C Commission on
E English Language Program
A Accreditation

CEA Standards for International Reviews

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Introduction

The *CEA Standards for English Language Programs and Institutions*, which form the foundation for accreditation and for this guide, were developed primarily for English language programs and institutions in the United States that are applying to be accredited by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA). Such organizations must submit a self-study report resulting from an internal review of their program and also participate in a site visit by CEA reviewers to determine whether the program meets the *CEA Standards*.

The *CEA Standards* were written with the various types of English language organizations in mind: independent, stand-alone institutions; proprietary schools; independent English language institutions under contract with colleges and universities; and university-based and administered programs. Because of the variety of settings where English language teaching is offered, the standards were written to allow programs and institutions to demonstrate that they meet the standards in ways appropriate to their settings and missions, in order to offer the best possible language instruction for their students.

Although the standards were initially written for the purpose of accreditation of programs and institutions in the United States, there has been growing interest in CEA accreditation outside the United States. Thus, in 2003, Commission began investigating the possibility of providing international accreditation and in 2005 began investigating how to adapt the current standards to the needs of non-U.S. programs. With the continued interest in CEA accreditation outside the United States, however, there was a need to provide specific guidance for international reviews. CEA applied for and received a grant from the TOEFL Board to review and revise standards-related materials. TOEFL funding allowed CEA to bring together a group of language teaching professionals with extensive experience in language programs outside the United States. This document, to be used for non-U.S. accreditation, is the result of their work.

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Context

How an English language program or institution functions and how it operates within established standards depend on the existence of a mission statement. This mission statement, developed and reviewed periodically by program administrators and faculty, provides a basis for all program activities. The program or institution's resources must be allocated to best achieve its mission and goals.

Mission Standard 1: The program or institution has a written statement of its mission and goals, which guides its activities, policies, and allocation of resources. This statement is communicated to faculty, students, and staff, as well as to prospective students, student sponsors, and the public, and is evaluated periodically.

Discussion

Each program or institution must have a clearly defined mission that is communicated in English and in other languages, as appropriate, and that is understood by individuals who work for or are served by the program or institution. The mission statement summarizes in broad terms the educational and service goals of the program or institution as well as any other purposes. The mission statement serves as the principal guide for

- administrators, to determine if decisions affecting the program or institution are appropriate
- faculty and support staff, to determine if their activities within the program or institution are appropriate
- prospective students and others who may represent them, such as parents, counselors, sponsors, and agents, to determine if the program or institution's programs and services are appropriate
- the public, to inform it of the purposes and goals of the program or institution

The mission statement must be clearly written, in terms easily understood by students, staff, and the public. It must be available to prospective students or their sponsors and to prospective and current employees through materials such as student recruitment literature, employee handbooks, and informational documents and must be posted visibly on premises. Because the mission statement forms the basis for all decisions, the statement must be evaluated and updated periodically whenever educational programs or services shift to reflect new goals, whenever activities and policies are conceived, implemented, or revised, and whenever any other substantial changes occur.

Curriculum

Context

The curriculum is the structure through which an English language program or institution accomplishes its instructional mission. Curriculum is defined as an instructional program that includes

- an educational goal or purpose
- content objectives
- a process for teaching and learning
- a means of assessment

An individual English language program or institution may have more than one curriculum. Curricula may be skills-based, content-based, or product-oriented. Whatever the approach, each curriculum must be responsive to assessed student needs and subject to periodic review for possible modification. Because good practice is informed by research, those who design, review, and revise the curriculum must be knowledgeable about second language acquisition and pedagogy, including issues affecting curriculum design. Importantly, curricular objectives become the basis for determining student learning outcomes. Therefore, the curricular objectives must be carefully established to reflect the quality of instruction offered by the program or institution.

Curriculum Standard 1: The curriculum is consistent with the mission of the program or institution; appropriate to achieve the organization's goals and meet assessed student needs; and available in writing.

Discussion

Each curriculum, including curricula delivered on-site, off-site, and via distance education must have adequate and appropriate levels to meet the assessed needs of the students through a continuity of learning experiences. Programs and institutions must document how a curriculum relates to the mission, how it is organized, the number and sequencing of classes, and whether the classes are offered for academic credit toward graduation. (See Mission Standard 1) The documentation must include a discussion of how students are placed into levels and how their proficiency is assessed.

Good practice includes having a written curriculum that has a logical progression from one level to the next, and having a curriculum appropriate for the needs of a particular group of students. Good practice also implies that the curriculum demonstrates consistency of objectives and student learning outcomes within a level from term to term.

Curriculum Standard 2: Course goals and objectives are written and are appropriate for the curriculum.

Discussion

The courses in the curriculum must be interrelated, interdependent, and shown to accomplish the instructional goals of the program. (See Mission Standard 1) Curricular goals are accomplished through appropriately sequenced course objectives that are complementary across courses and levels of the curriculum. Student learning outcomes based on these objectives must be written, observable, and measurable, and expressed in terms of academic readiness or practical applications.

It is critical that course objectives and student learning outcomes represent significant progress or accomplishment. The level of student achievement, which will be measured against student learning outcomes statements, forms the basis of the program's quality claims. (See Student Achievement Standard 2)

Curriculum Standard 3: The instructional materials and methodologies are appropriate and contribute to the mastery of course objectives.

Discussion

The curriculum, whether delivered on-site, off-site, or via distance education, must use materials and methodologies appropriate for teaching language and other skills to students of different backgrounds, abilities, ages, learning styles, goals, communicative needs and levels of achievement or proficiency. Instructional and resource materials must be clearly related to classroom activities and assignments, be readily available to students and faculty, and be supportive of methodologies, course objectives, and student learning outcomes. Copyright laws must be observed and intellectual property rights must be respected.

Curriculum Standard 4: The program or institution has a plan, in writing, for regular curriculum review and for modification of curricular components.

Discussion

This standard requires a written document describing a formal plan for review, including tasks, process, responsible parties, timelines, and documentation.

Regular review of the curriculum provides an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of existing curricula relative to the mission and goals of the program or institution, and the appropriateness of change based on new knowledge or changing circumstances.

Such review of the curriculum and the modification of curricular components must be undertaken in a formal systematic manner by appropriate committees or individuals with input from faculty and students.

Good practice in curriculum review involves data collection relevant to

- Goals, objectives, and student learning outcomes
- Syllabi and information related to each course
- Teaching materials
- Methods and methodologies
- Student learning outcomes
- Feedback from faculty and students
- Research in the areas of language teaching and learning

Context

Faculty is the most significant variable in determining instructional quality. This quality manifests itself through faculty performance in many ways. Faculty members

- transform curricular objectives and course materials into useful learning activities for students
- develop their own materials, tailoring them to fit the needs of specific students
- guide students in learning English, and in understanding a target culture and that culture's ways of viewing the world
- affirm learners' own cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- apply their knowledge of language, culture, cross-cultural communication and second language learning to assist learners in achieving their own objectives
- efficiently implement research findings in the classroom

The diversity and complexity of such functions have made it difficult to set widely accepted standards for faculty qualifications in the field of English language teaching. The diversity of the academic disciplines in which English language teaching faculty have been trained necessitates further clarification of standards so that those outside the field understand the qualifications of faculty. Good practice can be established when the faculty qualifications directly align with and support the stated mission and curriculum of a program or institution.

Instructional quality is largely determined by faculty performance in the classroom. In order to ensure a quality classroom experience, a program or institution must employ faculty who meet accepted professional standards with regard to educational background, professional experience, and proficiency in the language being taught. With the advent of distance education, performance in managing distance education is also of importance.

Faculty Standard 1: Faculty members have education and training commensurate with their teaching assignments.

