INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION

AIAASC

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION
ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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INTRODUCTION

These Accreditation Standards enable AIAASC to monitor institutional or programmatic performance in advancing academic quality, primarily measured through student learning, personal development, academic achievement, and professional success. To achieve this, AIAASC bases its accreditation judgments on: the mission and vision of the institution; the structure of governance and leadership; the instructional qualifications and teaching effectiveness of the faculty; the process of selecting international programs or American styled university curricula; the resources allocated for student support and safety; the administrative staff and operating procedures; the financial strength of the institution; the effectiveness of the institutional improvement plan; the institutional commitment to integrity; and other such key elements that demonstrate that the accredited institution is a quality, well-functioning, and ethically-grounded organization following recognized good practice in international higher education.

The AIAASC Accreditation Standards were developed specifically for institutions of international higher education and indicate high-quality educational practices. These standards should be used by the institutional stakeholders to self-assess their practices and programs to ensure that they are providing high-quality and rigorous educational programs for all students. A full accreditation site visit is conducted by higher educational professionals who use these standards, along with the institution's self study report based upon the standards, to evaluate institution-wide operations, to provide peer review, and to verify the institutional effectiveness and improvement plan. Institutions that continually engage in self-assessment and set goals based on these standards will ensure that they are providing high quality educational programs for all students.

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 — VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

The institution articulates a mission that defines institutional purposes, priorities, and goals appropriate to international higher education. It gives direction to operational activities and provides guidance to internal and external stakeholders. The mission conveys core values that place student learning, development, and achievement at the center of the institutional endeavor. Institutional governance is attentive to the changing landscape of international higher education and uses such insight for improving institutional effectiveness through an ongoing process of reviewing and revising, as needed, the mission and assessment of mission and goal achievement. The mission provides a basis for engaging in institutional reflection, internal and external assessment, and quality improvement. Together, the vision, mission, and values statements empower the institution to help students identify and establish their place within a rapidly changing and ecologically challenged globalized society.

Institutional Vision, Mission, and Values

1.1 The institution's vision of the challenges of the globalized society that its students and stakeholders will encounter is clearly articulated. This vision guides institutional mission, strategic thinking, long-term planning, and resource allocation.

1.2 The institution's mission statement reflects its vision, serves student needs, and defines its educational purpose in terms of student learning, development, achievement, and global engagement.

1.3 The mission statement guides institutional decision-making related to curricular and co-curricular programming, planning, resource allocation, local community outreach, and global engagement. The mission serves as the basis for evaluating institutional, programmatic, and academic outcomes, both internally and against comparable external peer institutions.

1.4 The institution defines the values it embraces in pursuit of its mission.

1.5 The institution can clearly demonstrate the collaborative process through which the mission statement was created and formally adopted and that it involved participation of appropriate stakeholders in its creation.

1.6 The institution measures mission accomplishment methodically by demonstrating effective achievement of the goals, objectives, and indicators it articulates for academic programming, and student learning and development, achievement, success, and global engagement.

1.7 The institution engages in a periodic review of the content and relevance of the mission statement in collaboration with key stakeholders. It updates the mission in light of the evolving context in which international higher education takes place, and in accordance with the changing needs of student learning and development. The institution redirects institutional planning and resources accordingly.

1.8 The institution ensures that the mission is communicated to internal and external stakeholders. The mission statement appears in appropriate print and digital publications and is displayed throughout the institution. The institution ensures that key stakeholders know the mission.

STANDARD 2 — STUDENT LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT, AND ACHIEVEMENT

The institution's educational programs clearly reflect its vision, mission, and values and set standards for student learning, development, and achievement consistent with international higher education expectations and appropriate to the degrees, certificates, credentials, and employment to which they lead. The institution places its primary focus on the quality of student learning, development, and achievement within its educational programs.

The institution encourages students to take responsibility for, and gain autonomy in, the learning process, the building upon prior knowledge, and the application of such learning towards further education, career development, and civic engagement with global issues.

Student Learning, Development, and Achievement

2.1 The content, delivery, goals, and intellectual rigor of academic programs are consistent with the institution's vision, mission, and values.

