

# Online Program - Self-Assessment Companion Guide

## National Standards for Quality Online Programs

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## Phase 1: Mission, Governance, and Leadership

### Standard A: Mission Statement

#### Stakeholder recommendations:

When creating and implementing a mission statement for a school, it is important to involve a range of stakeholders who have a vested interest in the success of the school. These stakeholders may include:

1. **Administrators:** The leadership team, including the superintendent, principal and other administrators, will play a key role in shaping the mission statement and ensuring that it aligns with the school's overall goals and objectives.
2. **Teachers and Staff:** Educators and support staff should be involved in the process of creating the mission statement, as they will be responsible for carrying it out and incorporating it into their daily work. A variety of teacher assignments should be considered.
3. **Students:** Students are the primary beneficiaries of the school's mission, so it's important to solicit their input and involve them in the process of crafting the statement.
4. **Parents and Families:** Parents and families are important stakeholders in the school community, and their input can help ensure that the mission statement reflects their values and priorities.
5. **Community Members:** Depending on the size and location of the school, it may be beneficial to involve community members, such as local business leaders or elected officials, in the process of creating the mission statement.

By involving a range of stakeholders, schools can create a mission statement that is truly reflective of the community's goals and values, and that has broad support from all key stakeholders.

#### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

To demonstrate that the mission and vision work of a school was done with quality, here are some sample evidence:

1. **Clear and Well-Defined Mission and Vision Statements:** The mission and vision statements of the school should be clearly written, concise and easy to understand. They should accurately reflect the values, goals and objectives of the school.

2. **Alignment with School Goals and Strategies:** The mission and vision statement should align with the school's overall goals and strategies. This means that the school's actions and decisions should be in line with the mission and vision statements.
3. **Involvement of Stakeholders:** The development of the mission and vision statements should involve input from a wide range of stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and community members. This ensures that the statements reflect the needs and aspirations of the entire school community.
4. **Regular Review and Update:** The mission and vision statements should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they remain relevant and aligned with the school's changing goals and strategies.
5. **Integration into School Culture:** The mission and vision statement should be integrated into the school's culture and daily practices. This means that the statement should be visible in the school's physical environment, such as posters or banners, and should regularly be communicated to staff, students, and parents.
6. **Evidence of Impact:** Evidence of the impact of the school's mission and vision should be collected and analyzed. This might include data on student achievement, student and staff engagement, and feedback from stakeholders. The evidence should demonstrate that the mission and vision have been effective in guiding the school's actions and achieving its goals.

## Standard B: Governance

### Stakeholder recommendations:

When discussing and implementing a clear governance structure for an online school program, it is important to involve a range of stakeholders that will ensure long-term success and sustainability. These stakeholders might include:

1. **Administrators:** Administrators are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the school and ensuring that it meets the needs of its students. They should be involved in discussions about governance to ensure that the structure aligns with the school's goals and objectives.
2. **Teachers:** Teachers are responsible for delivering the curriculum and supporting students. They should be involved in discussions about governance to ensure that the structure supports effective teaching and learning.
3. **Students:** Students are the primary beneficiaries of the online school program, and their needs and interests should be considered when designing the governance structure. Their input can help ensure that the program is student-centered and meets their needs.

4. **Parents/Guardians:** Parents/guardians play an important role in supporting their children's education and should be involved in discussions about governance to ensure that the program meets their expectations and needs.
5. **IT Staff:** The online school program is heavily reliant on technology, and IT staff are responsible for maintaining the technology infrastructure. They should be involved in discussions about governance to ensure that the structure supports the efficient and effective use of technology.
6. **Community Members:** The online school program may have an impact on the wider community, and community members may have an interest in how the program is governed. They should be involved in discussions about governance to ensure that the program aligns with community values and expectations.

By involving a range of stakeholders in discussions about governance, online school programs can ensure that the structure is designed to meet the needs of all stakeholders and promote long-term success and sustainability of the program.

#### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

To demonstrate a clear governance structure for an online school program, you can use the following evidence:

1. **Organizational Chart:** A clear and detailed organizational chart can demonstrate the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, support staff and board members.
2. **Policies and Procedures:** Written policies and procedures can provide evidence of a transparent governance structure. These could include procedures for enrollment, course development, grading, communication, and disciplinary actions.
3. **Budget and Financial Statements:** A well-documented budget and financial statements can demonstrate how financial resources are allocated and managed in the online school program. It should be clear who is responsible for managing the finances and how the money is used to support the program's goals.
4. **Board Minutes and Agendas:** Board minutes and agendas can provide evidence of how decisions are made and who is responsible for making them. These documents can demonstrate that the program has a clear governance structure and that it is being managed effectively.
5. **Accreditation and Compliance Documents:** Accreditation and compliance documents can provide evidence of the program's adherence to national or regional standards. This can demonstrate that the program is being managed effectively and is sustainable in the long term.

