

Chapter Two

PUTTING CAS TO WORK

Overview of the Eleventh Version

This 2023 edition of **CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education**, often referred to as the **CAS Blue Book** or the **CAS Book of Standards**, is the eleventh iteration of professional standards generated and promulgated by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). This edition contains the substantially revised General Standards, 50 sets of functional area standards, including the standards for Masters-Level Higher Education and Student Affairs Professional Preparation Programs. CAS continues to attract interest from professionals across higher education seeking to use existing professional standards or to develop new ones.

This version includes 4 new sets of standards and 15 sets of significantly revised standards. The new standards are Campus Credential Programs and Services, Esports Programs, Indigenous Student Affairs, Sustainability Programs. The standards that have undergone a comprehensive review since the 2019 edition include Academic Advising Programs; Campus Information and Visitor Services; Campus Police and Public Safety; College Unions: Programs, Services, and Community Center; Conference and Event Programs; Counseling Services; Disability Resources and Services; Fraternity and Sorority Advising Programs; Housing and Residential Life Programs; Leadership Education and Development; Masters-Level Student Higher Education and Student Affairs Preparation Programs; New Student Orientation Programs; Registrar Services; and Student Conduct Programs.

In addition to the major revisions of the existing standards, each set of standards has been embedded with the updated General Standards, which were significantly revised in 2022. The General Standards appear verbatim within nearly every set of standards and represent areas of practice that are essential regardless of functional area. CAS regularly reviews and updates the General Standards to ensure their currency; typically, the General Standards revision process occurs on a three-year cycle.

As has been increasingly true in previous editions, the breadth of CAS standards focuses attention not only on functions that comprise the traditional student affairs areas, but also on other educational functions essential to institutional effectiveness that may be less focused on direct work with students. This expanded CAS vision reflects an increased emphasis on developing standards to guide professional practice throughout the whole of higher education.

Using the CAS Standards and Self-Assessment Guides

CAS standards and guidelines are conceived and crafted with care to be instructive and useful to practitioners and educational leaders. Based upon professional judgment and societal expectations, they include principles that are fundamental to student development, learning, and success in conjunction with guidelines for practice for many higher education and student affairs functional areas.

Because CAS believes in the importance of self-assessment, the standards and guidelines, as well as other CAS-related materials, are offered as criteria that can be used in multiple ways toward the goal of assuring and enhancing quality practice. As noted in the **CAS Preamble** (1994), which outlines the organization's historic aims and justification, CAS standards can be used for design of new programs and services, for determining the efficacy of programs, for staff development, or for programmatic assessment as part of an institutional self-study. CAS does not prescribe or proscribe ways of using the standards; rather, they are intended to be tools for practitioners to improve practice.

Understanding the Standards and Guidelines

The initial CAS "Blue Book," **CAS Standards and Guidelines for Student Service/Development Programs** (CAS, 1986), emerged with the premise that practitioners needed access to a comprehensive and valid set of criteria by which to

judge program quality and effectiveness. Further, it was essential that the CAS standards represent quality practices that any college or university program could reasonably achieve. Thus, the standards are intended to represent the threshold of good practice, the minimum acceptable level, rather than an aspirational level of best practice that only some may reach.

CAS functional area standards were created as living, evolving documents. The Council established a periodic review cycle to ensure that each standard undergoes regular review and updating, which is described in the preceding chapter (see **The Case for CAS**). Protocols to guide the development of new standards and the revision of existing standards are in place and are available at www.cas.edu. These protocols identify the processes, participants, and procedures used by CAS to create and review its standards. On average, the completion of a typical functional standards review takes approximately one year from initiation to CAS adoption. Historically, by the time a functional area standard has undergone the thorough development and review process, CAS representatives have nearly always been unanimous in its decision to adopt a new or revised standard, and in fact, the CAS review process is designed to lead to consensus.

What is a Functional Area?

In the CAS Glossary (Appendix B), a functional area is defined as a distinct grouping of activities, programs, and services within higher education that can be differentiated by its purpose, mission, focus, policies, practices, staff, budget, and the professional interests and backgrounds of its practitioners. In many cases, functional areas are what are often referred to as offices or departments, but CAS uses the term functional area to indicate a program or service that may not have the separate organizational structure typically associated with a department. Examples of functional areas include academic advising, housing and residential life, leadership, and internships. Typically, functional areas are represented by one or more professional associations on the CAS Council of Representatives.

Defining functional areas within post-secondary higher education and student affairs requires thinking about things as “both/ands,” rather than “either/ors.” The CAS functional area standards address processes, populations served, and necessary facilities or services. Employing complex “both/and” thinking, one can simultaneously perceive a functional area as both narrow and broad. CAS uses the inclusive term “functional area” in a way that can provide creative tension, enabling programs and services both to be what they are and to envision different ways of organizing themselves. For example, an internship program may exist within career services but also intersect with academic departments and service-learning initiatives.

The current slate of 50 functional area standards identified and addressed by CAS reflects the context and time during which each area was added to the canon of CAS standards. The scope and definition of a functional area is also informed by the timing of its conception. For example, in the 1990s, issues surfacing around alcohol, ADA legislation, HIV, and the Internet influenced the work of post-secondary student support services and, thus, CAS efforts to codify quality practice in the field. In the early 2000s, CAS work reflected the field’s shifting focus on learning outcomes, undergraduate research, distance education, and globalization; in the 2010s, CAS standards have responded to the increasing attention on veteran students, sexual violence, intersectional identities, and cross-functional thinking. In recent years, CAS standards have focused on student learning, development, and success; equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice; indigenous and international perspectives.

A Common Core: The CAS General Standards

From the CAS perspective, all functional areas of practice, no matter how specialized, have identifiable commonalities with other functions. For example, an institution’s admission, academic advising, campus activities, and dining services programs, although established to accomplish clearly different purposes, will each benefit from establishing a written mission statement that is compatible with the mission of the institution. Likewise, the same is true for human, fiscal, physical, and technological resources; legal responsibilities; and ethical considerations, among others. Consequently, CAS developed and has incorporated a number of common criteria that have relevance for each and every functional area, no matter what its primary focus. These common criteria are referred to as “General Standards,” and this boilerplate text forms the core of all functional area standards.

The General Standards are composed of 12 subsections. The 2018 General Standards reorganized and defined these sections (see CAS Standards – Parts Definitions). They include mission; program and services; student learning, development, and success; assessment; access, diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice; leadership; human resources; collaboration and communication; ethics, law, and policy; collaboration and communication; financial resources; technology; and facilities and infrastructure. The standards statements included in these subsections are broad enough to apply across the different specialized functional areas yet targeted enough to provide meaningful direction for professionals. The CAS General Standards are reviewed and revised prior to the publication of each new edition of the **CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education**.

