

APPENDIX G

COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM REVIEW RESOURCES

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) promotes self-regulation as the most viable approach to program accountability and learning assessment. CAS encourages program review, learning assessment, and evaluation on a continuing basis using the CAS standards. To assist Student Affairs departments with their efforts to design and implement self-assessment activities informed by CAS functional area standards and guidelines, the following CAS Program Review resources are available from SAIRO:

CAS Standards and Guidelines

CAS functional area standards and guidelines are basic statements that should be achievable by any program in any institution when adequate and appropriate effort, energy, and resources are applied. Further, standards reflect a level of good program practice generally agreed upon by the profession at large. In addition to the standards, guidelines have been included for each functional area to amplify and explain the standards and to guide enhanced practice. The *2006 Book of Professional Standards for Higher Education* includes 34 sets of functional area standards and guidelines and one set of student affairs master's level preparation standards. The general standards address 13 different organizational components: mission; program; leadership; organization and management; human resources; financial resources; facilities, technology, and equipment; legal responsibilities; equity and access; campus and external relations; diversity; ethics; and assessment and evaluation.

CAS Self-Assessment Guides

CAS has created and published Self-Assessment Guides (SAGs), documents intended to show a step-by-step process for conducting a program self-assessment to determine its effectiveness. CAS Self-Assessment Guides are available for the following functional areas:

- Academic Advising Program
- Admission Programs
- Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Program
- Campus Activities Program
- Campus Information and Visitor Services
- Campus Religious and/or Spiritual Programs
- Career Services
- Clinical Health Services
- College Honor Societies
- College Union
- Commuter and Off-Campus Living Programs
- Conference and Event Programs
- Counseling Services
- Dining Services
- Disability Support Services
- Distance Education Programs
- Education Abroad Programs and Services
- Financial Aid Programs
- Fraternity and Sorority Advising Programs
- Health Promotion Services

- Housing and Residential Life Programs
- International Student Programs and Services
- Internship Programs
- Learning Assistance Programs
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Programs
- Masters-Level Graduate Program for Student Affairs Professionals
- Multicultural Student Programs and Services
- Orientation Programs
- Outcomes Assessment and Program Evaluation Services
- Recreational Sports Programs
- Registrar Programs and Services
- Service-Learning Programs
- Student Conduct Programs
- Student Leadership Programs
- TRIO and other Educational Opportunity Programs
- Women Student Programs and Services

Sample CAS Self-Assessment Outline

Below is a brief, general overview of the CAS Self-Assessment process. SAIRO can provide copies of specific functional area Self-Assessment Guides upon request.

Introduction and Instructions

I Purpose and Organization of the Guide

This *Self-Assessment Guide* (SAG) translates the *CAS Program Standards and Guidelines* for specific functional areas into a format enabling self-assessment. Educators can use this *Guide* to gain informed perspectives on the strengths and deficiencies of their services and programs and to plan for improvements. Grounded in the self-regulation approach to quality assurance in higher education endorsed by CAS, this SAG provides institutional and agency leaders a tool to assess programs and services using current generally accepted standards of practice.

The *Introduction* outlines the self-assessment process, describes how to put it into operation, and is organized into four sections. These include I Purpose and Organization, II Self-Assessment Process, III Rating Examples, and IV Formulating an Action Plan. The introduction is followed by the *Self-Assessment Worksheet*, which presents the *CAS Standards and Guidelines* and incorporates a series of criterion measures for rating purposes.

SAG Worksheet Format. CAS standards and guidelines are organized into thirteen components.

- Part 1. Mission
- Part 2. Program
- Part 3. Leadership
- Part 4. Organization and Management

- Part 5. Human Resources
- Part 6. Financial Resources
- Part 7. Facilities, Technology, and Equipment
- Part 8. Legal Responsibilities
- Part 9. Equity and Access
- Part 10. Campus and External Relations
- Part 11. Diversity
- Part 12. Ethics
- Part 13. Assessment and Evaluation

A rating scale designed for assessment purposes is displayed following the standards and guidelines along with a series of criterion measures to be rated. Making performance judgments by applying the rating scale to individual items (criterion measures) facilitates an initial assessment of the program.

II Self-Assessment Process

CAS self-assessment procedures involve several steps, including:

- A. Establishing the self-study process and review team
- B. Understanding the CAS Standards and Guidelines and the Self-Assessment Guide
- C. Compiling and reviewing documentary evidence
- D. Judging performance
- E. Completing the assessment process

Step A: Establish and Prepare the Self-Assessment Review Team

The first step is to identify an individual to coordinate the self-assessment process. Once a leader is designated, members of the institutional community [e.g., professional staff members, faculty members, and students] need to be identified and invited to participate. Whether a sole functional area or a full division is to be reviewed, the self-study team will be strengthened by the inclusion of members from outside the area(s) undergoing review.

