

# NECHE: Looking ahead to the *2026 Standards for Accreditation*

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# Update on the 2026 Standards For Accreditation

Major (decennial) revision: June 2024 through June 2026

- Commission kicked off revision process at June retreat
- Fall 2024 - regional meetings; input from institutions
- Draft of the new standards released June 2025
- Fall 2025 -- more regional meetings; more input from institutions
- 2025 Annual Meeting membership endorsed the Standards
- **December 15 Commission approved the 2026 Standards**

**2026 Standards will go into effect July 1, 2026**

# Overarching Changes to the 2026 Standards

- Fewer Standards: 9 to 5
- Fewer Numbered Paragraphs: 182 to 61
- Less redundancy
- Less prescriptive
- More emphasis on mission-appropriate learning goals
- More emphasis on using data to demonstrate Institutional and Educational Effectiveness (Success of ALL Students)

# The 2026 Standards For Accreditation

**Standard One:** Mission, Organization, Governance, and Planning

**Standard Two:** The Academic Program, Faculty, and Students

**Standard Three:** Institutional Resources

**Standard Four:** Educational Effectiveness and the Success of All Students

**Standard Five:** Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

# From 9 **NECHE 2021** Standards to 5 **NECHE 2026** Standards

## 2021 STANDARDS

- 1 Mission & Purposes
- 2 Planning & Evaluation
- 3 Organization & Governance
- 4 The Academic Program
- 5 Students
- 6 Teaching, Learning & Scholarship
- 7 Institutional Resources
- 8 Educational Effectiveness
- 9 Integrity, Transparency & Public Disclosure

## 2026 STANDARDS

- 1 Mission, Organization, Governance, and Planning
- 2 The Academic Program, Faculty, and Students
- 3 Institutional Resources
- 4 Educational Effectiveness and the Success of All Students
- 5 Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

# How to Read and Respond to the Standards

Standard Number and Title (Chapter Titles)

Statement of the Standard (**Bold Summary**)

Numbered Paragraphs (holistically explicate the Statement of the Standard)

Subheadings for organization and clarity



# Bridging the Gap

## 2021 Standards and 2026 Standards



# Standards Crosswalk

- 2026 to 2021
- 2021 to 2026

<https://www.neche.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Standards-Crosswalk-2021-2026.pdf>

2026 Numbered Paragraph Text	2026 Paragraph #	Corresponding 2021 Paragraph #s
The institution’s mission, approved by the governing board and consistent with its charter and other operating authority, defines its distinctive character, gives direction to its activities, and is broadly understood by all constituents.	1.1	1.1, 1.2, 1.4
As appropriate to its mission, the institution provides clear public statements about what students are expected to gain from their education (e.g., civic engagement, information literacy, employability, critical thinking, religious formation, global awareness).	1.2	8.2
The institution’s mission is periodically reviewed and either reaffirmed or modified.	1.3	1.5
The authority, responsibilities, and relationships among the governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and sponsoring entity (if any) are clearly described and mutually understood.	1.4	3.1

## 2: The Academic Program, Faculty, and Students

The institution's academic program and student services are consistent with and serve to fulfill its mission and purposes. **The institution works systematically and effectively to plan, provide, oversee, evaluate, improve, and assure the quality and integrity of its academic programs and credits and degrees awarded as well as its student services and co-curricular programs.** The institution supports teaching and learning through a well-qualified faculty and academic staff, who, in structures and processes appropriate to the institution, collectively ensure the quality of instruction and support for student learning. The institution sets a standard of student achievement appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded and develops systematic means to demonstrate how and what students are learning and to use the evidence provided to improve the academic program.

## The Academic Program, Faculty, and Students

2.10 The institution reviews its academic programs on a regular cycle, incorporates external perspectives when applicable, and uses the results for program improvement.

## 4: Educational Effectiveness and the Success of All Students

**The institution demonstrates its educational effectiveness and the success of all students by ensuring appropriate levels of student achievement on mission-appropriate student outcomes. Based on sustained, evidence-based reflection and study, the institution employs comprehensive quality assurance processes to demonstrate and continually improve institutional effectiveness and student learning and success.**

# Educational Effectiveness

4.1 The institution identifies a set of mission-appropriate goals for student learning and success at the institution, program and course levels, for all students, across all locations and all modalities. It establishes metrics to facilitate the assessment of its goals, including retention, graduation, and success rates.