These General Standards are designed to overcome the “silo effect” so common throughout higher education in which autonomous administrative units, programs, and services function independently and sometimes inconsistently. In effect, the general standards make the CAS standards highly utilitarian and promote inter-departmental, inter-program, and inter-service cooperation and collaboration. Users are encouraged to view the CAS standards and guidelines as vehicles that interconnect administrative units. Because what these various functional units have in common (e.g., educational purpose, student learning and development) often exceeds their differences, the effective practitioner will find that collaboration between and among units will enhance the educational environment in many important ways.

Another use of the General Standards is in offices or areas for which no CAS standards have been developed. While the General Standards do not offer the specialty standards designed to specifically address the particular functional area, they do offer essential standards of practice that are applicable to all areas and can be used where no other standards exist. The General Standards are also useful in conducting an assessment of an office that has multiple functional responsibilities (e.g., activities, leadership, and orientation). Since the General Standards are present in each set of standards, practitioners can identify both points of overlap and portions that speak to the various functions, enabling them to merge the General Standards and specialized aspects into one non-repetitive set of standards that reflects the complex nature of the office.

Although the General Standards have evolved over CAS’s history, the Council has reaffirmed and reinforced that the commonalities underlying different functional areas are indispensable and must be incorporated in all CAS standards.

Distinguishing the “Musts” from the “Shoulds”

The CAS standards and guidelines are written using similar language to clearly reflect the intent of the statements. All CAS standards use the auxiliary verbs “**must**” and “**shall**” and appear in **bold print** so that users can quickly identify them. As previously noted, all functional areas have specialty standards in addition to the general standards. Specialty standards are essential to accomplishing a support program’s purpose and appear in **bold print**, as do the General Standards.

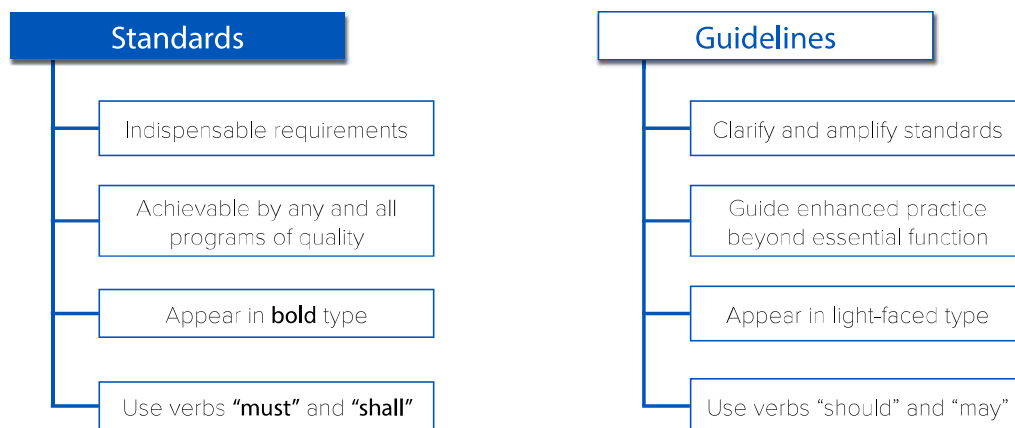


Figure 2.1. Distinguishing between CAS standards and guidelines

CAS standards are constructed to represent criteria that every higher education and student affairs functional area should be expected and able to meet with the application of reasonable effort and diligence. Although the standards are carefully worded, it is sometimes helpful to amplify them by providing additional information to facilitate the user's ability to interpret them accurately. Also, when programs are organizationally mature, there is need to provide users with additional criteria that may be used to make good programs even better. Consequently, as a supplement to its standards, CAS has established "guidelines" designed to clarify and amplify the standards. Guidelines may be used to guide enhanced practice when a program has previously achieved high levels of effectiveness. Guidelines use the auxiliary verbs "should" and "may" and are printed in lightface type to distinguish them from the standards.

In summary, CAS functional area standards and guidelines are basic statements that should be achievable by any functional area in any higher education institution when adequate and appropriate effort, energy, and resources are applied. The CAS standards reflect a level of good practice generally agreed upon by the profession-at-large. In addition to the standards, guidelines are incorporated into each functional area to amplify and explain the standards and to guide enhanced practice. This dual presentation is helpful because functional area programs in both early and advanced stages of development, and at both small and large institutions, can use the CAS standards effectively. Most important is the fact that the CAS standards have been conceived and developed via a profession-wide process that can ensure continuity and consistency of practice among all higher education institutions. In addition, each set of standards is reviewed regularly to assess currency and determine need for revision.

Recognizing Context: U.S. Values Inherent in CAS Standards

In considering the CAS standards and guidelines, it is important to note and understand that they are not value-neutral. As discussed in the prior chapter (see *The Case for CAS*), there is a clear set of values that serves as the underpinning for the standards. They are derived from the theories and models that inform work in post-secondary student programs and services as well as from the historical documents that have guided the development of the field in North America, and particularly in the U.S.; they serve today as important touchstones for the ideas that shape current approaches and that have shaped these standards. While these ideas have been consistently incorporated in the development of the standards to date, CAS acknowledges they are reflective of the democratic culture of U.S. higher education and not sufficiently inclusive for application in all global higher education environments. As CAS users increasingly represent international settings, new situations and voices inform the development of the standards, and while they remain mainly grounded in the context of American higher education, there is concerted effort to include users outside of the U.S.

Self-Regulation and Self-Study

Enabling professionals to critically reflect on their practice with an eye toward enhancing quality programs and services has been a CAS goal since its inception. According to Dean and Jones (2014),

From the beginning, the founders of CAS chose to base their approach on a belief that given the appropriate tools, professionals could do an effective job of self-regulation. Their belief was grounded in part in the recognition that expectations for practice need to be contextualized by the mission and structure of the institution. (p. 97)

Many practitioners today face the task of developing an assessment process, and CAS can be an important tool as part of the larger picture.

Henning and Roberts (2016) discuss several types of assessment and note that while not all are used for and by all units each year, they "do provide a holistic view of programs and services as they are systematically implemented over time" (p. 68). Types of assessment include tracking, needs, satisfaction, outcomes, campus climate, program review, benchmarking, resource effectiveness, accreditation, and national instruments. An institution, division, program, or service with an assessment plan that incorporates many of these types of assessment will have abundant documentation with which to complete a CAS self-study. Assessing the separate elements of the program or service supplies the evidence with which to support ratings in the self-study process. The CAS standards define effective practice and are intended to be achievable by well-designed programs of quality. "If practitioners are to call a specific program a 'best practice' (i.e., of high quality and worthy of the adjective 'best'), then they must

be able to point to some evidence that demonstrates a significant level of effectiveness based on clearly stated outcomes” (Shutt, et al., 2012, p. 6).

