

School Assessment of NWAIS Standards and Indicators Leading to and Maintaining Accreditation (adopted May 2013)

A school with a full academic program and located within the United States may join NWAIS only if it commits to pursuing NWAIS accreditation and abides by the NWAIS Core Values and Essential Characteristics. In pursuing NWAIS accreditation, we recognize that schools will be at various stages of development when beginning the application process. The accompanying chart assists the Association's Executive Director in determining a school's appropriate affiliation status. The chart outlines the Association's 14 standards and their underlying indicators. These indicators and their earlier iterations are mapped out according to where the Association expects a school to be in its developmental stage relative to each NWAIS affiliation category.

For a school applying to NWAIS, the school should assess its current compliance with the various expectations under each category of affiliation using the following assessment codes: M=meeting the expectation C=close to meeting the expectation N=not meeting the expectation. A school should assess its compliance for all three categories of affiliation. It is not unusual for a school to be meeting expectations under the different levels of affiliation. However, a school meeting all of the expectations underneath a particular affiliation category will in all likelihood be placed in that affiliation category. The Executive Director will help determine key benchmarks for a school to reach prior to moving to the next level of affiliation.

For a current NWAIS school seeking to move from one category of affiliation to another, the school should be meeting all of the expectations outlined in its current category of affiliation and almost all of the expectations of the category into which they wish to move before gaining that affiliation status. A school should assess its compliance for all three categories of affiliation using the following assessment codes: M=meeting the expectation C=close to meeting the expectation N=not meeting the expectation.

Contact the NWAIS office at 206-323-6137 with any questions.

Standard	Expectations for Becoming A Subscriber School <i>(A school should move to Candidate Member within a 5 year period)</i>	Expectations for Becoming A Candidate Member <i>(A school should host an accreditation visiting team within a 5 year period)</i>	Expectations for Becoming An Accredited School
NWAIS Self Study Process			
The school has conducted a self study that provides for reflection and for broad participation of the school community in a way that illustrates the school's commitment to continual school improvement.	The school commits to an approach of ongoing school improvement, and as part of this process, the school strives to meet all NWAIS Core Values and Essential Characteristics.	The school continues to move toward gaining accreditation by illustrating ongoing school improvement, and as part of this process, the school takes specific steps to meet all NWAIS Core Values and Essential Characteristics.	Indicator 1: The school has conducted its self study process in a way that assures that the responses to each section are the result of perspectives of people from both within and outside of the area being reviewed.
	The school commits to gaining accreditation by using the NWAIS self study as a guide in the development of its overall program.	The school continues to pursue accreditation by using the NWAIS self study as a guide in the development of its overall program.	Indicator 2: The school has surveyed its faculty and staff, students, parents, and, if appropriate, alumni within three years of its accreditation visit for the purpose of reflection and continual improvement.
			Indicator 3: The school has addressed all major recommendations from its previous accreditation visit (only for schools going through re-accreditation).
School Mission			
The school's mission is understood and supported by all constituencies.		The school continues to assess the relevance of its mission and to educate its constituencies about the role of the mission in the school's development.	Indicator 1: The school and its Board have reviewed its mission as the starting point in the self study process.
	Indicator 2: The school has a clear mission that is effectively communicated.		

