

Guiding Questions for the Review of Online Learning Programs

Purpose

The choice to evaluate a program in conjunction with the [National Standards for Quality Online Programs](#) can support the ongoing growth and efficacy of an online program. These questions may help staff reflect on where evidence supports successful learning outcomes and point to opportunities where practices, curriculum, and program management adjustments can lead to increased quality and effectiveness.

Mission Statement

Standard A

- To what extent does the program's mission or vision reflect an emphasis on student learning?
- To what extent is the program's mission/vision communicated to your school's stakeholders (e.g., students, families, teachers, administrators, governing body, community, etc.)?
- To what extent does the leadership team of your program reflect on and update the mission/vision of your program?

Governance

Standard B

- To what extent are the roles and responsibilities of governing members and the program's leadership team clearly established?
- To what extent are governing members ensuring resources are available for online learning and align with the strategic goals established for all student learning?
- To what extent is collaboration evident between governing members and the program team when implementing the policies and procedures necessary to comply with federal, state, and accreditation requirements?

Leadership

Standard C

- To what extent has leadership established goals, achievable measures, and action plans that demonstrate teaching and learning is a priority?
- To what extent are measures validated to ensure program quality and effectiveness?
- To what extent are program leaders monitoring educational trends and using that knowledge in projecting future program needs and budget allocations?

Planning

Standard D

- To what extent is a strategic plan reviewed and adjusted to address long-term outcomes of the program?

- To what extent does a strategic plan ensure resources are sufficient to effectively serve students?

Organizational Staff

Standard E

- To what extent are qualified staff allocated to the program so that its mission and goals are achievable?
- To what extent are staff given appropriate training and support to fulfill the program's mission/vision and goals?
- To what extent do staff and teachers understand their roles and responsibilities?
- To what extent do staff and teachers receive regular, timely feedback in the form of evaluations of their performance and student achievement using consistent, clear measures?
- To what extent are consistent, clear measures used to help staff and teachers determine areas in which they excel and also areas for improvement?

Financial and Material Resources

Standard F

- To what extent are resources managed responsibly in order to comply with accounting principles and government regulations?
- To what extent are appropriate financial resources allocated to sustain the program over time in accordance with its strategic plan?

Equity and Access

Standard G

- To what extent do program policies clearly communicate the requirements for student eligibility?
- To what extent are program staff working with students/families to customize and accommodate individual student needs?
- To what extent do program policies address equity and consider the appropriateness for online learning at an individual level?

Integrity and Accountability

Standard H

- To what extent are stakeholders provided accurate information about the program's mission/vision, accreditation status, policies, services, and fees?
- To what extent are stakeholders given accurate information about courses, learning outcomes, student practices, and the support available for students and parents in the online learning environment?
- To what extent is the program assessed against industry standards for course rigor and diploma-completion requirements?

Curriculum and Course Design

Standard I

- To what extent are the program's courses designed using research-based design principles that enable access to learning for all participating students?
- To what extent do the program's courses provide a consistent and easy-to-navigate user experience?
- To what extent do the program's courses provide opportunities for interactions that support active learning?
- To what extent do the program's courses provide a variety of activities that include options for in-depth learning through authentic problem-solving and experience?
- To what extent does the program's digital curriculum align with appropriate learning standards and include provisions for both intervention and accelerated learning opportunities?
- To what extent does the program's course content comply with web accessibility, copyright, and Fair Use guidelines?

Instruction

Standard J

- To what extent do instructional practices within the program incorporate digital pedagogical tools to foster communication and collaboration, encourage learner interaction, and monitor, and motivate learner engagement?
- To what extent do instructional practices within the program facilitate interactions and collaboration among online learners, their parents/guardians, and the students' on-site mentor to create a supportive online community?
- To what extent do instructional practices within the program personalize instruction, implement accommodations and modifications indicated on 504 Plans and IEPs, provide opportunities for differentiation, and reflect the needs of culturally diverse students?
- To what extent do our instructional staff incorporate a process of continual self-assessment, using learning analytics, to inform changes in pedagogy and instructional practices?

Assessment and Learner Performance

Standard K

- To what extent do courses within the program include reliable and valid assessments for students to demonstrate what they know and can do in multiple ways?
- To what extent are multiple assessment methods used to ensure students demonstrate what they know through means that maximize their abilities?
- To what extent are formative assessments used to identify whether students are meeting learning objectives?
- To what extent are the expectations for teachers to provide timely, actionable feedback to students documented?

Faculty and Staff Support

Standard L

- To what extent are new teachers paired with an experienced online mentor or teacher for support and guidance?
- To what extent are teachers provided documentation on the requirements for teacher-student communication?
- To what extent do administrators provide teachers feedback based on online classroom observations regarding actions, communications, and student performance?
- To what extent is professional learning aligned to the National Standards for Quality Online Teaching?
- To what extent do professional development and resources for staff include the skill areas essential to succeed in learning online and in guiding students into or away from online learning?
- To what extent does professional learning include knowledge about educational trends and optimizing the virtual learning environment for students, teachers, and staff?
- To what extent is timely technical help available to staff when they encounter issues?

Learner and Parent/Guardian Support

Standard M

- To what extent are students and parents oriented to the skills, technologies, and practices necessary to be a successful online learner before choosing courses?
- To what extent are academic support services and guidance provided to students and families in attaining their educational goals and how do these services adjust over time as the student develops?
- To what extent are the needs of students with an IEP or 504 Plan met?
- To what extent is access to and training on the use of the learning management system(s) available to students and parents?
- To what extent are guidelines provided to students, parents, and teachers regarding communication frequency, methods, and expectations during an online course?
- To what extent is timely, effective technical support available for learners and parents, and how is the effectiveness documented and measured?
- To what extent do students and families provide feedback to the online program that is used to inform program decisions?

Program Evaluation

Standard N

- To what extent are program data collected and analyzed to make improvements and increase the quality of services?
- To what extent are reliable measures used to evaluate student success and to drive instructional and management decision-making?
- To what extent are course completion data, course surveys, and stakeholder satisfaction surveys used as a measure of program success?
- To what extent are students' standardized test results compared to the online program's student achievement rates to identify areas for potential improvement?
- To what extent are regular course reviews conducted to examine content appropriateness and assessment methods to achieve learning outcomes?

- To what extent and how frequently is the program evaluated by an external evaluator to obtain objective, comprehensive feedback on the structure and effectiveness of the program as a whole?
- To what extent do we use the results of an external evaluation when planning for program improvement and opportunities for innovation?
- To what extent do we communicate the results of program evaluation to stakeholders?