Performance Standards

cognia™

In 2018, leading education nonprofits AdvancED® and Measured Progress® came together. With more than a century of experience in accreditation and school improvement and decades of leadership in student assessment solutions, the new organization—Cognia™—brings institutions around the world a new, holistic way to view school performance and student achievement.

To assure that our Performance Standards remain relevant and forward-thinking, we undertake review and development of our Standards on a recurring 5-year cycle. We expect to publish new Cognia standards early in 2021; accreditation reviews based on the new standards will begin in school year 2022–23. The AdvancED Performance Standards in this document remain in effect until then.

AdvancED® Performance Standards

Continuous improvement that results in success for all learners should be the goal of every institution. The *Improvement Journey* for each institution may look different but should always include measures of quality of learning and instruction. The *AdvancED Performance Standards* serve this purpose by providing a set of evaluative criteria that lays the foundation for improvement planning and implementation. Based on rigorous research and best practices, the Standards are a powerful tool for driving institutional change.

AdvancED is committed to quality and meeting the needs of the educational institutions we serve. Every five years, we use an iterative process to review, revise and renew our Standards to ensure they remain relevant and challenge institutions to reach higher. Our guiding question is: What will support the success of each and every learner?

The *AdvancED Performance Standards* embody our belief that high quality learning can transform lives, communities and the world.

Anatomy of the *AdvancED Performance Standards*

The new Standards, varying in number based on institution type, are organized under three Domains:

1. Leadership Capacity
2. Learning Capacity
3. Resource Capacity

The Domains are statements that define the capacity of an organization or institution to provide quality and meet the rigorous demands of continuous improvement. Each Domain is further defined by Standards.

The *AdvancED Performance Standards* are research-based statements that describe conditions that are necessary for institutions to support organizational effectiveness and improve student performance.

Collectively, the elements of the *AdvancED Performance Standards* serve as a road map for the continuous improvement process for institutions and as the foundation of the accreditation process used by AdvancED Review Teams to provide relevant and quality feedback on how institutions are serving the learner.

1 Leadership Capacity Domain

The capacity of leadership to ensure a corporation's progress toward its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An organization's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the organization to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to enact strategies to improve results of student learning and professional practice.

Standard 1.1: The organization commits to a documented purpose that defines beliefs about learning, including expectations for the organization.

Standard 1.2: Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the organization's purpose.

Standard 1.3: The organization engages in a continuous improvement process that leverages its performance and future success based on documented evidence.

Standard 1.4: The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support organizational effectiveness.

Standard 1.5: The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities.

Standard 1.6: Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.

Standard 1.7: The organization markets and promotes itself through processes that are transparent and reflect the organization's purpose.

Standard 1.8: Organizational leaders demonstrate business acumen.

Standard 1.9: Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness and professional practice.

Standard 1.10: Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the organization's purpose and direction.

Standard 1.11: The organization provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.

Standard 1.12: Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making for improvement.

Standard 1.13: The organization implements a documented quality assurance process for its institutions to ensure organizational effectiveness and student learning.

2 Learning Capacity Domain

The impact of teaching and learning is a primary expectation of every corporation and its institutions. The establishment of a learning culture built on high expectations for learning along with quality programs and services, which include an analysis of results, are all key indicators of the organization's impact on teaching and learning.

Standard 2.1: The organization ensures learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning expectations.

Standard 2.2: The organization develops and implements equitable, relevant, and targeted programs and/or services to meet the needs of its institutions.

Standard 2.3: The organization's learning culture promotes creativity, innovation, relevancy and collaborative problem-solving.

Standard 2.4: The organization's learning culture promotes the development of attitudes, beliefs and skills needed for success.

Standard 2.5: The organization has a formal structure to ensure learners are supported during their educational experiences.

Standard 2.6: Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels.

Standard 2.7: The organization implements a process to ensure the curriculum is aligned to standards and best practices.

Standard 2.8: Educators implement instructional strategies that ensure learners' needs are met and that learners are engaged in deeper learning experiences.

Standard 2.9: Learning progress is reliably assessed, and results are used to update curriculum, program services, and instructional practices deployed to educators.

Standard 2.10: Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.

Standard 2.11: The organization implements a process to continuously assess its programs, services and organizational conditions to improve its overall effectiveness.

3 Resource Capacity Domain

The use and distribution of resources align and support the needs of the organization and institutions served. Corporations ensure that resources are aligned with the stated purpose and direction and distributed equitably so that the needs of the organization are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for the professional learning for all staff. The organization examines the allocation and use of resources to ensure appropriate levels of funding, sustainability, and organizational effectiveness.

Standard 3.1: The organization plans and delivers professional learning to improve the organization's learning environment and organizational effectiveness.

Standard 3.2: The organization's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve organizational effectiveness.

Standard 3.3: The organization provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve organizational effectiveness.

Standard 3.4: The organization attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the organization's purpose and direction.

Standard 3.5: The organization integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness.

Standard 3.6: The organization provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of learners, staff, and the organization.

Standard 3.7: The organization demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the organization's purpose and direction.

Standard 3.8: The organization allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the organization's identified needs and priorities to improve organizational effectiveness.

About Cognia

Cognia™ is a global nonprofit that has the knowledge to help schools improve. Cognia offers accreditation and certification, assessment, professional learning, and improvement services. The result of the merger of AdvancED and Measured Progress, Cognia was formed to bridge the gap between school evaluation and student assessment. We are the largest education improvement organization in the world and an undeniable force for enhancing schools, engaging students, and driving better outcomes for all.

Find out more at cognia.org.

cognia.org