Discussion

Individuals with instructional responsibilities must possess the knowledge and training to make informed decisions about classroom practice and to deliver effective instruction in the courses to which they are assigned. This includes knowledge and training relevant to distance education in programs and institutions where one or more of the various forms of distance education are offered.

The good practices this standard seeks to encourage include employment of faculty who have appropriate academic credentials and who demonstrate an adequate knowledge of principles required for effective language instruction. This standard and the accompanying examples of

good practice were developed with the awareness that faculty acquire professional knowledge through both formal and informal means.

Informal preparation may be useful and may enhance faculty members' effectiveness, but formal education is a necessary component of their preparation. Faculty requirements must be consistent with and directly support the program or institution's mission, established curriculum, and other program components.

- The bachelor's degree is considered the baseline qualification for teaching in a postsecondary language program or institution.
- The master's degree is highly valued and is considered the baseline qualification for teaching college and university preparation courses.
- In some program or institutional contexts, the doctorate may be the appropriate degree and may be required by the program or institution.

English language institutions independent of a college or university and that offer teacher-training certificates may come under CEA review. Regarding teacher-training faculty within these institutions,

- the bachelor's degree is considered the baseline qualification, plus   additional training in language teaching pedagogy and methodology, at least equivalent to the certificate content being taught.
- in the case where an institution requires its teacher training faculty to hold a specific certificate (e.g. for CELTA teacher trainers), the certificate is in addition to the bachelor's degree.

In cases where the bachelor's or master's degree is not in English language teaching or a closely related field, such as applied linguistics or foreign language pedagogy, language teaching faculty, including teacher-trainers, must have a specific knowledge base that includes at a minimum the following subject matter:

- language teaching methodology
- the nature of language/languages (e.g. introduction to linguistics)
- the structure of English (e.g. syntax, phonology, morphology, discourse)
- second language acquisition
- intercultural communication
- practicum experience

Degrees and certificates must be issued by a reputable and legitimate institution. This may be established by accreditation, licensing, etc. or through approval by a ministry of education.

Faculty Standard 2: Faculty has experience relevant to teaching students at the postsecondary level in their areas of assignment and demonstrates an ongoing commitment to professional development.

Discussion

Faculty must have training and experience to understand the needs of adult language learners and to be able to use appropriate instructional means to meet those needs. The standard accommodates the wide range of instructional experiences and professional development experiences that instructors bring to the field; however, programs must demonstrate that faculty have experience relevant to their individual teaching assignments and to the mission of the program or institution.

Good practice includes employing faculty who possess knowledge of the needs of students; familiarity with specific issues in language instructional settings; and practice in the application of language teaching principles in both supervised and independent instructional settings. In addition, they should have experience relevant to the program's objectives, whether they be English for academic preparation, English for professional purposes, English for self-improvement, distance learning, or teacher training. Specifically, language faculty should have

- taught courses in an English language program or institution
- had a supervised practicum experience or taught English in supervised settings
- taught English or other languages to adult and/or postsecondary students in supervised settings
- participated in professional development activities, including teacher exchanges
- participated in the development and teaching of distance education courses or programs if appropriate to the program's objectives

In addition, relevant teaching experiences are enhanced and complemented by professional development activities on the part of the faculty member. Professional development activities include but are not limited to

- conference attendance and participation
- development and publication of materials
- teacher exchange experiences
- research
- professional reading programs
- mentoring opportunities

In cases in which the faculty member does not have appropriate experience, the administration must demonstrate that careful monitoring and developmental support are provided for the faculty member, while the faculty member is developing the experience required by this standard.

Faculty Standard 3: Faculty who teach English demonstrate excellent proficiency in English. In institutions where languages other than English are taught, faculty demonstrate excellent proficiency in the languages they teach.

Discussion

Faculty must have language proficiency appropriate to their teaching assignments. With regard to speakers of different varieties of English, the program must demonstrate that faculty members' proficiency in specific varieties of English is consistent with the program or institution's objectives, as well as the objectives of the specific course being taught.

Faculty Standard 4: Programs or institutions that use graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) demonstrate that teaching assistants are enrolled in graduate degree programs in a field appropriate to their teaching assignments. GTAs are appropriately selected, trained, and supervised for the instructional situations in which they are placed.

Discussion

Programs and institutions that use GTAs [or teachers in training, such as student teachers or interns] demonstrate that they provide a quality classroom experience for the student by practicing effective selection, training, and supervision. Such programs and institutions must provide careful monitoring and developmental support for these individuals to ensure that the program meets its instructional objectives, and maintains its overall quality and continuity. (See Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 3)

The good practices this standard seeks to encourage are that programs and institutions

- maintain an effective balance of faculty and teachers in training
- ensure that teachers in training have experience in language teaching or academic preparation for language teaching before being given instructional responsibilities
- ensure that teachers in training are supervised by individuals who possess, at a minimum, the educational level and experience required in Faculty Standards 1 and 2, and that those supervisors have significant involvement in developing curricular and instructional procedures for the program
- ensure the occurrence of regular and systematic classroom observations, meetings of teachers in training and other faculty, and regularly scheduled one-on-one consultations with the supervisor

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Faculty Standard 5: Faculty members have working conditions appropriate for their assigned responsibilities.

Discussion

Faculty must be provided with facilities, supplies, technology, and equipment necessary for the delivery of instruction, including distance education if relevant. (See Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies Standard 1)

Discussion

Written job descriptions must be consistent with other evidence of faculty duties and responsibilities and must specify responsibilities expected of faculty in the areas of

- teaching and teaching support activities, including distance education assignments
- professional development
- service to the program and/or larger institution

Written terms and conditions of employment [often called a contract] at the time faculty are hired must describe

- length of employment/appointments
- teaching load
- responsibilities outside the classroom, including any responsibilities related to distance education programs
- compensation and benefits
- criteria, procedures, and timelines for performance review

Employment policies of the program or institution, including policies regarding confidentiality of faculty records and grievance procedures, must be available to faculty.

Good practice ensures that the terms and conditions of employment at the time of the initial signing are honored.

Faculty Standard 7: A faculty member's duties are structured to permit timely and effective completion.

Discussion

Each faculty member's duties must reflect the systematic and rational allocation of program resources and duties. Responsibilities directly related to the instructional role of faculty include

- teaching
- lesson preparation
- planning and development of materials
- assessment of student work
- conferences with students
- on-line or virtual responsibilities in distance education programs.

Other responsibilities may include

- curriculum development and textbook selection
- research, professional development
- community service
- administrative and/or student services responsibilities

Regardless of the specific duties, the program or institution is responsible for ensuring that the faculty can complete their assigned duties effectively.
Good practice is demonstrated when faculty

- have realistic job descriptions that set achievable tasks
- are able to complete their duties in an effective and timely manner

Faculty Standard 8: The program or institution describes to faculty clearly and in writing the performance criteria and procedures for evaluation at the onset of the evaluation period; conducts faculty performance evaluations that are systematic, regular, fair, objective, and relevant to achieving program or institutional goals; and conveys evaluation results to faculty in writing in a timely manner.

Discussion

Effective evaluation methods are marked by appropriate notification, frequency of administration, and consideration of multiple sources of data. The standard seeks to discourage capricious or unplanned evaluation, evaluation procedures that rely on single sources of data, procedures that do not allow for faculty input, or procedures that do not allow faculty members to respond to their evaluation.

All activities to be evaluated must reflect the program or institution's goals and the faculty members' job descriptions. The performance evaluation process must include a variety of methods and data from various sources. Evaluations must be

- conducted on a regular basis
- based on data collected from more than one source
- based on data collected over a specified period of time
- thorough, well-documented, and consistent with program goals

Context

Facilities, equipment, and supplies make up the setting for quality instruction, whether on site or through distance education, and contribute to the establishment of a positive environment for successful learning.

Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies Standard 1: The program or institution has facilities, equipment, and supplies that support the achievement of the stated goals and objectives; are adequate in number, condition, and availability; and are accessible to students, faculty, and administrators.

Discussion

A program or institution must provide appropriate facilities and an adequate supply of learning materials to support and promote their learning.

Facilities include

- grounds
- buildings (exteriors and interiors)
- classrooms
- common areas
- faculty and administrative offices
- resource centers for students, including laboratories
- restrooms
- all other areas used by the program, students, faculty, or administration

Equipment includes

- graphic display materials
- audio-visual equipment
- electronic equipment for instruction, office, and student activities

Supplies include

- language learning and teaching materials
- reference materials
- office and classroom supplies
- facility maintenance supplies

Well-maintained classrooms and laboratories must be accessible to students and conducive to student learning. Clean, safe facilities, located in secure settings, must be adequate in size, number, lighting, and ventilation. Facilities and equipment must be properly maintained and available from class to class and session to session through legally secured lease/contract or

ownership of the premises. Equipment must be in good working condition and in sufficient quantity to meet the needs of all students.

Facilities, equipment, and supplies must be accessible to all students, faculty, and administrators, including those with disabilities where required by law. Where a program is part of a larger institution or campus, or where an independent language institution contracts with a larger institution, the location of the program supports the achievement of program objectives and helps promote the integration of its students into the academic/professional community. (See Faculty Standard 5)

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity

Context

English language programs or institutions of any size and scope must have an administrative structure that facilitates day-to-day operations and permits short- and long-term planning. Policies and practices related to facilities, services, and number of administrative and support staff require careful attention. Because financial considerations affect whether and how effectively the program or institution can meet its goals, fiscal issues, policies, and practices are of paramount importance in addressing administrative structure.

A variety of models of governance of English language programs and institutions exist, such as

- English language programs that are located within the organizational structure of academic units of a university or college. Such programs may be part of academic departments, such as foreign languages, English, linguistics, education, or continuing education.

- English language programs that are located in non-academic units of a university or college, such as a student affairs division. Such programs may be governed in part by academic units (e.g., by means of committees composed of academic-unit personnel) or they may exist solely within the administrative structure of non-academic units.

- English language institutions that exist independently of any college or university. The forms of ownership and governance of such institutions and the organizational structures in which they exist can vary greatly. They may be governed by individual proprietors, governing boards, or corporate managers. They may exist as stand-alone single-owner schools, may be individual sites in a large multi-site system, or may be not-for-profit organizations governed by boards. In addition to an English language program, such institutions may offer other language-related instruction.

- English language institutions that are not governed by a university or college but conduct classes upon a college campus. The use of university or college space by a non-university institution, and in some cases the provision of instruction by the institution to university or college students, is typically authorized by contractual agreements between the institution and the university or college. Such agreements may provide for varying levels of university or college involvement in the operations or administration of the English language institution.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 1: The program or institution provides a rationale for all linkages with external bodies.

Discussion

The program or institution must provide a description of any larger organizational structure within which it exists, such as a larger unit or a university or college of which a program is a part. A program or institution must also describe its relationship to any external entity that exercises authority over it, including committees, governing boards, or owners.

> **Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 2: The program or institution has an effective administrative structure and system of governance consistent with its mission and with the mission of the host institution, if applicable.**

Discussion

Because English language programs and institutions exist within a variety of organizations and settings, the environment in which they exist may significantly effect the administrative structure and system of governance. This standard was developed with the awareness that the administrative structure and system of governance must be evaluated within the context in which the program exists. No structure or system of governance is appropriate or inappropriate per se. Appropriateness must be determined on the basis of how well the structure and system of governance enables the program or institution to function and achieve its mission.

> **Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 3: Administrative, faculty, and support positions are adequate in number, staffed appropriately, and structured to facilitate the achievement of program or institutional goals.**

Discussion

The program must provide for adequate and appropriate staffing of administrative, faculty and support staff positions. The following terms in the standard are explained for clarity.

Adequate in number refers to the program or institution's ability to accomplish the tasks at hand in a timely manner and provide students with the services required for proper learning and any additional promised services (hereafter, *required services*). The actual number will vary according to enrollment, internal structure, and the kinds of services provided. However, failure to provide required services or failure to provide services in a timely manner can be evidence of inadequate staffing.

Staffed appropriately refers to the need to place qualified individuals in all positions and to fill positions in a timely manner. Thus, an instructor assigned to teach a new course must have the knowledge necessary to teach that course, but also must be given the lead-time or assistance necessary to adequately prepare to teach the course. Programs and institutions that experience fluctuating enrollments must take steps to ensure that personnel who are added or reassigned as a result of enrollment fluctuations are adequately prepared for their new assignments. Programs or institutions that offer distance education must ensure that administrators, faculty, and support staff have the appropriate training, that the proper technology exists to support the activity, and that adequate staff time is allocated.

Structured refers to the characteristics of the positions--specifically, the combination of duties that make up the positions and the extent to which the positions require a full-time commitment by the employee. Administrative and faculty positions comprise a variety of duties, and it is

common to encounter administrators who teach, faculty who assist in the administration, and administrators and faculty who play a role in both the advising and orientation of students. Positions combining multiple duties, including distance education, must be planned to achieve the program or institution's goals, rather than haphazardly or for budgetary expediency.

Full-time or full-load positions ensure continuity of instruction and services, coordination among the various elements of the program or institution, and effective evaluation of its efforts to achieve its goals. If part-time or partial-load administrators, faculty, or support staff are used, assurance must be provided that the benefits of full-time staffing are not lost.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 4: Administrative personnel have education, training, and experience appropriate to accomplish their assigned duties and to meet program or institutional goals.

Discussion

Administrators, faculty, and support staff involved in administration must have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the duties required. Knowledge related to the teaching of English to nonnative speakers, knowledge related to the teaching of other languages (if appropriate), and knowledge related to school or enterprise management are essential for administrators.

When faculty are placed into administrative positions or outside administrators are hired, the program or institution must provide (or provide access to) the orientation and support required for such individuals to perform administrative functions.

The curriculum vitae of administrative personnel must show evidence of formal education, experience, and professional training that would qualify these employees for their positions. (See Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 7)

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 5: The program or institution ensures that administrators and staff have working conditions appropriate for their assigned responsibilities.

Discussion

Administrators and support staff must have adequate working conditions, facilities, and resources to achieve goals efficiently. Programs and institutions that meet this standard are characterized by a lack of complaints or requests for an improved work environment. (See Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies)

> **Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 6:** Administrators and staff receive written job descriptions (and any institutional policies) at the time of employment and any time their duties or terms of employment change.

Discussion

Personnel must understand the full scope of duties and responsibilities related to their employment; they must be formally notified when there is a change in duties or responsibilities. The job descriptions must include a statement of work responsibilities and as applicable

- service expected to the institution, program, or host institution
- professional development expectations
- research

Personnel must be informed of other terms and conditions of employment including

- compensation and benefits
- length of employment/appointment
- criteria and procedures for performance evaluation
- policies and procedures for termination
- grievance procedures
- policies regarding confidentiality of personnel records

> **Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 7:** The program or institution defines, encourages, and supports appropriate professional development activities for faculty, staff, and administrators.

Discussion

Personnel must maintain the knowledge and skills necessary to perform effectively on the job. Professional development activities can include research, program development, continuing education, and participation in the wider professional community. The program or institution must define its standards for professional development and then work with individual employees to set appropriate goals. The program or institution must document its support for professional development activities and its employees' participation in such activities. (See Faculty Standard 2)

> **Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 8:** The program or institution describes to administrative and support staff clearly and in writing the performance criteria and procedures for evaluation at the onset of the evaluation period; conducts administrative and support staff performance evaluations that are systematic, regular, fair, objective, and relevant to achieving program goals; and conveys evaluation results to administrative and support staff in writing in a timely manner.