2.2 The institution offers collegiate-level courses and curricular content consistent with equivalent institutions and recognized fields of study in international higher education.

2.3 The institution demonstrates that its instructional technique develops students' higher-order thinking skills such as quantitative reasoning, critical analysis, problem-solving, integrative thinking, meta-cognition, global learning, and sustainability literacy.

2.4 In pursuit of student learning and development, and to increase student opportunities for completing their chosen academic program, the institution provides appropriate responses and support mechanisms for students with individualized needs and different learning preferences.

2.5 To achieve maximum student learning and development, instructors monitor each student's academic progress and ensure that each student is achieving expected course learning objectives. Individualized support or tutoring is provided as needed.

2.6 In support of student learning, development, and achievement, and to ensure students complete their courses, programs, and degree requirements, the institution closely monitors and documents student performance and progress, shares outcomes with the student, and provides academic support or tutoring as needed.

2.7 Students successfully completing academic programs earn degrees, certificates, or credentials that are recognized in their respective professional fields of study, and where required, by the state Ministry of Education.

Assessment of Learning

2.8 The institution articulates and publishes clear and easily accessible expected student learning outcomes, required sequenced coursework, and formative and summative assessment protocols for each academic program of study resulting in credit, degree, certificate, or credential.

2.9 For both courses and programs, student learning outcome expectations demonstrate a breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis consistent with the institutional mission, appropriate to international higher education, and pertinent to solving global problems.

2.10 Consistent with its mission, the institution has a robust system of formative and summative assessment and evaluation to measure and improve the quality of student learning and development for all curricular goals and academic programs. This system includes both direct and indirect measures of student learning and development.

2.11 The instructional faculty plays a central role in assessment processes and follows the principles of transparency, equity, and rigor in designing, delivering, and using assessment processes and data.

2.12 Within academic courses, instructors use formative and summative assessment techniques to monitor the quality of student learning and development; to compare entry-level to end-of-course knowledge and skill acquisition; and to revise the curriculum and course content and delivery as needed for improved student learning, development, and achievement.

2.13 In addition to assessing course and programmatic learning outcomes, and as part of its social responsibility to address global problems, the institution commits to assessing the sustainability literacy of students, faculty, and staff.

2.14 Consistent with its mission and in pursuit of continuous improvement in student learning, development, and achievement, the institution uses meaningful external assessment tools and processes to measure and validate aggregate student learning and performance over time.

2.15 External assessment outcomes are compared to appropriate peer institutions, used to identify improvements to instructional and administrative operations, and made easily available to institutional stakeholders.

2.16 The institution monitors and statistically analyzes student learning and development through course, programmatic and institutional examination scores and completion rates. The institution compares results over time and, based on assessment evidence, documents actions taken for improving student achievement

2.17 The institution collects, analyzes, and archives assessment indicators of student learning, development, and achievement and uses such information to improve programmatic and institutional effectiveness.

Graduate Education

2.18 Consistent with its mission and appropriate to the higher level of graduate and professional education, the institution articulates graduate program goals and objectives, curricular content, instructional methods, performance standards, learning resources, assessment processes, learning outcomes, and support services that are clearly differentiated from undergraduate education and programming.

2.19 Standards for graduate programs include, but are not limited to, the following attributes: greater depth of study, engagement in original research, more demands placed on independent analytic reasoning, greater intellectual rigor, deeper and wider knowledge of scholarship and professional practice in one's chosen field, greater capacity for creative thinking, and interaction with faculty advisors normally expected to hold a terminal degree in their field of study.

2.20 The institution has policies and procedures for administering student and staff research activity and output at the graduate level. Supervision over graduate research students is structured, effective, and premised upon student learning and development, improvement, and research output. Research students have access to facilities and resources appropriate to their needs and consistent with program goals.

2.21 When evaluating graduate faculty, the institution uses, but is not limited to, the following criteria: scholarly activity, citations, grant funding record, capacity for mentoring, publishing record, excellence in teaching, direct participation in appropriate professional conferences, and civic engagement in local and global issues.