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School Program			
<p>The school provides a mission-congruent educational program designed and implemented to promote the development of its students and in keeping with NWAIS core values. The program benefits from ongoing assessment and research, is supported by necessary resources and services, and provides for the assessment of student progress consistent with the school's mission.</p>	The school is developing a program that is congruent with the school's mission, philosophy and values.	The school is developing a process that assesses the congruence between the school's program and its mission, philosophy and values.	Indicator 1: The school's program is congruent with the school's mission, philosophy and values.
	The school commits to developing an overall program that provides students with a school experience that promotes free and open inquiry and diverse perspectives. The school also commits to developing other characteristics and capacities that students will need to lead purposeful, healthy and constructive lives.	The school is developing an overall program that provides students with a school experience that promotes free and open inquiry and diverse perspectives. The school also promotes other characteristics and capacities that students will need to lead purposeful, healthy and constructive lives.	Indicator 2: The school's overall program provides students with a school experience that promotes free and open inquiry and diverse perspectives and that promotes other characteristics and capacities that students will need to lead purposeful, healthy and constructive lives.
	Indicator 3: The school's overall educational program and instruction practices stem from a set of underlying beliefs and assumptions about the ways students learn.		
		The school is developing a process for the quantitative and/or qualitative assessment of its overall program.	Indicator 4: The school utilizes quantitative and/or qualitative information to assess and improve its overall program.
	The school is developing procedures for the assessment and communication of student progress and/or development.	Indicator 5: The school has clear and effective procedures for the assessment and communication of student progress and/or development.	
	The school must have some form of written description of its curriculum.	Indicator 6: The school has a written curriculum guide.	
		Indicator 7: The school communicates and coordinates the program between departments, divisions and grade levels.	
		Indicator 8: The school has reflected upon what constitutes excellence in teaching in a way that is appropriate to the mission of the school.	
	The school is identifying the necessary services to nurture, support and meet the social, emotional, physical and learning needs of its students.	The school is developing the necessary services to nurture, support and meet the social, emotional, physical and learning needs of its students.	Indicator 9: The school has developed the necessary services to nurture, support and meet the social, emotional, physical and learning needs of its students.
		The school is developing information literacy in its students.	Indicator 10: The school develops information literacy in its students.
If your school utilizes, or intends to utilize online/distance education, the school is developing an online program that is congruent with its mission and beliefs about how students learn.	If your school utilizes online/distance education, the school is developing a process that assesses the congruence between the online/distance education program and its mission and beliefs about how students learn.	Indicator 11: The school's online education and/or distance education is congruent with its mission and beliefs about how students learn. (Respond if your school utilizes online/distance education)	
	The school is developing a co-curricular program that is congruent with the school mission and that contributes to preparation of students to lead purposeful, healthy and constructive lives.	Indicator 12: The school has developed a co-curricular program congruent with the school mission and contributing to preparation of students to lead purposeful, healthy and constructive lives. (The co-curricular program may include clubs, sports, after-school activities, competitions, summer program, trips, etc.)	
The school identifies the necessary resources to support the overall educational program.	The school is developing the necessary resources to support the overall educational program.	Indicator 13: The school has the necessary resources to support the overall educational program.	
	The school is developing a process for determining the effectiveness of the design and implementation of its educational program components.	Indicator 14: Each of the school's educational program components is effectively designed and implemented.	

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School Culture				
The school has an intentional culture, which supports the school's mission and NWAIS' core value of free and open inquiry.	The school is mindful of the culture it is creating.	The school is developing an understanding of its own culture.	Indicator 1: There is an intentional school culture.	
	The school is mindful of how its culture relates to the school's mission.	The school is developing a culture aligned with its mission.	Indicator 2: There is a strong correlation between the stated mission of the school and the culture that exists in the school.	
	The school is committed to promoting a culture of free and open inquiry	Indicator 3: The school's culture promotes free and open inquiry.		
Commitment to Diversity				
The school has created a program, culture, and inclusive community of students, families, trustees, faculty, and staff that reflect many perspectives and diverse backgrounds.	The school commits to providing an overall program that honors diverse perspectives and backgrounds.	The school has articulated its commitment to diversity.	Indicator 1: The school's overall program provides students with a school experience that is in keeping with the school's commitment to diversity.	
		The school is developing an understanding of what might constitute a diverse student body in accordance with the school's mission and its geographic community.	Indicator 2: The school has defined what constitutes a diverse student body in accordance with the school's mission and its geographic community.	
	The school commits to developing efforts to address the issue of diversity through hiring and training of staff appropriate to its mission statement and its definition of diversity.	The school has begun its efforts in the hiring and training of staff that will strengthen the quality of the educational program through allowing students access to diverse perspectives.	Indicator 3: The school makes a concerted effort to address the issue of diversity through hiring and training of staff appropriate to its mission statement and its definition of diversity.	
Institutional Leadership				
NWAIS schools are self-governing and self-supporting with an institutional leadership structure consisting of a governing board and a Head of School operating in a constructive partnership that provides for the effective oversight, planning, resource development, and day-to-day management adequate to sustain the school's mission and vision.	Indicator 1: The school's articles of incorporation and bylaws define and direct the school's institutional leadership structure, policies, and procedures.			
	The school has established itself as a 501(c)(3) independent school with an institutional leadership structure that includes at least two separate entities which carry out the separate functions of governance and day-to-day management.	Indicator 2: The Head of School and the school's governing body have developed an effective partnership.		
	The school has begun to define the respective roles and responsibilities of its governing body and its Head.	Indicator 3: The governing body has conferred the appropriate authority necessary for the Head of School to effectively lead the day-to-day operations of the school.		
	The school has begun to identify the strategic issues facing the school.	The school has begun to develop plans that address the strategic issues facing the school.	Indicator 4: The school's institutional leadership engages in long-range and strategic thinking as illustrated by having a strategic plan that covers at least a three year period and that drives the annual work of the school's Institutional Leadership.	
	The school's is working toward the appropriate size, composition, and structure of its governing body to achieve essential governance duties and support organization priorities.		Indicator 5: The school's governing body is of appropriate size, composition, and structure to achieve essential governance duties and support organization priorities.	
	The school is mindful of the skills and experience that will be required for board members to be effective.	Indicator 6: The school's governing body has policies and procedures in place for orienting and educating its members.		
	The school's governing body keeps written records of its meetings.	Indicator 7: The school's governing body keeps records of its meetings, committees and policies and communicates its decisions appropriately, while keeping its deliberations confidential.		
	The school is identifying conflicts of interest and seeking to resolve any conflicts that may exist.	Indicator 8: The governing body has a conflict of interest policy.		
	The school's governing body is developing a process to assess and improve its own effectiveness.		Indicator 9: The school's governing body has processes to assess and improve its own effectiveness.	
	The school's institutional leadership is developing a process to assess and improve the effectiveness of the Head of School.	Indicator 10: The school's institutional leadership has processes to assess and improve the effectiveness of the Head of School.		
	The school's governing body is developing an understanding of the role of fundraising in the life of the school.	The school's governing body is developing an understanding of its role in fundraising.	Indicator 11: The school's governing body understands and acts upon its role in fundraising.	

