**Characteristics of Workforce Education Programs with Consistently High License/Credentialing Examination Pass Rates in Texas Public Community and Technical Colleges**

This instrument was developed as part of a Perkins State Leadership Grant-funded project through a collaborative effort by TSTC-Marshall and the Institutional Effectiveness Department of the Academic Affairs and Research Division, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The primary purpose of the project was to identify characteristics of programs that have consistently high license/credentialing examination pass rates. This instrument is based on the project findings and was created to enable colleges to self-assess the degree to which characteristics consistent with consistently high license exam pass rates are present.

In order to derive maximum benefit from the use of this instrument, it is recommended that individual program faculty members, program heads/ department heads, and administrators responsible for the program complete the instrument independently.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

In sections A through E, the greater the number of "yes" responses, the more likely the program is to achieve and maintain consistently high license/credentialing examination pass rates.

### A. Institutional/Administrative Support For The Program

In your opinion and judgment, does the college administration

1. empower faculty to do their jobs through consistent and continuous assurance of administrative support? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. support removing/reassigning low-performing faculty? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. support establishment and adherence to appropriately stringent program admission criteria[1] ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. provide strong financial support for the program[2] ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. leverage strength of other programs by encouraging interdepartmental communication, idea sharing, resource sharing, etc. ☐ Yes ☐ No

[1] admission to the college would not necessarily guarantee admission to a particular workforce education program; advisory committee and faculty members to reach general consensus on what program admission criteria should be

[2] the institution invests appropriate resources to ensure a strong program and/or actively assists the program in increasing funding levels by securing reliable source(s) of external funding/support

## B. Faculty Development

In your opinion and judgment is there

1. strong institutional and administrative support for faculty development? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. release time/sabbatical opportunities/other college support for faculty to engage in actual occupational practice of the discipline being taught? [3] ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. institutional support (financial and release time) for faculty to participate in professional development activities, including credentialing examination review courses? ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. release or flex time for faculty members who wish to purse further education? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. full or partial tuition reimbursement for faculty members pursuing further education? ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. intensive orientation for new faculty members (full time and part time)? [4] ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. peer coaching/mentoring and workshop(s) on classroom teaching techniques for new faculty members who have not previously taught? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. a formal institutional requirement for on-going development of teaching skills? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. formal public recognition for excellence in teaching? ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. encouragement for faculty to use creative approaches to teaching? ☐ Yes ☐ No

11. a written teaching guide for faculty members? [5] ☐ Yes ☐ No

[3] exchange programs; part-time employment; volunteer work, etc.

[4] including Coordinating Board standards for programs

[5] course content, learning outcomes, best practices, etc.

## C. Student Development and Performance

In your opinion and judgment, does your college and/or program

1. establish standards for student performance and satisfactory progress that equal or exceed credentialing agency and general college standards? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. conduct a formal license/credentialing examination review? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. require instructors to use examination formats that mirror the appropriate credentialing exam format? [6] ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. require a comprehensive end-of-program exam covering all content/skill areas contained in the credentialing exam? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. require instructors to engage in continuous reinforcement of previously learned material? ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. help students understand precisely what they do and do not know ? (see page 7 for information on the Check System) ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. require students to demonstrate competency/proficiency for each learning objective/outcome? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. arrange for job shadowing opportunities/experiences early in the program? [7] ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. conduct regular, formal student development activities? [8] ☐ Yes ☐ No

[6] computerized tests where applicable, applied skills component where applicable, question styles similar to credentialing exam, time limits, etc.

[7] permits students to experience “real world” of the job, shadowing should occur before co-ops/clinicals/internships/capstone experience

[8] study skills, test taking skills, time management, learning strategies, etc.

## D. General Program Standards

In your opinion and judgment, does your program

1. require all faculty members who teach in the program to possess credentials that *exceed* minimum standards? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. have verifiable "external accreditation" where appropriate? [9] ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. have state-of-the-art equipment or equipment that produces or simulates real on-the-job situations/experiences? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. encourage frequent and substantive faculty-student interaction/counseling? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. actively pursue sources of external funding and industry support? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. have and maintain a vigorous graduate/program completer placement effort? ☐ Yes ☐ No

## E. Business/Industry Support

In your opinion and judgment, is

1. your program advisory committee-driven? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. the advisory committee actively involved in the program (committee meets 2 to 4 times per year)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. there clear evidence of strong local business/industry support for the program? [10] ☐ Yes ☐ No

[9] External accreditation is recognition by a professional or occupational body or other entity that exists for the purpose of establishing standards of excellence. Examples include FIDER accreditation interior design programs, American Bar Association accreditation for paralegal programs, etc. Legally required accreditation or certification such as Board of Nurse Examiner accreditation or Federal Aviation Administration Certification do not constitute "external accreditation".