The most thorough use of the standards involves a self-study process for program evaluation. Also referred to as “program review,” which helps determine overall effectiveness by assessing strengths and identifying areas of improvement and involves others in examining evidence to determine collectively whether the program follows the standards. Involvement of others serves several purposes; it ensures a broader and more objective perspective, increases knowledge and awareness of the program across the institution, and develops support for implementation of identified improvements. Self-assessment offers a meaningful opportunity for institutions to be reflective. The results of self-studies can be organized into reports that divisions and institutions can use to enhance the student experience and to guide continuous improvement, strategic planning, and support accreditation efforts.

Program Review Process

For each set of standards and guidelines, CAS provides a Self-Assessment Guide (SAG) that includes a recommended comprehensive self-study process for program evaluation. Seven basic steps to using a SAG are suggested for implementing a functional area self-study. The following self-study process, presented in Figure 2 in summary form, is recommended.

Each SAG includes the contextual statement for the functional area; instructions for conducting self-assessment using the SAG, including details about all seven steps outlined above; the self-assessment instrument comprised of criterion statements, rating scales, and evaluation forms; work forms that offer direction for developing an action plan; and a copy of the functional area standards and guidelines.

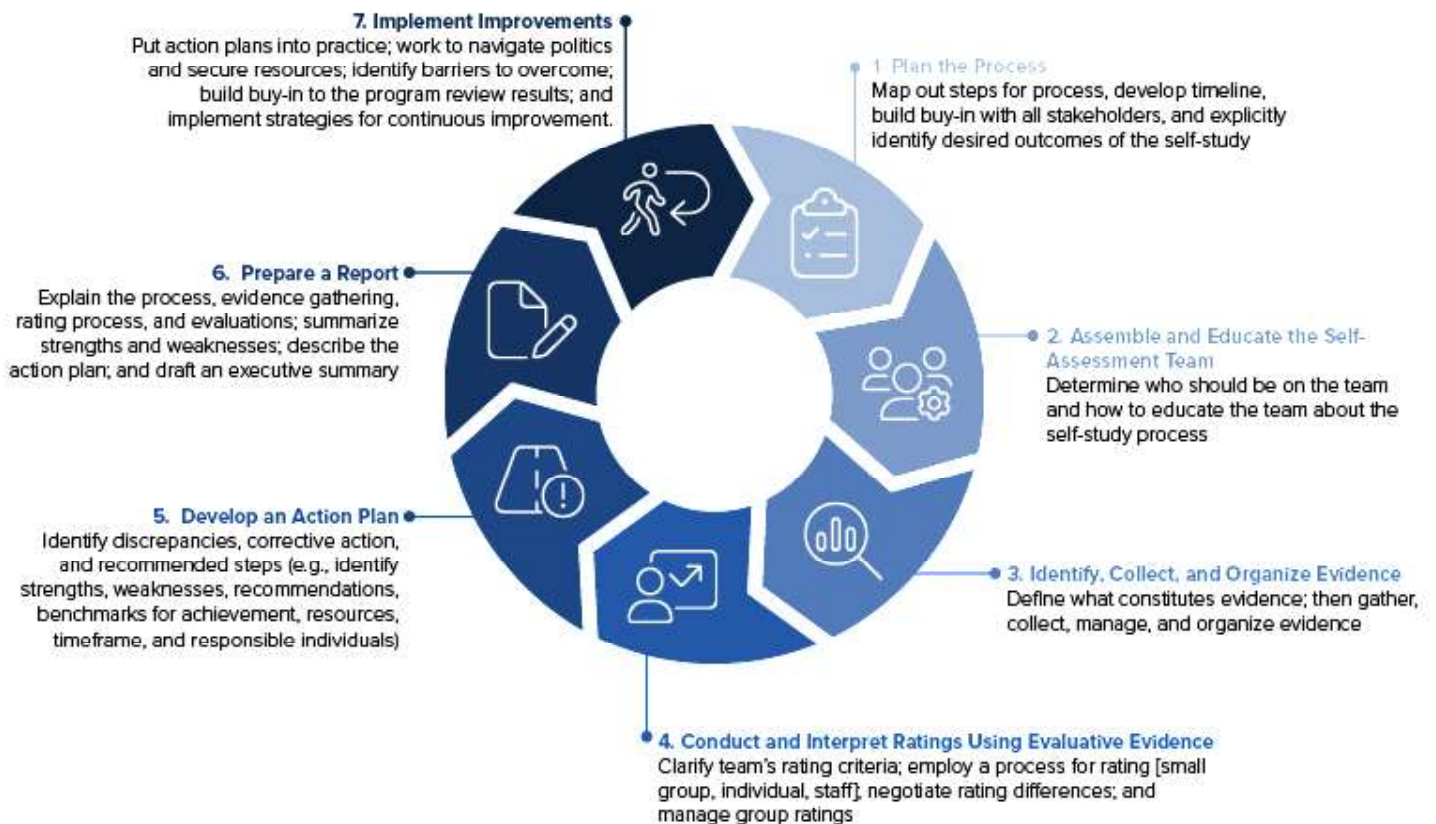


Figure 2.2. Steps of CAS Program Review Process

Other Uses and Applications of the CAS Standards

In addition to the model presented for program evaluation, the CAS standards are a resource that can be used for several other purposes. The following examples illustrate how CAS standards may be applied in practice and for purposes of professional development. The uses outlined here are representative because the CAS standards and guidelines are tools to be used by practitioners; there are not really “wrong” ways to use them if the values and spirit underlying them are honored.

Design of New Programs and Services

As student and institutional needs change, opportunities may arise to develop new programs or services, expand existing offerings, and restructure current areas. The functional area standards and guidelines are helpful criteria that outline, guide, and ground planning when needed. The Mission and Program and Services sections are particularly beneficial for specifying important goals and components relevant to the functional area being developed.

The CAS standards can be helpful when advocating for and broadening administrators’ understanding of what is required to meet basic essentials of programs and services. Too often, administrators limit their initial thinking about a new program to relatively basic issues, such as access, rather than considering how a new program could help students become better integrated into the campus community or enhance their learning, development, and success. The CAS standards can illuminate for leaders the importance of comprehensive programming.

Professional Development

Staff members can study the CAS standards to determine how well they and their colleagues are implementing the criteria in their daily work with students. The relevant functional area standards can be used as an orientation device to assist new professionals in understanding and reviewing their areas, as a point of discussion for supervisors and staff to discuss program strengths and weaknesses, as a resource for educating others at the institution about what is involved in a sound program, or as the format by which annual program reports are prepared. The more the CAS standards are used within a unit, department, division, or institution, the more it will lead to a common language and shared perception of the elements of good practice.