As a group, the review team should examine the standards carefully before implementing the study. It may be desirable for the team, in collaboration with the full staff, to discuss the meaning of each standard. Through this method, differing interpretations can be examined and agreement generally reached about how the standard will be interpreted for purposes of the self-assessment. Whatever procedures are used to arrive at judgments, deliberate discussions should occur about how to initiate the rating process and select the optimal rating strategy. In such discussions, it is expected that disagreements among team members will occur, and that resulting clarifications will inform all participants. It is important that the team achieve consensual resolution of such differences before proceeding.

Step B: Understanding the CAS Standards and Guidelines

CAS *Standards* represent best practices as formulated by representatives of multiple professional associations concerned with student learning and development in higher education. CAS *Guidelines*, on the other hand, are suggestions for practice and serve to elaborate and amplify standards through the use of suggestions, descriptions, and examples. Guidelines can often be employed to enhance program practice. Following a long-standing CAS precedent, the functional area standards and guidelines published in *The CAS Book of Professional Standards for Higher Education 2006* and presented in the SAG are formatted so that standards (i.e., essentials of quality practice) are printed in **bold type**. Guidelines, which complement the standards, are printed in slightly smaller, light-face type. Standards use the auxiliary verbs “**must**” and “**shall**” while guidelines use “should” and “may.”

In the SAG, the CAS Standards and Guidelines, presented in boxed text format, have been translated into multiple criterion measures for rating purposes. Each criterion measure focuses on a particular aspect of the standard. For each of the 13 component parts, there is a series of numbered criterion measures that team members may rate. If the assessment team decides to incorporate one or more of the guidelines into the review process, each guideline can be similarly sub-divided to facilitate the rating process.

Step C: Compile and Review Documentary Evidence

Collecting and documenting evidence of program effectiveness is an important step in the assessment process. No self-assessment is complete without relevant data and related documentation being used. It is good practice for programs routinely to collect and file relevant data that can be used to document program effectiveness over time.

Documentary evidence often used to support evaluative judgments includes:

- *Student Recruitment and Marketing Materials*: brochures and other sources of information about the program, participation policies and procedures, and reports about program results and participant evaluations
- *Program Documents*: mission statements, catalogs, brochures and other related materials, staff and student manuals, policy and procedure statements, evaluation and periodic reports, contracts, and staff memos
- *Institutional Administrative Documents*: statements about program purpose and philosophy relative to other educational programs, organization charts, financial resource statements, student and staff profiles, and assessment reports
- *Research, Assessment, and Evaluation Data*: needs assessments, follow-up studies, program evaluations, outcome measures and methodologies, and previous self-study reports

- *Staff Activity Reports*: annual reports, staff member vitae; service to departments, colleges, university, and other agencies; evidence of effectiveness; scholarship activities, and contributions to the profession
- *Student Activity Reports*: developmental transcripts, portfolios, and other evidence of student contributions to the institution, community, and professional organizations; reports of special student accomplishments; and employer reports on student employment experiences

Having a variety of evidence assists raters to make judgments about the wide range of program expectations articulated in the standards. Whatever is determined appropriate under given circumstances, multiple forms of evidence used should be reviewed and reported in the narrative section of the SAG worksheets. The self-study rating process may identify a need to obtain additional information or documentation before proceeding to lend substance to judgments about a given assessment criterion. Support documentation should be appended and referred to in the final self-assessment report.

Step D: Judging Performance

Assessment criterion measures are used to judge how well areas under review meet CAS Standards. These criterion measures, provided in the *Work Form* section of the SAG, are designed to use a 4-point rating scale. In addition to the numerical rating options, *Not Rated* (NR) and *Not Done* (ND) ratings are provided. This rating scale is designed to estimate broadly the extent to which a given practice has been performed.

CAS CRITERION MEASURE RATING SCALE

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

Under rare circumstances, it may be determined that a criterion measure used to judge the standard is not applicable for the particular program (e.g., a single sex or other unique institution that cannot meet a criterion measure for that reason). In such instances, a ND rating can be used and the rationale for excluding the practice reflected in the criterion measure presented in the self-study report. The NR response can be used when relevant data are unavailable to support a judgment. When either the ND or the NR ratings are used, an explanatory note should be entered. NR items should generate careful group consideration and follow-up action as appropriate.

Program leaders may wish to incorporate additional criterion measures, such as selected CAS Guidelines or other gauges, into the rating procedures before the self-assessment process begins. Such practice is encouraged and space is provided to incorporate additional criterion measure *yardsticks* for judging the program. In such instances, additional pages to accommodate the additional criterion measures may be required.

