

# Online/Distance Education/ Course Provider Program Standards

## Northwest Accreditation Commission

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Type of Program (please check one or more, as appropriate): Online Program \_\_\_\_ D Ed. \_\_\_\_ Course Provider \_\_\_\_

"Program" is used throughout to indicate a public school district, a public or private school or program, or a private organization.

For NWAC purposes the following definitions will serve as the basis for understanding of the relationship of the components in the protocol.

Online School or Program—Public or private for profit or non-profit institutions that offer comprehensive and sequential online courses for either **concurrent or diploma enrollments**.

Distance Education - A formal educational process in which instruction occurs when the learner and the instructor are not in the same place at the same time. These programs are not online and use asynchronous electronic download or written lessons.

Online Course Provider—Public or private for profit or non-profit institutions that offer **individual** online courses for contract with public or private schools.

Please rate each standard indicator using the following scale:

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 4 | Fully meeting the standard         |
| 3 | Substantially meeting the standard |
| 2 | Partially meeting the standard     |
| 1 | Not meeting the standard           |

### TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD FOR:

#### 1. MISSION, BELIEFS, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

**Guiding Principle:** The program's mission statement describes the essence of what the program as a community of learners is seeking to achieve. The goals for student learning are based on and drawn from the program's mission statement. These goals are the fundamental goals by which the program continually assesses the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Every component of the program community must focus on enabling all students to achieve the program's goals for student learning.

Type of Program: Online/Distance/Course Provider (*Unless identified as N/A*):

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|---|---|---|---|-----|--|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1.1 | A mission statement and expectations for student learning clearly convey the purpose and goals of the program. They serve as the basis for the program's day-to-day operations, as well as a guide for its strategic plans for the future. Communication between and support from stakeholders is a critical component of a mission statement. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1.2 | The program's mission statement represents the program community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning.  |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1.3 | The mission statement reflects the individual character of the program and indicates its special purposes.   |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1.4 | The mission statement reflects the characteristics and needs of the student population, by   |

- clearly and concisely stating who the organization is, what it does, and whom it serves.
- 4 3 2 1 1.5 The program defines individual academic, civic, and social learning expectations that are measurable and reflect the program's mission and uses indicators to assess individual's progress in achieving those expectations. CP: N/A
- 4 3 2 1 1.6 For each academic expectation of the mission, the program has a targeted level of successful achievement identified in an indicator.
- 4 3 2 1 1.7 The program's mission statement, beliefs, and the program's expectations for student learning guide the procedures, policies, and decisions of the program and are evident in the culture of the program.
- 4 3 2 1 1.8 The mission statement is reviewed periodically and is made available to the public.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD FOR: 2. CURRICULUM

Guiding Principle: The curriculum including coursework, co-curricular activities, and other program - approved educational experiences, is the program's formal plan to fulfill its mission and goals for student learning. The curriculum links the program's beliefs, its goals for student learning, and its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon the commitment and involvement of the professional staff to a comprehensive, ongoing review of the curriculum.

*A quality program will have a well thought-out approach to its curriculum and course design whether it develops its own courses and/or licenses curriculum from other educational providers.*

Type of Program: Online/Distance/Course Provider (*Unless identified as N/A*):

- 4 3 2 1 2.1 Each curriculum area has clearly stated and attainable educational goals.
- 4 3 2 1 2.2 The curriculum is aligned with the program -wide academic expectations and ensures that all students have sufficient opportunity to achieve each of those expectations.
- 2.3 The curriculum:
- 4 3 2 1 a. Prescribes content;
- 4 3 2 1 b. Integrates relevant learning expectations;
- 4 3 2 1 c. Includes course-specific learning goals;
- 4 3 2 1 d. Suggests instructional strategies;
- 4 3 2 1 e. Suggests assessment techniques;
- 4 3 2 1 f. Provides for high-degree of interaction between teacher and learners.
- 4 3 2 1 2.4 The curriculum engages all students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking as well as provides opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.
- 4 3 2 1 2.5 The curriculum is appropriately integrated and emphasizes depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.
- 4 3 2 1 2.6 There is effective curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the program. CP: N/A
- 4 3 2 1 2.7 The program has a written policy statement concerning the selection of quality instructional materials and appropriate technology to enable and enrich student learning.
- 4 3 2 1 2.8 The instructional materials are selected to support the specific objectives of the individual courses as well as the program's overall mission and goals. There are substantive checks and balances throughout the design, development, and quality assessment processes to ensure the effectiveness of materials and assessments.
- 4 3 2 1 2.9 The materials provided to the student are adequate to meet the course objectives.
- 4 3 2 1 2.10 Instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and staffing levels, are sufficient to allow for the effective implementation of the curriculum.
- 4 3 2 1 2.11 The reading level of the materials is appropriate to the reading-level competence of the students.

