



[AIRC International Enrollment Management \(IEM\) Standards for U.S. Institutions](#)

Endorsed on October 31, 2022 and Revisions Adopted December 5, 2023.

Intended for U.S. post-secondary institutions, these Standards provide guidance to institutions in serving the best interests of international students, the institution, and its recruitment partners. An institution's voluntary adherence to AIRC's Institutional Enrollment Management Standards signifies its commitment to ethical and transparent international enrollment management (IEM) policies and practices at the highest levels of professionalism. These Standards complement and are consistent with AIRC's Educational Agency Standards. Together, AIRC's standards for institutions and agencies provide quality assurance for the field of international student enrollment and are a primary way that AIRC fulfills its responsibility as the Standards Development Organization for the field.

How to Use these Standards

Institutions are encouraged to use these Standards to assess their international enrollment management operations. The Standards can be used as part of a formal review process such as an external or reaccreditation review. They may also be used internally for staff training, professional development and continuous improvement of international enrollment management.

There are five Standards, and each is divided into three parts:

- 1) The Standard's name and its description. These Standards comprise five major areas of international enrollment management.
- 2) Each of the five Standards is subdivided by topics specific to the Standard. Each topic is followed by questions designed to stimulate broad and critical thinking about the topic and the Standard. Users of this document are encouraged to approach these questions as a way to assess IEM at their institution. The questions are designed to elicit robust responses rather than a simple "yes" or "no" answer.
- 3) Forthcoming: A toolbox of best practice resources related to each question. These will be examples of institutional practices and programs that address the question topics. This part of

the Standards will be populated on an ongoing basis as AIRC identifies and seeks permission to include best practice examples in IEM implementation.

1. Mission and Goals

International Enrollment Management (IEM) is an integral part of overall institutional enrollment goals. It should align with the university's mission and international student enrollment targets and comprehensive internationalization, and DEI and environmental sustainability strategies.

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 How does the institution describe in a clear and detailed manner its mission for and commitment to diverse and equitable international enrollment management?

1.1.2 How does the institution define an international student? How is this definition communicated and understood across the institution?

1.1.3 How does the institution's international enrollment management plan align with comprehensive internationalization at the institution?

1.2 Goals

1.2.1 What are the institution's clearly stated goals for IEM, and what are its processes for developing, implementing, evaluating and revising these goals?

1.2.2 What is the institution's capacity to serve the international students it admits, enrolls, and graduates?

1.2.3 How does the institution recognize the value and importance of international students on campus beyond the financial impacts?

1.2.4 How does the institution enhance diversity, equity and inclusion in its student population through international admissions?

1.2.5 What other institutional missions and goals, such as environmental sustainability, have been considered in developing the institution's IEM plan?

1.3 Leadership

1.3.1 How does the institutional leadership articulate its commitment to and investment in international student enrollment priorities?

1.3.2 How does the institutional leadership articulate its commitment to DEI in relation to international student enrollment?

1.3.3 How is the leadership for IEM structured and supported?

1.3.4 What is the institution's international enrollment strategic plan and how does it align with the institution's strategic plan and priorities?

1.4 Collaboration

1.4.1 How does the institution facilitate awareness among and increase engagement with campus partners and other students to support and collaborate on international enrollment management?

1.4.2 How is IEM brought into existing DEI structures, plans and initiatives at the institution? How does IEM meet the DEI goals of the institution?

1.4.3 How does DEI support the IEM mission, structures, plans and initiatives at the institution?

2. Institutional Effectiveness for International Enrollment Management

Institutions should ensure that they have effective planning and management to deliver the scope of their international enrollment management plans to meet their goals.

2.1 Planning

2.1.1 What are the institution's short- and long-term plans for international student enrollment?

2.1.2 How does the institution sustain an effective planning process for diverse, equitable, and inclusive international enrollment management?