Step E: Completing the Assessment Process

A two-tiered (individual and group) judgment approach for determining the extent to which the program meets the CAS Standard is suggested. First, self-assessment team and functional area staff members individually should rate each criterion measure using separate copies of the *CAS Self-Assessment Guide*. This individualized rating procedure is then followed by a collective review and analysis of the individual ratings.

When the individual ratings have been reviewed and translated into a collective rating, the team is ready to move to the interpretation phase of the self-assessment. Interpretation typically incorporates considerable discussion among team members to assure that all aspects of the program were given fair and impartial consideration prior to a final collective judgment. At this point, persistent disagreements over performance ratings may call for additional data collection. After the team review is completed, a meeting with concerned administrators, staff members, and student leaders should be scheduled for a general review of the self-assessment results. The next step, including discussion of alternative approaches that might be used to strengthen and enhance the program, is to generate steps and activities to be incorporated into an action plan.

III Rating Examples

Rating Standard Criterion Measures

All CAS Standards, printed in **bold type**, are viewed as being essential to a sound and relevant student support program and include the verbs “**must**” or “**shall**.” Likewise, many standard statements incorporate multiple criteria that, to facilitate more precise judgment, have been subdivided into measurable parts for rating purposes. Consequently, a single standard statement may require several criterion measure statements that allow raters to judge it part by part rather than broadly. This approach often requires multiple judgments concerning a specific standard statement, but facilitates accomplishing a more precise assessment. Using a “Program” standard as an example, the following illustrates how several criterion measures are used to assess a single standard statement:

Part 2: Program

Programs must identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes and provide programs and services that encourage the achievement of those outcomes.

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

Criterion Measures	Rating Scale					
2.1 The program promotes student learning and development that is purposeful and holistic	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
2.2 The program has identified student learning and development outcomes that are relevant to its purpose	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
2.3 The program provides students with opportunities designed	ND	1	2	3	4	NR

to encourage achievement of the identified outcomes	
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Using Guidelines to Make Judgments about the Program

The CAS Standards are often accompanied by guidelines. Because many guidelines can provide additional evidence of good practice, program leaders may wish to include selected guidelines to be rated along with the standards. To accomplish this, criterion measure statements must be written for the guidelines selected. The self-study team can readily create statements to be judged as part of the rating process. Programs generally considered as being in compliance with the standards can benefit especially by using guidelines in this way because guidelines typically call for enhanced program quality. The following “Human Resources” program guidelines rating example illustrates the process.

Part 5. Human Resources

The program must employ qualified professional, technical, and support staff members who have the ability to provide well-maintained facilities, services, and programs that are responsive to student development goals, student input, and student participation inherent in its mission.

Desirable qualities of staff members should include: (a) knowledge of and ability to use management and leadership principles, including the effective management of volunteers; (b) skills in assessment, planning, training, and evaluation; (c) interpersonal skills; (d) technical skills; (e) understanding the program’s mission; (f) commitment to institutional mission; and (g) understanding of and ability to apply student development and learning theories.

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

Criterion Measures	Rating Scale
Guideline 5: Staff members possess knowledge and skills to:	
5a manage volunteers	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
5b train volunteers	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
5c evaluate volunteers	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
5d apply student development theory	ND 1 2 3 4 NR
5e apply learning theories	ND 1 2 3 4 NR

Not all programs under review will incorporate guidelines to be rated as part of its self-study. Even though the guidelines are optional for rating purposes, raters are strongly encouraged to read and review them as part of the training process. When CAS Guidelines or other criterion measures are rated, they should be treated as if they were standards.

IV Formulating an Action Plan

Typically, the assessment process will identify discrepancies between the program and the standards. Action planning designed to overcome program shortcomings and provide program enhancements must then occur.

To complete the process, a final summary document that (1) explains the mission, purpose, and philosophy of the program; (2) reviews available data; and (3) recommends specific plans for action needs to be prepared. Following is an outline of recommended steps for establishing a comprehensive plan of action using the CAS self-assessment worksheets. Space is provided in the SAG for recording relevant information.

Step 1. Answer Overview Questions (In the Instrument)

- a. Respond, in writing in the space provided, to the *Overview Questions* (A., B., C., etc.) that immediately follow the rating section of each of the 13 components.
- b. Use answers to the *Overview Questions* to stimulate summary thinking about overarching issues, to facilitate interpretation of the ratings, and for development of the self-study report.

Step 2. Identify Areas of Program Strength (Work Form A)

- a. Identify criterion measure ratings where *excellent* performance or accomplishment (i.e., program exceeds criterion and is viewed as excellent or exemplary) was noted.
- b. Identify criterion measures in which performance was found to be *satisfactory* or *good* (acceptable practice).