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- 4 3 2 1 2.12 The materials are reviewed and evaluated regularly to ensure quality, consistency with the curriculum, currency, and advancement of student learning outcomes.
- 4 3 2 1 2.13 The procedures for granting credit and/or for determining progress toward graduation are consistent with the program's stated purposes.
- 4 3 2 1 2.14 The policies and procedures for granting and/or transferring credit are in writing and are available to enrolled students. Policies and procedures for granting and/or transferring credit conform to the Northwest Accreditation Commission requirements in Policies and Procedures 5.6.6.
- 4 3 2 1 2.15 The program commits sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum.
- 4 3 2 1 2.16 Professional development activities support the development and implementation of the curriculum.
- 4 3 2 1 2.17 The program of studies meets the appropriate state and national standards, ADA compliance, and copyright and fair use.

Type of Program: Online ONLY:

- 2.18 The curriculum:
  - 4 3 2 1 a. Course organization and navigation is clear and coherent.
  - 4 3 2 1 b. Is designed to accommodate different learning styles.
  - 4 3 2 1 c. Is designed with consideration for time and place limitations of students.

Type of Program: Distance Education ONLY:

- 4 3 2 1 2.19 The program provides opportunities for all students to extend learning beyond the normal course offers.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD FOR: 3. INSTRUCTION**

Guiding Principle: The quality of instruction in a program is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning, the achievement of expectations for student learning, the delivery of curriculum, and the assessment of student progress. Instructional practices must be grounded in the program's mission, beliefs, and expectations for student learning, supported by research in best practice, and refined and improved based on identified student needs. Teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional strategies and to collaborate with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

*A quality program takes a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensure excellent teaching for its students. This process begins with promising practices but is equally committed to continuous improvement and adaptation to student learning needs through professional development.*

Type of Program: Online/Distance/Course Provider:

- 4 3 2 1 3.1 Instructional strategies are consistent with the program's mission statement and expectations for student learning.
- 3.2 Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to:
  - 4 3 2 1 a. Personalize instruction;
  - 4 3 2 1 b. Make connections across disciplines;
  - 4 3 2 1 c. Engage students as active learners;
  - 4 3 2 1 d. Engage students as self-directed learners;
  - 4 3 2 1 e. Involve students in higher order thinking;
  - 4 3 2 1 f. Provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge or skills;

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- 4 3 2 1 g. Promote student self-assessment;
- 4 3 2 1 h. Recognize diversity, multiculturalism, individual differences, and other prevalent unique characteristics of the student population, including time and place limitations of students.
- 4 3 2 1 3.3 Teachers use feedback from a variety of sources including other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.
- 4 3 2 1 3.4 Teachers are proficient in their content area, knowledgeable about current research and best practice on effective instructional approaches, and reflective about their own practices.
- 4 3 2 1 3.5 All teachers are given appropriate orientation training in distance education or online learning methodologies and technologies prior to starting their teaching assignments.
- 4 3 2 1 3.6 Analysis of instructional strategies is a significant part of the professional culture of the program; teachers regularly review and adapt their strategies based on changes in student demographics.
- 4 3 2 1 3.7 Technology is integrated into and supportive of teaching.
- 4 3 2 1 3.8 Failing students are provided special assistance and counseling.
- 4 3 2 1 3.9 The program's professional development program is guided by identified instructional needs and provides opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies.
- 4 3 2 1 3.10 Teacher supervision and evaluation processes are used to improve instruction in order to meet the needs of all students.

Type of Program: Online ONLY:

- 4 3 2 1 3.11 The program establishes and holds teachers accountable for timely teacher-to-student communication and meaningful assessment feedback.
- 4 3 2 1 3.12 The program provides timely, effective technical support to teachers.

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD FOR: 4. ASSESSMENT**

Guiding Principle: Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its purpose is to inform students regarding their learning progress and teachers regarding ways to adjust the curriculum and instruction to respond effectively to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates to the program community the progress of students in achieving the program's expectations for student learning as well as course-specific learning goals. Assessment results must be continually analyzed to improve curriculum and instruction.