A comprehensive staff development program using CAS functional area standards or the General Standards as a training device could encompass a half- or full-day of meeting time during which staff members share responsibility for leading discussions about the various standard components. This approach is particularly valuable when a program or division self-study is forthcoming. In such an instance, staff members learn how CAS standards can be used to influence good practice and how standards can provide a vehicle for self-study. Training staff members before conducting a self-study typically produces a more comprehensive and valuable program evaluation.

Academic and Professional Preparation

The CAS standards have a valuable educational application as a resource in formal academic preparation programs in both student affairs and higher education administration, especially in introductory courses concerned with student-oriented functions common to institutions of higher learning and assessment courses. The CAS functional area standards and their accompanying contextual statements, as well as the statements regarding individual characteristics, shared ethical principles, and learning and development outcomes, provide an excellent primer for those entering the field. The contextual statements summarize historical perspectives, important tenets, and current issues. These succinct summary statements provide an introduction for those unfamiliar with the areas under study. The CAS standards provide an in-depth description of the characteristics common to and expected of the various functional areas.

Quality assurance can be an ambiguous concept for graduate students, especially at the master’s level. The idea of applying standards to practice is more concrete and students can quickly come to understand the role, function, and utility of professional standards. As a result, many academic preparation programs have integrated the CAS standards into their curricula, as well as using the preparation program standards to guide development of the

program overall. From the outset, students can begin to internalize the professional interests of self-regulation and improvement.

CAS standards also are incorporated easily into experiential components of academic preparation programs. For students examining a given functional area in greater detail or participating in a practicum, internship, or other field-based experience, the CAS Self-Assessment Guide (SAG) provides a unique resource for learning the basics of functional areas and obtaining a comprehensive understanding. Each functional area SAG includes the standards, guidelines, and criterion measures that can be used to judge the level of compliance a program exhibits in regard to the standards. Using a SAG, students can readily identify a program's strengths and areas of improvement. Also, the SAG has utility as a vehicle for both students and supervisors to examine together and discuss the various components of the area under study. Students may complete a mini-self-study of the functional area to which they are assigned as part of their supervised practice experiences, ensuring that future professionals are familiar and experienced with putting CAS standards into practice as they move into entry level positions.

CAS offers faculty and graduate student packets to help guide the implementation of the standards in preparation programs. The **CAS Faculty Packet** provides resources to assist in working with graduate students in the classroom and through supervised practice. The online packet includes course activities, two chapters about CAS and the self-assessment process, a self-assessment guide, CAS overview presentation, learning and development domains and dimensions, resource papers, and an infographic on using CAS in the job search. The **CAS Graduate Student Packet** provides resources to assist graduate students in their job search, classroom, and learning in student affairs and higher education. The online packet includes the same items as the faculty packet, with exception of the course activities. Both are available for free through the CAS website.

Credibility and Accountability

Any profession, along with its practitioners, must exhibit a reasonable level of credibility if it is to survive. Credibility is essential to the existence of post-secondary student programs and services, and, by adhering to professional standards, institutions can help assure potential student users and the general public of their competence. Both higher education consumers and professionals alike attribute credibility to programs and institutions that meet stringent standards; compliance with such standards demonstrates that quality is present.

Institutional and academic program credibility is typically established through accreditation, a voluntary process by which agencies encourage and assist institutions and their units (e.g., colleges, schools, departments, and programs) to evaluate and improve their programs and services (Eaton, 2001). Information about the institutions and programs that voluntarily meet or exceed acceptable standards of quality and effectiveness is made public by the accrediting body. It is not uncommon for institutions lacking accreditation to be denied federal aid or other resources available to accredited institutions. Graduates of non-accredited institutions may be denied admission to graduate schools or certain employment opportunities. Accreditation is intended to assure the public that an institution and its programs do indeed provide quality education.

However, the general public cannot be assured that individuals who have diplomas, certificates, or degrees from accredited institutions and programs are, in fact, effective practitioners. Consequently, various structures have been established by professional and governmental oversight agencies to judge the professional qualifications of service providers in education, health, and social service areas. Three primary methods have been established to enable individuals to document their professional qualifications: registry, certification, and licensure. CAS, a consortium of higher education professional associations, focuses minimal attention on credentialing options, although some have encouraged CAS to expand its focus into registry or certification, which are often initiated by non-governmental professional bodies. Licensure is largely the province of governments. For instance, licenses based on generally comparable criteria are required of physicians, psychologists, and lawyers in all states; counselors and engineers, on the other hand, may be judged by diverse criteria from state to state.

As demand for accountability in higher education increases, so too does demand for practitioner accountability. CAS endorses self-regulation as the most viable approach to program accountability, calling for each institution to initiate a program of self-assessment for its student programs, services, and related personnel. Whether student

programs and services are administratively assigned to student affairs, academic affairs, business affairs, or elsewhere in the organizational hierarchy, CAS encourages program review and evaluation on a continuing basis using the CAS standards. From this perspective, self-regulation becomes a preferred strategy to establish and maintain credibility.

When appropriate and desirable, functional areas may invite representatives from peer institutions or professionals with particular expertise in the areas being studied to review their self-assessment reports as part of a validation process. Self-regulation requires institutions and their leaders to establish their own policies and procedures for institutional assessment and to adhere to them when evaluating quality and effectiveness. Through continuing assessment, institutions can compile and maintain the internal documentation required by regional accrediting bodies and governmental oversight agencies. Self-regulation provides institutions as well as student programs and services with tools to achieve and demonstrate quality. If institutions accept responsibility for initiating meaningful and well-considered assessment processes and procedures, there is less likelihood that external oversight agencies, governmental or otherwise, will seek to do so.

Conclusion

Many practitioners view the CAS standards as a staple for conducting comprehensive program reviews. CAS standards are readily available, easily understood, and consistent across functional areas; thus, they often are the standard of choice for higher education and student affairs unit reviews. The fact that operational versions of the standards in the form of CAS Self-Assessment Guides are also available has increased the ease with which the standards can be used for program review purposes. In addition, the existence of the CAS standards informs practitioners that professional practice is not based simply on instinct or history. Rather, it consists of the application of the collective wisdom of the profession and is enhanced by assessment, continuous improvement, and quality enhancement.

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CAS GENERAL STANDARDS

▶ GUIDING PRINCIPLE: STUDENTS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENTS

PART 1. MISSION

1.1 Functional Area Mission

The functional area mission must be aligned with the mission and core values of the department, college, division, institution, and applicable professional standards.

The functional area mission must be appropriate for the institution's constituents.

Regardless of its organizational structure, the functional area must collaborate and consult with its constituents to advance its mission.

1.2 Mission Statements

The functional area must develop, implement, disseminate, regularly review, and update its mission statement.

Functional area mission statements must reference student learning, development, and success.

PART 2. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

2.1 Functional Area Goals

The functional area must be guided by a set of written goals directly related to its stated mission, priorities, institutional core values, and expectations.

The functional area's goals must be aligned with institutional vision, mission, and core values.