Discussion

The process of evaluating the performance of administrators and support staff makes use of varied methods and data and ensures that evaluation systems are fully developed and clearly communicated to all relevant parties. Implementation of review procedures must be in conformity with the systems in place. Evaluations common to a corporate administrative structure (evaluation by the immediate supervisor) may be appropriate in one context, whereas evaluation by peers or faculty may be more appropriate in other environments.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 9: The program or institution has a plan, in writing, for development of the program or institution, including planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Discussion

This standard requires a written document describing a formal mechanism for program or institutional development, including tasks, process, responsible parties, timelines, and documentation.

A documented process for development of the program or institution provides an opportunity for the program or institution to ensure that its activities are consistent with achieving the goals as identified in its mission. (cf, Mission Standard 1) Planning is also an opportunity to specify and evaluate the human, financial, and physical resources needed to reach those goals.

Such a review of the administrative and fiscal capacity of a program or institution must be undertaken in a formal systematic manner by administrators with input from other appropriate individuals and all relevant sources.

Good practice includes on-going review of:
- mission and goals
- financial resources
- the physical plant
- internal and external factors that affect student enrollment, curriculum development, student achievement, faculty and staff
- administrative procedures
- operational policies

When an evaluation results in recommendations for change within the program or institution, the program or institution must be able to provide evidence that steps have been taken to implement the recommended change.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 10: Administrators ensure that policies relating to operations are developed and evaluated by the appropriate individuals, disseminated in writing to all who are affected by the policies, reviewed regularly, and implemented in a timely, fair, systematic, and ethical manner.

Discussion

The development and evaluation of policies must involve a broad spectrum of individuals, including administrators, faculty, support staff, and, in some cases, students. The inclusion of multiple viewpoints in the creation of policies provides a greater likelihood that the policies will be worded appropriately and will address the issues for which they are designed.

Policies must be published where they are easily found by those most likely to be affected by them. Personnel policies must be included in policy manuals such as faculty and staff handbooks (print or electronic). Student-related policies must be included in policy manuals such as student handbooks (print or electronic).

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 11: Administrators ensure that there are means for the exchange of information among those who need it.

Discussion

The program or institution must have a variety of means to guarantee that relevant information is provided to or shared among students, administrators, faculty, and support staff. Newsletters, suggestion boxes, staff meetings, town meetings, memos, and bulletin boards all serve to provide information to those who need it and to facilitate communication among students and personnel.

Administrative and Fiscal Standard 12: The program or institution documents that it is in compliance with all laws and institutional policies as well as with any applicable institutional regulations.

Discussion

The administration must ensure compliance with laws and regulations related to a wide range of elements, such as facilities, student services, personnel, and instruction.

Compliance with the laws and regulations of the country is an important responsibility of administration. Administrators must ensure that all staff involved in processing immigration documentation or advising students on immigration matters are knowledgeable about and follow current country regulations, including any regulations that may relate to distance education programs.

Administrative and Fiscal Standard 13: Financial, student, personnel, program, governmental, and contractual records are maintained and kept current, accessible, complete, accurate, and, when appropriate, secure. Reporting is done ethically and in compliance with the law.

Discussion

Programs and institutions must maintain records in the areas indicated in this standard, including electronic files, and must have stated policies regarding record keeping, record retention, and reporting. These policies must conform to the requirements dictated by the laws and regulations affecting the program or institution.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 14: All contracts are in compliance with the law and in keeping with policies of the larger institution, where applicable. Contracts are drafted with appropriate guidance, have undergone appropriate review, and are authorized by the appropriate individual(s).

Discussion

This standard applies to all contracts and agreements, including contracts for goods and services, agreements with institutions and agencies, and employment agreements. *Appropriate guidance* is typically provided by individuals with legal or fiscal expertise or others experienced in the preparation and review of contracts.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 15: Financial supervision is conducted by qualified individuals who implement appropriate policies and procedures and follow accepted accounting practices to ensure the integrity of program or institutional finances.

Discussion

Financial planning is necessary to achieve the mission and goals of the program or institution. Good financial planning and management is conducted by qualified individuals. Such financial management guarantees that expenditures are appropriate, consistent with the mission, and in keeping with the financial capabilities of the program or institution. This standard seeks to encourage the following good practices:

- The program or institution ensures through its hiring and management practices that personnel or contractors who are responsible for financial planning and implementation have the necessary training and appropriate professional background to be responsible for relevant accounting, fiscal oversight, and financial reporting duties.

- Financial policies and procedures are in alignment with the mission and goals of the institution, are consistent with general institutional practice, are subject to review, and support the provision of services to students.

- The program or institution demonstrates ability to maintain accurate accounting records and reporting instruments which reflect adequate controls.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 16: Financial reserves are adequate and available to meet obligations to students, staff, and any contractual parties.

Discussion

A program or institution must maintain adequate financial reserves to enable it to provide whatever services a student has paid for; must inform students of the extent to which it is responsible for seeing students through to the end of the course of study; and must be able to fulfill the commitments it has made to faculty, staff, and contractual parties. Students have a right to expect that the fees they pay for services will result in the delivery of those services and that the program or institution will exist for the duration of their course of study.

Context

Activities and programs classified as "student services" support the language-teaching mission of an English language program or institution. Student Services personnel work in partnership with the faculty to provide an optimal learning environment for the student. Although the types of services provided vary greatly, all programs and institutions have responsibilities and obligations beyond teaching language that must be addressed adequately to provide an effective learning environment.

Recognizing that some students, for example, those coming from other cities or neighboring countries, access routine student services within a social, cultural, linguistic, and institutional context that might be unfamiliar to them, the program or institution demonstrates an informed awareness of students' needs in offering and delivering services such as orientation, housing, and counseling. Not all programs and institutions provide a full range of services. For example, some may not provide any housing-related services, and some may not provide recreational or social activities.

Distance education programs provide student services related to effective virtual learning environments. These services include providing accurate technical information and timely technical support, as well as building a virtual learning community, if possible.

Student Services Standard 1: Admissions policies are consistent with the objectives and the mission of the program and institution (as well as with the host institution, if applicable) and are implemented by properly trained and authorized individuals. The admissions process ensures that the student is qualified to enroll and benefit from the instructional program. Both the policies and the personnel who implement them adhere to ethical standards and good practice.

Discussion

Admission policies must be directly related to the program or institution's mission and goals and, where relevant, to those of the larger institution or organization (See Mission Standard 1). Admission policies serve as a guideline regarding who shall or shall not be admitted, using clearly stated, consistently applied criteria. The policies take into account the maximum number of students a program can accommodate without compromising its academic and support services and facilities, the degree of diversity desired, and the minimum/maximum proficiency level and ages served. Admissions decisions are based on complete information as determined by the program or institution to ensure that only qualified students are admitted.

If a program admits students from outside the country, they must alert students of the need to apply for proper immigration and visa authorization. Where government regulations require monitoring of international students, program personnel adhere to specified regulations.

Student Services Standard 2: The program or institution provides academic and personal advising and counseling, as well as assistance in understanding immigration regulations. Such advice and assistance are provided in a timely and accurate manner by qualified individuals.

Discussion

The program or institution must provide students with sufficient numbers of advisors who have training appropriate to their job descriptions. Students are made aware of how and where to access advisors. (See Administrative and Fiscal Capacity Standard 4)

Personal counseling includes helping students adjust to the learning environment. For students from outside the country, it includes helping students adjust to living in the new country by providing information and clarification of documents as well as nonacademic procedures and routines. Counselors must listen carefully to students and help them solve problems that may arise.