*A quality learning program values student academic performance and takes a comprehensive, integrated approach to measuring student achievement. This includes use of multiple assessment measures and strategies that align closely to both program and learner objectives, with timely, relevant feedback to all stakeholders.*

Type of Program: Online/Distance/Course Provider:

- 4 3 2 1 4.1 The program has a process to assess individual student progress in achieving the academic expectations of the mission.
- 4 3 2 1 4.2 The program's professional staff uses assessment data (climate survey, empirical, etc.) to determine the success of the student in achieving civic and social expectations.
- 4 3 2 1 4.3 The program regularly reviews its mission statement, beliefs, and expectations for student learning using a variety of data to ensure that these reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state and national standards.
- 4 3 2 1 4.4 The relevant academic expectations and course-specific learning goals that will be assessed are clearly articulated for students for each learning activity.
- 4 3 2 1 4.5 Assessment of student learning is based on course-specific indicators.
- 4 3 2 1 4.6 Teachers or instructional materials employ varied assessment strategies and activity types

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- to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time.
- 4 3 2 1 4.7 The program’s professional development program allows for opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies.
- 4 3 2 1 4.8 The program’s professional staff communicates individual student progress to students and their families in a timely manner.
- 4 3 2 1 4.9 Assessment enables students to monitor their own learning progress.
- 4 3 2 1 4.10 Grading policy and practices are published to students and easy to understand.
- 4 3 2 1 4.11 Each course must have defined exit levels of performance that will ensure comparable achievement by the student to what they might receive in traditional programs or by other methods of teaching and learning.
- 4 3 2 1 4.12 Results and analysis of assessment are used to drive curriculum and instruction.
- 4 3 2 1 4.13 A record that documents the results of all student performance is maintained.
- 4 3 2 1 4.14 Every student must sign an honor code verifying that they are responsible for completing all work themselves and that no person has unfairly assisted them.
- 4 3 2 1 4.15 All final examinations are monitored by trained persons other than parents or those who might be considered to have a conflict of interest.

**SUPPORT STANDARD FOR:**

**5. LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION**

Guiding Principle: The way that a program organizes learning for students, fosters leadership, and engages its members has a profound effect on teaching and learning. The professional culture of the program must be characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about decision-making and practices that supports student learning and well-being.

*Governance is typically provided by a Board of Directors, a School Board, or proprietors. Leadership is responsible to the program's governance body, and is responsible for setting and meeting the operational and strategic goals in support of the program's mission and vision statements. Governance and leadership work hand-in-hand, developing the operations policies for the program and its leadership and staff.*

Type of Program: Online/Distance/Course Provider (*Unless identified as N/A*):

- 4 3 2 1 5.1 The program administrator has sufficient autonomy and decision-making authority to lead the program in achieving the mission, beliefs, and expectations for student learning.
- 4 3 2 1 5.2 The program administrator provides leadership in the program by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
- 4 3 2 1 5.3 Staff members as well as administrators provide leadership essential to the improvement of the program.
- 4 3 2 1 5.4 Staff turnover does not impact program effectiveness.
- 4 3 2 1 5.5 The organization of the program and its educational programs allow for the achievement of the program’s mission, beliefs, and expectations for student learning.
- 4 3 2 1 5.6 Meaningful roles in the decision-making process are accorded to students, parents, and all members of the program staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership. *CP: N/A*
- 4 3 2 1 5.7 There is a formal system through which each full-time student has an adult staff member who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the expectations for student learning. *CP: N/A*
- 4 3 2 1 5.8 Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are evident to create collaborative teams to assure effective delivery of quality education.
- 4 3 2 1 5.9 All program staff is involved in promoting the well-being and learning of students.

