



Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education

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This standard and all other standards are available along with information on self-assessment procedures in the most recent edition of the *CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education* book. You are particularly encouraged to examine the learning and developmental outcomes (see www.cas.edu and in the standards book) in the design and assessment of your programs.

This standard has a Self Assessment Guide (SAG) available for purchase from www.cas.edu for use in program evaluation.

CAS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) is to promote the improvement of programs and services to enhance the quality of student learning and development. CAS is a consortium of professional associations who work collaboratively to develop and promulgate standards and guidelines and to encourage self-assessment.

CAS STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Each CAS standard contains 12 common criteria categories (referred to as “general standards”) that have relevance for each and every functional area, no matter what its primary focus. In addition to the general standards, all functional area standards are comprised of both specialty standards and guidelines. All standards use the auxiliary verbs “**must**” and “**shall**” and appear in **bold print** so that users can quickly identify them. Guidelines are designed to provide suggestions and illustrations that can assist in establishing programs and services that more fully address the needs of students than those mandated by a standard. CAS guidelines appear in regular font and use the auxiliary verbs “should” and “may.”

OVER THIRTY YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) has been the pre-eminent force for promoting standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs since its inception in 1979. For the ultimate purpose of fostering and enhancing student learning, development, and achievement and in general to promote good citizenship, CAS continues to create and deliver a dynamic and credible Book of Professional Standards and Guidelines and Self-Assessment Guides that are designed to lead to a host of quality-controlled programs and services. These standards respond to real-time student needs, the requirements of sound pedagogy, and the effective management of 43 functional areas, consistent with institutional missions. Individuals and institutions from nearly 40 CAS member organizations comprise a professional constituency of over 100,000 professionals.

DISCLAIMER

The standards and guidelines published in “The Book of Professional Standards for Higher Education” by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) and referred to in each of the “CAS Self-Assessment Guides” (SAGs) are developed through the voluntary efforts of leaders of professional associations in higher education. The purpose of the standards and guidelines is to identify criteria and principles by which institutions may choose to assess and enhance various areas of their academic, administrative, or student affairs programs and services. CAS specifically disclaims any liability or responsibility for any perceived or actual shortcomings inherent in the text or application of the standards. Further, CAS does not certify individuals nor accredit programs. No institution, whether it has met some or all of the CAS standards, is authorized to indicate that it is “approved, endorsed, certified, or otherwise sanctioned by CAS.” Institutions that have conducted a self-assessment of one or more functional areas addressed by CAS Standards and Guidelines using the appropriate CAS Self-Assessment Guide (SAG) may, where that self-assessment provides evidence that an institution meets these standards, are free to make accurate representations to the effect that the designated program or service meets the CAS Standards.

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The Role of Learning Assistance Programs

CAS Standards Contextual Statement

Learning assistance programs (LAP) help students to succeed academically (Ryan & Glenn, 2004; Stone & Jacobs, 2008) and to facilitate student development and academic success by developing appropriate strategies and behaviors to increase learning efficiency (Dansereau, 1985). Participation in learning assistance programs and services can also improve student retention (Beal, 1980; Ryan and Glenn, 2004) and academic engagement, providing the kinds of rewarding interactions that foster student intellectual and social growth (Tinto, 1987, 2004). The LAP may serve all students at the institution or targeted populations from first-year through graduate and professional students, as well as faculty, staff, administrators, and other students in the community (Kerstiens, 1995).

Ideally, the LAP operates “at the crossroads of academic affairs, student affairs, and enrollment management” (Arendale, 2010, p. 3). The LAP uniquely complements classroom and online instruction by helping students make the most of their intellectual opportunities, making learning accessible to students, and encouraging communities of learning on campus.

The LAP usually provides individualized instruction (tutoring, mentoring, academic coaching, and counseling) that accommodates students’ learning styles, learning goals, and current development. Learning centers may also provide Supplemental Instruction (SI), Structured Learning Assistance (SLA), and a variety of other programs and services that help students master content and learn how to learn. Sometimes the LAP provides credit and non-credit courses, including developmental education, tutor training classes or workshops, first-year seminars, linked courses, and learning strategies instruction. These programs are intentionally diverse because they are designed and implemented to be consistent with institutional missions as well as educational best practices.

High-quality learning assistance programs are characterized by a focus on processes and strategies of learning, intellectual development, and effective assessment of academic performance. These programs respect students’ cultures while acquainting them with the conventions, discourses, and expectations of higher education. The LAP also engages faculty, staff, and administrators in broader conversations about academic success.

Learning assistance programs generally share certain theoretical perspectives and assumptions.