The functional area must develop goals addressing access, diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion.

The functional area must annually determine, review, assess, and consider revising its goals.

The functional area must determine and define its constituents.

2.2. Achieve and Communicate Functional Area Goals

The functional area must examine how its programs and services goals align with the functional area's mission and core values.

The functional area must provide programs and services addressing the diverse needs of its constituents.

The functional area must provide programs and services addressing access, diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion.

The functional area must include its constituents when developing programs and services.

The functional area must communicate at least annually to its constituents its progress toward meeting the mission, goals, and outcomes.

The functional area must develop and implement strategies for outreach, marketing, and promotion of its programs and services that are consistent with the functional area's mission and goals.

The functional area must use multiple modes of delivery to meet the needs of its constituents.

2.3 Program Structure

The functional area must provide a research-informed, theory-informed, or evidence-based rationale for designing programs and services, strategies, and tactics intended to influence student learning, development, and success goals.

The functional area must establish and communicate a clear organizational structure for the implementation of its programs and services.

The functional area must align the components, strategies, and tactics of its programs and services with functional area goals and the corresponding

student learning, development, and success outcomes.

The functional area must be structured and resourced to

- ▶ balance efficiency and effectiveness
- ▶ respond to the needs of its constituents and distinct populations
- ▶ ensure access for its constituents

Regardless of its organizational structure, the functional area must work in close consultation and collaboration with experts and utilize resources to meet the needs and interests of its constituents.

The functional area must collaborate with colleagues and departments across the institution to develop programs and services consistent with the institutional core values and department functions.

PART 3. STUDENT LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUCCESS

3.1 Student Learning, Development, and Success

The functional area must contribute to student learning, development, and success by offering programs and services that support curricular and co-curricular experiences.

The functional area must select relevant [CAS Student Learning and Development Domains and Dimensions](#) or other recognized outcomes frameworks to help create written goals and intended outcomes for its programs and services. Outcomes must be developed within one or more of the following areas:

- ▶ Cognitive Complexity
- ▶ Knowledge Acquisition
- ▶ Interpersonal Development
- ▶ Intrapersonal Development
- ▶ Local and Global Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement
- ▶ Practical Competence

The functional area must provide educational opportunities and experiences for students targeting goals based on relevant [CAS Student Learning and Development Domains and Dimensions](#) or other outcomes frameworks.

The functional area must align predetermined student learning, development, and success outcomes with the institutional framework for student outcomes.

The functional area must collaborate with institutional leaders to identify relevant, desirable, and feasible student learning, development, and success outcomes.

The functional area must document the extent to which intentionally designed programming, strategies, and tactics are implemented as planned.

PART 4. ASSESSMENT

4.1 Assessment Culture, Plans, and Processes

The functional area must create and sustain a culture of assessment that is transparent and valued by its constituents.

The functional area must create assessment plans and processes in alignment with its mission and the core values of the institution. These plans and processes must

- ▶ be created in collaboration with functional area constituents
- ▶ include functional area goals, objectives, and outcomes
- ▶ engage the functional area in an ongoing cycle of assessment activities
- ▶ incorporate assessment of student learning, development, and success
- ▶ address the role of power and positionality for those conducting assessment
- ▶ be both ethical and equity-centered
- ▶ incorporate different approaches to creating, collecting, and measuring evidence of progress towards achieving goals, objectives, and outcomes

The functional area must implement strategies, practices, services, and programming toward achieving its stated goals and evaluating intended outcomes.

The functional area must use data-informed decision-making.

The functional area must document progress toward goal, objective, and outcome achievement.

The functional area must implement and communicate its self-assessment and program review timeline as determined appropriate by department, divisional, and/or institutional leaders.

The functional area must commit fiscal, human, and technological resources to develop, implement, and improve assessment plans.

The functional area must support professional development for those responsible for assessment.

The functional area must collaborate with appropriate departments on assessment of functional area outcomes.

The functional area must use assessment data, research, and theory to review and revise program mission, goals, and outcomes in a regular cycle.

4.2 Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

The functional area must clearly define goals, objectives, and outcomes for what the functional area intends to achieve.

The functional area must develop student learning, development, and success outcomes using relevant frameworks.

The functional area must review and revise goals, objectives, and outcomes annually, using data and relevant research to inform revisions.

4.3 Implementing Strategies to Achieve Goals and Outcomes

The functional area must use theory, research, and evidence to develop and implement its programs and services to achieve stated mission, goals, and outcomes.

4.4 Gathering Evidence and Data

The functional area must gather evidence and utilize equity-centered data collection processes.

The functional area must utilize multiple methods and measures of data collection.

The functional area must regularly evaluate and update methods of data collection.

The functional area must develop manageable processes for gathering and evaluating data.

The functional area must ensure measures and methods are rigorous and reflect characteristics of validity, reliability, and trustworthiness.

The functional area must adhere to institutional policies related to data access and management.

4.5 Reviewing and Interpreting Findings

The functional area must analyze and interpret data using appropriate methods for the outcomes and questions developed in the planning processes.

The functional area must identify and address bias regarding analysis and interpretation.

The functional area must disaggregate data to identify issues related to equity and inclusion.

The functional area must compare findings to relevant literature on assessment areas of focus or interest.

4.6 Reporting Results and Implementing Improvement

The functional area must use data to demonstrate achievement of program outcomes and student learning, development, and success outcomes.

The functional area must avoid deficit-based reporting of assessment results.

The functional area must articulate potential bias in data and reported findings when sharing or reporting results.

The functional area must communicate results and findings to its constituents using formats tailored to them.

The functional area must use evidence from assessment activities and research to inform decision-making and continuous improvement.

The functional area must suggest strategies for using results and findings.

The functional area must monitor improvements made based on assessment results.

▶ GUIDING PRINCIPLE: ORGANIZATION, LEADERSHIP, AND HUMAN RESOURCES

PART 6. LEADERSHIP

6.1 Create and Advance Vision, Mission, Goals, and Core Values

Functional area leadership must align the vision or purpose, mission, goals, and core values for the area with that of the institution.

Functional area leadership must facilitate the shared vision or purpose, mission, goals, and core values for the area.

Functional area leadership must facilitate goal setting and development of goals and professional expectations in collaboration with their team.

Functional area leadership must determine the supervisory structure best suited for the ongoing operations of the functional area.

Functional area leadership must advocate for and actively promote the functional area and institution's vision, mission, goals, and values.

Functional area leadership must model, encourage engagement, and create space for discourse on the vision or purpose, mission, goals, and core values.

Functional area leadership must identify and address individual, organizational, and environmental conditions that inhibit the pursuit of mission, goals, and outcomes.

Functional area leadership must demonstrate a set of professional ethics and core values.

6.2 Cultivate Access and Well-Being

Functional area leadership must cultivate an environment of access in the design and delivery of programs and services and in the workplace.

