

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Section 4 (Governing Board)—all standards

Standard 7.1 (Institutional Planning)

- 4.3** If an institution’s governing board does not retain sole legal authority and operating control in a multiple-level governance system, then the institution clearly defines the following areas within its governance structure: (a) institution’s mission, (b) fiscal stability of the institution, and (c) institutional policy. (*Multi-level governance*)

Rationale and Notes

The governing board of an institution typically has legal authority and responsibility for the institution’s mission, its financial stability, and institutional policies. When the governing board does not retain sole legal authority and operating control, this standard calls for the institution to clearly outline the active control of these functions by other entities and how the multiple levels of governance relate to the governing board’s responsibilities pertaining to institutional mission, financial operations, and/or institutional policies.

Examples of when this standard would be applicable would include:

- Public institutions where there may be a state or district board that retains legal authority over these functions, but may delegate partial or full authority to a local board.
- A private for-profit corporate structure where the parent institution may or may not delegate some authority to subsidiary units.
- A private not-for-profit institution where a religious denomination or order maintains some authority over local board functions.

There are numerous other examples where multiple-level governance may need more explanation (e.g., branch campuses, merger situations, hospital boards with an educational component, other systems or relationships where the same board serves multiple institutions). In these cases, the institution uses this standard to explain how the governance structure operates with regard to mission, fiscal affairs, and institutional policies.

NOTE

If the institution’s governance structure does not have multiple levels, the institution can state that point and this standard can be “not applicable.”

Questions to Consider

- Are there bodies other than the institution’s own governing board that maintain certain legal authority or operating control for this institution?

- Is the governing board “shared” with other institutions, whether SACSCOC accredited or not?
- In the above cases, are adequate definitions of legal authority and operating responsibility clearly stated in the rules and regulations, policy manuals, and/or bylaws of the institution’s governing board?
- What entity (or entities) regularly examines the mission of the institution?
- What is the nature of the fiscal responsibilities among the multiple levels of control? Is this clearly stated?
- Does the institution maintain sufficient autonomy for separate accreditation by SACSCOC?

Sample Documentation

- Bylaws, policy manuals, other board documents, state codes, or statutes that define legal authority and operating control.
- Organizational charts that help define the relationships.
- Meeting minutes pertaining to review of the mission (perhaps from multiple levels of governance).
- Institutional correspondence among levels of governance.

Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies: [Governing, Coordinating, and Other State Agencies: Representation on Evaluation Committees](#)
 [Separate Accreditation for Units of a Member Institution](#)

Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

CR 4.1 (*Governing board characteristics*)
Standard 4.2.a (*Mission review*)
Standard 4.2.c (*CEO evaluation/selection*)
Standard 4.2.d (*Conflict of interest*)
Standard 4.2.e (*Board dismissal*)
Standard 4.2.f (*External influence*)
Standard 4.2.g (*Board self-evaluation*)
CR 13.1 (*Financial resources*)
Standard 14.5 (*Policy compliance*)