6. Student and Parent Surveys: Surveys can provide evidence of how the program is being perceived by its stakeholders. Positive feedback can demonstrate that the program is being managed effectively and that it is sustainable in the long-term.

Overall, a clear and transparent governance structure is essential for the long-term success and sustainability of an online school program. The evidence outlined above can help demonstrate that such a structure is in place.

## Standard C: Leadership

### Stakeholder recommendations:

When discussing leadership of a quality online program to ensure accountability to the governing body, setting and meeting operational and strategic goals, and supporting the mission and vision, the following stakeholders should be considered:

1. Governing Body: The governing body of the organization is responsible for overseeing the management and operation of the online program. They provide direction and guidance to the leadership team, ensure compliance with regulations and policies and monitor the program's performance.
2. Leadership Team: The leadership team is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the online program. They develop and implement strategies, policies, and procedures, monitor performance, and ensure the program's success.
3. Teachers and Staff: The teachers and staff are responsible for delivering the online program's educational content and providing support to students. They contribute to the program's development, delivery, and evaluation, and ensure the program's quality.
4. Students: The students are the primary beneficiaries of the online program. They are responsible for learning and completing the program's requirements. They provide feedback on the program's quality, effectiveness, and relevance.
5. Community Stakeholders: Community stakeholders, such as alumni, employers, and local organizations, can provide support and resources for the program. They can also offer feedback on the programs' relevance and impact on the community.
6. Industry Partners: Industry partners can provide valuable input into the program's design, delivery, and evaluation. They can offer insights into the skills and knowledge required in the job market and help identify emerging trends and technologies.

7. **Accreditation Bodies:** Accreditation bodies set standards and guidelines for academic quality and ensure that institutions and programs meet these standards. They provide external validation of the program's quality and can help the programs stay up-to-date with effective practices.

By considering the perspectives and needs of these stakeholders, the leadership of a quality online program can ensure that the program is meeting its goals, supporting its mission and vision, and providing value to its stakeholders.

### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

There are several types of evidence that can be used to demonstrate leadership of a quality online program that is accountable 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. Here are some examples:

1. **Governance Documents:** Reviewing the program's governance documents, such as the program charter, bylaws, policies, and procedures, can provide evidence of the program's leadership structure, responsibilities, and decision-making processes.
2. **Program Reviews and Evaluations:** Conducting program reviews and evaluations can provide evidence of the program's adherence to its mission and vision statements, as well as its operational and strategic goals. These reviews may include self-assessments, external evaluations, and accreditation reports.
3. **Program Data:** Analyzing program data, such as enrollment numbers, retention rates, graduation rates, and student satisfaction surveys, can provide evidence of the program's effectiveness in meeting its goals.
4. **Strategic Plans and Reports:** Reviewing the program's strategic plans and reports can provide evidence of the program leadership's commitment to setting and meeting operational and strategic goals.
5. **Stakeholder Feedback:** Gathering feedback from stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and external partners, can provide evidence of the program leadership's responsiveness to the needs and expectations of its stakeholders.
6. **Leadership Actions and Behaviors:** Observing the actions and behaviors of the program's leadership, including communication, decision-making, resource allocation, and collaboration, can provide evidence of their accountability and responsibility for the program's success.

By examining these types of evidence, it can be determined whether the leadership of a quality online program is accountable to the program's governance body and is

responsible for setting and meeting the operation and strategic goals in support of the program's mission and vision statements.

## Standard G: Equity and Access

### Stakeholder recommendations:

To ensure that a quality online program's policies and practices support students' ability to access the program and that accommodations are available to meet a variety of student needs, the following stakeholders should be considered:

1. **Students:** Students are the primary stakeholders who must be considered when designing policies and practices for online programs. They should be consulted to identify their needs, preferences, and challenges in accessing and participating in online learning.
2. **Teachers:** Teachers play a critical role in the design and delivery of online courses. They should be trained to use accessible design principles and to provide accommodations to students with disabilities. They should also be familiar with the policies and procedures related to accommodating students' needs.
3. **Administration:** Administrators are responsible for setting policies and allocating resources to support online learning. They should ensure that there is adequate funding and support for accessibility and accommodations for students with disabilities.
4. **Disability Services:** Disability service offices provide accommodations and support services to students with disabilities. They should be involved in the development of policies and practices relating to accessibility and accommodations for online courses. They can also provide training to faculty and staff on how to accommodate students' needs.
5. **Technology and Instructional Design:** Technology and instructional design staff are responsible for the design and delivery of online courses. They should ensure that the online learning platform is accessible and that course materials are designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
6. **Legal and Compliance:** Legal and compliance staff are responsible for ensuring that the online program complies with federal and state laws related to accessibility and accommodations for student with disabilities. They should be consulted to ensure that the policies and practices related to accessibility and accommodations are compliant with the law.

By involving these stakeholders in the development of policies and practices related to accessibility and accommodations for online courses, a quality online program can ensure that all students can access the program and that their needs are met.

### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

There are several pieces of evidence that can demonstrate a quality online program's policies and practices support student's ability to access the program and that accommodations are available to meet a variety of student needs.

1. **Accessibility Policy:** A quality online program should have an accessibility policy that outlines the program's commitment to ensuring that all students have equal access to its courses and resources. This policy should include information about the program's approach to creating accessible content, providing accommodations, and addressing any accessibility issues that arise.
2. **Accommodation Request Process:** The program should have a clear and transparent process for students to request accommodations, such as extended time on exams, assistive technology, or other accommodations. The process should be easy to understand and accessible to all students.
3. **Accommodation Approval Process:** The program should have a clear process for approving accommodation requests, including the criteria for approval and the timeline for making decisions. The program should also provide feedback to students about the status of their accommodation requests.
4. **Availability of Accommodations:** A quality online program should offer a range of accommodations to meet the diverse needs of its students. These accommodations may include captioning, transcripts, audio descriptions, screen readers, sign language interpreters, and more.
5. **Student Feedback:** The program should actively seek feedback from students about the effectiveness of its policies and practices related to accessibility and accommodations. This feedback can be gathered through surveys, focus groups, or other methods and should be used to continually improve the program's accessibility and accommodations.

Overall, a quality online program should prioritize accessibility and accommodations and provide clear policies and practices that demonstrate this commitment. The program should also be responsive to the needs of its students and continuously evaluate and improve its accessibility and accommodations.



## Standard H: Integrity and Accountability

### Stakeholder recommendations:

When determining if leadership is transparent in its management of a quality online program, several stakeholders should be considered. These stakeholders include:

1. **Students:** Students are the primary beneficiaries of the quality online program, and they should receive regular updates on progress towards the attainment of goals, alignment with policies and standards, and achievement of learning outcomes. Transparency in communication with students can help build trust and improve student engagement.
2. **Faculty and Staff:** Faculty and staff are critical to the success of the online program, and they should be informed of the progress and performance of the program. Regular and timely communication with faculty and staff can help ensure that they are aligned with the goals and objectives of the program.
3. **Administrators:** Administrators play a critical role in the management of the online program, and they should be kept informed of progress towards the attainment of goals, alignment with policies and standards, and achievement of student learning outcomes. Regular communication with administrators can help ensure that the program remains aligned with institutional goals and objectives.
4. **Accreditation Bodies:** Accreditation bodies are responsible for ensuring that institutions meet certain standards of quality in their programs. Transparency in the management of the online program can help demonstrate to accreditation bodies that the institution is committed to meeting these standards.
5. **Industry Partners:** Industry partners may be interested in the quality online program for a variety of reasons, including potential collaboration opportunities, recruitment of graduates, or simply staying informed about the latest developments in the field. Regular updates on progress and performance can help maintain positive relationships with industry partners.

Overall, all stakeholders involved in the quality online program should be considered when determining whether leadership is transparent in its management of the program. Regular and timely communication with all stakeholders can help ensure that the program is aligned with institutional goals and objectives, and that all parties involved are informed and engaged in the program's success.

### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

There are several pieces of evidence that may demonstrate that a leadership team is transparent in its management of a quality online program, providing regular and timely information on progress towards attainment of goals, aligned with policies and

standards, and achieving student learning outcomes to all stakeholders. Some possible examples include:

1. **Regular Progress Reports:** The leadership team provides regular reports to stakeholders (such as students, teachers, staff, and parents) on the progress towards attainment of goals, policies and standards, and student learning outcomes. These reports could include updates on course completion rates, assessment results, and feedback from students and teachers.
2. **Publicly Available Data:** The leadership team makes relevant data available to stakeholders on the program's website or other public forums. This data might include enrollment numbers, retention rates, graduations rates, and student achievement data.
3. **Open Communication Channels:** The leadership team has open communication channels that allow stakeholders to ask questions and provide feedback. This might include online discussion forums, live chats, or email.
4. **Accreditation Reports:** If the program has been accredited by a recognized accrediting agency, the leadership team should provide evidence of compliance with the agency's standards. This might include the program's most recent accreditation report or a summary of the key findings and recommendations from the report.
5. **Student Success Stories:** The leadership team shares stories of student success to demonstrate how the program is achieving its goals and fulfilling its mission. This could include testimonials from graduates, examples of successful student projects, or stories of students who have overcome significant obstacles to succeed in the program.

Overall, demonstrating transparency in the management of a quality online program requires a commitment to open communication, a willingness to share data and information with stakeholders, and a focus on achieving measurable student learning outcomes aligned with policies and standards.