2.1.3 What is the institution's action plan for effectively supporting and collaborating with international stakeholders/constituencies, including its educational agency, EducationUSA, and institutional partner networks.

2.2 Data

2.2.1 How does the institution fairly, equitably, and inclusively collect and analyze data to assist in international enrollment management success?

2.2.2 What type of international enrollment data should be collected and analyzed to ensure an equitable process? (or, result?)

2.2.3 How does the data reflect the diversity of experiences and identities of international students?

2.2.4 How does the institution measure IEM impacts and outcomes, disseminate data and reports, and communicate with students and other stakeholders?

2.2.5 How does the institution protect and maintain the confidentiality of student data?

2.3 Effective Management

2.3.1 How is the institution sufficiently organized to accomplish its IEM purpose through organizational structure, policies, procedures, and budget?

2.3.2 How is the institution sufficiently organized to accomplish its IEM purpose to serve the best needs and interests of international students?

2.4 Effective Decision Making

2.4.1 How does the institution's decision-making process ensure that equitable and effective decisions are made regarding international student satisfaction and success, recruitment and enrollment, student services and programs?

2.5 Change Management

2.5.1 How does the institution act on its decisions and data to manage change while continuing to serve and value the diverse and unique interests of international students?

2.5.2 How does the institution use data to improve its international student enrollment activities and operations?

2.6 Human Resources

2.6.1 How does the institution ensure that employees or other people working for or on behalf of the institution are competent, well informed, value diversity, and act at all times in the best interest of international applicants and enrolled students?

2.6.2 What measures are in place to reduce discriminatory barriers to employment?

2.6.3 How does the institution train its staff to be up-to-date and knowledgeable about relevant U.S. laws and federal regulations and good practices?

2.6.4 How does the institution ensure that recruiting, admissions, and other relevant staff adhere to all U.S. laws and federal regulations related to international admissions and recruiting practices?

2.6.5 How does the institution ensure ongoing investment in necessary resources and tools to keep international staff and team members current on international trends/policies to effectively serve and contribute to international student success?

2.7 Conflicts of Interest

2.7.1 How does the institution manage its relationships with agencies, organizations and students to ensure equity, impartiality and transparency?

2.7.2 For institutions working with third parties, including educational agencies and service providers, there should be a written agreement for these relationships to ensure integrity, transparency, and accountability related to financials, purchase of services, and commission payments.

3. Marketing and Recruitment

Marketing and promotional activities are essential aspects of international enrollment. They are the main channels for achieving enrollment growth and should correspond to a strong and effective marketing

strategy. Promotional activities must adhere to compliance requirements including honesty and transparency, diversity, equity, and inclusion, accountability for third-party relationships and appropriate consent for use of images.

3.1 Accuracy in Marketing Information

3.1.1 How does the institution market its educational and institutional services professionally and accurately, and maintain the integrity and reputation of its particular academic programs as well as of the U.S. education sector?

3.2 Honesty

3.2.1 How does the institution represent itself honestly, claim competency when demonstrable, and avoid misrepresentation?

3.3 Transparency and Accessibility

3.3.1 How does the institution conduct itself in a transparent manner in which only truthful claims are made, and in which students are equally valued and served in an unbiased manner?

3.3.2 How does the institution transparently present the costs of attendance for international students?

3.3.3 How does the institution make information about its international admissions office, policies, and procedures accessible to students with different cultural backgrounds, native languages, English language competencies, and physical abilities?

3.4 Relationships with Third Parties, including Educational Agencies and Service Providers

3.4.1 How does the institution provide pertinent information and training on marketing and recruitment efforts to its educational agency partners and other third parties so that prospective students may make informed decisions about institutional choice, thereby ensuring better alignment between students' expectations and their actual experiences?

3.4.2 How does the institution make certain that its legal relationships are reflected in written contracts or agreements with readily understood and up-front disclosure of services and related fees?