- Academic assistance programs should be ethically and professionally managed, guided by student learning outcomes and assessment, and consistent with current knowledge of student learning.
- Students should have access to the academic tools that will help them succeed.
- Learning assistance should be designed to meet the demands of the institutional setting and student populations.

Assisting students to achieve their academic goals, meet the expectations of their instructors and requirements of their degree programs, and succeed on standardized exams requires professional knowledge, experience, and expertise. To augment professional expertise, LAP professionals often train student staff to provide services (e.g., peer tutoring and mentoring, study groups, SI, SLA); the learning and development of student staff as well as of student clients thus become important parts of the mission.

Formal and informal learning assistance has been essential to student success and retention since the opening of the first U.S. colleges (Maxwell, 1997). The reading clinics, intensive writing, and study methods laboratories of the 1930s and 1940s and self-help programs, learning modules, and programmed instruction of the 1950s and 1960s formed part of the historical foundation for learning assistance programs (Arendale, 2004; Carino, 1995; Enright, 1975; Lissner, 1990; Sullivan, 1980). In the U.S., more holistic learning assistance grew out of demographic shifts in student populations in the 1970s, spearheaded in colleges and universities on the West Coast (Christ, 1980; Walker, 1980) and in the Midwest, coupled with a growing national sense of college as a necessary part of a complete education. The open university movement, which broadened admissions to students who had not traditionally sought or been admitted to academically-oriented postsecondary institutions, led to development of learning assistance centers to keep the open door to college from becoming a revolving door at institutions that otherwise did not intend to adapt to the new student body.

The growth of academic success programs across the U.S. and Canada into and through the 1980s was consistent with traditional American ideals of democratic education and equal opportunity. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, the last decade of the 20th century saw comprehensive academic support become a standard part of the postsecondary landscape.

CAS Standards provided the impetus for certification and professional development programs in learning assistance. In 1989, the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) initiated International Tutor Training Program Certification to ensure minimum standards for tutor training. Nine years later CRLA developed International Mentor Training Program Certification. The *CRLA Tutor Training Handbook* (Deese-Roberts, 2003) and *CRLA Handbook for Training Peer Tutors and Mentors* (Agee & Hodges, 2012) provide examples of best practices that meet certification standards. The National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) developed the *NADE Self-Evaluation Guides* (Clark-Thayer, 2009) in the 1990s. All three certification programs are endorsed by the Council of Learning Assistance and Developmental Education Associations (CLADEA), through which five organizations continue to examine and approve certifications in the field.

Despite productive research in the field, challenges and issues remain to be addressed more fully in the future.

- How can the LAP best gather data to measure student learning and improve programs? What services and programs demonstrate best practices for student learning and academic success at different institutions and different LAP models? Academic assistance programs must do more than provide services; they must also demonstrate effectiveness (Trammell, 2005).
- How should the LAP respond to challenges of shifting student demographics, the changing culture of K-12 schooling, and diversity of needs? In short, how can the LAP improve access to higher education (Arendale, 2010)?
- How will brain research impact learning theory and inform LAP practices?
- How should the LAP move beyond the content, modes, and discourses of the Western model of education to embrace internationalization and globalization?
- How can the LAP help students deal with their high (and often unmet) grade expectations and see learning as a process?

- How can professional organizations and institutions facilitate the recruitment and professional development of LAP directors and staff members?
- How should the LAP resolve information technology concerns and use technology to deliver services?
- How can learning assistance and developmental education programs work together to best meet the needs of students and institutions?
- How can the LAP best assist students in becoming lifelong, independent learners?

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LEARNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

CAS Standards and Guidelines

Part 1. MISSION

The primary mission of Learning Assistance Programs (LAP) must be to provide students with resources and opportunities to improve their ability to learn and to achieve academic success.

LAP must develop, disseminate, implement, and regularly review their missions. The mission must be consistent with the mission of the institution and with professional standards. The mission must be appropriate for the institution's student populations and community settings. Mission statements must reference student learning and development.

LAP must collaborate with faculty members, staff, and administrators in addressing the learning needs, academic performance, and retention of students.

Models of LAP vary, but must have the following goals:

- ensure that students are the central focus of the program
- assist students in achieving their personal potential for learning
- introduce students to the academic expectations of the institution, the faculty members, and the culture of higher education
- help students develop positive attitudes toward learning and confidence in their ability to learn
- foster students' personal responsibility and accountability for their own learning
- provide a variety of instructional approaches appropriate to the skill levels and learning styles of students
- assist students in applying newly learned skills and strategies to their academic work
- support the academic standards and requirements of the institution

Models of LAP should also share the following common goals:

- provide instruction and services that address the cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural dimensions of learning
- provide to faculty members, staff, and administrators, both services and resources that enhance and support student learning, instruction, and professional development

Part 2. PROGRAM

The formal education of students, consisting of the curriculum and the co-curriculum, must promote student learning and development outcomes that are purposeful, contribute to students' realization of their potential, and prepare students for satisfying and productive lives.

