



# Think College Standards Continuous Improvement Tool

Presented by Cate Weir, Clare Papay and Ty Hanson  
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- History of Think College Standards
- Tool Development Process
- Adjustments to Standards
- A look at the new tool
- Using the tool in program review or development



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# A Brief History of the Think College Standards



- Developed by Think College supported by funding from a federal grant
- Completed a comprehensive Delphi review process in 2011
- Think College Standards for Inclusive Higher Education published in 2011
- Created an "Implementation Rating" tool in 2012
- Online version 2015

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# Using the 2015 Think College Standards Tool



**Focus on benchmarks**



**Limitations**

- Self-rate implementation scale (zero to five)
- Limited area to make comments or document evidence
- Action planning component missing



**Feedback led to new design**



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## 2019 Workgroup members

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## Goals of the workgroup



Create a self-assessment tool that operationalizes the Think College Standards, Quality Indicators, and Benchmarks



Make suggestions for tool delivery format (e.g., online) and possible rating scales



Suggest updates to the standards to improve clarity or to reflect evolution in practice



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## Tool development process

Reviewed the AHEAD Self-Study Tool and other similar tools

Reflected on our use of the TC Standards

Cross-walked TC Standards with model accreditation standards and TPSID Data Network

Selected a format for the tool

Subgroups developed content for the tool and whole group reviewed

TC staff reviewed final version and made further updates



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## Adjustments to the Standards, QI and Benchmarks

 Reordered the Standards to put Foundational Standards first, then Student Experience Standards

 Edited for clarity

 Reduced repetition

 Revisions based on evolving practice

 Assured there were at least 2 QI under each standard, and 2 benchmarks under each QI

 Updates and revisions may still be made



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**STANDARD 1: ACADEMIC ACCESS:** To facilitate quality academic access for students with intellectual disabilities, the comprehensive postsecondary education program should:

*Quality Indicator 1.1: Provide access to a wide array of college course types that are attended by students without disabilities, including:*

- 1.1A: Enrollment in noncredit-bearing, non-degree courses (such as continuing education courses) attended by students without disabilities
- 1.1B: Auditing or participating in college courses attended by students without disabilities for which the student does not receive academic credit.
- 1.1C: Enrollment in credit bearing courses offered by the institution attended by students without disabilities, when aligned with the student's postsecondary plans.
- 1.1D: Access to existing courses rather than separate courses designed only for students with intellectual disabilities
- 1.1E: College course access that is not limited to a pre-determined list.
- 1.1F: Participation in courses that relate to their personal, academic and career goals as established through person-centered planning.
- 1.1G: Collection of objective evaluation data on college course participation.

**STANDARD 6: ACADEMIC ACCESS:** The postsecondary education program supports inclusive academic access for students.

**Quality Indicator 6.1: A wide array of college courses that are attended by students without disabilities are available to students in the program.**

- 6.1A: Students enroll in college courses that relate to their personal, academic, and career goals.
- 6.1B: Students enroll in credit, audit, or non-credit/non-degree/continuing education courses that are offered by the institution and attended by students without disabilities (inclusive courses).
- 6.1C: Enrollment in separate courses designed only for students with ID is minimized or eliminated.
- 6.1D: The program collects college course enrollment and completion data.

## The New Self Assessment Tool



Allows for focus on one standard area or multiple areas



Encourages reflective practice



Includes a checklist of essential practices and suggested evidence/data for each benchmark



**STANDARD 6: ACADEMIC ACCESS: The postsecondary education program provides inclusive academic access to students.**

**Quality Indicator 6.1: A wide array of college courses that are attended by students without disabilities are available to students in the program.**

**Quality Indicator 6.2: The program addresses barriers to course registration and participation.**

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**Quality Indicator 6.1: A wide array of college courses that are attended by students without disabilities are available to students in the program.**

6.1A: Students enroll in college courses that relate to their personal, academic, and career goals.

*Check all that apply:*

- Students lead the development of an individualized program of study.
- Students take college courses related to personal goals.
- Students take college courses related to academic goals.
- Students take college courses directly related to career goals.

*Data/Evidence*

- Course of study and student-directed planning process (e.g., person-centered planning) for each student.
- Description of student involvement in the development of their course of study.
- List of college courses taken by each student.
- Show alignment between each student's evolving planning process, course of study, and long-term goals.

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- How does the list of essential practices and evidence help to clarify what it looks like when the benchmark is being met?
- Do the lists help you to better understand the benchmark?



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## Maturity Model



College programs for students with ID are all relatively new with many new programs in development.



This scale is based on the concept of maturity, which highlights that all programs are growing and maturing over time.



Program staff can use this rating scale to determine whether their practices meet the Think College Standards, Quality Indicator, and Benchmarks for inclusive higher education.



This scale can be used to improve practitioner competency through self-evaluation and to seek supports such as training and technical assistance to improve fidelity of implementation.



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## Incomplete

- This Standard is not met.
- The program is not aligned with the Standard, Quality Indicators, or Benchmarks described.

## Developing

- The Standard is achieved overall; however,
  - success is often person-driven through individual initiative;
  - achievement is inconsistent;
  - achievement is not regularly monitored/tracked.
- Institutional leaders and other stakeholders are minimally aware of the Standard.

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## Established

- Achievement is planned and predictable.
- Practice that supports achievement is documented, repeated, monitored, and tracked.
- Institutional leaders and other stakeholders are supportive of this Standard and provide resources necessary for consistent achievement.

## Optimizing

- Achievement of this Standard serves as a model for other programs.
- Achievement consistently meets current and future goals.
- Practices are clearly defined, and well-aligned with the Quality Indicators, and Benchmarks
- A plan of continual improvement is in place, using data to support Improving practice.
- Practices are innovative and push development of the field.

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Thank You!

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