In every class section students receive a course syllabus that includes learning outcomes from the institution's officially approved course outline.

4. If the institution offers pre-collegiate level curriculum, it distinguishes that curriculum from college level curriculum and directly supports students in learning the knowledge and skills necessary to advance to and succeed in college level curriculum.

5. The institution's degrees and programs follow practices common to American higher education, including appropriate length, breadth, depth, rigor, course sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning. The institution ensures that minimum degree requirements are 60 semester credits or equivalent at the associate level, and 120 credits or equivalent at the baccalaureate level. (ER 12)

6. The institution schedules courses in a manner that allows students to complete certificate and degree programs within a period of time consistent with established expectations in higher education. (ER 9)

7. The institution effectively uses delivery modes, teaching methodologies and learning support services that reflect the diverse and changing needs of its students, in support of equity in success for all students.

8. The institution validates the effectiveness of department-wide course and/or program examinations, where used, including direct assessment of prior learning. The institution ensures that processes are in place to reduce test bias and enhance reliability.

9. The institution awards course credit, degrees and certificates based on student attainment of learning outcomes. Units of credit awarded are consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted norms or equivalencies in higher education. If the institution offers courses based on clock hours, it follows Federal standards for clock-to-credit-hour conversions. (ER 10)

10. The institution makes available to its students clearly stated transfer-of-credit policies in order to facilitate the mobility of students without penalty. In accepting transfer credits to fulfill degree requirements, the institution certifies that the expected learning outcomes for transferred courses are comparable to the learning outcomes of its own courses. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements as appropriate to its mission. (ER 10)

11. The institution includes in all of its programs, student learning outcomes, appropriate to the program level, in communication competency, information competency, quantitative competency, analytic inquiry skills, ethical reasoning, the ability to engage diverse perspectives, and other program-specific learning outcomes.

12. The institution requires of all of its degree programs a component of general education based on a carefully considered philosophy for both associate and baccalaureate degrees that is clearly stated in its catalog. The institution, relying on faculty expertise, determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum, based upon student learning outcomes and competencies appropriate to the degree level. The learning outcomes include a student's preparation for and acceptance of responsible participation in civil society, skills for lifelong learning and application of learning, and a broad comprehension of the development of knowledge, practice, and interpretive approaches in the arts and humanities, the sciences, mathematics, and social sciences. (ER 12)

13. All degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry or in an established interdisciplinary core. The identification of specialized courses in an area of inquiry or interdisciplinary core is based upon student learning outcomes and competencies, and include mastery, at the appropriate degree level, of key theories and practices within the field of study.

14. Graduates completing career-technical certificates and degrees demonstrate technical and professional competencies that meet employment standards and other applicable standards and preparation for external licensure and certification.