STANDARD 3 — INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN, DELIVERY, AND ASSESSMENT

The institution demonstrates a clear process for designing, delivering, and assessing instructional effectiveness premised upon achieving quality student learning and developmental outcomes. The institution demonstrates a commitment to improving curricular design, review, and relevance; to enhancing pedagogical practice; to providing faculty with training in high-impact and applied learning instructional practice; and to improving information literacy and the use of learning technologies.

The institution demonstrates its commitment to continuous improvement by validating student learning and developmental outcomes, programmatic outcomes, and student achievement using both direct/indirect measures and internal/external assessment processes that are systematic, socially responsible, and pertinent to today's global challenges.

Curricular Design and Review

3.1 Consistent with professional standards, the institution places faculty at the center of curricular design, development, review, and improvement. Formal policies and procedures, based on recognized good practice in international higher education, direct the process of curricular development, course design, and high-impact and applied learning pedagogical delivery.

3.2 Each course has a well-developed syllabus that includes, but is not limited to: course title and identifier code, description, prerequisites, delivery methods, intended learning outcomes, readings and assignments, forms of assessment, code of conduct, instructions for communicating with the instructor, and week-to-week course content.

3.3 The institution has policies and procedures for performing annual reviews of curricular content for undergraduate and graduate courses and programs.

3.4 The curricular review process includes formal input from faculty, students and academic stakeholders, and ensures that educational courses and programs are rigorous, up-to-date, relevant to student needs, and responsive to global realities. The review process identifies and documents formal actions taken to improve student learning and programmatic quality.

Instructional Leadership

3.5 Consistent with its mission and programmatic goals, the institution employs instructors able to document their appropriate professional qualifications, disciplinary expertise, interdisciplinary awareness, pedagogical skill, information literacy, and local and global civic engagement.

3.6 The institution employs and retains instructors sufficient in number to ensure organizational coherency over academic administration, curricular programming, and academic student support.

3.7 The institution designates academic leadership appropriate for maintaining administrative oversight and accountability for academic programs and outcomes.

3.8 Consistent with its mission and needs, the institution has a professional development plan and appropriate budget for faculty growth and development which includes training for improving instructional practice. The institution encourages and supports the professional development of staff members in meaningful ways.

Instructional Resources

3.9 Consistent with its mission and in pursuit of maximum student learning and development, the institution promotes the use of high-impact and applied learning practices within its instructional corps. Such strategies should include, but not be limited to: experiential learning, undergraduate research, community-based learning, service learning, cooperative education, intercultural learning, project-based learning, field studies, and ecopedagogy.

3.10 Consistent with its mission and program goals, the institution provides its faculty and students with a variety of appropriate instructional facilities and support materials required for effective teaching and learning strategies. These should include, but not be limited to: well-equipped classrooms and faculty office space with effective internet and Wi-Fi access, institutional subscriptions to online libraries or data banks, and access to traditional libraries and learning resources where available.

3.11 Consistent with its mission, the institution ensures that information and library support resources have sufficient depth, breadth, and currency to support the learning objectives of its courses and programs.

3.12 To increase student learning, development, engagement, and achievement in both curricular and co-curricular programming, the institution provides faculty and students with up-to-date technology, effective internet access, and a learning management system (LMS) that includes course content management software (CMS) appropriate to student learning and programmatic goals.

Instructional Assessment and Evaluation

3.13 Instructional improvement is achieved through a formal and documented process of annual performance reviews for all teaching staff. The collaborative process should include, but not be limited to: review of student course feedback, peer-based in-class observations, professional pedagogical coaching, faculty self-assessments, agreed-upon and action-based targets for improving instructional performance, and evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of these procedures.

3.14 The institution has formal and transparent mechanisms for collecting student feedback on the quality of the academic content and delivery at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Such feedback should include, but not be limited to: course content and delivery, faculty engagement, learning resources, research supervision, and support services. The institution provides evidence that it acts upon student feedback.

3.15 The institution follows recognized good practice in the design, delivery, technical support, and assessment of its distance education courses and programs. The academic rigor and learning outcomes of distance learning are equivalent to traditional in-class instruction.

