



# Program Accreditation: Current Status and Next Steps

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*2018 State of the Art Conference*

 **ThinkCollege**  
**NATIONAL COORDINATING CENTER**



The TPSID National Coordinating Center at Think College is a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston.

The Center is funded by the Office of Postsecondary Education Grant #P407B100002.

# Agenda

- Brief history of Accreditation Workgroup
- Why program accreditation is important
- Accreditation Report and model standards
- Current Workgroup activities and Next Steps

# Importance of Program Accreditation

- Benchmarks are useful for quality assurance and improvement.
- Valuable for institutions of higher education, federal student aid offices, accrediting agencies, students with ID and their parents.
- Implementation will validate and strengthen programs.
- Accreditation MAY replace the current Comprehensive Transition Program approval process

2008

Passage of the HEOA

2011

First Accreditation Committee Formed

2012-15

Model Standards Developed

2016

Report to the Department of Education

# Report on Model Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability: A Path to Education, Employment, and Community Living

The National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup

September 30, 2016



 **NATIONAL COORDINATING CENTER**

## REPORT TO:

THE HONORABLE JOHN B. KING, JR., UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF EDUCATION  
THE UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS  
THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE  
NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AND INTEGRITY

## Report on Model Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability

<https://thinkcollege.net/resource/accreditation-and-credentials/report-model-accreditation-standards-higher-education>

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# Model Standards in Ten Areas

Mission

Student Achievement

Curriculum

Faculty

Facility, Equipment and Supply

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity

Student Services

Length and Structure of Program of Study

Student Complaints

Program Development, Planning, and Review

# Update on Current Workgroup and Model Accreditation Standards

- New workgroup with required expertise.
- Other experts also participate in committees.
  - Student Assessment and Learning Outcomes Committee
  - Accreditation Outreach Committee
  - Self-Study Committee
- All committees making progress and reporting to Workgroup.

# Student Assessment and Learning Outcomes Committee: New Draft Standard

## **Student Achievement Standard 3:**

The program has a student learning outcome assessment plan and process in place that allows it to monitor satisfactory academic progress of its participating students.

The SLO assessment plan and process is used to examine curricular quality and then implement program improvements based on the SLO assessment analyses as appropriate.



# Student Assessment and Learning Outcomes Committee: Guidance

Student learning outcomes (SLO):

- articulate what students know and can do upon completion of the program.
- articulate the knowledge and skills in varied domains (e.g. academics, social, independent living, career/employment) applicable to the program.
- should be appropriate to the nature of the program, individualized student program goals, and be measurable.

The process/plan will include written SLO, the methods to assess the extent to which they are met, a schedule which indicates when data are collected and analyzed and the program improvements implemented for continuous quality improvement.

# Accreditation Outreach Committee

- Extensive research on accreditation agency suitability and interest in using model standards.
- Contacts with national organizations and accrediting agencies.
- Determined that a regional accreditor (that accredits the entire institution) not feasible and Workgroup agreed.
- Researched cost of creating a new accreditation agency.
- Currently researching feasibility issues with a new agency.
- Continued outreach to accreditors.

# Self-Study Committee Recommendations

- ✓ Identify a minimum of six, diversely representative programs to participate as the pilot programs for field test.
- ✓ Develop a survey addressing each of the standards areas with two base questions for each standard and additional Qs as needed.
- ✓ Internal reviewers review the completed surveys and hold individual calls with programs, then prepare report for Workgroup.
- ✓ In-person Workgroup meeting Spring/Summer 2019 to consider results and feedback on process, assist with developing guidance, consider any tweaks to standards.
- ✓ Not an evaluation or accreditation of program participants.

# Conducting the Field Test

- Created an online survey in Survey Gizmo
- Recruited eight college programs with varying characteristics
- Each completed an online survey
  - Consider if they meet the standard
  - Provide evidence of how they meet the standard
  - Comment on the process and the standard

# Field Test Participants

Vanderbilt University  
Pennsylvania State University  
College of Charleston  
George Mason University  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Millersville University  
University of Northern Colorado  
Massasoit Community College

# A diversity of program participants!

- ✓ Public *and* private institutions of higher learning represented
  - ✓ Small, medium *and* large student populations  
(range is 4,000 – 25,000 with an average of 12,000)
  - ✓ Adult *and* Dual enrollment programs
- ✓ Urban, suburban, rural *and* commuter environments
  - ✓ Full range of program lengths including  
2 year programs, 4 year programs and variable length
  - ✓ Residential *and* non-residential campuses
    - ✓ Some TPSID, some not TPSID
    - ✓ Some have CTP status, some do not
    - ✓ Schools from across the country

# Next steps: Review the field test results

- December 2018: Review team established
  - Review survey responses and materials.
- January/February 2018: Review team members meet in person to go through each field test survey
  - Analyze how programs responded to the survey, materials provided, any confusion about standards as well as comments about the standards, guidance and process.
- Not a detailed, in-depth accreditation analysis, but rather an opportunity to obtain a sense of understanding of and responsiveness to the standards and any tweaks that may be needed to the standards and guidance.

# Next steps: Review the field test results

- Review team holds individual calls with each program to discuss their experience with the process, questions, suggestions, and any recommendations for fine tuning standards or developing guidance, etc.
- Aggregate report drafted for Workgroup. Report will include any recommendations for revising standards and guidance. Every effort will be made not to share program-identifiable information.



# Additional Work 2019 - 2020

- Address other recommendations from first Report
- Develop technical guidance to accompany standards
- Tweak existing model standards if needed
- Submit Report as required in Year 5 (2020)



Join us this afternoon at 4:15 – 5 pm at our Technical Assistance and Networking session if you have more questions!