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- 4 3 2 1 5.10 Student success is regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.
- 4 3 2 1 5.11 The climate of the program is safe, positive, respectful, and supportive resulting in a sense of pride and ownership. *CP: N/A*
- 4 3 2 1 5.12 The program engages in practices that promote safety and has established a plan that includes preventions, interventions, crisis management, and post-crisis recovery. For online programs, this includes policies and terms of use for online interaction. *CP: N/A*
- 4 3 2 1 5.13 The governing board includes person(s) that reflect the public interest.
- 4 3 2 1 5.14 The governing board is responsible for and works with leadership to establish and monitor program policy.
- 4 3 2 1 5.15 Policies pertaining to the discretionary authority of the administration of the program are clearly defined.
- 4 3 2 1 5.16 The administration is significantly involved in the selection, assignment, and retention of personnel.
- 4 3 2 1 5.17 The program employs adequate staff, both professional and non-certificated, to support student enrollment and to realize its stated purposes.
- 4 3 2 1 5.18 The program meets all applicable state requirements and regulations for licensure, organization, administration, and control unless state authorities have granted official exemption. The corporate status is clearly defined with no legal or proprietary ambiguities.
- 4 3 2 1 5.19 The role of the board is well-defined in the bylaws of the program or organization. The board fulfills the role defined for it in the bylaws.
- 4 3 2 1 5.20 The program has measures in place to ensure quality, integrity and validity of student data, including completion and retention rate.
- 4 3 2 1 5.21 A program that functions under the authority of another organization has a demonstrated commitment from the parent organization to support the implementation and ongoing operation of this program.
- 4 3 2 1 5.22 Sustainability of the program is articulated through strategic and operational planning and implemented through ongoing operations (e.g., commitment to sustainable funding, maintaining quality staff and compliance with applicable educational statutes.
- 4 3 2 1 5.23 Assessment of the operational continuity under the condition of change of ownership, as applicable, has been conducted in cooperation with the Northwest Accreditation Commission.

Type of Program: Online ONLY:

- 4 3 2 1 5.24 Board members have knowledge of the K-12 online education field, or receive appropriate training after joining the board.

Type of Program: Course Provider ONLY:

- 4 3 2 1 5.25 The relationships between the course provider and those responsible for the local operation of its corporate, franchise, or contract schools are characterized by clear and accurate communication, good will, and mutual support.
- 4 3 2 1 5.26 The business plan for the course provider demonstrates how it determines the educational offerings; establishes its marketing; identifies and trains the heads of its corporate, franchise, or contract schools; styles the relationship with students; establishes and maintains cash flow; and implements financial and education accountability.
- 4 3 2 1 5.27 The course provider monitors the establishment and provision of the educational programs offered in its corporate, franchise, or contract schools; it has standards for the services these schools provide; and it has provisions to intervene when these standards are not met.
- 4 3 2 1 5.28 The course provider maintains access to legal counsel that can advise or obtain necessary information about the legal requirements and obligations that exist in the states, nations, or other jurisdictions in which its corporate, franchise, or contract schools are operating.
- 4 3 2 1 5.29 The course provider has provisions that assure that none of its corporate, franchise, or

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contract schools teaches prejudice in any form or conducts its activities in such ways as may derogate or deny its services to an identified segment of the public.

- 4 3 2 1 5.30 The course provider has provisions in place to assure itself that its corporate, franchise, or contract schools record the presence or absence of enrolled students, notify family or appropriate authority of unexplained absences, and meet all local requirements aimed at maintaining the health and safety of the students.
- 4 3 2 1 5.31 The course provider has adequate legal and administrative provisions in place that enable it to either close or terminate its connection to any corporate, franchise, or contract school that fails to meet its responsibilities to the course provider or to the public.

## **SUPPORT STANDARD FOR: 6. PROGRAM SERVICES**

Guiding Principle: Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support programs and services. The program is responsible for providing an effective range of integrated resources to enhance and improve student learning and well-being and to support the program's mission and expectations.

### *Student Support Services:*

*Student support services address the various needs of students at different levels within the organization. The levels of support are appropriate and adequate for a student's success.*

Type of Program: Online/Distance/Course Provider (*Unless identified as N/A*):

- 4 3 2 1 6.1 The program's student support services are consistent with the mission, beliefs, and expectations for student learning.
- 4 3 2 1 6.2 The program allocates resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the program's expectations for student learning.
- 4 3 2 1 6.3 Student support personnel enhance learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff to address the academic, social, emotional and physical needs of students.
- 4 3 2 1 6.4 All student support services are regularly evaluated and revised as needed to support improved student learning.
- 4 3 2 1 6.5 All administrative, teaching, and counseling staff are in compliance with the certification requirements of the state in which the program is located. *CP: N/A*
- 4 3 2 1 6.6 There is sufficient administrative support staff to accomplish the mission of the program.
- 4 3 2 1 6.7 There are sufficient numbers of instructional staff to meet the requirements of the state, as applicable, and accomplish the mission of the program. *CP: N/A*
- 4 3 2 1 6.8 There is a system for effective and ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, and program personnel, designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and identified student needs.
- 4 3 2 1 6.9 The program has a procedure for the timely transfer of students' records. *CP: N/A*
- 4 3 2 1 6.10 The program provides written materials that clearly define its program and its expectations for students so that the students being served can make appropriate and informed choices before they apply for admission while selecting courses.
- 4 3 2 1 6.11 The program has clearly defined eligibility requirements and admission procedures that are made known to potential students and their parents.
- 4 3 2 1 6.12 The program only admits those students who have potential for a reasonable chance of benefit from the instruction and completion of the course(s).
- 4 3 2 1 6.13 The written enrollment/registration agreement and other written materials clearly specify what the student can expect from the course(s), the services that will be provided by the program, and student obligations, including financial.