Learning Assistance Programs (LAP) must collaborate with colleagues and departments across the institution to promote student learning and development, persistence, and success.

Consistent with the institutional mission, LAP must identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes from among the six domains and related dimensions:

Domain: knowledge acquisition, integration, construction, and application

- **Dimensions: understanding knowledge from a range of disciplines; connecting knowledge to other knowledge, ideas, and experiences; constructing knowledge; and relating knowledge to daily life**

Domain: cognitive complexity

- **Dimensions: critical thinking, reflective thinking, effective reasoning, and creativity**

Domain: intrapersonal development

- **Dimensions: realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, and self-respect; identity development; commitment to ethics and integrity; and spiritual awareness**

Domain: interpersonal competence

- **Dimensions: meaningful relationships, interdependence, collaboration, and effective leadership.**

Domain: humanitarianism and civic engagement

- **Dimensions: understanding and appreciation of cultural and human differences, social responsibility, global perspective, and sense of civic responsibility**

Domain: practical competence

- **Dimensions: pursuing goals, communicating effectively, technical competence, managing personal affairs, managing career development, demonstrating professionalism, maintaining health and wellness, and living a purposeful and satisfying life**

[LD Outcomes: See *The Council for the Advancement of Standards Learning and Developmental Outcomes* statement for examples of outcomes related to these domains and dimensions.]

LAP must

- **assess relevant and desirable student learning and development**
- **provide evidence of impact on outcomes**

- **articulate contributions to or support of student learning and development in the domains not specifically assessed**
- **articulate contributions to or support of student persistence and success**
- **use evidence gathered through this process to create strategies for improvement of programs and services**

LAP must be

- **intentionally designed**
- **guided by theories and knowledge of learning and development**
- **integrated into the life of the institution**
- **reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the student population**
- **responsive to needs of individuals, populations with distinct needs, and relevant constituencies**
- **delivered using multiple formats, strategies, and contexts**

Where institutions provide distance education, LAP must assist distance learners to achieve their educational goals by providing access to information about programs and services, to staff members who can address questions and concerns, and to counseling, advising, or other forms of assistance.

The scope of programs and services must be determined by the needs of the student populations whom LAP are charged to serve.

LAP should serve all students at the institution. Individual LAP may serve specific populations such as culturally and ethnically diverse students, international and English-as-a-second-language students, student athletes, returning students, students with disabilities, and those provisionally admitted or on academic probation.

LAP should provide instruction and services for the development of reading, mathematics and quantitative reasoning, writing, critical thinking, problem-solving, technological literacy, scientific literacy, and learning strategies. Other programs may include subject-matter tutoring, course-based instructional programs such as Supplemental Instruction, time management programs, college success courses, first-year student seminars, and preparation for graduate and professional school admissions tests and for professional certification requirements.

In recognition of the fact that all students do not learn in the same manner, modes of delivering learning assistance programs should be diverse, including individual and group instruction and/or tutoring, cooperative learning, peer assisted learning, and accelerated learning. A variety of instructional media such as print, electronic, and skills laboratories should be incorporated. Instruction and programs may be delivered traditionally or via technology, either on or off site.

Formal and informal screening or diagnostic procedures must be conducted to identify the knowledge, skills, and motivation that students need to develop to achieve the level of proficiency prescribed or required by the institution, program, or instructor.

Assessment results must be shared with the student to formulate recommendations and a plan of instruction.

LAP should provide systematic feedback to students concerning their progress in reaching cognitive and affective goals; teach methods of self-regulation; and give students practice in applying and transferring skills and strategies learned through the LAP.

LAP professional staff must have access to institutional databases with student information relevant to its work.

LAP must promote, either directly or by referral, the cognitive and affective skills that influence learning, such as stress management, test anxiety reduction, assertiveness, time management, concentration, and motivation.

LAP must refer students to appropriate campus and community resources for assistance with personal problems, learning disabilities, financial difficulties, and other areas of need that may be outside the purview or beyond the expertise of the learning assistance program.

LAP must promote an understanding among campus community members of the learning needs of the student population.