3.16 Following recognized good practice in assessing English language proficiency, the institution provides evidence that students completing undergraduate and graduate degree programs demonstrate collegiate-level English language skills. The institution provides language support or tutoring as needed.

STANDARD 4 — STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

External to the classroom, a multitude of services and resources are provided to support student learning, development, achievement, and well-being. These services include, but are not limited to: access to up-to-date media and technology resources; co-curricular programs and activities; and structured opportunities for community service and civic engagement. In support of student physical and mental health, the institution provides for student counseling services or referral information, as well as designated safe-spaces for students encountering any form of harassment or discrimination. The institution provides access to health facilities, staffed by qualified medical personnel, for students who become ill or are in need of medical attention.

Staffing and Financial Resources

4.1 Consistent with its mission, the institution provides adequate financial resources and program coordination for appropriate student support services.

4.2 In line with the goals of student services intentionally designed to support student learning, development, and achievement, the institution provides staff members that are qualified, accountable within their functional area, and sufficient in number to administer student support service effectively.

4.3 The institution ensures that designated staff have the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes for advising students on curricular, programmatic, and institutional graduation requirements at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

4.4 The institution provides evidence that student service resources, while external to the academic program, contribute to more effective learning environments and greater student engagement, achievement, and success.

Academic and Career Advising

4.5 The institution administers an effective program of student academic advising premised on advancing student learning, development, achievement, and success both during and after the chosen program of study.

4.6 Career guidance and advising services are provided to assist students in planning a specific degree-, certificate-, or credential-based program of study that will prepare them to achieve their professional career goals.

4.7 The institution organizes a formal orientation program for new students that ensures they understand academic program, transfer, and graduation requirements, along with the academic and student support services available to them.

4.8 Consistent with its mission and in collaboration with local community leaders, the institution maintains a list of community resources for students who need further services beyond what the institution provides.

Specialized Services

4.9 Consistent with its mission, the institution provides the quality and quantity of support appropriate for the achievement and success of students with medical, physical or learning disabilities.

4.10 The institution provides access to health facilities, staffed by qualified medical personnel, for students who become ill or are in need of medical attention.

4.11 In support of student achievement and consistent with its mission and resources, the institution provides student financial aid or work-study based upon policies that are fair, effective, and transparent.

4.12 Where students are housed with external homestay providers, the institution ensures that lodgings are in compliance with applicable health and safety regulations and that host families are properly vetted, monitored, and regularly evaluated. The institution provides students, host families, and homestay agents with formal policy guidelines on the reciprocal rights and responsibilities of each party.

Information and Technology Support

4.13 Consistent with its mission and in support of student learning, development, and achievement, the institution's technology resources are appropriate in quality and quantity for meeting the educational objectives of its programs, staff administrative functions, student support services, and physical plant operations.

4.14 The institution maintains student access to information by providing IT infrastructure that includes, but is not limited to: Wi-Fi and internet-connected classrooms and laboratory facilities with projection facilities; appropriate computer labs and, where required, language labs; free access to Wi-Fi; and designated informal study areas connected to Wi-Fi.

4.15 The institution has a well-developed and comprehensive technology plan which includes, but is not limited to: a purchasing timeline for equipment; procedures for assuring that a variety of up-to-date and reliable technology resources are available to faculty, staff and students; processes to ensure technology is functioning properly; policies that ensure equipment and internet are readily accessible to staff and students; policies for monitoring and countering illegal or inappropriate uses of IT resources; specialized policies adapted to the particular requirements of distance learning; and policies for reducing the aggregate institutional IT environmental impact.

4.16 The institution has clear policies and procedures for creating, storing, protecting, and retrieving student data records. Its policies ensure that student data records are accurate, permanent, and uphold confidentiality. The policies inform stakeholders of the conditions under which student records may be accessed and released.

Civic and Global Engagement

4.17 Consistent with its mission and values, and in support of equitable and reciprocal interaction with the local community, the institution engages students, staff, and local community leaders and residents in service projects and initiatives designed or selected for their potential to help students understand and address current local and global issues such as social justice, human rights, and environmental protection.