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Finance			
The school practices sound financial management, and its financial operations, resources, planning, and oversight are adequate to support the school's mission and to sustain the school's long-term viability and stability.	The school is identifying the financial needs of the school.	The school is developing adequate current financial resources to support its operations.	Indicator 1: The school has adequate current financial resources to support its operations.
	The school articulates what financial resources are necessary to support its operations.	The school has started developing a multi-year financial planning process that takes into account strategic initiatives and impacts the annual budgeting process.	Indicator 2: The school's financial planning process assures the long-term viability of the school through a financial plan that covers at least a three year period, supports the school's strategic plan, and drives the development of the school's annual budget.
	The school has an annual budget that has been adopted by, and is periodically reviewed by the Board.	Indicator 3: The school follows practices sufficient for the governing body to provide oversight and guidance regarding financial operations.	
	The school has begun to identify potential areas of financial risk.	The school is developing practices that allow the school to evaluate elements of financial risk.	Indicator 4: The school follows practices sufficient for the governing body to provide oversight and guidance regarding risk management.
		The school has conducted a full opinioned audit prior to being approved as a Candidate Member.	Indicator 5: The school completes a full independent audit twice during an accreditation cycle no more than four years apart, one of which has to cover the fiscal year prior to the accreditation evaluation, and addresses issues raised in the management letter, if applicable.
		The school understands the financial impact of auxiliary services on its annual operating budget	Indicator 6: Auxiliary services are appropriately funded and mission appropriate.
		The school has begun communicating its financial status to appropriate constituencies.	Indicator 7: The school forthrightly and regularly communicates its financial status to appropriate constituencies.
Administration			
The school has an effective administration that enables the school to implement the school program in accordance with its mission, to carry out school policy, and to comply with applicable laws and regulations.	The school is developing a basic administrative structure that adequately supports its programmatic and operating needs.	The school is developing its administrative structure to cover the essential areas of School Leadership, Development, Enrollment Management, School Operations, Financial Management, and Academic Leadership.	Indicator 1: The school has created an effective administrative structure that covers the essential areas of School Leadership, Development, Enrollment Management, School Operations, Financial Management, and Academic Leadership.
		The school's administration is determining the resources required to support the program.	Indicator 2: The school's administration has sufficient resources to conduct the school's program.
		Indicator 3: The school has processes in place to familiarize itself and comply with federal, state, and local laws and regulations that apply to the school.	
Institutional Advancement			
The school has an institutional advancement program that sufficiently supports the mission and program of the school.	The school is educating itself about the importance and impact of communications, marketing, and development on its future success.	The school is developing its institutional advancement program so that it supports the mission and program of the school.	Indicator 1: The school's institutional advancement program is designed and operated in a way that supports the mission and program of the school.
		The school has started identifying the resources necessary to conduct its institutional advancement program.	Indicator 2: The school has sufficient resources to conduct its institutional advancement program.
		The school is developing a process to review its institutional advancement management program on a regular basis and revises it as needed.	Indicator 3: The school reviews its institutional advancement management program on a regular basis and revises it as needed.
	The school is beginning to interact constructively with its community and is beginning to avail itself of community resources.	Indicator 4: The school interacts constructively with its community and avails itself of community resources.	

