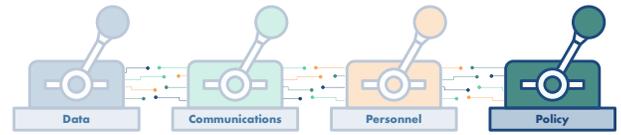


# Auditing Institutional, System and State Policies and Practices

## FSS Self-Assessment



Note: To effectively use these tools, your institution should first ensure that those involved in the process have a clear and collective definition of STEM and a list of institutional STEM programs.

**Scale:**    **Y = Yes**    **I = In Process**    **D = Discussing**    **N = No**    **U = Unsure**

*It is noted that policies exist at the institutional (I), system (Sy) and state (St) level that impact practices at an institution. Institutions can advocate for the system (when relevant) and state to set evidence-based policies that focus on the success of students.*

### Recruitment, Admissions and Transfer

| Question  | Y | I | D | N | U |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>A. Recruitment</b>   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>A1. Are there institutional and/or system relationships, with a focus on STEM education, with the communities from which your students come?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p> |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>A2. Are these communities represented in the recruitment materials and on the institution and/or system’s websites?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>                          |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>A3. Are recruitment supports available in the primary languages of these communities?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>  |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>A4. Are there institutional, and/or system relationships focused on STEM education with middle and high schools in your community?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>           |   |   |   |   |   |

| Question  | Y | I | D | N | U |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>A5. Are there institutional, system and/or state relationships focused on STEM education with local/state workforce organizations (e.g., unions, non-profit community organizations, workforce development organizations)?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p> |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>A6. Are there opportunities for families and supporters of prospective students to engage meaningfully with the institution?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>A7. Are there policies and/or programs designed specifically to engage adult learners in STEM fields?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>  |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>A8. Do recruitment staff have access to professional development on inclusive practices?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>B. Admissions</b>  |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>B1. If the institution is a member of a system, is there a common application across institutions that allows an applicant to apply to more than one institution?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>  |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>B2. Is admissions support available both in person and virtually?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>  |   |   |   |   |   |

| Question  | Y | I | D | N | U |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>B3. Do admissions processes consider various cultural preferences (e.g., inclusion of families and supporters in the process where appropriate)?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>                               |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>B4. Are on-demand, live translation services available to enable real-time conversations with prospective students and their families?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>B5. Is a summer transition program, with institutional need-based funding, available to newly admitted students, particularly for students interested in pursuing STEM majors?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p> |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>C. Transfer</b>  |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>C1. Are there articulation agreements between your institution and others focused on courses necessary for STEM majors?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>  |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>C2. Are articulation agreements regularly reviewed and updated for curricular changes?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>C3. Is there common course numbering across public institutions?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>C4. Is there a process for ensuring curricular alignment between transfer institutions?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>  |   |   |   |   |   |

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| Question   | Y | I | D | N | U |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| C5. In accountability data collection, are system or state policies designed so as not to penalize institutions for students who transfer out?<br><br><i>Comments:</i> |   |   |   |   |   |

### Affordability, Tuition and Fees and Financial Aid

| Question  | Level | Y | I | D | N | U |
|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>D. Affordability</b>   |       |   |   |   |   |   |
| D1. Is there an agreed-upon definition of <i>affordability</i> ?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>  | All   |   |   |   |   |   |
| D2. Is there transparent information available for the full cost of attendance?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>   | All   |   |   |   |   |   |
| D3. Is there a policy and/or practice to waive fees/fines that produce barriers to admission and/or completion?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>                       | I, Sy |   |   |   |   |   |
| D4. Are there policies and/or practices, through the state or employer partnerships, focused on financial incentives for STEM majors?<br><br><i>Comments:</i> | All   |   |   |   |   |   |

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| Question   | Level | Y | I | D | N | U |
|--|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| D5. Do state allocation practices take into consideration the real costs of educating students from low-income backgrounds and first-generation students in STEM fields?<br><br><i>Comments:</i> | St    |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>E. Tuition and Fees</b>   |       |   |   |   |   |   |
| E1. Are there consistent, publicly available definitions for <i>in-state residence</i> and <i>in-state tuition</i> ?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>   | All   |   |   |   |   |   |
| E2. Is there a policy and/or practice that guides course program and activity fees?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>  | All   |   |   |   |   |   |
| E3. Are there policies and/or practices focused on reviewing the cost of course materials (e.g., books, software, hardware, lab fees, etc.)?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>                             | All   |   |   |   |   |   |
| E4. Are required fees made transparent to students, including fees built into course materials?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>  | All   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>F. Financial Aid</b>  |       |   |   |   |   |   |
| F1. Are work-study funds used to provide students with quality opportunities for academic credit and/or professional enrichment or skills?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>                               | I, Sy |   |   |   |   |   |

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| Question   | Level | Y | I | D | N | U |
|--|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| F2. Is there a consistent, publicly available definition for <i>need-based aid</i> that is understandable by students?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>   | All   |   |   |   |   |   |
| F3. Is there a consistent, publicly available definition for <i>merit-based aid</i> that is understandable by students?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>  | All   |   |   |   |   |   |
| F4. Are state financial aid/scholarships awarded using a first-dollar model? In a dollar-first model the state's financial aid/scholarship is awarded before other federal, institutional or private sources of aid to prevent disadvantaging students from low-income backgrounds.)<br><br><i>Comments:</i> | St    |   |   |   |   |   |
| F5. Is the state financial aid process flexible with its deadlines to accommodate students whose college plans do not solidify by the priority deadline?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>   | St    |   |   |   |   |   |
| F6. Are there features of student financial aid policy that reward students for persistence to degree completion?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>  | All   |   |   |   |   |   |
| F7. Are student loan repayment rates (by major and disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender) tracked and shared with leadership and financial aid staff?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>   | I     |   |   |   |   |   |