4.18 When administering its entire range of support services premised upon benefiting students and extended stakeholders, the institution demonstrates that it upholds the principles of equity, inclusion, respect, and transparency.

STANDARD 5 — LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE, AND ADMINISTRATION

Institutional leadership demonstrates a clear capacity for analyzing, apprehending, and adapting to the changing landscape of international higher education. Attentive to internal and external opportunities and risks, leadership engages in strategic thinking, future-oriented planning, and innovation to achieve continuous improvement in student learning, development, achievement, and success. Strategic decision-making and resource allocation by leadership are grounded in the feed-back loops of internal quality assurance and institutional research, informed by input provided by core stakeholders both inside and outside the institution, and assessed against key performance indicators identified in the institutional effectiveness and improvement plan, each consistent with the mission.

The institution demonstrates its commitment to effective governance through the principles of coherency, transparency, and accountability. The institution articulates formal policies and procedures that provide guidance, direction, and accountability to executive, administrative, and instructional staffs. Decision-making processes are clear and reflect functional lines of authority and leadership. Student learning, development, and achievement are enhanced by well-defined, appropriately staffed, and coherently organized administrative support structures. Administrative functions and responsibilities are communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

Leadership and Decision-Making

5.1 The institution establishes and publishes governance structures, administrative hierarchies, organizational charts, and staffing support that are effective and appropriate for the scale and complexity of institutional operations. Governance structures and processes are known to institutional stakeholders.

5.2 A clearly designated, qualified, and autonomous chief executive officer provides effective oversight over governance and administrative operations. Effective communication is maintained between leadership and institutional staff members.

5.3 The institution has formal, regular, and transparent policies and procedures for receiving stakeholder input into institutional decision-making processes. The views of faculty, staff, and students are routinely taken into account on institutional policies and operations that concern them.

5.4 To ensure efficient planning, resource allocation, internal communication, and overall operational management, institutional and departmental leaders hold regular staff meetings to discuss policies and procedures and to assess institutional achievements and effectiveness. Meeting discussions, decisions, and follow-up accountabilities are recorded and archived.

5.5 Well-developed job descriptions provide meaningful guidance for institutional employees.

Financial Management

5.6 Institutional proprietors and/or leadership provide a budget commensurate to its mission and the requirements of high quality educational programs, including compensation sufficient for attracting and retaining qualified academic and administrative staff. The institution demonstrates adequate resources for assuring short-term operational health, long-term financial stability, sustained growth, and environmental responsibility.

5.7 Financial leadership engages institutional stakeholders in planning for both financial resource development and institutional risk management which should include, but not be limited to: civil/political unrest; regional or global pandemic; and local/global environmental disaster.

5.8 The institution has well-developed and transparent policies and procedures for monitoring, managing, reporting, and auditing its financial resources on an annual basis.

Staff Policies and Administration

5.9 The institution has a comprehensive set of written policies and procedures for all operations. They are clear, collaboratively developed, widely available, known to stakeholders, periodically reviewed and revised, and administered in a fair, transparent, and timely manner.

5.10 The institution informs all employees of the policies and procedures they are subject to as well as the benefits and opportunities the institution provides. Such information is made available as a physical handbook or on easily accessible platforms.

5.11 Information provided to employees should include, but not be limited to, provisions regarding: applicable labors codes and standards; insurance provisions and coverage; terms and conditions of employment; employee rights and responsibilities; procedures for assessing employee effectiveness; criteria for employee retention, promotion, and termination; grievance, appeal, and disciplinary policies and procedures; employee benefits and professional development opportunities; integrity in employment practices such as equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusiveness; the institutional code of conduct; and a formal acknowledgement that the employee knows and will abide by the code of conduct and all other institutional policies and procedures.

5.12 Staff members formally acknowledge that they know and will abide by institutional policies and procedures.

5.13 The institution maintains accurate, up-to-date, and secure files for all governance and staff employees that should include, but not be limited to: proof of employee credentials and qualifications, residency status, right to work, and relevant criminal record data.

5.14 The institution provides appropriate orientation programming for new staff members.

Admissions Policies

5.15 Consistent with its mission and in support of student achievement, the institution recruits and admits students based upon their demonstrated potential to succeed in and complete their chosen educational program.