3.4.3 How does the institution help to determine that educational agencies, service providers and other third parties comply with their local and U.S. laws and federal regulations?

3.4.4 How does the institution determine the specifics of contracts such as: duration, renewal, termination, handling of disputes, commission rates, fixed-based commissions, bonus structure, and the purchase of additional services?

3.4.5 How does the institution ensure that it is meeting all the obligations in its written agreements, including timely commission payments to recruitment partners?

3.4.6 How does the institution ensure that educational agencies, service providers and other third parties are duly trained by, and remain current on, the institution they represent, including topics such as admission and scholarship requirements, academic programs, international student support services, diversity, equity and inclusion policies, and policies relevant to an international student's institutional choice? How does the institution ensure information is clearly articulated regarding available marketing fees, commissions and other methods of compensation, dates and process for invoicing and payment. How does the institution address conflicting data on student enrollment and attribution, financial concerns and partnership disagreement?

3.4.7 How does the institution collaborate closely with its educational agencies, service providers and other third parties, and establish clear procedures for sustainable relationships, including mechanisms for compliance with AIRC guidelines?

3.5 Confidentiality of Records

3.5.1 How does the institution maintain the confidentiality and security of records, notes, and student information?

4. Admissions and Enrollment

Institutions should ensure that the admissions process for international students is equitable to the admissions process for domestic students. Understanding that each institution has different requirements for admission, it is critically important that admissions requirements focus on student success by ensuring that admission is based on academic performance and English proficiency. Institutions should understand the varied educational systems around the world that could impact admissions decisions. Institutions need to explain to students how admissions decisions are made, including, but not limited to, document translation and credit evaluation processes.

4.1 Admissions Standards

4.1.1 What are the standards for admission for international students, including English language proficiency requirements? How are these communicated in clear, consistent, transparent ways to students, families, agencies, and internally across the institution? How does the institution ensure equity in its international admission requirements?

4.2 Credential Evaluation

4.2.1 How does the institution ensure fairness, consistency, and accuracy in its international credential evaluation processes?

4.2.2 How does the institution engage faculty in the process of evaluating credits through campus units such as curriculum committees, academic centers, and academic advisors in related disciplines?

4.3 Admissions Decisions

4.3.1 How does the institution balance its established international admission standards with its enrollment and DEI goals?

4.3.2 How does the institution ensure consistency, accuracy, and fairness in admissions decisions?

4.3.3 If applicable, how does the institution provide access to admissions tests options and scores? How does the institution address situations in which students are unable to access tests?

4.3.4 How does the institution assess the tests it uses and accepts to determine that they are accurate, secure and fair?

4.3.5 How does the institution communicate clear standards for its English language proficiency requirements?

4.3.6 What admissions policies, practices and/or resources does the institution have in place to provide academically qualified students equitable educational opportunities?

4.3.7 How are applicant communications handled effectively? How are queries responded to in an accurate and timely manner? How is the management of applicant interactions supported by effective communication flows and CRM systems?

4.3.8 How is applicant feedback and satisfaction tracked?

4.3.9 How are students who do not meet admission standards provided guidance?

4.4 Staffing

4.4.1 How is staffing commensurate with the institution's international student enrollment and DEI goals? How are the staff roles, responsibilities and reporting structures clearly defined?

4.4.2 What are the unit's explicit performance metrics? How does the unit track and share key performance data regarding processing volumes, processing times, responsiveness, and yield rates? How is the unit held accountable?

4.4.3 How is the culture of the unit aligned with a high customer service function? What effective processes, systems and software are in place to help the unit to succeed? How does the unit keep up with innovation? How does the unit share knowledge?

4.4.4 What is the employment turn-over rate of processing staff and admissions advisors? How does the unit strive for a healthy percentage of diverse internal processing staff versus relying heavily on part-time staff and/or contractors?