Academic counseling includes providing students with comprehensible written information about program or institutional academic policies and procedures including placement, attendance, advancement, and dismissal. It includes orienting students to the system of education used by the host institution, especially if different from familiar. Programs preparing students for academic study in another country help students to understand the system of education in the destination country and to develop academic skills important to ensure success.

Immigration assistance includes helping students from other countries achieve informed compliance with immigration regulations. Good practices include having an advising staff who remain informed of any applicable regulations and laws. If the program or institution cannot provide such assistance, it must refer students to other qualified professionals, services, or programs. (See Recruiting).

Student Services Standard 3: The program or institution provides pre-arrival and ongoing orientation to support students in their adjustment to the program or institution (and the host institution, if applicable) and to the surrounding culture and community, as well as for their understanding of immigration regulations and procedures and health and safety issues.

Discussion

All incoming students benefit from a clear and complete orientation to the program, its policies, and the host institution (if applicable). This might include, but is not limited to, information about transportation, safety, housing and meals, health care, as well as the schedule for reporting, testing, placement, and classes. The students' orientation must include written information about instructional style and content, academic expectations, appropriate student conduct, and student responsibility to maintain enrollment status in good standing. The orientation program must offer continuing support to both new and longer-term students.

Students coming from outside the local area or from other countries need orientation to the surrounding community and possible cross-cultural issues. Additionally, students must have access to pre-arrival information, in writing, which accurately describes the program, student services, and registration policies. (See also Recruiting Standards 2 & 3, Student Services Standards 4 & 8.)

Student Services Standard 4: The program or institution seeks to ensure that students understand policies regarding enrollment and registration.

Discussion

Before students complete the enrollment and registration process, the program or institution must apprise them of appropriate and relevant policies regarding registration, withdrawal, and under what circumstances the program refunds any student fees paid.

Good practices include

- giving students written information regarding the services for which the student has paid
- clarifying the process for withdrawal and any deadlines with which the student must comply
- clarifying the process for refunds and ensuring timely payment of refunds
- having procedures in place for ensuring comprehension of English language materials by students who have limited English proficiency before they sign any contractual documents or make full fee payments for the term in which they enroll

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Student Services Standard 5: Students have access to health insurance coverage as required by country and local immigration regulations, and institutional policies.

Discussion

Where required by national, local, or institutional policies, the program or institution must inform students in writing of the application process and costs for medical insurance coverage and of the risks incurred by letting coverage lapse.

Student Services Standard 6: Students have access to social and recreational activities that provide a cultural context for their second language acquisition and other studies, as appropriate.

Discussion

Because students need the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-life experiences, the program or institution must encourage and facilitate opportunities that reinforce English language learning, such as films and guest speakers, field trips, and sport and social events, if appropriate. Sufficient numbers of personnel must accompany any field trips or activities formally sponsored by the program, institution, or other contracted agencies/entities. Safety procedures must be in place for emergencies; and if students sign waivers, the program or institution must verify the students' understanding of the implications. If school-sponsored activities are offered for additional fees, students are informed in advance of the fees required.

Good practices include

- having written information available in advance regarding recreational and social activities and, if sponsored by the program or institution, any costs involved
- having written procedures that are communicated to all staff regarding health and safety issues and how those procedures are to be communicated to student participants

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Student Services Standard 7: The program or institution clearly states and fulfills its responsibilities regarding student housing.

Discussion

If the program or institution assists students with housing, written information disseminated to students about housing must be accurate. (See Recruiting Standards 1 & 2) The program or institution or the contractual agency/entity must provide written policies regarding selection of accommodations, their quality, and safety. An employee of the program or institution or the contracted agency/entity must personally inspect all accommodations and have procedures in place to investigate housing complaints properly and to solve problems without delay. (See Student Complaints Standards 1 & 2).

Good practice includes having the program or institution or its contracted agency/entity ensure that

- the student is placed in a safe, clean, livable environment that is conducive to achieving the student's educational purpose
- accommodations take into consideration respect for the student's personal privacy and religious beliefs and practices
- there are written policies available on request and that these policies are communicated to all appropriate staff
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Student Services Standard 8: The program or institution clearly states and consistently provides the student services described in any promotional literature or other agreements, written or verbal.

Discussion

The program or institution must conduct its support services program in an ethical manner. The personnel responsible are appropriately trained and accessible. All services for which students have paid or that have been promised, even those contracted out, are available as promised. If fees are charged for specific services, written fee schedules are available. (See Recruiting Standards 1, 2, & 3)

Examples of good practice include

- clear statements of services provided in all promotional and other written information
- written information about fees for services
- clearly written information about which services are part of the program and which are optional

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Student Services Standard 9: The program or institution has a plan, in writing, for the regular review and revision of its student services policies and activities.

Discussion

This standard requires a written document describing a formal plan for review, including tasks, process, responsible parties, timelines, and documentation.

Regular review provides an opportunity to evaluate student services policies and activities. Such a review must be undertaken in a formal systematic manner by appropriate individuals and committees.

Regular review considers feedback from staff, students, related institutional personnel, homestay hosts, sponsoring agencies and overseas offices from which the program or institution receives students, and other relevant sources. The review allows for timely implementation of necessary alterations, revisions, additions, or deletions so that policies and services can continue to be effectively administered, clearly communicated, and monitored.

Good practice includes a review of:

- admission policies
- promotional materials
- orientation materials and activities
- social and recreational activities
- personal, academic, and immigration advising services
- housing
- outside service providers

Recruiting

Context

Recruiting activities are any efforts intended to attract students to a program or institution. English language programs and institutions recruit students through a variety of means, including

- study fairs
- promotional videos and brochures
- World Wide Web pages
- visits to schools and counseling offices
- relationships with embassies, sponsors, or third party recruiters

Recruiting is a topic for accreditation because of the possibility that prospective students, their parents, or their sponsors could be misled in any recruiting transaction or in promotional literature. For students coming from outside the country, this may be caused by language or cultural differences or by inadequate knowledge of the country and law.

> **Recruiting Standard 1:** The program or institution follows ethical standards for recruiting students and promoting its programs. Its policies and procedures are made clear to prospective students and/or student sponsors. In any recruitment transaction, the **students' interests and well**-being are paramount.

Discussion

Persons engaged in recruiting students must focus on the welfare of both potential and actual applicants at all times. Admissions criteria, processes, procedures, and documents necessary for the application process must be clearly and accurately represented both by the program or institution directly and by any agent acting for the program or institution. The program or institution ensures that students are informed of the result of attending or completing the program or institution relative to eligibility requirements for admission to university or college classes, awarding of credit for attendance, enrollment in concurrent programs, or conditional admission to a university or college.

Good practice results when the recruiting staff, admission personnel, academic advisors, and all those to whom recruiting activities are delegated are well trained to describe clearly and accurately all aspects of the program or institution when recruiting and admitting students. In their marketing and recruiting activities, such programs and institutions must not misrepresent themselves or others by either deliberately falsifying or selectively omitting information.