5.16 To ensure that student learning, development, and achievement attain a level consistent with international higher educational standards, the institution's admission and placement policies include assessments of the prerequisite knowledge, skills, and appropriate language abilities required for student learning at a level commensurate with course, program, degree, certificate, or credential expectations.

5.17 The institution publishes easily accessible academic information on admission, transfer, and graduation requirements for all programs and ensures that students are informed and properly oriented for completing such requirements.

5.18 In support of student learning, development, and achievement, the institution demonstrates its commitment to domestic and international student mobility through efficient inbound and outbound transfer-of-credit policies that are comprehensive, fair, transparent, preserve the integrity of its programs, and that are consistent with recognized good practice in international higher education and/or education abroad.

5.19 The institution has effective and transparent policies in place for administering, maintaining the academic integrity, and the credentialing of distance education courses and programs as offered.

5.20 The institution has policies in place to ensure that accepted and/or enrolled students who are not citizens of the host country are informed of their obligation to comply with applicable immigration and visa regulations. To help such students maintain compliance, the institution monitors expected enrollment, minimal credit loads, attendance, time-to-graduation—as well as unexpected withdrawals and deferrals—that might impact a student's visa compliance and immigration status. When policy violations take place which constitute a breach of visa regulation, the institution notifies the student and, if appropriate, informs immigration authorities as required.

5.21 The institution meets applicable legal requirements related to equal opportunity and non-discriminations in the recruitment, admission, and enrollment of students.

Student Policies and Code of Conduct

5.22 The institution has clearly articulated and comprehensive policies and procedures related to student rights and responsibilities. These should include, but not be limited to: a code of academic conduct, formal and informal mechanisms for processing grievances and appeals, disciplinary actions and recourse, and accommodations for students with disabilities.

5.23 The institution publishes in a format readily accessible to stakeholders a formal "Student Handbook" that is updated annually and which includes accurate information about, but not limited to, the following topics: vision, mission, and values statements; admission requirements; academic programs and corresponding requirements, course sequencing, standard timelines to completion, and expected learning outcomes; grading and attendance policies; credentials of administrative and instructional staff; academic calendar; enrollment and payment procedures; tuition costs and all additional fees and charges; access to financial aid; withdrawal procedures; refund policies; code of conduct; student rights and responsibilities; onsite recycling, zero-waste, and low-carbon energy policies; local banking operations; required personal information; local living costs; student housing assistance; expected housing costs; homestay options and costs; and required registration with local authorities.

5.24 The institution publishes a formal student code of academic conduct which includes, but is not limited to, the following topics: the elements of academic integrity; the nature of plagiarism and how to avoid it; the requirements of academic assiduity, progress, and achievement; the procedures for lodging grievances and appeals; the accommodations for special needs; the responsibility to minimize one's carbon footprint and environmental impact; and a formal acknowledgement that the student knows and will abide by the code of academic conduct and all other institutional policies and procedures.

5.25 Where the institution admits students under the age of majority to any course or program, the institution has in place comprehensive and effective written policies for child protection and care in line with the principles and standards of *The International Taskforce on Child Protection* (ITFCP).

5.26 The institution makes its policies and procedures widely available to students and stakeholders.

STANDARD 6 — FACILITIES, SAFETY, AND MAINTENANCE

Consistent with its mission, the institution demonstrates that its classroom, specialized teaching areas, office, and support facilities are safe, secure, and fully adequate for ensuring academic quality and student achievement within its educational programs and student support services. Students, faculty, and staff have access to learning and working spaces appropriate to their respective needs and connected to information technology and Wi-Fi services, access to an appropriate sized commons room, closed-space independent group study areas, informal study areas, and access to recreational and refreshment areas. The cleanliness and maintenance of facilities and grounds provide evidence of stakeholder pride in the institution.

Facilities, Safety, and Maintenance

6.1 Institutional facilities and grounds meet all building codes and standards. Particularly attention is paid to compliance with statutory requirements regarding fire, safety, emergency, and environmental regulations.

