

Standard III: Resources

The institution effectively uses its human, physical, technology, and financial resources to achieve its mission and to improve academic quality and institutional effectiveness.

Accredited colleges in multi-college systems may be organized so that responsibility for resources, allocation of resources, and planning rests with the district/system. In such cases, the district/system is responsible for meeting the Standards, and an evaluation of its performance is reflected in the accredited status of the institution(s).

D. Financial Resources

Planning

1. Financial resources are sufficient to support and sustain student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, allocation and reallocation, and enhancement of programs and services. The institution plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability. (ER 18)¹
2. The institution's mission and goals are the foundation for financial planning, and financial planning is integrated with and supports all institutional planning. The institution has policies and procedures to ensure sound financial practices and financial stability. Appropriate financial information is disseminated throughout the institution in a timely manner.
3. The institution clearly defines and follows its guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development, with all constituencies having appropriate opportunities to participate in the development of institutional plans and budgets.

Fiscal Responsibility and Stability

4. Institutional planning reflects a realistic assessment of financial resource availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements.
5. To assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of its financial resources, the internal control structure has appropriate control mechanisms and widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision making. The institution regularly evaluates its financial management practices and uses the results to improve internal control systems.

¹ **Eligibility Requirement for Accreditation 18:** The institution documents a funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to support student learning programs and services, to improve institutional effectiveness, and to assure financial stability. (Standard III.D.1)

6. Financial documents, including the budget, have a high degree of credibility and accuracy, and reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support student learning programs and services.
7. Institutional responses to external audit findings are comprehensive, timely, and communicated appropriately.
8. The institution's financial and internal control systems are evaluated and assessed for validity and effectiveness, and the results of this assessment are used for improvement.
9. The institution has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, support strategies for appropriate risk management, and, when necessary, implement contingency plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences.
10. The institution practices effective oversight of finances, including management of financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations or foundations, and institutional investments and assets.

Liabilities

11. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both short-term and long-term financial solvency. When making short-range financial plans, the institution considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. The institution clearly identifies, plans, and allocates resources for payment of liabilities and future obligations.
12. The institution plans for and allocates appropriate resources for the payment of liabilities and future obligations, including Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB), compensated absences, and other employee related obligations. The actuarial plan to determine Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) is current and prepared as required by appropriate accounting standards.
13. On an annual basis, the institution assesses and allocates resources for the repayment of any locally incurred debt instruments that can affect the financial condition of the institution.
14. All financial resources, including short- and long-term debt instruments (such as bonds and Certificates of Participation), auxiliary activities, fund-raising efforts, and grants, are used with integrity in a manner consistent with the intended purpose of the funding source.
15. The institution monitors and manages student loan default rates, revenue streams, and assets to ensure compliance with federal requirements, including Title IV of the Higher Education Act, and comes into compliance when the federal government identifies deficiencies.

Contractual Agreements

16. Contractual agreements with external entities are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, governed by institutional policies, and contain appropriate provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution and the quality of its programs, services, and operations.

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

The institution recognizes and uses the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for promoting student success, sustaining academic quality, integrity, fiscal stability, and continuous improvement of the institution. Governance roles are defined in policy and are designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness, while acknowledging the designated responsibilities of the governing board and the chief executive officer. Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. In multi-college districts or systems, the roles within the district/system are clearly delineated. The multi-college district or system has policies for allocation of resources to adequately support and sustain the colleges.

D. Multi-College Districts or Systems

1. In multi-college districts or systems, the district/system CEO provides leadership in setting and communicating expectations of educational excellence and integrity throughout the district/system and assures support for the effective operation of the colleges. Working with the colleges, the district/system CEO establishes clearly defined roles, authority and responsibility between the colleges and the district/system.
2. The district/system CEO clearly delineates, documents, and communicates the operational responsibilities and functions of the district/system from those of the colleges and consistently adheres to this delineation in practice. The district/system CEO ensures that the colleges receive effective and adequate district/system provided services to support the colleges in achieving their missions. Where a district/system has responsibility for resources, allocation of resources, and planning, it is evaluated against the Standards, and its performance is reflected in the accredited status of the institution.
3. The district/system has a policy for allocation and reallocation of resources that are adequate to support the effective operations and sustainability of the colleges and district/system. The district/system CEO ensures effective control of expenditures.
4. The CEO of the district or system delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEOs of the colleges to implement and administer delegated district/system policies without interference and holds college CEO's accountable for the operation of the colleges.
5. District/system planning and evaluation are integrated with college planning and evaluation to improve student learning and achievement and institutional effectiveness.

6. Communication between colleges and districts/systems ensures effective operations of the colleges and should be timely, accurate, and complete in order for the colleges to make decisions effectively.
7. The district/system CEO regularly evaluates district/system and college role delineations, governance and decision-making processes to assure their integrity and effectiveness in assisting the colleges in meeting educational goals for student achievement and learning. The district/system widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.