

SECTION 12: Academic and Student Support Services

- 12.1 The institution provides appropriate academic and student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission.**
(*Student support services*) [CR]

Rationale and Notes

Student success is significantly affected by the learning environment. An effective institution provides appropriate academic and student support programs and services consistent with the institution's mission that enhance the educational and personal development experience(s) of students at all levels; contribute to the achievement of teaching and learning outcomes; ensure student success in meeting the goals of the educational programs; and provide an appropriate range of support services and programs to students at all locations. Qualified and effective faculty and staff are essential to implementing the institution's goals and mission and to ensuring the quality and integrity of its academic and student support programs and services. An effective institution has policies and procedures that support a stimulating and safe learning environment.

Appropriate academic and student support programs and services apply to both undergraduate and graduate programs, although the mix of appropriate services may differ for students seeking degrees at different levels. Similarly, the mix of services may differ by location or mode of delivery. Regardless of the type of student, however, the expectation is that an institution recognizes this important component of student learning and student development, and that, in the context of its mission, the institution provides an appropriate range of support services and programs to all students.

Furthermore, academic support services may be appropriate for faculty as well as students. Testing centers serve both faculty and students, learning resource specialists often offer services for enhancing pedagogy, and instructional technologists support faculty seeking to develop and enhance courses.

The Core Requirement calls for "appropriate . . . programs, services, and activities." When addressing this Core Requirement, an institution needs to see past its own organizational chart and not address just offices or departments. Organizationally, academic and student support services may be housed in academic offices, in student affairs, or administrative offices. Academic support services may include, but are not limited to, academic teaching and resource centers, tutoring, academic advising, counseling, disability services, diversity and inclusion offices, campus ministry, service learning centers, teaching laboratories, career services, testing centers, student life, residence life programming, and information technology. The emphasis should be on aspects of the institution that serve a curricular support or co-curricular function

NOTES

This Core Requirement relies heavily on the professional judgment of those assembling a narrative and those reviewing the narrative. There is a balancing act between too much detail

and not enough. Finding this balance can be helped by recognizing that the standard seeks detail on the appropriateness of the programs, services, and activities—not on the effectiveness of activities. Details on effectiveness and assessment of programs should be in Standard 8.2.c (Student outcomes: academic and student services). However, information from that standard may be useful as evidence of the appropriateness of programs, services, and activities discussed in this standard.

There are separate standards for library and learning/information resources (Standard 11 of the Principles), so that information does not need to be repeated here, with one major exception. As mentioned in this Manual in Core Requirement 11.1 (Library and learning/information resources):

Institutions should include information on learning/information resources housed in the library, other locations, or offered over a network, as appropriate (e.g., curriculum labs, specified reading rooms, computer labs, IT help services, writing centers, online learning management systems). If this information is instead presented in Core Requirement 12.1 (Student support services), that should be clear in the narrative of both standards.

Questions to Consider

- How does the institution's organizational structure affect its delivery of academic and student support programs, services, and activities?
- What is the student body profile and do the institution's academic and student support programs, services, and activities serve all levels of students?
- How do the programs, services, and activities differ between undergraduate, graduate, and professional students?
- How do the academic and student support programs and services effectively promote the mission of the institution?
- How do students taking courses at off-campus instructional sites (including high school dual-enrollment sites) and branch campuses, or taking distance and correspondence education courses, access student support programs, services, and activities?
- What academic support programs, services, and activities exist for faculty?
- How does the institution ensure that its academic support programs and services are adequate and appropriate to the needs of its students and faculty?

Sample Documentation

- Descriptions of the various academic and student support programs, services, and activities.
- Narrative relating the support programs, services, and activities to the mission of the institution.
- Publications and websites (e.g., academic support services) explaining how support programs and services are provided and accessed.

- Data on the frequency of usage of academic and student support services, programs, and activities by students and faculty.
- Surveys indicating that student and faculty needs are being met.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policy: [Distance and Correspondence Education](#)

Cross-References to Other related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 8.2.c (*Student outcomes: academic and student services*)

CR 11.1 (*Library and learning/information resources*)

Standard 12.2 (*Student support services staff*)

Standard 12.3 (*Student rights*)

Standard 12.5 (*Student records*)

Standard 12.6 (*Student debt*)

12.2 The institution ensures an adequate number of academic and student support services staff with appropriate education or experience in student support service areas to accomplish the mission of the institution.
(*Student support services staff*)

Rationale and Notes

Qualified and effective faculty and staff are essential to implementing the institution's goals and mission and to ensuring the quality and integrity of its academic and student support programs and services. In order to carry out such programs and services, the institution is expected to appoint student affairs professionals who have adequate educational training and/or experience to provide these services. Although academic credentials are primary and, in most cases, will be the standard qualification, other types of qualifications may be appropriate. Furthermore, mission-related considerations may affect desired qualifications.

Questions to Consider

- How does providing academic and student support programs and services cut across organizational lines at the institution?
- What are the student support programs and services and how are they staffed?
- What are the qualifications, both academic and experiential, for student affairs and academic support personnel?
- What are the training and professional growth opportunities for student affairs staff?
- What evidence is needed to demonstrate that the staff is sufficient to accomplish the mission?