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| Question   | Level | Y | I | D | N | U |
|--|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| F8. Are students counseled on only borrowing what is needed and on the implications of borrowing more?<br><br><i>Comments:</i> | I     |   |   |   |   |   |

### Academic Advising, Career Services and Student Support

| Question   | Level | Y | I | D | N | U |
|--|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>G. Academic Advising and Career Services</b>  |       |   |   |   |   |   |
| G1. Do advisors — professional academic advising staff, faculty members and career services professionals — collaborate to assist students in developing and linking their academic and career goals and pathways?<br><br><i>Comments:</i> | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| G2. Is professional development on culturally inclusive practices provided to advisors (professional academic advising staff, faculty members and career services professionals)?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>                                  | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| G3. Are academic advising and career services available for all (new and continuing) students?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>   | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| G4. Are students' schedules considered to determine the availability of academic advising and career services?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>   | I     |   |   |   |   |   |

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| Question  | Level | Y | I | D | N | U |
|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| G5. Are academic and career services offered both in person and virtually?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>  |       |   |   |   |   |   |
| G6. Are academic pathways, especially for STEM fields, clearly defined and communicated?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>  | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| G7. Is there a policy and/or practice that encourages students to enroll in the requisite number of credits to graduate in a timely manner?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>     | All   |   |   |   |   |   |
| G8. Is there a process for ensuring students stay on track with their academic plan/pathway?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>  | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| G9. Is there a tool for students to see their progress toward a degree?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>   | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| G10. Is there a policy and/or practice of proactive advising?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>   | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| G11. Do career services professionals have relationships with employers in STEM-related sectors that are aligned with students' areas of study?<br><br><i>Comments:</i> | I, Sy |   |   |   |   |   |

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| Question  | Level | Y | I | D | N | U |
|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>H. Student Support</b>   |       |   |   |   |   |   |
| H1. Have funds been allocated to create capacity for necessary student support services?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>  | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| H2. Does the institution work to proportionally maintain services that support student success even when faced with budget reductions?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>                      | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| H3. Are emergency funds and basic needs (e.g., food pantry) available and accessible to students?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>   | I, Sy |   |   |   |   |   |
| H4. Are there institutional/system relationships with community partners to provide or supplement student supports?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>   | I, Sy |   |   |   |   |   |
| H5. Are students assisted in connecting with public benefits? These public benefits may include SNAP, TANF, WIC, Veterans Affairs, Head Start and Medicaid.<br><br><i>Comments:</i> | I, Sy |   |   |   |   |   |
| H6. Are students assisted in connecting with mental health services that match their availability?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>  | I, Sy |   |   |   |   |   |

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| Question  | Level | Y | I | D | N | U |
|---|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| H7. Are direct services that support student completion offered at times that match student availability?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>                 | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| H8. Are direct services that support student completion offered both in person and virtually, where appropriate?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>          | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| H9. Is there a case-management structure for identifying and reaching out to students encountering non-academic barriers?<br><br><i>Comments:</i> | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| H10. Are student services provided in a model that avoids a siloed approach to meeting each student's needs?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>              | I     |   |   |   |   |   |

## Academic Practices

| Question   | Level | Y | I | D | N | U |
|--|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>I. Academic Practices</b>   |       |   |   |   |   |   |
| I1. Is there a policy and/or practice for helping students get academic credit toward graduation for skills and knowledge they gain from their employment or military service?<br><br><i>Comments:</i> | All   |   |   |   |   |   |

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| Question   | Level | Y | I | D | N | U |
|--|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. Are short-term, stackable credentials available in a sequence that leads to a degree?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>  | I, Sy |   |   |   |   |   |
| 13. Is there an institutional policy mandating departments consider student availability and requirements for graduation when scheduling course offerings?<br><br><i>Comments:</i> | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| 14. Is there a policy and/or practice of corequisite remediation, in which students take college courses simultaneously with academic support?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>             | All   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 15. Is the analysis of student success in gateway courses disaggregated by student characteristics to assess equity?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>                                       | I, Sy |   |   |   |   |   |
| 16. Is there a policy and/or practice of awarding degrees via reverse transfer?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>  | All   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 17. Are high-impact practices integrated into academic programs (e.g., undergraduate research, internships, service learning, capstone projects)?<br><br><i>Comments:</i>          | I     |   |   |   |   |   |

|                      |                          |                       |                       |               |                   |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| <b>Scale:</b>        | <b>Y = Yes</b>           | <b>I = In Process</b> | <b>D = Discussing</b> | <b>N = No</b> | <b>U = Unsure</b> |
| <b>Policy Level:</b> | <b>I = Institutional</b> | <b>Sy = System</b>    | <b>St = State</b>     |               |                   |

| Question   | Level | Y | I | D | N | U |
|--|-------|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>18. Are high-impact practices integrated into academic programs (e.g., undergraduate research, internships, service learning, capstone projects)?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p> | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>19. Is professional development on culturally inclusive practices and pedagogy provided to academic staff and faculty?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>                            | I     |   |   |   |   |   |
| <p>110. Is there a policy and/or practice that STEM faculty participate in a curriculum audit to assess cultural relevance?</p> <p><i>Comments:</i></p>                          | I     |   |   |   |   |   |

Sources referenced: Education Commission of the States (ECS), REACH Collaborative.



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