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- 4 3 2 1 6.14 The non-professional clerical and paraprofessional staff members are carefully selected and have appropriate training and background for their position.
- 4 3 2 1 6.15 Policies for the selection and assignment of personnel are non-discriminatory in reference to race, ethnic origin, ADA, and sex.
- 4 3 2 1 6.16 Student (parent/guardian) inquiries are answered promptly and satisfactorily.
- 4 3 2 1 6.17 Adequate provisions are made for the prompt delivery and return of instructional materials, lessons, and examinations to and from the students.

Type of Program: Online ONLY:

- 4 3 2 1 6.18 Information is provided to students, parents, and mentors on how to communicate with the online teacher and student support services, including information on the process for those communications.
- 4 3 2 1 6.19 The program provides an orientation of online technologies and successful online student practices for students and parents.
- 4 3 2 1 6.20 The program provides timely and effective technical and student services support.

### **Guidance Services:**

*Guidance services support students and parents to ensure the success of the program. Depending on the program, these services are either directly provided by the program or a service provider, or in the case of supplemental online programs, these services may be provided by the local program.*

Type of Program: Distance Education ONLY:

- 4 3 2 1 6.21 Student records, including health and immunization records, are maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal (FERPA) law. *CP: N/A*
- 6.22 The program provides access to a full range of comprehensive guidance services, including:  
*CP: N/A*
  - 4 3 2 1 a. Personal counseling
  - 4 3 2 1 b. Career and college counseling
  - 4 3 2 1 c. Student course selection assistance
  - 4 3 2 1 d. Collaborative outreach to community and area mental health agencies and social service providers
- 4 3 2 1 6.23 The ratio of students to those who provide guidance and counseling is sufficient to meet the requirements of the state and accomplish the mission of the program. *CP: N/A*

### **Library Information Services:**

Type of Program: Distance and Online

- 4 3 2 1 6.24 All students have access to library services through a traditional or virtual library, overseen by a qualified specialist.
- 4 3 2 1 6.25 A wide range of materials, technologies, and/or other library/information services that are responsive to the program's student population are available to students and faculty and utilized to improve teaching and learning.
- 4 3 2 1 6.26 The library/information services program fosters independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to use various program and community information resources and technologies.
- 4 3 2 1 6.27 Policies are in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the internet.
- 4 3 2 1 6.28 The program engages parents and families as partners in each student's education and encourages their participation in program programs. *CP: N/A*
- 4 3 2 1 6.29 The program fosters productive business/community/higher education partnerships that

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support student learning. CP: N/A

## **SUPPORT STANDARD FOR:**

### **7. FACILITIES AND FINANCE**

Guiding Principle: The administrative site (consisting of site, buildings, equipment and services) is an important factor in the functioning of the educational program. The administrative site services as a vehicle for the implementation of the program mission. In addition, sufficient fiscal resources must be available, accounted for and effectively used in order for any program to accomplish its mission and expectations for student learning.

*Adequate financial and material resources are allocated for meeting the mission of the program. These resources are appropriately planned for and expended using sound business practices.*

Type of Program: Online/Distance/Course Provider (*Unless identified as N/A*):