4.2 The institution uses a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods, and direct and indirect measures, to assess its mission-appropriate goals for student learning and success and to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of its academic programs, student services, and cocurricular programs in achieving its mission and facilitating student success.

4.3 The institution regularly and systematically collects and analyzes data aligned with its mission and uses the findings to identify and address areas for improvement.

4.4 The institution demonstrates progress towards achieving its mission-appropriate goals based on the results of its inquiry, evidence, and evaluation of its educational effectiveness.

4.5 The institution defines and demonstrates the post-enrollment/post-graduation success of its students using mission-appropriate metrics, e.g., transfer and further education, return on investment, employment, service, loan repayment, social mobility.

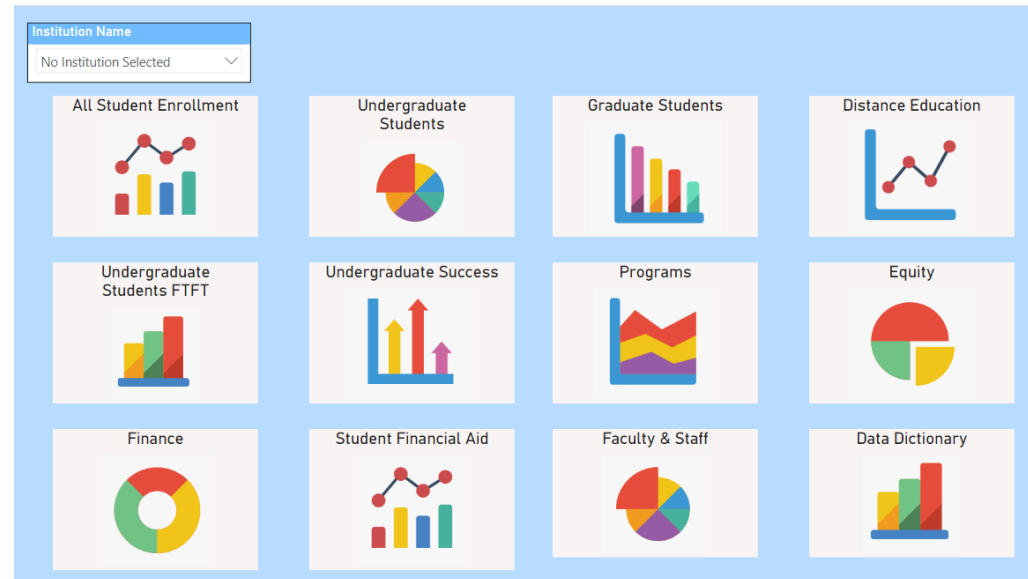
# Student Achievement & Success Forms

- **Data Dashboards:** Data on retention rates, graduation rates, and other measures of success appropriate to the institution's mission are reported.
- **E-Series: Making Assessment More Explicit:** Institutions select and declare a basic approach to assessment and summarize the findings.

Will be included in self-studies for comprehensive evaluations and may be included for focused evaluations, depending on the areas of focus.

# Data Driven Process: NECHE Dashboard, Financial Forms, Disclosure Page

- The NECHE Data Dashboards have replaced the Data First Forms.
- Dashboards are available through the Evaluator Portal.
- There are 11 dashboards (enrollment, student success, finances, etc.)
- IPEDS data used to populate the Dashboards.
- Institutions are expected to include discussion/analysis of the Dashboard data in their report.
- Dashboard User Guide for Evaluators in your folder and on the website.
- A set of NECHE Financial Forms will be included as one of the appendices in the Self-Study (more on these later).
- Public Disclosure Portal Page



# Where We Are Today: Using Data

## NECHE Context:

- Data Dashboards
  - Launched in 2024
  - Built from IPEDS data
  - 11 Dashboards related to student success, outcomes, faculty and staff
- Student Success Analysis
  - Graduation Rate
- E-Series – paper form for program-level assessment data