Step 3. Identify Areas of Program Weakness (Work Form A)

- a. Identify criterion measures where program weaknesses (i.e., program shortcomings that fail to meet criterion measures and/or rating discrepancies among raters of two points or more) were noted.
- b. Identify criterion measures viewed as being *Unsatisfactory* by one or more reviewer.

Step 4. Describe Practices Requiring Follow-up (Work Form A)

- a. Note criterion measure numbers deemed less than satisfactory and describe practice shortcomings that need to be strengthened.

Step 5. Summarize Actions Required for the Program to Meet Standards (Work Form B)

- a. List each criterion measure and/or related practices that the self-study process identified as being “Not Done,” “Unsatisfactory,” or wherein rater discrepancies were noted. Be specific when noting the rationale for each shortcoming identified.
- b. List *specific actions* identified in the self-study that require implementation
- c. Prioritize the list by importance, need, and achievability of the desired change.

Step 6. Summarize Program Enhancement Actions (Work Form C)

- a. List each specific action identified in the self-study that would enhance and strengthen services.
- b. Establish specific priorities for the action plan.

Step 7. Write Program Action Plan

- a. Prepare a comprehensive action plan for implementing program changes.
- b. Identify resources (i.e., human, fiscal, physical) that are essential to program enhancement.
- c. Set dates by which specific actions are to be completed.
- d. Identify responsible parties to complete the action steps.
- e. Set tentative start-up date for initiating a subsequent self-study.

Frameworks for Assessing Learning and Development Outcomes (FALDOs)

The FALDOs stem from the CAS General Standards that mandates each program and service to “provide evidence of its impact on the achievement of student learning and development outcomes” (CAS, 2006). The Book of Standards details 16 learning outcome domains from which learning can be assessed as well as offers examples of learning indicators. Each FALDO is organized around one of the 16 learning domains and is designed to further enable practitioners to conduct assessment and evaluation procedures that focus on student learning and development. This is an important distinction between FALDOs and the Self-Assessment Guides (SAGs). The Self-Assessment Guides are composed of overview questions and criterion measures for each of 13 components of effective educational programs and services including three worksheets to record and analyze findings of effectiveness. Each SAG is associated with a functional area in higher education and includes a worksheet for developing a plan of action to improve the functional area under review. On the other hand, each FALDO is organized around a learning domain—for example, intellectual growth, realistic self-appraisal, or leadership development. The FALDOs create a bridge between CAS professional standards and learning assessment; providing examples of learning and development assessment for practitioners to consider in the context of virtually any program or functional area. Each framework was designed to emphasize learning and

development outcomes over mere satisfaction and program effectiveness. From this perspective, the functional area or program is secondary to its affect on learning.

Each framework includes: introduction, theoretical context, relevant variables, assessment examples (one quantitative and one qualitative), available assessment instruments, related websites, references, and a recommended reading list.

FALDOs Available for 16 Student Learning Development Outcomes

1. intellectual growth
2. effective communication
3. realistic self-appraisal
4. enhanced self-esteem
5. clarified values
6. career choices
7. leadership development
8. healthy behaviors
9. meaningful interpersonal relationships
10. independence
11. collaboration
12. social responsibility
13. satisfying and productive lifestyles
14. appreciation of diversity
15. spiritual awareness
16. achievement of personal and educational goals

**UCLA Student Affairs Program Review
Suggested Self-Study Report Outline for
CAS Self-Assessment Protocol**

A. Introduction

B. Executive summary of self-study process

C. Introduction to department context

D. Synthesis/interpretation of ratings and discussion of self-study findings for 13 CAS self-assessment components.

1. Mission

2. Program

Specifically address the connection between departmental activities and the Student Affairs Strategic Plan. Possible prompt for this discussion: Explain how the department's programs and services address the goals of the current Student Affairs Strategic Plan. Please identify all of the Student Affairs strategic goals for which the department provides leadership as well as those for which the department provides support. Explain how the department uniquely contributes to the five Student Affairs aspirations articulated in the current Strategic Plan.

3. Leadership

4. Organization and management

5. Human resources

6. Financial resources

7. Facilities, technology, and equipment

8. Legal responsibilities

9. Equity and access

10. Campus and external relations

11. Diversity

12. Ethics

13. Assessment and evaluation

Additional information on writing the synthesis section of self-study report:

- Narrative should be informed by overview questions posed at the end of each CAS self-assessment section.
- Support assertions with evidence or specific examples drawn from organizational practice.
- Provide detailed organizational information so that readers are able to gain insight into scope of department (e.g., budget, staffing, utilization, etc).
- Ratings worksheets should not appear in the body of the self-study report but may be included in the appendix if the self-study team would like to share this information with others.

E. Summary

1. Highlight department strengths

2. Identify areas of improvement

3. External review issues statement