## Phase 2: Planning, Resources, and Evaluation

### Standard D: Planning

#### Stakeholder recommendations:

When it comes to ensuring regular strategic planning is happening to allow for reflection and improvement of organizational effectiveness in a quality online program, there are several stakeholders who should be involved. These stakeholders include:

1. **Administrators:** Administrators are responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the online program. They should be involved in strategic planning to ensure that the program is aligned with the overall goals and objectives of the organization.
2. **Teachers:** Teachers are responsible for delivering the online program content and iterating with students. They should be involved in strategic planning to ensure that the program is meeting the needs of students and providing them with a quality education.
3. **Students:** Students are the primary beneficiaries of the online program, and their feedback is essential for improving the program's effectiveness. They should be involved in the strategic planning to provide input on their experiences with the program and suggest areas for improvement.
4. **Industry Experts:** Industry experts can provide valuable insights into the current state of the industry and the skills and knowledge that students need to be successful. They should be involved in strategic planning to ensure that the program is preparing students for the workforce.
5. **External Evaluators:** External evaluators can provide an objective assessment of the online program's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. They should be involved in strategic planning to provide feedback on the program's strengths and weaknesses.

By involving these stakeholders in strategic planning, the organization can ensure that the online program is meeting its objectives and providing students with a quality education.

#### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

There are several pieces of evidence that may demonstrate a quality online program engages in regular strategic planning in order to reflect upon and improve organizational effectiveness. Here are some examples:

1. **A Documented Strategic Plan:** A quality online program should have a documented strategic plan that outlines its goals, objectives, and action plans. This plan should be regularly updated and reviewed to ensure it remains relevant and effective.
2. **Performance Metrics:** A quality online program should have performance metrics in place to measure its success in achieving its goals and objectives. These metrics should be regularly monitored and used to inform decision-making and continuous improvement efforts.
3. **Stakeholder Feedback:** A quality online program should regularly solicit feedback from its stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, staff, and other

external partners. This feedback should be used to inform strategic planning and continuous improvement efforts.

4. **Professional Development:** A quality online program should invest in professional development opportunities for its staff and teachers to ensure they have the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively implement the program's strategic plan and improve organizational effectiveness.
5. **Collaborative Culture:** A quality online program should foster a collaborative culture that encourages open communication and teamwork. This culture should support strategic planning and continuous improvement efforts by ensuring all stakeholders are engaged and working together towards a common goal.

Overall, a quality online program that engages in regular strategic planning should demonstrate a commitment to ongoing improvement and a willingness to adapt to changing circumstances and stakeholder needs.

## Standard E: Organizational Staff

### Stakeholder recommendations:

When ensuring a quality online program has appropriate levels of qualified, well-trained, and supported staff who have the resources needed to achieve personal and organizational goals, the following stakeholders should be considered:

1. **Program Directors:** They are responsible for designing and implementing the online program, and they should ensure that the program has enough staff to meet the program's goals.
2. **Teachers:** They are responsible for delivering the curriculum and they should be appropriately qualified and trained to teach the courses. They should also be provided with resources and support to help them achieve their personal and organizational goals.
3. **Instructional Designers:** They are responsible for designing the curriculum and ensuring that it aligns with the program's goals. They should be appropriately trained and supported to design effective online courses.
4. **Technical Support Staff:** They are responsible for maintaining the online platform and ensuring that it is functioning properly. They should be well-trained and supported to provide technical assistance to faculty and students.
5. **Student Support Staff:** They are responsible for providing support to students, including academic advising, counseling, and career services. They should be well-trained and supported to provide effective support to students.

6. Administrators: They are responsible for overseeing the program and ensuring that it meets the goals of the organization. They should provide the resources and support necessary to achieve the program's goals.

Overall, the stakeholders involved in the online program should be considered to ensure that the program has appropriate levels of qualified, well-trained, and supported staff who have the resources needed to achieve personal and organizational goals.

### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

There are several key pieces of evidence that can demonstrate that an online program has appropriate levels of qualified, well-trained and supported staff who have the resources needed to achieve personal and organizational goals. Here are some examples:

1. Teacher and Staff Credentials: The qualifications and experience of the staff can be a key indicator of their ability to perform their roles effectively. Evidence of staff credentials, such as degrees, certification, and relevant work experience, can demonstrate that the program has appropriately qualified staff.
2. Teacher and Staff Retention Rates: High staff retention rates can be an indication of a positive work environment and effective support for staff. Evidence of staff retention rates can demonstrate that the program is able to attract and retain talented staff who are committed to achieving personal and organizational goals.
3. Teacher and Staff Training and Professional Development: Ongoing training and professional development opportunities can help staff to stay up to date with effective practices in their field and improve their skills. Evidence of training and professional development opportunities can demonstrate that the program is committed to supporting staff in achieving their personal and organizational goals.
4. Teacher and Staff Workload and Support: A manageable workload and adequate support can help staff to perform their roles effectively and achieve personal and organizational goals. Evidence of teacher and staff workload and support, such as workload assessments and staff feedback, can demonstrate that the program is committed to ensuring staff have the resources they need to be successful.
5. Teacher and Staff Feedback and Performance Evaluations: Regular feedback and performance evaluation can help staff to identify areas for improvement and stay on track with personal organizational goals. Evidence of teacher and staff feedback and performance evaluations can demonstrate that the program is committed to supporting staff in achieving their full potential.