4.5 Staff Knowledge and Training

4.5.1 How does the staff develop sufficient knowledge of and receive regular training regarding international education systems, foreign accreditation bodies and degree equivalence, credential evaluation and foreign grading scales, DEI training as it pertains to international students, etc.?

4.5.2 How does the institution support staff to attend and participate in updates/training sessions for credit evaluation at regional and/or national conferences?

4.5.3 How does the international admissions staff stay updated with the constantly evolving academic programs, e.g., additions or deletions of programs so that students' intended interest in academic disciplines is properly matched?

4.5.4 How does the staff develop competencies on intercultural and inclusive advising and support practices?

5. Student Wellbeing and Services

The institution provides a sustained and comprehensive support system for students' wellbeing. Through a wide range of programming and services, the institution facilitates students' physical and mental wellbeing. These programs and services focus on efforts to assist students in acculturation, cultural assimilation, cultural adjustment, equitable student services, cultural exchange, integration into the community, and global competency. Additionally, programming and services related to academic success, retention, and graduation are robust and adequately staffed with qualified personnel.

5.1 Commitment, Understanding and Capacity

5.1.1 How is the institution committed to supporting and facilitating international student wellbeing (e.g., mental health, advising, emergency financial support)?

5.1.2 How does the institution demonstrate an understanding of the international student experience, recognize the importance of respecting the needs of international students, value the diversity international students bring to campus, and commit to the provision of supporting programs and services conducive to the enrollment, persistence, welfare and success of international students on their campuses?

5.1.3 How does the institution assess and improve its capacity to support all international students, particularly in the areas of housing, food insecurity, medical and mental health services, and insurance?

5.2 Effective International Student Support and Integration

5.2.1 How are students informed of the services made available to them? How are students actively encouraged to use such services?

5.2.2 How does the institution provide suitable support for international students throughout the application process, once students are on campus, during their entire academic career, and as alumni?

- 5.2.3 How does the institution facilitate the integration of international students with U.S. students and assist them to become valued members of the institutional community?
- 5.2.4 How does the institution facilitate deliberate and proactive engagement with international students about race, gender, sexuality and other social identities in relation to local and national historical contexts?
- 5.2.5 How does the institution facilitate cross-divisional and interdepartmental teamwork to flag early signs of concerns and intervene to ensure that international student issues are addressed in a timely manner?
- 5.2.6 How does the institution ensure proper staffing, training, facilities, opportunities and support systems designed to meet the specific needs and requirements of international students so they may be successful as students in the U.S.?
- 5.2.7 How does the institution provide support for visa and immigration regulations?
- 5.2.8 How does the institution retain international students and facilitate their success?
- 5.2.9 How does the institution provide effective international student academic advising, including career advising?
- 5.2.10 What appropriate institutional and program-specific accreditations does the institution hold for its curricular and co-curricular programs that serve international students.

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IEM Standards Working Group Timeline

September, 2021 Working Group convenes first meeting

December, 2021 Early Draft of Standards presented and discussed at an open session at the AIRC Annual Conference in Miami

January, 2022 Feedback incorporated to produce updated draft

February - March , 2022 AIRC's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group, in collaboration with Diversity Abroad, reviews the draft and makes recommendations on incorporating DEI principles into the Standards

April, 2022 Recommendations incorporated, and a new draft produced Draft Standards available in member area of AIRC website for members to review and comment

May, 2022 AIRC Webinar to present and discuss updated draft of Standards

June – September, 2022 Standards available for public review and comment and shared with key stakeholders. Presented at the EducationUSA Forum in Washington, D.C. and the Annual Meeting of the National Association for College Admission Counseling in Houston, Texas

October, 2022 Final review and revisions by Working Group

November, 2022 AIRC Board of Directors votes to adopt and issue IEM Standards for Higher Education Institutions

September through November 2023, AIRC members and the public were informed of draft standards updates and for public comment.

December, 2023, AIRC Board of Directors votes to adopt revised Standards for Higher Education Institutions.