Functional area leadership must cultivate an environment of team well-being in the workplace and through programs and services developed for its constituents.

Functional area leadership must encourage others to contribute to the well-being and effectiveness of the unit and institution.

The functional area must have a published protocol for its constituents to request disability accommodations for its programs and events.

Functional area leadership must encourage personnel to engage in reflection about their work.

Functional area leadership must delegate tasks based on talent and interest.

Functional area leadership must develop and empower new leaders from within the organization.

Functional area leadership must engage team members in discourse to reconcile conflict, address complaints, and improve team morale as needed.

Functional area leadership must develop plans for research, assessment, scholarship, leadership, and service to the institution and the profession.

6.3 Create Collaborative Communities

Functional area leadership must create collaborative communities by building a network of its constituents for sharing of ideas, strategizing on change and improvements, collaborating on programs and services, and advocating for additional resources.

Functional area leadership must facilitate dialogue with its personnel and constituents about program advancement through processes that include assessment, strategic planning, and continuous improvement.

6.4 Operate with Integrity, Transparency, and Accountability

Functional area leadership must operate with integrity, transparency, and accountability.

Functional area leadership must incorporate both research, evaluation, and outcomes assessment data in review of operations and in decision making.

Functional area leadership must provide updated operational reports to its constituents based on assessment and feedback of activities.

Functional area leadership must communicate with its constituents about current issues affecting the work of the functional area and the profession.

Functional area leadership must advocate for resources to address functional area and team member needs.

Functional area leadership must plan for, allocate, and monitor the responsible use of fiscal, physical, human, intellectual, and technological resources.

6.5 Act Strategically to Bring About Positive Change

Functional area leadership must act strategically to bring about positive change in the unit and engage the team in strategic planning processes aligned with the institution's strategic plan and with the functional area's mission, vision, goals, and values.

Functional area leadership must utilize research, scholarship, evidence, philosophies, principles, and values to guide the work of the functional area.

Functional area leadership must set goals, objectives, and outcomes based on the needs of the populations served, intended learning, development, success outcomes, and program outcomes.

Functional area leadership must develop, adapt, and improve programs and services in response to the needs of changing environments, populations served, current research, and evolving institutional priorities.

Functional area leadership must engage diverse constituents and perspectives from within and outside the unit to inform the development and implementation of the strategic planning process.

Functional area leadership must advocate for representation in strategic planning processes at unit, divisional, and institutional levels.

PART 7. HUMAN RESOURCES

7.1 Staffing and Support

The functional area must communicate and collaborate with institutional and/or divisional human resource departments.

The functional area must use professional standards to identify the staffing needs to achieve its mission and goals.

The functional area must be staffed by personnel qualified to accomplish its mission and goals.

The functional area must have access to technical and support personnel to accomplish its mission.

Functional area personnel must possess an appropriate combination of educational credentials and equivalent experience.

7.2 Employment Practices

The functional area must have clearly stated, current, relevant, and documented responsibilities and performance expectations for personnel.

The functional area must have clearly stated, current, relevant, and documented organizational charts demonstrating reporting structures.

The functional area must align employment practices with institutional procedures and expectations for recruitment, selection, onboarding and training, supervision, performance management and coaching, evaluation, and professional and organizational development of personnel.

The functional area must determine and implement practices that achieve the goals of successful recruitment, selection, onboarding and training, supervision, performance, and evaluation when institutional practices do not meet expectations.

The functional area must supplement institutional approaches when necessary for personnel to demonstrate their competence.

Functional area leadership must ensure that all personnel have written position descriptions in a format consistent with institutional and/or divisional practices.

Functional area leadership must regularly review position descriptions.

Functional area leadership must conduct searches that candidates describe as fair and equitable.

Functional area leadership must implement recruitment and selection/hiring strategies that comply with institutional policy and demonstrate a deliberate effort to diversify the workforce.

Functional area leadership must develop promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, proactive, non-discriminatory, and in alignment with institutional policy.

Functional area leadership must establish, in partnership with personnel and aligned with institutional policies, work arrangements, scheduling, and modality that achieve department goals, objectives, and outcomes.

7.3 Recruitment

The functional area must develop strategies for talent sourcing and recruitment including

- ▶ creating a positive brand or message in alignment with the functional area and institutional mission and values to attract potential personnel
- ▶ proactively searching for diverse candidates
- ▶ developing personnel from within the functional area and the institution
- ▶ hiring from outside of the institution
- ▶ investing in multiple and continuous sourcing methods to diversify its personnel
- ▶ using technologies, such as social media and applicant tracking software, to support sourcing and recruiting approaches

The functional area must identify metrics and capture data in support of staffing strategies including

- ▶ costs associated with sourcing, recruiting, hiring, and onboarding
- ▶ percentage of applicants moving on to the next stage in the hiring process and number of days to fill the position
- ▶ factors associated with turnover for reasons other than termination

7.4 Selection Process

The functional area must use a well-defined and transparent selection process.

The functional area must utilize a selection process that

- ▶ communicates with applicants throughout its process and timeline
- ▶ develops applicant evaluation criteria based on the position description
- ▶ ensures interviewers are familiar with position duties, requirements, and selection criteria, and are trained on appropriate and legal interviewing techniques
- ▶ designs interview questions and processes to assess applicants' qualifications, skill level, knowledge, overall competence, and alignment with the organization's needs
- ▶ notifies non-selected applicants promptly

7.5 Onboarding, Training, and Development

The functional area must provide a comprehensive professional development plan that includes onboarding, training, and development.

Functional area personnel must receive training when hired and professional development throughout their employment.

Functional area personnel must engage in continuing professional development activities to keep abreast of the research, theories, legislation, policies, and advancements that affect its programs and services.

Functional area personnel must engage in continuing professional development activities to apply current research when developing new programming, improving existing programming, or advocating for the discontinuation of existing programming.

The functional area must provide personnel with appropriate professional development opportunities or resources that facilitate individual goals and improve competence, skills, and leadership capacity.

When creating training and development programs or experiences, the functional area must

- ▶ account for different learning styles

- ▶ use a variety of delivery methods
- ▶ provide accessible platforms for delivering training and development programs
- ▶ encourage discussion and challenge to ideas and respect for opinions
- ▶ provide additional resources for learning outside of training

Functional area personnel must have access to resources and receive specific training on policies, procedures, and laws related to

- ▶ the functional area and institutional mission, goals, and core values
- ▶ the programs and services they support
- ▶ administrative and operational policies, procedures, and protocols
- ▶ resource allocation and planning
- ▶ privacy and confidentiality
- ▶ student records and sensitive institutional information
- ▶ access, diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice
- ▶ systems and technologies necessary to perform their assigned responsibilities
- ▶ sexual misconduct, harassment, and workplace violence
- ▶ all laws and policies that directly affect the delivery of the functional area programs and services

Functional area personnel must be trained on how to recognize and address systems of oppression in the workplace and facilitate a welcoming, inclusive work environment.