Actions to promote this understanding may include

- establishing advisory boards consisting of members from key segments of the campus community
- holding periodic informational meetings and consulting with staff, faculty members, and administrators
- participating in staff and faculty development and in-service programs on curriculum and instructional approaches that address the development of learning skills, attitudes and behaviors, and the assessment of student learning outcomes
- encouraging the use of learning assistance program resources, materials, instruction, and services as integral or supplemental classroom activities
- conducting in-class workshops that demonstrate the application of learning strategies to course content
- disseminating information that describes programs and services, hours of operation, and procedures for registering or scheduling appointments
- training and supervising paraprofessionals and pre-professionals to work in such capacities as tutors, peer mentors, and other group leaders, such as Supplemental Instruction (SI) leaders
- providing jobs, practicums, courses, internships, mentoring, and assistantships for students interested in learning assistance and related careers
- collaborating with other community groups and educational institutions to provide college preparation assistance

Part 3. ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

To achieve student and program outcomes, Learning Assistance Programs (LAP) must be structured purposefully and organized effectively. LAP must have

- **clearly stated goals**
- **current and accessible policies and procedures**
- **written performance expectations for employees**
- **functional work flow graphics or organizational charts demonstrating clear channels of authority**

Leaders with organizational authority for the programs and services must provide strategic planning, supervision, and management; advance the organization; and maintain integrity through the following functions:

Strategic Planning

- **articulate a vision and mission that drive short- and long-term planning**
- **set goals and objectives based on the needs of the population served and desired student learning or development and program outcomes**
- **facilitate continuous development, implementation, and assessment of goal attainment congruent with institutional mission and strategic plans**
- **promote environments that provide meaningful opportunities for student learning, development, and engagement**
- **develop and continuously improve programs and services in response to the changing needs of students served and evolving institutional priorities**
- **intentionally include diverse perspectives to inform decision making**

Supervising

- **manage human resource processes including recruitment, selection, development, supervision, performance planning, evaluation, recognition, and reward**
- **influence others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the unit**
- **empower professional, support, and student staff to accept leadership opportunities**
- **offer appropriate feedback to colleagues and students on skills needed to become more effective leaders**
- **encourage and support professional development, collaboration with colleagues and departments across the institution, and scholarly contribution to the profession**

Managing

- **identify and address individual, organizational, and environmental conditions that foster or inhibit mission achievement**
- **plan, allocate, and monitor the use of fiscal, physical, human, intellectual, and technological resources**
- **use current and valid evidence to inform decisions**
- **incorporate sustainability practices in the management and design of programs, services, and facilities**
- **understand appropriate technologies and integrate them into programs and services**
- **be knowledgeable about codes and laws relevant to programs and services and ensure that staff members understand their responsibilities through appropriate training**

- **assess potential risks and take action to mitigate them**

Advancing the Organization

- **communicate effectively in writing, speaking, and electronic venues**
- **advocate for programs and services**
- **advocate for representation in strategic planning initiatives at appropriate divisional and institutional levels**
- **initiate collaborative interactions with internal and external stakeholders who have legitimate concerns about and interests in the functional area**
- **facilitate processes to reach consensus where wide support is needed**
- **inform other areas within the institution about issues affecting practice**

Maintaining Integrity

- **model ethical behavior and institutional citizenship**
- **share data used to inform key decisions in transparent and accessible ways**
- **monitor media used for distributing information about programs and services to ensure the content is current, accurate, appropriately referenced, and accessible**

LAP leaders must be knowledgeable about issues, trends, theories, research, and methodologies related to student learning and retention.

LAP leaders should

- participate in institutional planning, policy, procedural, and fiscal decisions that affect learning assistance for students
- seek opportunities for additional funding, resources, and facilities, as needed
- represent the learning assistance program on institutional committees
- collaborate with leaders of academic departments and support services in addressing the learning needs and retention of students
- be involved in research, publication, presentations, consultation, and activities of professional organizations
- communicate with professional colleagues in the learning assistance field and related professions
- promote and advertise their programs and services

The mission and goals of LAP, the needs and demographics of their clients, and their institutional role should determine where the unit is located in the organizational structure of the institution. Learning assistance programs are frequently organized as units in the academic affairs or the student affairs division.

Regardless of where LAP is positioned within the organization structure, it must communicate and collaborate with a network of key units across the institution to ensure coordination of related functions, programs, services, policies, and procedures, and to expedite student referrals.

LAP should have a broadly constituted advisory board to share information and make suggestions to strengthen the program.

LAP must provide written goals, objectives, and anticipated outcomes for each program and service.

Written procedures should exist for collecting, processing, and reporting student assessment and program data.

LAP must hold regularly scheduled meetings to share information; coordinate the planning, scheduling, and delivery of programs and services; identify and discuss potential and actual problems and concerns; and collaborate on making decisions and solving problems.

Part 4. HUMAN RESOURCES

Learning Assistance Programs (LAP) must be staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish mission and goals.