[10] including, but not limited to, donation or loan of equipment, facilities, guest instructors, industry-site training opportunities, program funding, student scholarships, faculty development opportunities, regular hiring of program graduates, etc.

**Significant Threats to Programmatic Attainment and Maintenance of Consistently High License/Credentialing Examination Pass Rates**

In this section, the greater the number of "yes" responses, the more difficulty the program is likely to have in attaining and maintaining consistently high license/credentialing examination pass rates.

**F. Faculty Issues**

1. The program is staffed mostly or entirely by adjunct faculty members ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Non-instructional faculty responsibilities reduce time available for interacting with and advising students ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. There is relatively high faculty turnover ☐ Yes ☐ No

**G. Administrative Issues**

1. There is no institutional requirement that students must purchase or otherwise acquire appropriate textbooks and/or other instructional material necessary to fully participate in the course ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. There is a conflict between access to college and establishing and maintaining high program admission and performance standards ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. There is pressure from the administration for the program to accept and retain under-prepared students ☐ Yes ☐ No

**H. Facilities and Equipment Issues**

1. Instructional equipment is insufficient and/or outdated ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. The program budget is inadequate to acquire and/or maintain necessary equipment ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Program faculty members do not have offices or another adequate place to advise and interact with students ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Instructional space (classrooms/laboratories) is inadequate for the program ☐ Yes ☐ No

## G. Student Issues

1. Students frequently enter the program with little or no awareness and understanding of their own under-preparedness ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Students frequently enter the program with only a vague idea of what the occupation actually requires of people who work in that field. ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Students in the program experience considerable pressure resulting from working full or part time in addition to attending college ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Students in the program experience considerable pressure as a result of family obligations while attending college ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Many students who enter the program are economically disadvantaged ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Many students who enter the program have little awareness or knowledge of financial aid resources ☐ Yes ☐ No

## H. Issues Beyond the College's Control

1. The program provides training for an occupation that has been significantly impacted by an economic downturn ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. The license/credentialing examination that program graduates must take in order to be licensed is not consistent with current industry standards ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. The program does not receive much support from business and industry ☐ Yes ☐ No

## The Check System For Enhancing Student Performance On Examinations

The Check System can be used to improve student performance in any course. It is included here because it has been successfully used to help increase scores on license and credentialing examinations. The steps outlined below help students gain a clearer understanding of what they are confident they know and where their knowledge level needs improvement. The goal is to continuously increase the number of accurate "checks"

Increase the number of accurate "checks"

1. A student takes a multiple choice test. Upon completing the test, the student places a check mark next to each question that the student believes was answered with 100 percent accuracy.

2. The exam is graded by the instructor or, if the student is preparing for a credentialing/licensing exam by taking a practice test, a fellow student or a friend can use the grading key to score the test.

3. All test questions that are answered incorrectly are marked with an "X". The grader or test scorer does not provide correct answers to the incorrectly answered questions.

Analysis

1. Compare the number of correctly answered questions to the number of questions answered incorrectly

2. Examine how many of the questions checked by the student were answered correctly, then compare that number to the total number of questions checked by the student.

   For example, a student who checks 15 out of 175 questions with 100 percent accuracy has some idea of what she/he knows and does not know, but clearly doesn't know enough to score well on the exam. This student can increase her/his knowledge thereby enhancing the possibility of success on the exam. Alternatively, a student who checks 100 questions with 25 percent accuracy is not sure of what she/he truly knows.

Step 2. When remediation step 1 has been completed, the instructor can go over the information with the student. Reviewing Step 1 information with the student can provide the instructor with insight into why the student is having difficulty with the information. Commonly encountered issues include:

- ESL issues (lack of proficiency with spoken and/or written English)
- lack of mastery of specialized or technical vocabulary
- the student did not look-up correct answers, but simply selected a different answer on repeat practice exams
- student does not understand the question (Students should be asked to rephrase the question in their own words. Difficulty doing this suggests the student is having difficulty understanding what the question is asking).

Step 3. The student is encouraged to make flash cards containing all the information learned (why the distracter is or is not the correct answer) for each distracter.

Step 4. The student is also encouraged to take a key word or short phrase from a test question and make flash cards to help learn the central concepts associated with the word or phrase. For example, a nursing student might take the key phrase “blood pressure” and create a flash card with the phrase on one side, and key concepts about blood pressure (e.g. what is meant by systolic, diastolic, normal, etc. Those terms could also become items on additional flash cards).

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