

**REPORT OF THE
STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Institutional Performance Standards

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 68

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
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Guidelines for Assessments of Institutional Performance

The attached materials display a recommended relationship between the goals of the Restructuring Act and measures (Institutional Performance Standards) that SCHEV will employ in reaching annual “certification” decisions on institutional responses to the goals. Such decisions will be based on mutually-determined performance targets created by SCHEV and individual institutions.

With all measures, SCHEV will assist institutions in developing base-level data against which their performance target will be measured. Further, SCHEV will use its data resources to evaluate the rigor embedded in institutional targets. SCHEV will also use these same resources to develop web-based reports that provide greater detail on each measure for which it is already collecting relevant data. Finally, SCHEV will serve as a resource to institutions that wish to capture historical data on measures in order to provide context or additional clarity to their responses.

SCHEV recognizes, and the institutions agree, that data fluctuate from year to year, even when continual progress toward a goal is being made. Working with the institutions, SCHEV will develop a minimum acceptable threshold of performance for each measure based on historical trends. This threshold would be created such that it would still allow an institution to show progress toward a target, even if performance lagged from one year to the next. The practical effect of this is that it allows an institution to pass a measure, even when its performance may be less than what was anticipated for a given year, as long as it is above the prescribed minimum acceptable threshold.

Along with this minimum acceptable threshold of performance, SCHEV will develop an absolute minimum standard of performance on each measure. Once again, this will be based on past performance. This provides a standard of performance that each institution has been historically able to maintain and should be able to continue to maintain.

Not all measures addressing the goals apply to all institutions. Mission language may dictate an institutional request for an exemption. Further, an institution may be currently performing at an exceptional performance level and this might dictate a similar request. In this latter example, the institution would be able to direct its resources and attention to other measures where heightened performance better serves the institution and the Commonwealth. In both examples, SCHEV would grant or deny an exemption request.

To be certified as meeting the performance standards in effect in the fiscal year, institutions will meet the following SCHEV criteria:

1. Successful demonstration of institutional performance at or above the “absolute minimum standard of performance” on all measures.
2. Successful demonstration of continuing progress toward established targets on 15 of 18 measurable targets for four-year non-research institutions, 17 of 20 for research institutions, and 14 of 17 for two-year colleges.
3. Successful demonstration of commitment to the overall goals by failing no more than two measures for any single goal.

SCHEV reserves the right to modify the certification process when severe external forces outside the control of the institutions occur. These might include dramatic decreases in state financial support, shifts in federal higher education policies, particularly with respect to student aid and research, and/or state/national disasters.

1. **[Access]** Consistent with its institutional mission, **provide access to higher education for all citizens throughout the Commonwealth, including underrepresented populations**, and in accordance with anticipated demand analysis, **meet enrollment projections and degree estimates** as agreed upon with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. Each such institution shall bear a measure of responsibility for ensuring that the statewide demand for enrollment is met;

Access

- provide access to higher education for all citizens throughout the Commonwealth, including underrepresented populations

1.A Institution maintains acceptable progress towards an agreed upon target that increases the percentage of total in-state undergraduate enrollment representing under-represented populations. (Such populations should include low income, first-generation college status, geographic origin within Virginia, race, and ethnicity.)

- meets enrollment projections

1.B Institution meets or exceeds its SCHEV-approved biennial enrollment projections of Total In-State Student Enrollment within a mutually agreed percentage deviation. (Most recently completed year against most recent projection for that year.)

- meets degree estimates

1.C Institution annually meets SCHEV-approved projections of degrees awarded within 5% of targets.

2. **[Affordability] Ensure that higher education remains affordable, regardless of individual or family income, and through a periodic assessment**, determine the impact of tuition and fee levels net of financial aid on applications, enrollment, and student indebtedness incurred for the payment of tuition and fees;

Affordability

- ensure that higher education remains affordable, regardless of individual or family income

2.A SCHEV reports annually on in-state undergraduate tuition, fees, room and board, both gross and net of gift aid, as a proportion of the institution's student family income ranges, by quintiles.

2.B Institution reduces the ratio of the percentage increase of in-state undergraduate tuition to the percentage increase of total institutional aid dollars available to in-state undergraduates.

2.C Institution maintains acceptable progress towards an agreed upon target that decreases the average debt of in-state undergraduate student borrowers and the percentage of those borrowing.

- periodic assessment

2.D Institution conducts a biennial assessment of the likely impact of tuition and fee levels net of financial aid on applications, enrollment, and student indebtedness incurred for the payment of tuition and fees and provides SCHEV with a copy of this study upon its completion and makes appropriate reference to its use within the required six-year plans.

Institution reports to SCHEV annually on the ratio of in-state undergraduate tuition and fees net of student gift-aid to the Virginia resident median household income.

3. **[Academic offerings]** Offer a broad range of undergraduate and, where appropriate, graduate programs consistent with its mission and assess regularly the extent to which the institution's curricula and degree programs address the Commonwealth's need for sufficient graduates in particular shortage areas, including specific academic disciplines, professions, and geographic regions;

Academic offerings

- Offer a broad range of undergraduate and, where appropriate, graduate programs and assess regularly the extent to which the institution's curricula and degree programs address the Commonwealth's need for sufficient graduates in particular shortage areas (as determined by regular study by SCHEV)

3.A Institution increases the total number and percentage of graduates in high-need areas (e.g., nursing, teacher education, engineering, and medicine) toward a mutually agreed target.