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Enrollment Management				
The school has defined what it means by a mission appropriate student and has an enrollment management program that sufficiently supports the mission and program of the school.	The school has an initial understanding of what type of students would be best served by the school.	The school is developing a definition of what it means by a mission appropriate student.	Indicator 1: The school has defined what it means by a mission appropriate student.	
	The school is developing an admissions process.	The school is developing its enrollment management program so that it supports the school's mission and program.	Indicator 2: The school has an enrollment management program that is designed and operated in a way that supports the school's mission and program.	
	The school is educating itself on the role of financial assistance as it enrolls students.	The school is developing its financial assistance program so that it supports the school's enrollment management program.	Indicator 3: The school has a financial assistance program that is designed and operated in a way that supports the school's enrollment management program.	
	The school annually identifies the desired number of students it intends to enroll.	Indicator 4: The school has determined the desired number of students and achievable enrollment targets for the next three years or longer.		
	The school has started identifying the resources necessary to run its admissions process	The school has started identifying the resources necessary to conduct its enrollment management program	Indicator 5: The school has sufficient resources to conduct its enrollment management program.	
Human Resources				
The school has policies and practices in place to ensure that employees are well qualified, adequately compensated, appropriately supported through effective evaluation and strong professional development, and are sufficient in number to support the school's efforts to achieve its mission.	The school is developing effective hiring practices that result in well-qualified employees sufficient in number to support the school's program.	Indicator 1: The school has effective hiring practices that result in well-qualified employees sufficient in number to support the school's program.		
	The school is considering various employee compensation and evaluation systems	The school is developing initial employee compensation and evaluation systems.	Indicator 2: The school has compensation and evaluation systems in place that are well thought through and are clearly communicated to employees.	
	The school is beginning to structure a professional development program.	The school provides a structured professional development program for its staff.	Indicator 3: The school has a strong professional development program.	
	The school has reviewed its compliance with applicable employment-related federal and state laws to manage risk.	Indicator 4: The school regularly reviews its compliance with applicable employment-related federal and state laws to manage risk.		
	Indicator 5: The school has an effective process for communicating essential Human Resources related information to employees.			
School Plant				
The school's plant supports the mission and program of the school and is maintained over time in a manner that is sustainable.	The school has, or is developing a physical plant that supports the existence of the school.	The school is developing a physical plant that supports the school's program in a manner consistent with its mission.	Indicator 1: The school's physical plant supports the school's program in a manner consistent with its mission.	
		The school has, or is developing a plant that will be sustainable. Or, the school has plans for the same.	Indicator 2: The school demonstrates an ability to sustain the school's current plant and location for at least a three-year period, or alternatively, has a realistic and sustainable plan for change of plant or location.	
	The school begins long-range facilities planning that is incorporated into the school's strategic and long-range financial plans and addresses plant maintenance, improvement or expansion as correlated with projected enrollment, program growth, or institutional development and change.		Indicator 3: The school demonstrates long-range facilities planning that is incorporated into the school's strategic and long-range financial plans and addresses plant maintenance, improvement or expansion as correlated with projected enrollment, program growth, or institutional development and change.	
	The school is developing annual and long-range budgeting practices and adequate asset allocation to support plant occupancy, maintenance, and safety.		Indicator 4: The school demonstrates annual and long-range budgeting practices and adequate asset allocation to support plant occupancy, maintenance, and safety.	
	The school has begun to identify the resources it needs to support the technology needs of the program and administration.	The school identifies the resources it needs to support the technology needs of the program and administration.	Indicator 5: The school has adequate systems in place to support the technology needs of the program and the administration.	

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Health and Safety			
The school has established and effectively implemented policies and procedures that promote a safe and healthy school environment consistent with the mission of the school.	The school identifies risks to the health and safety of students and takes appropriate steps to reduce hazards.	The school has begun to develop policies and procedures with the goal of reducing hazards to health and safety.	Indicator 1: The school evaluates risks to the health and safety of students and develops, reviews and disseminates policies and procedures with the goal of reducing hazards to health and safety.
	Indicator 2: The school gives appropriate priority to operating its buildings, equipment, and grounds in a safe manner.		
	The school is developing plans to effectively supervise and instruct students with attention to their safety.	Indicator 3: The school implements plans to effectively supervise and instruct students with attention to their safety.	
	The school is developing procedures to deal with health, accident, injury and illness.	Indicator 4: The school has written procedures to deal with health, accident, injury and illness.	
	The school is developing emergency and crisis procedures.	Indicator 5: The school has written emergency and crisis procedures and is prepared to implement them.	
Residential Program			
The residential program operates in a way that assures a balanced, thoughtfully planned, and mission consistent experience for students.	The school has articulated its beliefs and assumptions about how students learn in its residential program.	The school is developing its residential curriculum with defined goals and objectives that adequately meet the needs of its residential students.	Indicator 1: The residential program has a written residential curriculum with defined goals and objectives that supports the school mission and adequately meets the needs of the residential students.
	The school is identifying ways in which the residential program is integrated into the total life of the school.	The school is developing the ways in which the residential program is integrated into the total life of the school.	Indicator 2: The residential program is integrated into the total life of the School.
	The school is identifying the means by which it can accommodate its students.	The school is developing the means by which it can accommodate students with different profiles and needs.	Indicator 3: The School accommodates students with different profiles and needs.
	The school is identifying the preparation and experience necessary for an employee to be considered well-qualified to meet the needs of students under their supervision.	Indicator 4: Residential staff members are qualified by preparation and/or experience to meet the needs of students under their supervision.	