Overall, the above evidence can demonstrate that an online program has appropriate levels of qualified, well-trained, and supported staff who have the resources needed to achieve personal and organizational goals.

## Standard F: Financial and Material Resources

### Stakeholder recommendations:

To ensure a quality online program plans for and expends financial resources using sound business practices to accomplish the organization's mission and vision, the following stakeholders should be considered:

1. **Administration:** The administration is responsible for developing policies and procedures for the online program, ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, allocating resources, and overseeing the programs overall management.
2. **Teachers and Staff:** The teachers and staff are responsible for developing and delivering the online curriculum, designing assessment, and ensuring the academic rigor of the program.
3. **Students:** The students are the primary beneficiaries of the online program and must be provided with quality educational experiences, materials and resources that meet their needs and expectations.
4. **Technology Support Staff:** The technology support staff plays a critical role in ensuring that the online program's infrastructure is robust and reliable, providing technical assistance to faculty and students, and ensuring data security and privacy.
5. **Financial Staff:** The financial staff is responsible for budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting for the online program, ensuring the resources are utilized efficiently, effectively, and legally.
6. **External Stakeholders:** External stakeholders, such as accrediting bodies, industry partners, and funding agencies, may also be important to ensure the quality and sustainability of the online program through fiscal responsibility.

Having the right stakeholders involved in your strategic planning and evaluation from a fiscal standpoint will ensure program effectiveness, efficiency, and compliance.

### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

There are several pieces of evidence that can demonstrate if a quality online program is planning for and expending financial and material resources using sound business practices to accomplish the organization's mission and vision. Here are a few examples:

1. **Clear Budget:** A quality online program should have a clearly defined budget that aligns with the organization's mission and vision. The budget should be transparent, and stakeholders should be able to see how resources are being allocated.
2. **Performance Metrics:** The program should have established performance metrics that are tracked and reported on a regular basis. These metrics should be tied to the organization's mission and vision, and they should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program's financial and material resources expenditures.
3. **Strategic Plan:** The program should have a well-defined strategic plan that outlines how financial and material resources will be used to achieve the organizations' mission and vision. The plan should be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.
4. **Stakeholder Feedback:** The program should seek input from stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, staff, and other external partners, on how financial and material resources are being used. This feedback can be used to inform decisions about resource allocation and to identify areas for improvement.
5. **Accreditation:** Accrediting bodies may review the program's financial and material resource management practices as a part of the accreditation process. Accreditation can be a strong indicator that the program is using sound business practices to accomplish the organization's mission and vision.

Overall, a quality online program that is planning for and expending financial and material resources using sound business practices should have a clear budget, established performance metrics, a well-defined strategic plan, seek stakeholder feedback, and may have received accreditation from relevant accrediting bodies.

## Standard N: Program Evaluation

### Stakeholder recommendations:

When it comes to ensuring the quality of an online program and recognizing the value of program evaluation, it is essential to consider several stakeholders both internally and externally. Here are some of the stakeholders that should be considered:

1. **Students:** Students are the primary stakeholders in any educational program. It is crucial to gather their feedback and input about the program's quality and effectiveness.
2. **Parents/Guardians:** Parents/guardians play an important role in supporting their children's education and should be involved in discussions about program quality and effectiveness to ensure that the program meets their expectations and needs.

3. **Teachers and Staff:** Teachers and staff are responsible for designing and delivering the online program. They should be involved in the program evaluation process to ensure that it meets their pedagogical goals.
4. **Administrators:** Administrators play a critical role in overseeing the program's development and ensuring that it aligns with the institution's strategic goals.
5. **Employers:** Employers are external stakeholders who may hire graduates from the program. They should be consulted to ensure that the program prepares students for the workforce.
6. **Accrediting Bodies:** Accrediting bodies ensure that the program meets certain standards of quality and rigor. They should be involved in the program evaluation process to ensure that it maintains its accreditation status.
7. **Peer Institutions:** Peer institutions can provide valuable insight into effective practices for online program evaluation and offer benchmarks for comparison.

By involving these stakeholders in the program evaluation process, online programs can ensure that they are meeting their goals and delivering quality education to their students.

#### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

There are several pieces of evidence that may demonstrate an online program's recognition of the value of program evaluation and its use in informing all processes that affect teaching and learning both internally and externally. Some possible examples include:

1. **Clearly Articulated Program Goals and Objectives:** A program that recognizes the value of program evaluation will have clearly defined goals and objectives that are regularly reviewed and updated based on evaluation data.
2. **Regular Program Evaluations:** The program should conduct regular evaluations that include both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. This may include survey of students and faculty, analysis of student learning outcomes, and other forms of data collection that are aligned with the program's goals and objectives.
3. **Use of Evaluation Data in Decision-Making:** The program should demonstrate how evaluation data is used to inform decision-making at all levels of the program, from program-level changes to individual course revisions.
4. **External Review and Accreditation:** an online program that values program evaluation will seek external review and accreditation from recognized organizations. This demonstrates the program's commitment to meeting high standards and continuous improvement.