4. **[Academic Standards]** Ensure that the institution's academic programs and course offerings **maintain high academic standards, by undertaking a continuous review and improvement of academic programs, course availability, faculty productivity,** and other relevant factors;

Academic Standards

- maintain high academic standards, by undertaking a continuous review and improvement of academic programs, **4.A** Institution reports on total programs reviewed under SACS assessment of student learning outcomes criteria within the institution's established assessment cycle in which continuous improvement plans addressing recommended policy/program changes were implemented.

The State Council views the items below as being critical to the evaluation of the institutional response to Goal 4.

- course availability **4.B** Institution maintains acceptable progress towards a target that decreases the annual number of lower division students denied enrollment in introductory (100- and 200-level) courses.
- faculty productivity **4.C** Institution maintains acceptable progress towards a mutually agreed upon target that maintains or increases the ratio of degrees conferred per FTE faculty member.

5. **[Student Progress and Success] Improve student retention** such that **students progress from initial enrollment to a timely graduation**, and that the **number of degrees conferred increases as enrollment increases**;

Student Progress and Success

- Improve student retention **5.A** Institution maintains or increases acceptable performance towards a mutually agreed target that increases the average annual retention and progression rates of degree-seeking undergraduate students.

- students progress from initial enrollment to a timely graduation, **5.B** Institution maintains acceptable progress towards a mutually agreed target that increases the ratio of Total Undergraduate Degree Awards to Annual FTE of Degree-Seeking Undergraduates.

- number of degrees conferred increases as enrollment increases; Demonstrated with compliance on measure **1.C**

6. **[Enhanced Access and Affordability]** Consistent with its institutional mission, **develop articulation agreements that have uniform application to all Virginia community colleges** and meet appropriate general education and program requirements at the four-year institution, **provide additional opportunities for associate degree graduates to be admitted and enrolled**, and **offer dual enrollment programs in cooperation with high schools**;

Enhanced Access and Affordability

- develop articulation agreements that have uniform application to all Virginia community colleges

6.A-4 Institution maintains acceptable progress toward an agreed upon target of the number of undergraduate programs or schools for which the institution has established a uniform articulation agreement by program or school for associate degree graduates transferring from all colleges of the VCCS and RBC.

- provide additional opportunities for associate degree graduates to be admitted and enrolled,

6.B-4 Institution maintains acceptable progress towards a mutually agreed target that increases the total number of associate degree graduates enrolled from VCCS and RBC as a percent of all students enrolled.

- offer dual enrollment programs in cooperation with high schools;

6.B-2 Institution maintains progress towards a mutually acceptable target that increases the number of students involved in dual enrollment programs.

(two-year institutions only)

7. **[Economic Development] Actively contribute to efforts to stimulate the economic development of the Commonwealth** and the area in which the institution is located, and for those institutions subject to a management agreement, in areas that lag the Commonwealth in terms of income, employment, and other factors;

Economic Development

- Actively contribute to efforts to stimulate the economic development of the Commonwealth
 - 7.A** Institution develops a mutually agreed upon number of plans to help address local and/or regional economic development needs. These plans will consist of specific partners, activities, fiscal support, and desired outcomes. The institution will identify these plans for SCHEV in the first year of their use for this measure.
 - 7.B** In succeeding years, institution will receive positive feedback on an annual standardized survey developed by SCHEV, in consultation with the institution, of local and regional leaders, and the economic development partners identified in its plans, regarding the success of its local and regional economic development plans.
 - 7.C** Institution complies with state goals and standards for engagement of small, women- and minority-owned businesses.

8. **[Research]** Consistent with its institutional mission, **increase the level of externally funded research conducted at the institution and facilitate the transfer of technology from university research centers to private sector companies;**

Research

- increase the level of externally funded research conducted at the institution

8.A Institution maintains progress towards an agreed upon target that maintains or increases the total expenditures in grants and contracts for research.

(Research institutions only, three-year moving average)

- facilitate the transfer of technology from university research centers to private sector companies;

8.B Institution maintains progress towards an agreed upon target that maintains or increases the annual number of new patent awards and licenses.

(Research institutions only, three-year moving average, Association University Technology Managers (AUTM) definition)

[AUTM 2003 Licensing Survey Respondents include: GMU, UVA, VCU, VT]

9. **[Enhancing K12] Work actively** and cooperatively with elementary and secondary school administrators, teachers, and students in public schools and school divisions to **improve student achievement, upgrade the knowledge and skills of teachers, and strengthen leadership skills of school administrators;**

Enhancing K12

Work actively to:

- improve student achievement, upgrade the knowledge and skills of teachers, strengthen leadership skills of school administrators;

9.A Institution develops a mutually agreed upon number of formal relationships with schools or school district administrations with specific goals to improve student achievement, upgrading the knowledge and skills of teachers, or strengthen the leaderships skills of school administrators. These formal relationships will have evaluation plans, specific start and end dates, fiscal support, and desired outcomes and the institution will identify these relationships for SCHEV in the first year.

Examples of the types of activities such formal relationships might include are: mentoring programs for teachers, implementing career switchers programs and recruiting qualified candidates for these programs, implementing training programs to create highly qualified paraprofessionals, and providing tutorials to allow teachers to keep current with the Standards of Learning.

9.B In successive years, the superintendents, principals, and appropriate other parties will be surveyed using a standardized survey of the effectiveness of these programs and their identifiable outcomes.



STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA

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