Within institutional guidelines, LAP must

- **establish procedures for staff recruitment and selection, training, performance planning, and evaluation**
- **set expectations for supervision and performance**
- **assess the performance of employees individually and as a team**
- **provide access to continuing and advanced education and appropriate professional development opportunities to improve the leadership ability, competence, and skills of all employees.**

Staff and faculty who hold a joint appointment with LAP must be committed to the mission, philosophy, goals, and priorities of the program and must possess the necessary expertise for assigned responsibilities.

LAP must maintain position descriptions for all staff members.

To create a diverse staff, programs and services must institute recruitment and hiring strategies that encourage individuals from under-represented populations to apply for positions.

LAP must develop promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, proactive, and non-discriminatory.

To further the recruitment and retention of staff, LAP must consider work life initiatives, such as compressed work schedules, flextime, job sharing, remote work, or telework.

LAP professional staff members must hold an earned graduate or professional degree in a field relevant to the position they hold or must possess an appropriate combination of educational credentials and related work experience.

Relevant disciplines include English, reading, mathematics, student affairs professional preparation, student development, higher education, counseling, psychology, or education.

LAP professionals should be competent and experienced in

- the content areas in which they teach, conduct labs, or provide assistance
- learning theory, instruction and assessment, and the theory and professional standards of practice for their areas of specialization and responsibility
- understanding the unique characteristics and needs of the populations they assist and teach
- demonstrating the ability to adjust pedagogical approaches according to the learning needs and styles of their students, the nature of the learning task, and the content of academic disciplines across the curriculum
- working with college students with different learning styles and abilities, including those with disabilities
- writing and communicating at a professional level
- working in culturally and academically diverse environments
- consulting, collaborating, and negotiating with staff, faculty members, and administrators of academic and student affairs units
- designing, implementing, and utilizing instructional strategies, materials, and technologies
- training, supervising, and mentoring paraprofessionals and pre-professionals
- identifying and establishing lines of communication for student referral to other institutional and student support units

LAP professional staff members must engage in continuing professional development activities to keep abreast of the research, theories, legislation, policies, and developments that affect their programs and services.

LAP must have technical and support staff members adequate to accomplish their mission. All members of the staff must be technologically proficient and qualified to perform their job functions, be knowledgeable about ethical and legal uses of technology, and have access to training and resources to support the performance of their assigned responsibilities.

Degree- or credential-seeking interns or graduate assistants must be qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and by relevant experience. These individuals must be trained and supervised adequately by professional staff members holding educational credentials and related work experience appropriate for supervision. Supervisors must be cognizant of the roles of interns and graduate assistants as both student and employee and closely adhere to all parameters of their job descriptions, work hours, and schedules. Supervisors and the interns or graduate assistants must agree to compensatory time or other appropriate compensation if circumstances necessitate additional hours

Student employees and volunteers must be carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated. They must be educated on how and when to refer those in need of additional assistance to qualified staff members and must have access to a supervisor for assistance in making these judgments. Student employees and volunteers must be provided clear job descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing development.

LAP professionals must be knowledgeable of the policies and procedures to be followed for internships and practicums as required by students' academic departments.

Roles and responsibilities of LAP and those of the academic department should be clearly defined.

All LAP staff members, including student employees and volunteers, must receive specific training on institutional policies pertaining to functions or activities they support and to privacy and confidentiality policies and laws regarding access to student records and other sensitive institutional information.

All LAP staff members must receive training on policies and procedures related to the use of technology to store or access student records and institutional data.

LAP must ensure that staff members are knowledgeable about and trained in emergency procedures, crisis response, and prevention efforts. Prevention efforts must address identification of threatening conduct or behavior of students, faculty and staff members, and others and must incorporate a system for responding and reporting.

LAP must ensure that staff members are knowledgeable of and trained in safety and emergency procedures for securing and vacating facilities.

Administrative and technical staff should be knowledgeable about changes in programs, services, policies, and procedures in order to expedite smooth and efficient assistance to students. Appropriate staff development opportunities should be available.

Faculty members assigned to LAP must be informed about the implications for tenure and promotion.

Part 5. ETHICS

Learning Assistance Programs (LAP) must review relevant professional ethical standards and must adopt or develop and implement appropriate statements of ethical practice.

LAP must publish and adhere to statements of ethical practice and ensure their periodic review by relevant constituencies.

LAP must orient new staff members to relevant ethical standards and statements of ethical practice and related institutional policies.

Specific attention must be given to properly orienting and advising student staff about matters of confidentiality. Clear statements must be distributed and reviewed with student staff regarding what information is not appropriate for them to access or communicate.