5. **Communication and Strategy:** The program should communicate evaluation results and use them to engage stakeholders in dialogue about program strengths and areas for improvement. This includes sharing evaluation data with students, parents, teachers, staff and other stakeholders and being transparent about how evaluation data is used to inform program decisions.

Overall, an online program that recognizes the value of program evaluation will have a culture of continuous improvement that is evident in all aspects of the program.

## Phase 3: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

### Standard I: Curriculum and Course Design

#### Stakeholder recommendations:

To ensure a quality online program adopts and implements effective instructional design methods, the following stakeholders should be considered:

1. **Teachers and Staff:** Teachers and staff are essential stakeholders in the development and implementation of online instructional design methods. They bring the content expertise necessary to create engaging, effective, and relevant course material.
2. **Instructional Designers:** Instructional designers are experts in the field of online learning and design. They can work with faculty members to develop course materials, create engaging online learning experiences, and ensure that courses meet high standards of quality.
3. **Students:** Students are the primary beneficiaries of online learning, and their needs and learning styles should be considered in the development of effective online instructional design methods. Online courses should be designed to engage and motivate students, and to provide them with the support and resources they need to succeed.
4. **Administrators:** Administrators play an important role in ensuring that online courses are designed and delivered effectively. They can provide support and resources to faculty members and instructional designers, and can ensure that courses meet institutional standards and guidelines.
5. **Technology Support Staff:** Technology support staff play a critical role in the development and delivery of online courses. They can provide technical support to faculty members and students, and can ensure that the technology used in online courses is reliable and effective.

6. **External Partners:** If the online program includes licensed content from other sources, external partners should also be considered. It is important to ensure that the licensed content meets high standards of quality and aligns with the instructional design methods used in institutionally developed courses.

### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

There are several key pieces of evidence that can demonstrate that an online program is adopting and implementing instructional design methods that enable effective online instruction:

1. **Clear Learning Objectives:** Effective instructional design begins with clearly defined learning objectives that outline what students should know and be able to do by the end of the course. Look for evidence that the online program has clear, measurable learning objectives for each course, and that these objectives are aligned with the program's overall goals.
2. **Engagement Strategies:** Online courses can be more challenging for students who are not used to the online learning environment. Look for evidence that the program is using a variety of engagement strategies such as interactive activities, multimedia resources, and collaborative assignments to keep students engaged and motivated.
3. **Assessment and Feedback:** Effective instructional design includes a variety of assessments that allow students to demonstrate their learning and receive feedback. Look for evidence that the online program is using a variety of assessment methods such as quizzes, exams, essays, and projects that are aligned with the learning objectives, and that provide timely and constructive feedback.
4. **Consistency in Course Design:** Consistency in course design can help students navigate the online learning environment more easily. Look for evidence that the online program has a consistent course design that includes a clear structure, easy navigation, and consistent use of graphics, fonts, and color schemes.
5. **Continuous Improvement:** Effective instructional design is an ongoing process of improvement. Look for evidence that the online program is continually evaluating and improving its courses based on student feedback, learning analytics, and emerging effective practices in online learning.
6. **Evidence-based Instructional Strategies:** Look for evidence that the online program is using evidence-based instructional strategies, such as active learning, flipped classrooms, and personalized learning, to improve student learning outcomes.

## Standard J: Instruction

### Stakeholder recommendations:

To ensure a quality online program takes a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensuring excellent teaching for its students, the following stakeholders should be considered:

1. **Students:** Students are the primary stakeholders in any education program. They should be involved in the development and design of the program and provided with the necessary resources and support to succeed.
2. **Teachers and Staff:** Teachers and staff are the backbone of any education program, and their expertise and experience are critical to the success of an online program. Teachers and staff should be trained in online teaching methods and provided with the necessary resources and support to deliver high-quality instruction.
3. **Administrators:** Administrators play a critical role in the success of an online program. They are responsible for setting policies and procedures, allocating resources, and ensuring that the program meets the needs of students and faculty. They are also responsible for evaluating teaching and learning which includes instruction.
4. **Support Staff:** Support staff, such as instructional designers, technology specialists, and academic advisors, are essential to the success of an online program. They provide necessary resources and support to ensure that faculty members and students have the tools they need to succeed.
5. **Industry Partners:** Industry partners can provide valuable insights into the skills and knowledge that are in demand in the job market. They can also provide opportunities for students to gain practical experience through internships and other work-based learning experiences.
6. **Accrediting Bodies:** Accrediting bodies play a critical role in ensuring that an online program meets the standards for quality education. They provide an external validation of the program's quality and help ensure that the program meets the needs of students and employers.
7. **Peer Institutions:** Peer institutions can provide valuable insights into instructional effective practices for online education. They can also serve as a benchmark for evaluating the effectiveness of an online program.

### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

There are several pieces of evidence that can demonstrate an online program takes a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensuring excellent teaching for its students, including aligned curriculum delivery. Here are some possible examples:

1. Curriculum Mapping: The program has a clearly defined and documented curriculum map that aligns course objectives, assessments, and instructional materials with the program's learning outcomes. This can help ensure that the delivered curriculum is aligned with the intended curriculum.
2. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs): The program has well-defined SLOs that are regularly reviewed and assessed. This can help ensure that the program is meeting its goals and that the delivered curriculum is aligned with the intended outcomes.
3. Instructional Design: The program has a team of instructional designers who work closely with faculty to ensure that the course content, assessments, and instructional strategies are aligned with the program's learning outcomes. This can help ensure that the delivered curriculum is aligned with the intended curriculum.
4. Teacher and Staff Training: The program provides regular training and support to faculty to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge needed to effectively deliver the curriculum. This can help ensure that the delivered curriculum is aligned with the intended curriculum and that students receive high-quality instruction.
5. Student Performance Data: The program regularly collects and analyzes data on student performance to identify areas where students may be struggling and to make adjustments to the curriculum as needed. This can help ensure that the delivered curriculum is effective and aligned with the program's learning outcomes.

Overall, a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensuring excellent teaching in an online program requires a combination of careful planning, ongoing assessment, and continuous improvement. By using these strategies, online programs can help ensure that their students receive a high quality education that prepares them for success in their chosen field.

## Standard K: Assessment and Learner Performance

### Stakeholder recommendations:

To ensure a quality online program values positive learner outcomes and takes a comprehensive integrated approach to measuring and monitoring progress toward defined learning objectives, the following stakeholders should be considered:

1. **Students:** The students themselves are the primary stakeholders. Their needs, goals, and preferences should be at the forefront of all decisions related to designing and implementing the online program.
2. **Teachers and Staff:** Teachers and staff are essential to the success of any online program. They should be involved in the development of the program and play a key role in monitoring and measuring progress toward learning objectives. This includes assessments.
3. **Program Designers/Developers:** Program designers and developers should work closely with instructors and learners to ensure that the program is well-designed and meets the needs of all stakeholders. They should also be responsible for implementing effective assessment strategies.
4. **Administrators:** Administrators are responsible for ensuring that the program is run efficiently and effectively and that learners are learning. They should be involved in the planning and implementation of the program and provide support to instructors and learners as needed.
5. **Industry Experts:** Industry experts can provide valuable input and guidance on the content and delivery of the program and curriculum. They can also help ensure that the program is aligned with industry standards and effective practices.
6. **Assessments and Evaluation Specialists:** Assessment and evaluation specialists can provide expertise in designing effective assessments and evaluation strategies to measure progress toward learning objectives.

By considering the perspectives of these stakeholders, a quality online program can be designed and implemented to effectively measure and monitor progress toward defined learning objectives and ultimately lead to positive learning outcomes.

### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

There are several types of evidence that can demonstrate that an online learning program values positive learner outcomes and takes a comprehensive, integrated approach to measuring and monitoring progress toward defined learning objectives, including that assessments are accessible, understandable, and flexible. Here are some examples:

1. **Student Feedback:** A program that values positive learner outcomes should regularly seek feedback from students to ensure that they are meeting their learning objectives and that assessments are assessable, understandable, and flexible. This feedback can take the form of surveys, focus groups, or interviews.

2. **Learning Analytics:** Learning analytics involves collecting and analyzing data on student performance to understand how they are progressing toward their learning objectives. A program that includes a comprehensive, integrated approach to measuring and monitoring progress will use learning analytics to identify areas where students may be struggling and adjust the curriculum or assessments accordingly.
3. **Accessibility Features:** An online learning program that values positive learner outcomes should have accessibility features in place to ensure that all students can access the content and assessments. For example, the program should have alternative text for images and videos for students with visual impairments, closed captioning for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, and the ability to adjust font size and color contrast for students with learning disabilities.
4. **Assessment Design:** Assessments that are accessible, understandable, and flexible should be designed to align with the learning objectives and curriculum. They should be clear and concise, provide clear instructions, and be flexible enough to accommodate different learning styles and abilities.
5. **Student Success Rates:** Ultimately, the success rates of students completing the program and meeting their learning objectives can serve as evidence that the program values positive learner outcomes and takes a comprehensive, integrated approach to measuring and monitoring progress.

## Phase 4: Stakeholder Supports

### Standard L: Faculty and Staff Support

#### Stakeholder recommendations:

To ensure a quality online program supports faculty and staff by providing mentoring, technical assistance, and timely professional development, the following stakeholders should be considered:

1. **Teachers and Staff:** The primary stakeholders are the teachers and staff who will be delivering the online program. They need to be provided with adequate support and resources to help them adapt to the online environment and ensure that they can deliver quality education.
2. **Students:** Online programs are designed to meet the needs of students, and their input is critical to the success of any online program. Their feedback on the quality of the program, the faculty and staff, and the support services provided will be valuable in improving the program's quality.