## Bigger Picture:

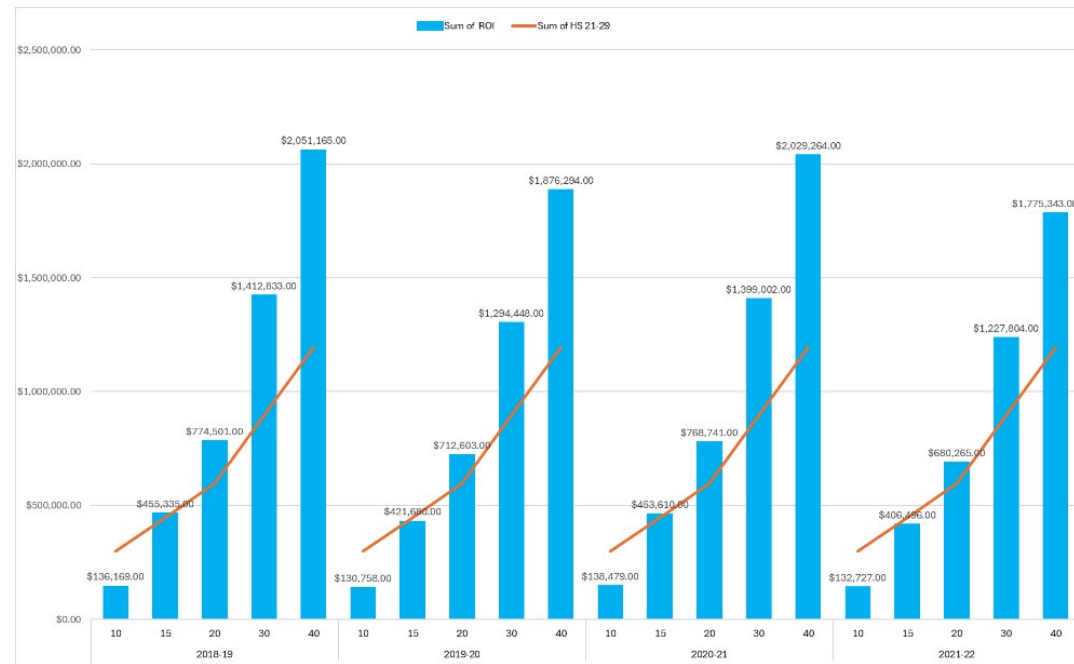
- Growing emphasis on student success from USDOE and NACIQI

# Where We are Going: Using Data

- Peer Comparison Data
  - Hybrid peer selection process
    - K-means clustering: identify a set (up to 25) peers
    - January: You will have the ability to adjust up to 20% of your peer set
    - Quartile data will appear on specific student success dashboards
      - IPEDS Retention Rate
      - IPEDS 150% Total Success
      - IPEDS 150% Graduation Rate
  - Summer 2026 launch

# Where We Are Going: ROI Data Dashboard

- Working with Georgetown's Center for Education and the Workforce (session tomorrow)
- Developing an ROI dashboard based on earnings data
- ROI dashboard will go live in the NECHE Portal Summer 2026
- Visible only to the institution, evaluators, and Commissioners



# Where We Are Going: New Annual Student Success Analysis

- The Commission annually reviews graduation, retention, transfer, and total success rate data.
- For two-year institutions, the results are compared to the national mean for two-year institutions; for four-year institutions, the results are compared to the national mean for four-year institutions.
- Should one of the following apply, the institution will be asked to prepare a Student Success Outcomes Response Report:
  1. the institution's 150% total success rate is one standard deviation or more below the national mean; or
  2. two of the institution's other three student success measures (i.e., 150% graduation rate, retention rate, transfer rate) fall one standard deviation or more below the national mean.

## Where We Are Going: E-Series Form

- Will be transitioning to an electronic form
- Program-level assessment information and data
- Form is still in development
  - Frequency:
    - How many years of assessment data in an e-series submission?
    - How often will institutions complete the form?
  - Flexibility:
    - Submit ancillary documents in lieu of the form?
- Potential launch in Fall 2026/Spring 2027
- Stay tuned!



**Any  
questions,  
comments,  
insights**