Statements of ethical standards must specify that staff members respect privacy and maintain confidentiality in all communications and records to the extent that such communications and records are protected under relevant privacy laws.

Statements of ethical standards must specify limits on disclosure of information contained in students' educational records as well as requirements to disclose to appropriate authorities.

Statements of ethical standards must address personal and economic conflicts of interest, or appearance thereof, by staff members in the performance of their work.

Statements of ethical standards must reflect the responsibility of staff members to be fair, objective, and impartial in their interactions with others.

Statements of ethical standards must reference management of institutional funds.

Statements of ethical standards must reference appropriate behavior regarding research and assessment with human participants, confidentiality of research and assessment data, and students' rights and responsibilities.

Statements of ethical standards must include the expectation that LAP staff members confront and hold accountable other staff members who exhibit unethical behavior.

Statements of ethical standards must address issues surrounding scholarly integrity.

As appropriate, LAP staff members must inform users of programs and services of ethical obligations and limitations emanating from codes and laws or from licensure requirements.

LAP staff members must recognize and avoid conflicts of interest that could adversely influence their judgment or objectivity and, when unavoidable, recuse themselves from the situation.

LAP staff members must perform their duties within the limits of their position, training, expertise, and competence.

When these limits are exceeded, individuals in need of further assistance must be referred to persons possessing appropriate qualifications.

Promotional and descriptive information must be accurate and free of deception.

LAP must adhere to institutional policies regarding ethical and legal use of software and technology.

Because LAP staff work with students' academic coursework, they must be knowledgeable of policies related to academic integrity, plagiarism, student code of

conduct, students' rights and responsibilities and other similar policies. All staff members must be cognizant of the implications of these policies.

Statements or claims made about outcomes that can be achieved from participating in learning assistance programs and services must be truthful and realistic.

LAP funds acquired through grants and other non-institutional resources must be managed according to the regulations and guidelines of the funding source and the institution.

Part 6. LAW, POLICY, AND GOVERNANCE

Learning Assistance Programs (LAP) must be in compliance with laws, regulations, and policies that relate to their respective responsibilities and that pose legal obligations, limitations, risks, and liabilities for the institution as a whole. Examples include constitutional, statutory, regulatory, and case law; relevant law and orders emanating from codes and laws; and the institution's policies.

LAP must inform staff members, appropriate officials, and users of programs and services about existing and changing legal obligations, risks and liabilities, and limitations.

LAP must have written policies on all relevant operations, transactions, or tasks that have legal implications.

LAP must regularly review policies. The revision and creation of policies must be informed by best practices, available evidence, and policy issues in higher education.

LAP staff members must use reasonable and informed practices to limit the liability exposure of the institution and its officers, employees, and agents. Staff members must be informed about institutional policies regarding risk management, personal liability, and related insurance coverage options and must be referred to external sources if the institution does not provide coverage.

The institution must provide access to legal advice for staff members as needed to carry out assigned responsibilities.

LAP must have procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for responding to threats, emergencies, and crisis situations. Systems and procedures must be in place to disseminate timely and accurate information to students, other members of the institutional community, and appropriate external organizations during emergency situations.

LAP staff members must neither participate in nor condone any form of harassment or activity that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

LAP must obtain permission to use copyrighted materials and instruments. LAP must purchase the materials and instruments from legally compliant sources or seek alternative permission from the publisher or owner. References to copyrighted materials and instruments must include appropriate citations.

LAP staff members must be knowledgeable about internal and external governance systems that affect programs and services.

Staff development programs should be available to educate LAP staff of changing legal obligations.

Part 7. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS

Within the context of each institution's unique mission and in accordance with institutional policies and all applicable codes and laws, Learning Assistance Programs (LAP) must create and maintain educational and work environments that are

- **welcoming, accessible, and inclusive to persons of diverse backgrounds**
- **equitable and non-discriminatory**
- **free from harassment**

LAP must not discriminate on the basis of ability; age; cultural identity; ethnicity; family educational history (e.g., first generation to attend college); gender identity and expression; nationality; political affiliation; race; religious affiliation; sex; sexual orientation; economic, marital, social, or veteran status; or any other basis included in institutional policies and codes and laws.