3. IT Support Team: The IT support team plays a critical role in ensuring the smooth functioning of an online program. They should be available to assist teachers and staff with technical issues and to provide timely support for any technical challenge that arises.
4. Instructional Designers: Instructional designers are responsible for designing the online program's curriculum, and they play a critical role in ensuring that the program is of high quality. They should work with teachers and staff to ensure that the program's instructional materials and assessments are engaging, relevant, and effective.
5. Administrators: Administrators are responsible for overseeing the online program and ensuring that it is meeting its objectives. They should provide support for faculty and staff by providing access to professional development opportunities, mentoring, and guidance on effective practices for online instruction.
6. Industry Professionals: Industry professionals can provide valuable insights into the latest trends and effective practices in online education. They can also offer mentorship and networking opportunities for faculty and staff, which can help them improve their skills and knowledge.

Overall, to ensure a quality online program, it is essential to engage with all of these stakeholders and to work collaboratively to provide the necessary support and resources.

### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

Here are some examples of evidence that may demonstrate an online program is supporting staff:

1. Mentoring:
  - a. Survey data from staff showing satisfaction with the mentorship program
  - b. Number of staff participating in the mentorship program
  - c. Success stories or testimonials from staff who have received mentorship
2. Technical Assistance:
  - a. Number of technical assistance requests received and resolved
  - b. Time it takes to resolve technical assistance requests
  - c. Survey data from faculty and staff showing satisfaction with technical assistance provided
  - d. Reduction in technical issues or errors reported by faculty and staff

3. Professional Development:
  - a. Number of PD opportunities provided
  - b. Participation rates in PD opportunities
  - c. Survey data from staff showing satisfaction with PD opportunities
  - d. Improvement in skills or knowledge among faculty and staff who have participated in PD opportunities

Overall, a combination of quantitative data (such as participation rates, number of requests, and time to resolution) and qualitative data (such as survey data and success stories) can provide a comprehensive picture of the online program's impact on staff support.

## Standard M: Learner and Parent/Guardian Support

### Stakeholder recommendations:

To ensure a quality online program provides learners and parent/guardians with support services, the following stakeholders should be considered:

1. Students: The needs and preferences of students should be considered when designing support services. This includes addressing the various needs of learners at different levels within the organization and ensuring that the levels of support are appropriate and adequate for student success.
2. Parents/Guardians: Parents and guardians play a critical role in supporting their child's learning. They should be provided with relevant information and resources to help them navigate the online program and support their child's success.
3. Teachers: Teachers are essential in providing academic support and guidance to learners. They should be provided with appropriate training and resources to enable them to provide effective support to learners.
4. Instructional Designers: Instructional designers play a critical role in designing and developing online courses. They should work closely with teachers and other stakeholders to ensure that the courses are designed to meet the needs of learners and their appropriate support services are provided.
5. Technical Support Staff: Technical support staff play a critical role in ensuring that the online program runs smoothly. They should be available to provide technical support to learners, parents, and teachers and ensure that any technical issues are addressed promptly.
6. Administrators: Administrators play a critical role in overseeing the online program and ensuring that appropriate resources are allocated to support



services. They should work closely with teachers, instructional designers, technical support staff, and other stakeholders to ensure that the program is effective in meeting the needs of learners and parents/guardians.

7. **Community Partners:** Community partners such as local businesses, community organizations, and non-profit organizations can provide additional resources and support services to learners and parents. They should be engaged and involved in the online program to provide additional support and resources to learners and parents/guardians.

### Evidence to demonstrate meeting this area:

There are several types of evidence that can demonstrate an online program is providing learner and parent/guardian support services to address the various needs of learners at different levels within the organizations, and that the levels of support are appropriate and adequate for learners. Here are a few examples.

1. **Survey Data:** One way to gather evidence of support services is to survey learners and parents/guardians about their experiences with the program. The survey can ask about the availability of support services, the quality of the support provided, and how well the support met their needs. This data can provide valuable feedback on the effectiveness of the support services provided.
2. **Tracking Data:** Online programs can track data related to learner progress and engagement with support services. For example, they can track how often learners access support services, which services they use most frequently, and how much time they spend with each service. This data can help to identify areas where students may need additional support, and can be used to adjust the level and type of support services provided.
3. **Performance Data:** Performance data, such as course completion rate and grades, can also provide evidence of the effectiveness of support services. If learners are completing courses and achieving good grades, it can be an indication that they are receiving appropriate support.
4. **Case Studies:** Case studies can provide detailed examples of how support services are meeting the needs of students at different levels within the organization. These case studies can be used to illustrate the benefits of support services and demonstrate how they are helping students achieve their goals.
5. **External Reviews:** External review, such as accreditation reports and evaluations by independent organizations, can also provide evidence of the effectiveness of support services. These reviews typically assess the quality of support services provided and can provide valuable feedback or improvement.