6.2 The Institution provides evidence of tenure on all existing premises and appropriate planning approval for new construction. The institution informs relevant local authorities and the accrediting body of change of premises or substantive extension of existing premises.

6.3 The institution follows a regular plan and schedule of facility cleaning, maintenance, and improvement that results in a physical plant and learning environments that are clean, safe, accessible, comfortable, energy efficient, and environmentally friendly. In compliance with local statutory requirements, such maintenance should include, but not be limited to: ventilation; heating and cooling; lighting; sanitation; and where applicable, food and drink facilities.

6.4 The institution has a well-developed and comprehensive facilities plan which includes, but is not be limited to: schedules for monitoring and evaluating the facilities, preventative maintenance, facility expansion and improvement, and facility compliance with evolving environmental regulation.

6.5 The institution ensures that internal and external signage is clear, comprehensive, and accurate. Particular attention is paid to signage related to fire, safety, and emergency protocols.

Safety and Emergency Planning

6.6 To maintain safe and secure learning and working environments, and in conformity with recognized good practice and local statutory regulations, the institution has developed clear, comprehensive, written, and properly publicized, safety and emergency response plans. As defined:

> Safety Plan – Ongoing policies and procedures that assure that all physical facilities and grounds are safe.

> Emergency Response Plan – Procedures to follow in case of an emergency, including fire.

6.7 The institution ensures that relevant staffs receive appropriate training and practical drills for ensuring the effective implementation of all safety and emergency plans.

6.8 The institution ensures that students and staff are informed of their respective roles and recommended responses under the safety and emergency plans.

STANDARD 7 — QUALITY ASSURANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The institution has a clearly articulated internal system of quality management and is committed to conducting a comprehensive and continuous evaluation of its educational and administrative domains to identify areas of strength and sustainability, as well as areas of weakness and needed improvement. Consistent with its mission, the institution develops a comprehensive profile that indicates: the nature of the students served; the community, city and country in which the institution operates; and detailed performance indicators of student learning, development, achievement, and success. In consideration of its profile and consistent with its mission, the institution creates and updates a comprehensive improvement plan with measurable goals centered on student learning, development, achievement, and success. The improvement plan engages stakeholders in an evidence-based, collaborative, and continuous process of institutional self-reflection and evaluation. Institutional improvement is focused upon improving student learning, development, achievement, and success, as well as supporting student services and programs.

Institutional Effectiveness and Improvement Plan

7.1 Consistent with its mission and in an effort to align institutional improvement with student needs, the institution publishes an easily accessible public profile of key institutional facts and characteristics which should include, but not be limited to: origins and historical development; size and composition of student body; leadership and staff qualifications; physical attributes and location of campus within the local community; academic and co-curricular programs and support services; indicators of student performance, achievement, and career outcomes; and institutional commitment to environmental stewardship.

7.2 The institution produces a formal, written, comprehensive, and reasoned improvement plan designed to enhance the quality of academic programs, student support services, and administrative operations. The institution uses the plan to help inform decision-making, strategic planning, goal setting, and corresponding resource allocation. The plan is readily available to stakeholders.

7.3 The institution clearly demonstrates that the mission and institutional profile determine the content, scope, and implementation of the improvement plan. The institution provides evidence that it engages stakeholders in an inclusive and collaborative process of drafting, reviewing, revising, and commenting upon the improvement plan.

7.4 The goals of the improvement plan are specifically and strategically focused on sustained yearly improvement of student learning, development, achievement, success, and global awareness. Consistent with its mission, the improvement plan articulates educational goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.

7.5 The institutional improvement plan includes clear strategies for achieving goals, corresponding actions to be taken, designated personnel responsible for each goal, and realistic short-term, mid-term and long-range targets for achieving each goal. Each set of targets include their own benchmarks to monitor goal progress and can be used as reliable measurements in the plan. Final responsibility for the implementation and success of the improvement plan lies with the institution's chief executive officer.

Improvement Plan Assessment

7.6 The institution demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement by articulating ongoing and systemic procedures for assessing how effectively it achieves the specific goals and larger purpose of the improvement plan.