> **Recruiting Standard 2: All promotional literature is accurate and complete.**

Discussion

Printed materials, video presentations, and electronic media must contain clear, complete, current, and correct information about the program or institution's

- goals and purposes
- admission requirements and procedures
- hours of instruction
- program length
- calendar
- prices
- related services, such as counseling, assistance with locating appropriate housing, help with application for university or college admission, and other services (See Student Services Standard 8)
- distance education, where applicable, such as the equipment and technical expertise possessed by the program or institution and the technology and technical expertise needed by the students

Good practice results when promotional materials, electronic and other presentations:

- make accurate claims about instructional programs and student services available
- state clearly whether admission to the program or institution is also admission to another concurrent or subsequent educational program
- realistically depict the program, its location, and the facilities used by students

> **Recruiting Standard 3: Students are informed of the benefits they receive for tuition and fees, including complete and accurate information about the academic program and calendar, student life, and facilities.**

Discussion

The program or institution must explain to students

- actual costs or realistic estimates of costs for tuition
- educational expenses, including, where applicable, technology (hardware and software) requirements for distance education
- subsistence and related fees
- the extent to which financial aid or scholarships are available

Good practice will result in an absence of student complaints about undisclosed fees. (See Student Services Standards 2, 3, 6, 7, & 8)

Recruiting Standard 4: If there are agreements between a program or institution and a recruiting agent, the program or institution ensures that it has complete information about the agent and assumes the responsibility for monitoring the agent and terminating the agreement if necessary.

Discussion

The program or institution must keep itself informed of the professional conduct of the agent. It must

- ensure that the agent does not misrepresent his relationship with the program or institution and does not perform services on behalf of the program or institution without proper authorization and training
- be prudent in evaluating agents prior to contracting by soliciting information from students, other clients of the agent, and other sources that may be available
- obtain written confirmation that the agent is aware of the *NAFSA Code of Ethics* (available from NAFSA at www.nafsa.org) or any local codes that apply to student recruitment.
- subscribe to the admissions/recruiting policies of the *NAFSA Code of Ethics* or any local codes that apply to student recruitment.
- monitor the performance of its agents in light of the *NAFSA Code of Ethics* or any local codes that apply to student recruitment, be vigilant and proactive in requiring adherence to the standards, and terminate agent relationships if it becomes evident that there is a pattern of unacceptable practice
- be kept informed of the fees charged to students and services rendered to students

Good practice will result in students receiving accurate information, including the program or institution's location, tuition, and fees; the relationship between the program or institution (and the host institution, if applicable); and the relationship with the agent or agency.

Length and Structure of the Program of Study

Context

The mission and goals of the program or institution can be realized only through a structure that is appropriate and adequate relative to the level of instruction and the length of the instructional terms. These standards, therefore, relate to the calendar and the organizational design of the program.

> **Length and Structure of Program of Study Standard 1: The calendar states the number of terms per year, the number of weeks per term and hours of instruction per week, and is consistent with and supportive of the program or institution's stated mission and goals.**

Discussion

The time allotted for instruction is adequate for students to achieve the stated goals of the program of study and the stated goals of individual courses. An orderly and sequential flow of terms of instruction is essential. The program must provide the necessary number of terms, weeks per term, and hours of instruction per week to enable the student sufficient time for successful completion of a course or series of courses. (See Curriculum Standards 1 & 2) In addition, the program or institution indicates how many hours per term within its instructional component are devoted to the following: teacher contact hours, educational field trips, testing, orientation, social events, language laboratory/media center, and other specified activities. If distance education is offered, the program or institution must take these hours into consideration.

> **Length and Structure of Program of Study Standard 2: The program or institution's organizational design clearly indicates the levels of instruction and specifies how students progress through a full program of study.**

Discussion

The program or institution must be able to demonstrate a logical consistency among the following elements relative to the stated goals of the program:

- the number of levels offered
- the average pass/fail patterns and rates of promotion at each level (See Student Achievement Standard 2)
- the average time required to complete all levels in the curriculum (See Curriculum Standards 1 & 2)

Specific to student progress, programs must provide a clear link between the expected and acceptable student learning outcomes and their program structure in regards to length and structure of the program and pass/fail rates for each level. (See Mission Standard 1, Curriculum Standards 1 & 2, and Student Achievement Standard 2)

Context

CEA's primary philosophy is that accreditation is focused on the student. Thus, student achievement, monitored through sound assessment processes, must be the heart of the English language program.

Assessment must be based on statements of student learning outcomes that are in line with curricular objectives. A student learning outcome, as a description of expected student competence or performance with the language, is generally a statement of what the student will know or be able to do as a result of the course of instruction and is written in terms of observable and measurable language skills or demonstrable knowledge. Student achievement of learning outcomes will likely be shown by both qualitative and quantitative means; in any case, direct evidence of student learning outcomes is required of all accredited programs and institutions. (See Glossary: *proficiency*, *Direct evidence*, and *Indirect evidence*.)

English language programs and institutions serve students with a wide range of educational goals, of which English language learning is a part. For example, students may engage in study to improve speaking skills or writing skills for general purposes, may seek integrated skills or language for academic readiness, may desire to improve oral fluency for personal or professional reasons, or may pursue a language immersion experience. Further, whatever their short-term, long-term and language learning goals, students begin instruction with varying levels of competence in the English language and its skill areas, varying primary languages, and various cultural approaches to language learning. For these reasons, programs and institutions establish a mission and promote their program and services to the student market(s) they serve. Within that mission, they hire faculty, develop curriculum, offer student services, and enroll students.

Thus, because specific expectations of student learning outcomes will vary; good practice requires that these outcomes be transparently linked to the mission, types of students, student goals, and the objectives of the curricular program. CEA seeks to confirm that programs and institutions ensure that students are learning by verifying that they

- establish student learning outcomes that can be measured and documented, and that represent satisfactory progress from level-to-level
- determine levels of satisfactory progress that represent significant outcomes and attainment within the norms of the English language program type
- utilize trustworthy, valid, and reliable assessment tools and systems
- describe and publicize student achievement goals
- demonstrate and document that students achieve those goals

In addition, CEA seeks to verify that programs and institutions have the components of effective assessment processes in place. Assessment components serve programmatic and operational integrity when they are part of a methodical and integrated system. The overall system of assessment contributes to program continuity and coordination by providing a sound basis on

which decisions regarding admissions, placement, advancement through the levels, and completion of the program are made. Such a system of assessment includes the operational, academic, and student service components addressed in the five Student Achievement standards. CEA expects that the program will have the following components in place within the assessment system to support the program's mission and curriculum goals:

- admissions and placement practices that align with the program or institution's mission and curriculum levels and goals
- measurement or assessment practices for level-to-level progression that are harmonious with placement practices, curricular objectives, and stated student learning outcomes
- written proficiency scales and progress reports that provide feedback on achievement to students and sponsors
- a written plan for regular review of assessment practices based on multiple sources of information, including collection of student achievement and satisfaction data

In distance education, the program or institution must assure the integrity of student placement and achievement: firm student identification, exam security, and secure and timely exam evaluation. (See Glossary: *Firm student identification*) An established and appropriate system of distance education assessment contributes to continuity and coordination by providing a sound basis on which decisions regarding admissions, placement, and advancement through the levels can be made, and for determining when students have achieved the goals of the program or study.

Student Achievement Standard 1: The program or institution has a system of assessment that is consistent with its admission requirements and allows valid and reliable placement of students into levels.

Discussion

Programs and institutions must ensure that students are placed into levels on the basis of consistent, reliable, and valid measures of proficiency. (See Curriculum Standard 1) In addition to measurement tools, good practice includes having a set of reliable placement procedures. Programs can use published placement materials, valid and reliable in-house materials, or a combination. The program must be able to demonstrate how it has determined that the measurements and procedures used for placement allow the program to meet the standard by allowing for effective distribution of students into correct program levels. Further, programs need to describe the curricular link, showing how the placement instruments and processes that are utilized evaluate skill or content areas cited in the program curriculum and clearly differentiate language ability levels of learners. Programs must also address their procedure for re-evaluation of placement should there be appeals by students.