LAP must

- **advocate for greater sensitivity to multicultural and social justice concerns by the institution and its personnel**
- **modify or remove policies, practices, facilities, structures, systems, and technologies that limit access, discriminate, or produce inequities**
- **include diversity, equity, and access initiatives within their strategic plans**
- **foster communication that deepens understanding of identity, culture, self-expression, and heritage**
- **promote respect about commonalities and differences among people within their historical and cultural contexts**
- **address the characteristics and needs of a diverse population when establishing and implementing culturally relevant and inclusive programs, services, policies, procedures, and practices**
- **provide staff members with access to multicultural training and hold staff members accountable for integrating the training into their work**
- **respond to the needs of all students and other populations served when establishing hours of operation and developing methods of delivering programs, services, and resources**
- **ensure physical, program, and resource access for persons with disabilities**

- **recognize the needs of distance learning students by providing appropriate and accessible services and resources or by assisting them in gaining access to other appropriate services and resources in their geographic region**

The program should facilitate student adjustment to the academic culture of the institution by orienting students to the practices, resources, responsibilities, and behaviors that contribute to academic success.

The instructional content, materials, and activities of learning assistance programs should provide opportunities to increase awareness and appreciation of the individual and cultural differences of students, staff, and faculty members.

Part 8. INSTITUTIONAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Learning Assistance Programs (LAP) must reach out to relevant individuals, groups, communities, and organizations internal and external to the institution to

- **establish, maintain, and promote understanding and effective relations with those that have a significant interest in or potential effect on the students or other constituents served by the programs and services**
- **garner support and resources for programs and services as defined by the mission statement**
- **disseminate information about the programs and services**
- **collaborate, where appropriate, to assist in offering or improving programs and services to meet the needs of students and other constituents and to achieve program and student outcomes**
- **engage diverse individuals, groups, communities, and organizations to enrich the educational environment and experiences of students and other constituents**

LAP must have procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for

- **communicating with the media**
- **contracting with external organizations for delivery of programs and services**
- **cultivating, soliciting, and managing gifts**
- **applying to and managing funds from grants**

LAP should

- be integrated into the academic program of the institution
- establish communication with academic units and student services
- collaborate with appropriate academic departments and faculty members when providing course-based learning assistance
- encourage the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and expertise
- provide mutual consultation, as needed, on student cases
- expedite student referrals to and from the LAP
- collaborate on programs and services that efficiently and effectively address student needs
- have representation on institutional committees relevant to the mission and goals of the program such as committees on retention, orientation, basic skills, learning communities, first-year student seminars, probation review (e.g., academic, financial

aid), academic standards and requirements, curriculum design, assessment and placement, and professional development

- solicit and use trained volunteers from the local community to contribute their skills and talents to the services of the learning assistance program, consistent with the LAP mission and goals and the institution's risk management policies
- provide training and consultation to community-based organizations, e.g., literacy associations, corporate training, and school-to-college transitions, initiatives, and programs

Part 9. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Learning Assistance Programs (LAP) must have funding to accomplish the mission and goals. In establishing funding priorities and making significant changes, a comprehensive analysis must be conducted to determine the following elements: unmet needs of the unit, relevant expenditures, external and internal resources, and impact on students and the institution.

Adequate funds should be provided for the following budget categories: staff and student salaries, general office functions, student assessment and instructional activities, data management and program evaluation processes, staff training and professional development activities, instructional materials and media, and instructional and office technology.

LAP must demonstrate efficient and effective use and responsible stewardship of fiscal resources consistent with institutional protocols.

A financial analysis of costs and available resources must be completed before implementing new programs or changing existing ones. This analysis must include an assessment of the impact on students served prior to making significant changes

Opportunities for additional funding should be pursued; however, these sources should not be expected to supplant institutional funding.

Part 10. TECHNOLOGY

Learning Assistance Programs (LAP) must have adequate technology to support the achievement of their mission and goals. The technology and its use must comply with institutional policies and procedures and be evaluated for compliance with relevant codes and laws.

Electronic systems for scheduling and record keeping must be secure.

Such systems should be integrated with institutional systems.

LAP must use current technology to provide updated information regarding mission, location, staffing, programs, services, and official contacts to students and designated clients.

LAP must explore the use of technology to enhance delivery of programs and services, especially for students at a distance or external constituencies.

When technology is used to facilitate student learning and development, LAP must select technology that reflects intended outcomes.

LAP must

- **maintain policies and procedures that address the security, confidentiality, and backup of data, as well as compliance with privacy laws**
- **have clearly articulated plans in place for protecting confidentiality and security of information when using Internet-based technologies**
- **develop plans for replacing and updating existing hardware and software as well as plans for integrating new technically-based or supported programs, including systems developed internally by the institution, systems available through professional associations, or private vendor-based systems**

Technology, as well as workstations or computer labs maintained by programs and services for student use, must be accessible to all designated clients and must meet established technology standards for delivery to persons with disabilities.