Functional area personnel must be trained on how and when to refer those in need of additional assistance to qualified staff and must have access to a supervisor for assistance in making these judgments.

Functional area supervisors must ensure that personnel are knowledgeable about and trained in safety, emergency procedures, identifying threatening conduct or behavior, crisis prevention, response, and reporting.

Functional area supervisors must seek input from their personnel during the process of writing

performance goals, objectives, and outcomes to be used to plan, review, and evaluate work and performance for each performance cycle.

Functional area supervisors and personnel must update performance plans and job descriptions regularly to reflect changes during the performance cycle.

Performance plans must be consistent with institutional, divisional, departmental, and individual expectations of personnel.

Functional area supervisors and personnel must have periodic conversations to discuss progress towards goals and needed changes to performance plans.

Functional area supervisors must use the results of performance evaluations to measure job competencies, identify growth opportunities, and implement individual and/or collective professional development and training programs.

7.6 Undergraduate and Graduate Student Employees

The functional area must verify that undergraduate and graduate student employees working in the functional area meet the eligibility and requirements for the position.

Undergraduate and graduate student employees working in the functional area must be carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated by supervisors with applicable educational credentials, work experience, and supervisory experience.

Training for undergraduate and graduate student employees must address privacy standards when working with sensitive information and data.

Functional area undergraduate and graduate student employees must be representative of the institution's student body, reflecting the diversity of the institutional community.

Functional area supervisors must adhere to the parameters of undergraduate and graduate student employees' job descriptions.

Functional area supervisors must articulate relevant student learning, development, and success outcomes in undergraduate and graduate student employees' job descriptions.

Functional area supervisors must comply with institutional policies regarding standards of work for undergraduate and graduate student employees and adhere to agreed-upon work hours and schedules.

Functional area supervisors must offer flexible scheduling options for undergraduate and graduate student employees.

Functional area supervisors must create an environment that welcomes feedback from undergraduate and graduate student employees.

Functional area supervisors must conduct evaluations and provide feedback.

Functional area supervisors must support undergraduate and graduate student employees with a specific emphasis on supervision, management, coaching, and mentoring.

Functional area supervisors must inform undergraduate and graduate student employees of compensation options in circumstances that necessitate additional hours.

PART 8. COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

8.1 Collaboration

The functional area must collaborate and consult with constituents essential to its success.

The functional area must collaborate with its constituents to address and achieve shared program and student learning, development, and success goals and outcomes.

The functional area must collaborate with its constituents to determine ways to build trust.

The functional area must collaborate with its constituents to define their respective roles and responsibilities in the collaboration.

The functional area must collaborate with its constituents to disseminate information about programs and services and garner support and resources.

The functional area must collaborate with constituents to meet their needs.

The functional area must collaborate with its constituents to engage diverse populations to enrich the educational environment.

The functional area must collaborate with its constituents to solve problems pertinent to the student population, other constituents, or the organization.

The functional area must collaborate with its constituents to assess, evaluate, and improve programs and services.

The functional area must refer its constituents to appropriate resources when assistance beyond the functional area's scope is needed.

8.2 Communication

The functional area must provide information, services, and resources that explain its mission, goals, and outcomes.

The functional area must develop and implement strategies for outreach and promotion to constituents who use or might benefit from the programs and services.

The functional area must create and implement a schedule regarding the places, formats, and timing of communications to its constituents.

The functional area promotional and descriptive information must be accurate, transparent, and free of deception and misrepresentation.

The functional area must communicate with its constituents using accessible formats and modalities.

8.3 Effective Approaches

The functional area must have and follow procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for

- ▶ communicating with the media
- ▶ distributing information through print, broadcast, and digital platforms
- ▶ using social media and streaming services
- ▶ providing programs and services through multiple modalities
- ▶ contracting with external organizations for delivery of programs and services

- ▶ developing relationships with donors
- ▶ disseminating relevant information in a timely manner to its constituents
- ▶ adhering to the institutional style and branding guidelines

▶ GUIDING PRINCIPLE: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

PART 9. ETHICS, LAW, AND POLICY

9.1 Ethical Statements, Policies, and Procedures

The functional area must review and adopt appropriate policies and standards of ethical practice including those of applicable professional associations.

The functional area must have or be able to easily retrieve institutional policies that clearly define and document ethics addressing

- ▶ conflicts of interest including financial interest, or appearance thereof, by personnel in the performance of their work
- ▶ management of institutional funds
- ▶ acceptance, in gratis, of cash or merchandise in accordance with institutional advancement reporting policies
- ▶ solicitation of gifts, in accordance with institutional advancement policies
- ▶ research and assessment with human participants and animal subjects
- ▶ confidentiality of research and assessment data
- ▶ safe retention of and destruction of student information
- ▶ development and implementation of an information retention policy
- ▶ the rights and responsibilities of its constituents
- ▶ disclosure of information in constituents' records
- ▶ what is considered speech of its personnel compared to that of a private citizen

The functional area must have written policies and procedures for operations, transactions, or tasks with ethical and legal implications.

The functional area must have and follow a timeline for formally reviewing policies and procedures.

The creation and revision of functional area policies and procedures must be informed by feedback from its constituents, other available evidence, and procedures often used across higher education.

The functional area must adopt institutional policies for threats, emergencies, and crises and supplement with approaches that make sense for its specific programs and services.

9.2 Ethical Practice

Functional area personnel must employ ethical decision-making in the performance of their day-to-day duties and responsibilities.

Functional area personnel must recognize and avoid conflicts of interest that could adversely influence their judgment and, when unavoidable, recuse themselves from the situation.

Functional area personnel must be honest, fair, and multipartial in interactions with their constituents.

Functional area personnel must demonstrate responsibility for sound and ethical assessment, research, evaluation, and program review.

The functional area must develop and publish a process for its constituents to report and address unethical behavior.

Functional area personnel must make referrals when issues presented by constituents exceed the scope of their position.

9.3 Legal Obligations and Responsibilities

Functional area personnel must comply with laws, regulations, policies, and procedures that relate to their responsibilities and pose legal obligations, limitations, risks, and liabilities for individuals and the institution.

Functional area personnel who are concerned about students' well-being must ensure that students are referred to appropriate resources in accordance with laws, governmental and institutional policies, and standards of good professional practice.

The functional area must have a process for accessing legal advice needed to carry out their assigned responsibilities.

The functional area must not discriminate against students in its services and programs in compliance with laws, institutional policy, and standards of good professional practice.

The functional area must purchase or obtain permission to use and appropriately cite protected intellectual property resources.

The functional area must comply with institutional and governmental reporting obligations.