Documentation must include a discussion of what instruments and procedures are used for placement and how the program has determined these are reliable and valid measures for the mission and academic program. In order to ensure that placement instruments are reliable measures, the program must also address procedures ensuring security of the tests.

If distance education is used, programs and institutions must ensure that students are firmly identified and that they are placed into levels on the basis of consistent measures of proficiency. (See Curriculum Standard 1)

Student Achievement Standard 2: The program or institution documents in writing whether students have attained the learning objectives for courses taken within the curriculum, using instruments or procedures that appropriately assess whether students are ready to progress to the next level or to exit the program of study.

Discussion

The good practices the standard seeks to encourage include consistent use of assessment practices that

- establish demonstrable and significant achievement and advancement criteria
- require evidence that students are making reasonable progress in terms of stated student learning outcomes
- make clear what is expected in order to progress in the program
- are grounded in acceptable assessment research

Programs and institutions must determine and document that students have attained the student learning outcomes established within the curriculum. To do so, programs must have consistent and reliable means for effectively assessing and recording student progress. In keeping with good curriculum design practices, the means of assessment are expected to be appropriate in that they align with the program or institution's mission (See Mission 1), curriculum objectives (See Curriculum Standard 1), and the structure of program (See Length & Structure of Program of Study Standard 2).

The degree of student progress must be based on concrete evidence (See Glossary) demonstrating how well students meet the stated student learning outcomes of given courses or levels. Concrete evidence of learning is typified by documentation of multiple forms of assessments, which may be qualitative or quantitative. In assessing student progress, the program is expected to use instruments or procedures that meet the norms of good practice as elaborated in second language learning and assessment research, and which are accepted in the language-learning arena.

Programs may use qualitative and/or quantitative measures (See Glossary) when determining if students have attained stated student learning outcomes, including such indicators as

- standardized tests
- comprehensive exams (teacher-made or institution-made)
- portfolios
- rubrics
- scales
- oral presentations, and/or
- evaluated performances

Since various assessment methods may be used, the program should be able to explain how the multiple assessment practices are rendered harmonious and how they contribute to coherence and consistency in the program relative to student achievement.   Further, the program should describe how it determines the appropriateness of the assessment procedures, from initial placement, to level progression, to completion of the program. Further, good practice requires that policies regarding failure to make satisfactory progress be in place. These policies include procedures to monitor and counsel students at various levels of achievement.

Programs and institutions that include distance education as part of their curricular offerings should have policies and procedures in place to maintain the privacy of student assessments.

Student Achievement Standard 3: The program or institution maintains written reports of attained proficiency for each student.

Discussion

The intent of this standard is ensure that written student reports focus on attained language proficiency as a result of instruction. Thus, the program or institution's *system* for reporting the attained language proficiency for each student must consist of

1. a written report to be provided to students including but not limited to
    *   the course in which the student has been enrolled
    *   a grade, score, mark, or narrative indicating the degree to which the student has mastered the course requirements [see below]
2. an indication of the proficiency level(s) of the course
3. a proficiency scale, which is the range of possible levels of proficiency related to the length and structure of the curricular program
4. and an interpretation of the proficiency scale with descriptors for each course within each level written in terms of describable and measurable student learning outcomes

If these essential parts of the reporting system—course proficiency levels, a proficiency scale, and an interpretation of the scale—are not available on the written report, they must be available and easily accessible, such as on the syllabus or in a student handbook, not only to students but to others who might need to know, such as parents, employers, sponsors, or admissions officers.

The proficiency scale and its interpretation must be aligned with Curriculum 2 and with Length and Structure of Program of Study 3. Curriculum 2 requires that course goals and objectives be written, observable, and measurable, that they be expressed in terms of academic readiness or practical applications, and that they represent significant progress or accomplishment. Specific to student progress, Length and Structure of Program of Study 3 requires that there be a clear link between the expected learning outcomes and the program structure.

In cases where the course grade includes other factors, such as attendance, effort, and completion of homework, the program or institution must make clear the proficiency level that the student has achieved for the course irrespective of these other factors.

In addition, good practice requires that individual proficiency reports be methodically collected and retained according to the program or institution's policy on record keeping. Analysis of these data in the aggregate allows programs and institutions to make concrete statements about what students have learned as a result of their respective courses of study and provide information about student performance relative to goals such as program graduation, retention, and college admission. In sum, these cumulative progress data support the quality claims of the program. (See Student Achievement Standard 5)

Student Achievement Standard 4: The program or institution informs students of the assessment procedures used to determine placement, progression from level to level, and completion of the program, as well as their individual results.

Discussion

The Student Achievement standards require evidence of valid and reliable evaluation of student language proficiency at all stages of a student's program of study, including placement, progress within the curriculum, at the completion of the course levels taken, and/or at the completion of the full program of study if the student seeks to complete the full program. The program or institution must inform students of the assessment procedures used to determine their progress from level to level and for exiting the program. Equally important, each student must be regularly informed of his/her individual progress as revealed by the assessments.

Good practices include

- informing the student about initial placement instruments and procedures as well as a course of action if he/she disagrees with placement decisions
- describing to the student the relationship between course grades and promotion from one level to another, the impact of attendance and/or effort on grades or promotion, and the appeal procedure (See Length and Structure of Program of Studies Standard 2)
- providing to the student, in writing, the procedures for level promotion and program completion
- providing to the student, in writing, an explanation of the student learning outcomes and the criteria by which the student will be assessed (See Curriculum Standard 3)
- documentation of timely reporting to the student of his/her level progress and/or completion of the course
- documentation of student conferences and recommendations when satisfactory progress is in question

> **Student Achievement Standard 5:** The program or institution has a plan, in writing, for regular review and modification of its assessment and reporting practices.

Discussion

This standard requires a written document describing a formal plan for review, including tasks, process, responsible parties, timelines, and documentation.

Regular review of student assessment practices provides an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of existing practices and the appropriateness of any changes. It allows for review of assessment practices relative to the mission and goals of the program or institution and their alignment with the achievement of the students. Importantly, it permits regular exposure of achievement and assessment practices to new testing and second language acquisition research.

Such a review must be undertaken in a formal systematic manner by appropriate individuals or committees with input from faculty, students, and other individuals or organizations.

Good practice in student achievement review includes

- data about student performance relative to student learning outcomes such as pass/fail rates, program graduation, retention and college admission
- reliability studies of testing instruments relative to program objectives
- faculty surveys and student satisfaction surveys
- articulation patterns with programs to which students may be admitted after program completion.

Student Complaints

Context

This set of standards deals with procedures for responding to formal complaints made by students. It is not the intent of these standards to require the program or institution to record or respond to every critical comment; however, it must put in place procedures to handle formal (written) complaints. (See Glossary "formal student complaints.)

> **Student Complaints Standard 1: The program or institution makes available to students, in writing, procedures by which they may lodge formal complaints.**

Discussion

The program or institution must have in place student complaint procedures and ensure that students, including both on-site and distance education students, if relevant, know what these procedures are. The procedures must include a process by which a student may lodge a formal written complaint.

> **Student Complaints Standard 2: The program or institution documents and maintains records of formal student complaints as well as the resolution of any such complaints.**

Discussion

Personnel who have the requisite authority and training must resolve and maintain appropriate records of any such formal complaints.

Appendix A: Glossary

Achievement: How much has been learned in relation to the goals of a particular course.

Administrative staff: All those employees who are involved in non-instructional administrative or support activities.

Agent: A person or organization that, for compensation, represents an English language program or institution or prospective students in the process of providing information about the program or institution to the prospective student and/or providing the program or institution with information about the student, typically through an application (See *Third-party recruiter*).

Applied linguistics: A discipline that encompasses research, theory, and practice related to language including teaching and learning a second language.