When providing student access to technology, LAP must

- **have policies on the use of technology that are clear, easy to understand, and available to all students**
- **provide assistance, information, or referral to appropriate support services to those needing help accessing or using technology**
- **provide instruction or training on how to use the technology**
- **inform students on the legal and ethical implications of misuse as it pertains to intellectual property, harassment, privacy, and social networks**

Student violations of technology policies must follow established institutional student disciplinary procedures.

Students who experience negative emotional or psychological consequences from the use of technology must be referred to support services provided by the institution.

Part 11. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Learning Assistance Programs (LAP) must have adequate, accessible, and suitably located facilities and equipment to support the mission and goals. If acquiring capital equipment as defined by the institution, LAP must take into account expenses related to regular maintenance and life cycle costs. Facilities and equipment must be evaluated on an established cycle, including consideration of sustainability, and be in compliance with codes and laws to provide for access, health, safety, and security.

LAP staff members must have workspace that is well equipped, adequate in size, and designed to support their work and responsibilities. For conversations requiring privacy, staff members must have access to a private space.

Facilities and equipment should support the instructional, service, and office functions of the learning assistance program. Facilities should include flexible space to accommodate different delivery modes and student needs. Consideration should be given to universal instructional design in creating classrooms, labs, resource rooms, media and computer centers, and group and one-to-one tutorial space to support instruction. Adequate space should be provided for quiet areas to support testing and other activities that require concentration.

There must be adequate and secure storage for equipment, supplies, instructional and testing materials, and confidential records.

Environmental conditions such as appropriate acoustics, lighting, ventilation, heating, and air-conditioning should enhance the teaching/learning process.

LAP staff members who share workspace must be able to secure their own work.

The design of the facilities must guarantee the security and privacy of records and ensure the confidentiality of sensitive information.

The location and layout of the facilities must be sensitive to the needs of persons with disabilities as well as the needs of other constituencies.

Part 12. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Learning Assistance Programs (LAP) must have a clearly articulated assessment plan to document achievement of stated goals and learning outcomes, demonstrate accountability, provide evidence of improvement, and describe resulting changes in programs and services.

LAP must have adequate fiscal, human, professional development, and technological resources to develop and implement assessment plans.

Assessments must include direct and indirect evaluation and use qualitative and quantitative methodologies and existing evidence, as appropriate, to determine whether and to what degree the stated mission, goals, and intended outcomes are being met as effectively and efficiently as possible. The process must employ sufficient and sound measures to ensure comprehensiveness. Data collected must include responses from students and other constituencies, and aggregated results must be shared with those groups. Results of assessments must be shared appropriately with multiple constituents.

Qualitative methods may include standard evaluation forms, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observations, or case studies, with input solicited from faculty members, staff, and students.

Quantitative measurements range from data on an individual student's performance to data on campus retention rates and success for various cohorts. Quantitative methods may include follow-up studies on students' grades in targeted courses, gain scores, grade point averages, graduation, re-enrollment, and retention figures. Program effectiveness may also be measured by comparing data of learning assistance program participants and non-participants. Quantitative program measures may include data on the size of the user population, numbers utilizing particular services and number of contact hours, sources of student referrals to the program, or numbers of students who may be on a waiting list or who have requested services not provided by the learning assistance program. Quantitative data should be collected within specific time periods as well as longitudinally to reveal trends.

Results of assessments and evaluations must be used to identify needs and interests in revising and improving programs and services, recognizing staff performance, maximizing resource efficiency and effectiveness, improving student achievement of learning and development outcomes, and improving student persistence and success. Changes resulting from the use of assessments and evaluation must be shared with stakeholders.

LAP should have the ability to collect and analyze data through its own resources as well as through access to appropriate data generated by the institution.

Periodic evaluations of LAP or services may be performed by on-campus experts and outside consultants. Evaluations should be disseminated to appropriate administrators and constituencies.

LAP should conduct periodic self-assessments, utilizing self-study processes endorsed by professional organizations. The assessments should examine the quality of services provided as well as the potential impact on student learning over time. Additionally, learning outcomes associated with LAP instructional courses should reflect what students learn or do better as a result of being exposed to course materials and instructional strategies.

Various means of individual assessment should be conducted for the purpose of identifying the learning needs of the students and guiding them to appropriate programs and services. Assessment results should be communicated to students confidentially, honestly, and sensitively. Students should be advised and directed to appropriate, alternative educational opportunities when there is reasonable cause to believe that students may not be able to meet requirements for academic success.

LAP should periodically review and revise its goals and services based on evaluation outcomes and based on changes in institutional goals, priorities, and plans. Data that reveal trends or changes in student demographics, characteristics, needs, and outcomes should be utilized for learning assistance program short- and long-term planning.

*General Standards revised in 2011;
LAP content developed/revised in 1986, 1996, & 2007*