- 4 3 2 1 7.1 The administrative site supports all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning. CP: N/A
- 4 3 2 1 7.2 The administrative site meets all applicable federal and state laws and is in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations. CP: N/A
- 4 3 2 1 7.3 Equipment is adequate, properly maintained, inventoried, and replaced when appropriate.
- 4 3 2 1 7.4 A planned and adequately funded program of building and site management ensures the appropriate maintenance, repair, and cleanliness of the administrative site. CP: N/A
- 4 3 2 1 7.5 There is ongoing planning to address future programs, enrollment changes, staffing, facility, and technology needs as well as capital improvements.
- 4 3 2 1 7.6 Faculty and administrators have active involvement in the budgetary process as it supports all aspects of the educational program.
- 4 3 2 1 7.7 The administration has the authority to administer its discretionary budget, where applicable.
- 4 3 2 1 7.8 The program is not in or in the prospect of moving into protection or under the auspices of bankruptcy.
- 4 3 2 1 7.9 Proper budgetary procedures and generally-accepted accounting principles and practices are followed for all program funds.
- 4 3 2 1 7.10 The total cost for a course of instruction, including all textbooks, materials, and instructional services, is made known to students at the time of their application and/or registration, where applicable.
- 4 3 2 1 7.11 Terms of tuition and/or fees payment are clearly defined in the application, where applicable.
- 4 3 2 1 7.12 Tuition collection procedures shall be in keeping with sound and ethical business practices and protect the financial interest of the program.
- 4 3 2 1 7.13 All advertising and promotional literature is completely truthful and ethical.
- 4 3 2 1 7.14 All advertising and promotional literature clearly states the purpose of the school's program's program of instruction.
- 4 3 2 1 7.15 None of the program's advertising and promotional literature is offensive or negative towards other schools, programs or educational agencies.

Type of Program: Online and Course Provider ONLY:

- 4 3 2 1 7.16 The program provides an online learning environment that is appropriately maintained, secure and is a productive and safe work environment for students and staff.

Type of Program: Course Provider ONLY:

- 4 3 2 1 7.17 The program provides a work environment consisting of the resources, tools, and organizational policies that enables staff to implement the program's mission, beliefs, and objectives.

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- 4 3 2 1 7.18 The course provider is in a financial condition that enables it to assume the stability, continuity, and integrity of its defining services to its corporate, franchise, or contract schools.
- 4 3 2 1 7.19 The responsibilities of the course provider to its corporate, franchise, or contract schools are well defined and the resources required for meeting these responsibilities are adequate and effectively administered.
- 4 3 2 1 7.20 The course provider maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations from protracted proceedings and claims for damage

**PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT STANDARD FOR:  
8. CULTURAL OF CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT**

Guiding Principle: A quality program develops and maintains an externally validated process and plan for program improvement. Goals resulting from the evaluation process should include targeted levels of achievement and should be measurable.

*Improvement planning focuses on using program evaluations, research, and promising practices to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness. It fosters continuous improvement across all aspects of the organization and ensures the program is focused on accomplishing its mission and vision.*

Type of Program: Online/Distance/Course Provider (*Unless identified as N/A*):

- 4 3 2 1 8.1 The program has developed and implemented a comprehensive program improvement plan that is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis.
- 4 3 2 1 8.2 Results of program improvement are identified, documented, used, and communicated to all stakeholders.
- 4 3 2 1 8.3 The program improvement effort is externally validated on a periodic basis.
- 4 3 2 1 8.4 The program improvement plan is consistent with external accountability requirements to which the school is accountable.
- 4 3 2 1 8.5 The program improvement process provides an orderly system for:
- a. Selecting the most appropriate areas upon which to focus improvement efforts.
  - b. Developing strategies that are designed to improve student performance.
  - c. Implementing those strategies.
  - d. Monitoring the process.
  - e. Evaluating the process to ensure that success has been attained.
  - f. Regularly conducting and analyzing data based on national, state, or program metrics.
  - g. Determining program success by measuring student achievement and satisfaction based on assessment techniques.
  - h. Ensuring students participate in state and national standardized testing, as appropriate, and evaluating results against state and national data. *CP: N/A*
- 4 3 2 1 8.6 The program improvement process is the result of a program self-study that addresses the major recommendations for improvement as identified in the self-evaluation or outside team report.
- 4 3 2 1 8.7 The program staff and administration work to systematically anticipate and appropriately respond to change as the program improvement process is implemented.
- 4 3 2 1 8.8 Goal statements for the program improvement process are properly aligned with the implementation plan and clearly identify measures of success.
- 4 3 2 1 8.9 A reasonable, specific timeline for the implementation of each area within the program improvement process is identified.
- 4 3 2 1 8.10 The program improvement process includes a measure of student satisfaction with the

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program.

Type of Program: Course Provider ONLY:

- |         |      |   |
|---------|------|---|
| 4 3 2 1 | 8.11 | The course provider has both criteria and a systematic and adequately supported program for evaluation of its corporate, franchise, or contract schools. It keeps records of its evaluations and conducts period review of these records to discover indications of unwanted trends or tendencies |
| 4 3 2 1 | 8.12 | Subsequent to its evaluation of its corporate, franchise, or contract schools, the course provider provides follow-up recommendations and consultation for the heads and staffs of the school.  |