Appropriate instructional materials: Materials that further the instructional objectives of a course or learning situation. For example, if the course goal is to improve writing skills, the materials will relate to writing and associated writing skills, taking into account the level of the course and the proficiencies of the students.

Assessment: Evaluation of language skills and proficiency with respect to set standards, stated criteria, and/or descriptions. For example, a writing assessment instrument would contain descriptions of writing skills/abilities at various levels of proficiency (a clear statement of topic, adequate supporting detail to allow the reader to understand the purpose of the paper, etc.).

Competency: Ability inferred from performance of a skill.

Course: A component of a curriculum in which a teacher and students interact toward the achievement of predetermined goals and objectives.

Course description: A description of the goals, methods, and time lines for a course.

Course goal: The overall intended outcome or target for the course. The goal guides the development of meaningful instructional objectives. (See *Course objectives*)

Course objective: A specific teaching objective from course content and activities. A course's objectives in aggregate address all of the course goals. The course objectives guide instruction in order to provide a learning experience for all students. Along with statements of student learning outcomes, the course objectives provide the foundation of assessment by inferring what will be assessed and appropriate methods of assessment. (See *Student learning outcomes)*

Current instructional materials/resources: Materials or resources that reflect current knowledge of language teaching and learning.

Curriculum: An education program that includes an educational goal or purpose, content objectives for all courses, statements of student learning outcomes for all courses, a process for teaching and learning, and a means of assessment.

Demonstrable means for assessing outcomes: A description of the assessment methods and measures used to evaluate what a student knows or is able to do as a result of instruction.

Direct evidence: Demonstrates actual learning, actual performance or product.

Distance Education: Electronically mediated instruction that is offered by the program or institution. May be part of the regular course of study or a separate program.

EFL: English as a foreign language. Most often used to refer to teaching English as a foreign language, in a setting in which English is not a major language used by the surrounding society. (See *TEFL*).

ESL: English as a second language. Most often used to refer to the English used or taught in English-speaking settings or for long-term continuous purposes (See *TESL*).

Faculty: Instructional staff who have both teaching and non-teaching responsibilities (student advising, curriculum development, testing, etc) and provide continuity and stability to the program.

Firm student identification: The means by which the program or institution ensures the integrity of student work in distance education, specifically including the means by which the IEP can ensure that a student enrolled in a distance education course is the same student who is submitting assignments or taking examinations via electronically mediated instruction.

Formal student complaint: A written complaint filed by a student following the written procedures provided to the student by the program or institution.

Full-load: The number of instructional hours and other responsibilities that would be carried by a full-time faculty member as defined by the program or institution--typically 15-20 hours of instruction per week or the equivalent.

Full-time faculty: Faculty who hold positions defined by the program or institution as being 1.0 FTE (full-time equivalency) and who are available for assignment during the scheduled hours of operations.

Graduate teaching assistant (GTA): A graduate student who is also a teacher in training and who teaches courses in an English language program, usually for compensation.

Home stay: An arrangement whereby a student resides for a period of time in a private home with a full-time resident host(s) who provides room and/or board, as specified in the hosting agreement.

Home stay host(s): An individual or individuals who extend hospitality, either voluntarily or for fees, in a private home. Time periods can range from one meal to overnight stays for an extended period of time.

Host institution: Contracted entity with which the English language program or institution has a relationship.

Indirect evidence: Involves data that are related to the act of learning and imply learning has occurred. A perception of learning.

Intensive English program (IEP): A postsecondary program that: offers participants a minimum of 18 class hours (one class hour equals 50 minutes) per week of English language instruction; has a curriculum designed to serve the needs of non-native speakers of English; allows for the differentiation of participants by level of proficiency; and offers instruction on an on-going basis for at least 8 months of each calendar year.

Instructional methodologies: Organized principles for language teaching that are based on accepted views of language, teaching, and learning.

Instructional staff: All those individuals involved directly or indirectly in instruction, including, for example, faculty, graduate teaching assistants, and language laboratory or technical staff.

Larger institution: The governing organization/institution in which the English language program is a unit/department or part of a unit/department.

Non-native speaker: A person who did not learn English as a first language.

Norms of the field: Current practice in the field. The recognized boundaries of acceptable program standards by those operating in the field.

Part-time: Faculty or staff who hold positions of less than 1.0 FTE (full-time equivalency) as defined by the program or institution.

Partial load: The number of instructional hours and other responsibilities that would be carried by a part-time faculty member as defined by the program or institution—typically fewer than 15 hours of instruction per week or the equivalent.

Post-secondary education: Courses and/or programs that fulfill the requirements for an educational, professional, or vocational objective and are not avocational or recreational in character. All presume prior completion of a secondary level of education or its equivalent.

Practical application: Use of language in concrete settings for designated purposes.

Proficiency: The degree to which a nonnative speaker has achieved describable and measurable competencies using language for a specific purpose, academic or otherwise. (See *student learning outcomes*)

Proficiency scale: The range of possible levels of proficiency related to the length and structure of the curricular program.

Program of study: A coordinated, coherent group of courses provided by a program or institution, which may include levels from beginner to advanced.

Program placement of students: The process followed by a program or institution in the administration of a test, or series of tests, or other evaluative procedures designed to place students at an appropriate level. The process ensures that placement instruments/procedures and the results obtained from them are related to the sequence of courses and that guidelines are available for the uniform interpretation of results as well as the training of placement test administrators.

Qualitative measures: That which may not be quantifiable but which contributes to an understanding of the activity/event/situation being measured. Example: The extent to which an instructor encourages student participation in class. This may be measured through observations of instructor speech, body language, classroom management techniques, and/or lesson design.

Quantitative measures: That which can be assessed in quantitative terms; that which can be counted. Example: The amount of student participation in class. This can be measured by counting the number of times each student participates and the duration of each participation.

Sequenced courses: A graduated grouping of courses within a program of study that provides a coherent and connected body of material and in which a student may not enroll in a given course until able to demonstrate competency in meeting the objectives of the previous course in the sequence.

Sponsor: A person or organization that supports a student's admission and enrollment in an English language program or institution. This person is neither an official representative nor is working under the auspices of the program or institution.

Student: A person who did not learn English as a first language and who is enrolled in an intensive English program or institution. Students are nonnative speakers of English who seek to increase their English language proficiency in a full-time postsecondary program

Student grade level: A student's placement within the curriculum.

Student learning outcome: A description of what the student will know or be able to do with the language as a result of the course of instruction. A student learning outcome is written in terms of observable and measurable language skills. Along with course objectives, student learning outcomes provide the foundation of assessment by inferring what will be assessed and appropriate methods of assessment. (See *course objectives*)

Student needs: Set of desired learner outcomes as determined by an analysis of the anticipated linguistic and social environments of the students.

Student services: The services required for proper learning and any additional student support services the program or institution has promised through its promotional literature or statements. Examples are counseling, housing, extra-curricular activities, and college placement.

Support staff: Non-administrative employees who provide support to administrators and faculty in carrying out the mission of the program or institution.

Syllabus: The organized content, methods/techniques, and objectives designed to support a particular course.

Techniques: Instructional activities that flow from methodologies and are based on theories of language learning and teaching.

TEFL: Teaching English as a foreign language, in a setting in which English is not a major language used by the surrounding society.

TESL: Teaching English as a second language, in an English-speaking or English-bilingual setting.

TESOL:

>   Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc., a professional organization for individuals teaching ESL or EFL around the world.

>   The field of teaching English to speakers of other languages for whom English is not the first language.

Third-party recruiter: An agent who is under contract to represent an English language program or institution in recruitment and marketing activities (See A*gent*).

Verification: Activities undertaken by site reviewers to provide evidence that standards have been met.