9.4 Communication of Ethical and Legal Obligations

The functional area must educate new personnel about relevant ethical standards, statements of ethical practice, and related institutional policies and procedures.

The functional area must inform its constituents of ethical and legal obligations and limitations emanating from laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

The functional area personnel must provide its constituents with information about privacy rights and the disclosure obligations of its personnel.

Functional area leaders must inform personnel about internal and external governance organizations that affect the functional area.

Functional area leaders must inform personnel about professional liability insurance options and refer them to external sources if the institution does not provide coverage.

9.5 Addressing Harassment and Hostile Environments

The functional area must neither participate in nor condone any form of harassment or activity that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

The functional area must adhere to institutional policies and procedures regarding sexual misconduct, harassment, and workplace violence.

The functional area must have policies and procedures consistent with institutional policies to address bias incidents.

▶ GUIDING PRINCIPLE: LEARNING-CONDUCTIVE STRUCTURES, RESOURCES, AND SYSTEMS

PART 10. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

10.1 Financial Planning

The functional area must provide a clear and accurate financial plan and budget.

In establishing and prioritizing funding needs, the functional area must conduct comprehensive analyses to determine

- ▶ relevant expenditures required to advance the mission of the unit
- ▶ unmet needs of the unit
- ▶ resources needed to develop innovative strategies to advance the mission of the unit
- ▶ potential funding sources, both internal and external, to the institution
- ▶ potential influence on its constituents and the institution
- ▶ future expenditures related to planned growth and maintenance

The functional area's financial plan must be used in decision-making.

10.2 Funding

The functional area must have the funding necessary to accomplish its mission and goals.

The functional area must use benchmarks and other relevant data to advocate to financial leadership for necessary funding.

The functional area must maintain funding for programs, services, and personnel to effectively meet the stated mission, goals, and outcomes.

The functional area must allocate funds equitably across its units.

The functional area must have the funding to maintain, retain, and promote personnel.

The functional area must have the funding to support the professional development of personnel.

10.3 Financial Management

Functional area leaders must have administrative responsibility for the budget.

The functional area must manage funds in accordance with established governmental and institutional laws as well as institutional policies, procedures, and guidelines.

The functional area must have procedures and guidelines consistent with the institutional policy for applying to and managing funds from external resources.

The functional area must have procedures and guidelines consistent with the institutional policy for applying and managing funds from student fees.

The functional area must demonstrate responsible stewardship and use of fiscal resources.

The functional area's procedures must

- ▶ be consistent with institutional policies
- ▶ ensure that purchases comply with laws and codes for usability and access
- ▶ account for the ethical, environmental, and equity implications of expenditures

PART 11. TECHNOLOGY

11.1 Systems Management

The functional area must have current technology to support the fulfillment of its mission and goals.

The functional area must ensure that technology used is accessible to diverse users.

The functional area must incorporate accessibility features into technology-based programs, services, and communications.

The functional area must ensure that personnel have computers, software, tools, and other technology to enact their responsibilities effectively.

The functional area must ensure that personnel have access to training and support for the strategic application of technology.

The functional area must implement a technology (hardware/software) replacement and/or update plan and cycle with attention to sustainability.

The functional area must have a backup plan to ensure access to data when systems are down or compromised by malware attacks.

11.2 User Engagement

The functional area must use institutionally supported and up-to-date technologies to enhance the delivery of programs and services for all users.

The functional area must ensure that technology addresses the needs of its constituents, including its provision of multi-modal programs and services.

The functional area must employ technologies facilitating user interaction.

The functional area must ensure secure access to departmental data for appropriate personnel.

The functional area must have policies and practices to ensure the integrity of departmental data.

11.3 Compliance and Information Security

The functional area must have policies on the appropriate use of clear and easily accessible technology.

The functional area must comply with governmental codes and laws and with institutional technology policies and procedures.

The functional area must work with IT professionals to ensure data and systems are secure.

The functional area must provide a secure platform for managing operations involving personal information or records, in accordance with industry best practices and institutional policy and practices.

11.4 Communication

The functional area must have websites and digital platforms adaptable to multiple devices that provide information to its constituents in accessible formats.

The functional area must use technology that allows users to communicate sensitive information in secure formats.

The functional area must evaluate digital platforms for collaboration and communication and implement those that best meet the needs of its constituents.

The functional area must develop contingency plans regarding the continuance of university communications and operations in the event of an operational disruption such as a pandemic, natural disaster, or criminal act.

PART 12. FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

12.1 Space and Facility Design

Functional area spaces must be in suitable facilities with equipment designed to support the functional area's mission, goals, programs, services, and diverse users.

The functional area must advocate for its involvement when designing spaces and facilities associated with its programs and services.

Functional area spaces must be intentionally designed to engage diverse students and other users.

Functional area spaces must promote learning, development, and success.

Functional area spaces must support various program and educational needs.

Functional area spaces must be designed to protect the security and privacy of records and ensure the confidentiality of sensitive information and conversations.

The functional area must incorporate universal design principles.

Functional area spaces and facilities must be designed and constructed to be energy-efficient and sustainable.

If the functional area has personnel who work remotely, the remote facilities and technology must be integrated to support collaboration and efficiency of a hybrid workforce.

Functional area personnel must have well-equipped, clean, and operable workspaces designed to support their work, responsibilities, and well-being.

Functional area facilities and equipment must be inspected on an established cycle and comply with codes, laws, and established practices for accessibility, cleanliness, health, safety, and security.

The functional area must assess the effectiveness of its facilities and equipment to ensure they are meeting facilities and equipment goals, program outcomes, and diverse user needs.

The functional area must utilize current technology when designing and using the facilities.

12.2 Access to Spaces

Functional area spaces must be accessible and welcoming.

The functional area must have a process in place to provide reasonable spaces, facilities, and equipment accommodations when universal design does not meet an individual's accessibility needs.

Functional area personnel must have access to private spaces for confidential conversations with its constituents.

Functional area personnel must be able to safeguard the privacy of their work within the space.

12.3 Equipment Acquisition and Management

When acquiring capital equipment, the functional area must consider expenses related to the life cycle, repair, replacement, and depreciation.

The functional area must incorporate sustainable practices when purchasing equipment.

The functional area must plan expenses for regular maintenance, repair, replacement, and renovations.

The functional area must promptly report damaged, malfunctioning, defective, unusable, or faulty facilities, and equipment to the entity responsible for maintenance.

The functional area must have access to properly trained and skilled personnel to maintain the facility and equipment.

General Standards revised September 2022.

The CAS General Standards should be considered in conjunction with the [CAS Guiding Principles](#), [CAS General Standards Contextual Statement](#), [CAS Glossary of Terms](#), [CAS Learning and Development Domains and Dimensions](#), and [Aspects of Identity in the CAS Standards](#).

CAS would like to acknowledge and express appreciation to the following individuals for their significant contributions in the development of these standards:

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