7.7 The institutional improvement plan includes internal measurements to monitor and track progress toward each goal. The institution validates the progress made in improving institutional effectiveness through comparative evaluation using recognized standards of good practice and/or national or international norms. External assessments are routinely used as measurements to validate the progress of the plan's goals.

7.8 The institution provides evidence that the improvement plan leads to meaningful improvement of student learning, development, achievement, and success as well as overall institutional effectiveness and environmental impact.

STANDARD 8 — ETHICS AND INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

The institution demonstrates that integrity and ethical conduct codified into written policy constitute foundational principles essential to the purpose, function, and ethos of international higher education. Guided by the core components of integrity—honesty, transparency, and action anchored to ethical principle—the institution aspires to the highest standards of conduct at each stage in its planning, policy-making, administrative, instructional, assessment, and external operations. The institution subscribes to, and actively promotes, integrity and openness in its relations with students, faculty and staff, external partners, and community stakeholders. The institution provides evidence of its commitment to integrity through the actions it takes, the character it conveys, and the impact of its endeavors.

Code of Ethics

8.1 The institution's commitment to integrity is affirmed in a formal and written code of ethics which is easily accessible to stakeholders. The code should include guidelines on, but not be limited to: academic freedom, student rights, responsibility to students, intellectual property rights, copyright regulations, grievance policies, regulatory compliance, managing conflicts of interest, non-discrimination across policy and practice, observance of recognized good practice, and environmental responsibility.

8.2 The institution designates senior leadership over the implementation and regular review of the code of ethics and provides training to faculty and staff as needed in line with recognized good practice.

Ethical Conduct

8.3 The institution upholds high standards of ethical conduct in operational management and in its relations with students, employees, external partners, and community stakeholders. In addition to the attributes of its values statement, the institution embraces the values of respect, honesty, fairness, reciprocity, transparency, and accountability in its interactions with stakeholders.

8.4 The institution represents itself with integrity and transparency. The principles of truthfulness, clarity, accuracy, full disclosure, and ease of access, apply to internal and external information and communications regarding, but are not limited to: campus profile and setting, recruitment policies, admissions and graduation requirements, program and courses offerings, tuition and fees, code of conduct, assessment and grading policies, grievance policy, student support services, faculty and staff credentials, housing accommodations and costs, governance structures, accreditation status, advertising and promotional literature, and aggregate institutional ecological impact.

8.5 The institution has fair, transparent, and effective policies for observing student data protection requirements, for monitoring the practice and regulatory compliance of external agents working on its behalf, for managing internal conflicts of interest, and for addressing stakeholder grievances and appeals.

8.6 Where eligibility for entry into professional occupations requires additional training and/or licensure beyond the degrees, certificates, or credentials awarded, the institution states this clearly.

8.7 The institution maintains the accuracy of its public information through a policy of regular review.

Academic Freedom

8.8 Within the context of its mission and values, and consistent with its international higher educational vocation, the institution values, promotes, and protects academic freedoms. These should include, but need not be limited to: freedom of expression and inquiry; the pursuit, creation and dissemination of knowledge; the intellectual freedom to examine, question, and revise knowledge; the sharing of scholarship; the protection of intellectual property rights; and the application of reciprocity and standards of critical reasoning in cases of contested knowledge.

8.9 The institution has in place effective policies and procedures for protecting academic freedoms.

Sustainability and Environmental Impact

8.10 Consistent with its educational mission of providing students with knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant to the society, economy, and careers they will be entering, the institution addresses global and local environment and ecological concerns in meaningful ways. These should include, but not be limited to, the following initiatives: leadership adhesion to a climate emergency declaration and/or carbon commitment; adoption of a plan, targets, resources, and policies for net-zero carbon operations; fossil fuel divestment; curricular and co-curricular reform consistent with sustainability and biodiversity; adoption of *The UN Principles for Responsible Management Education* (PRME); targeted faculty and staff training on the responsibility higher education professionals have in addressing the challenges of sustainability; and sustainability literacy assessment of students, faculty and staff.

8.11 The institution publicizes its environmental impact, policies, initiatives, and progress accurately and transparently.