Overview of Changes to the National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Second Edition (2019)

Considerable Broad Changes

This edition of the National Standards for Quality Online Programs has some significant changes in comparison to the previous release.

1. Indicators under each standard have been labeled in order to make them more easily identified.
2. Each indicator has associated "Explanations" and "Examples" for further clarification.
3. Removed the Rating Scale, which will allow for more flexibility in individual organization application of the standards.

Considerable Standard and Indicator Changes

1. Standard F, "Organizational Commitment," has been removed, as it is inherently addressed in standards B, C and E.
2. Standard O, "Guidance Services," has been removed and reworked into standards L and M.
3. Standard P, "Organizational Support," has been removed and reworked into standards E and C.
4. Standard Q is removed and combined with Standard N to become standard M, now entitled, "Learner and Parent/Guardian Support."
5. Standard S, "Program Improvement" has been removed and addressed throughout standards A, C, D, I, J, M, and N.

Overall Comparison

	National Standards for Quality Online Programs (2009)	National Standards for Quality Online Programs (Second Edition: 2019)
Number of standards	19	**14**
Number of "indicators"	109	**72**

Changes to the Standards and "indicators"

The changes described in this document are not an exhaustive account of all the changes that were made to the National Standards for Quality Online Programs, Second Edition. Always read the indicators and accompanying explanations and examples completely and carefully when applying the standards to your specific situation.

	National Standards for Quality Online Programs (2009)	National Standards for Quality Online Programs (Second Edition: 2019)
Institutional Standards		**Removed** this label.
Standard A	**Mission Statement -** *A mission statement of a quality online program clearly conveys its purpose and goals. It serves as the basis for the program's day-to-day operations, as well as a guide for its strategic plans for the future. Communication between and buy-in from stakeholders is a critical component of a mission statement.*	*A mission statement of a quality program clearly conveys its purpose and goals. It serves as the basis for the program's day-to-day operations, as well as a guide for its strategic plans for the future. Communication between— and buy-in from— stakeholders is a critical component of a mission statement.*
	States the purpose of the organization. Is clear and concise in articulating who the organization is, what it does and whom it serves.	**A1** The mission statement gives the purpose of the program or organization, is clear and concise in articulating who the program or organization is, what it does, and whom it serves.
	Indicates that online learning is the focus of the organization.	**A2** The mission statement indicates that learning is the focus of the program or organization.
	Demonstrates a commitment to measurable quality and accountability.	**A3** The mission statement demonstrates a commitment to measurable quality and accountability to stakeholders.
	Reflects involvement of key stakeholders.	**Removed**. Addressed in **D1**.
	Is made available to the public.	**A4** The mission statement is made available to the public.
	Is reviewed periodically by program leadership.	**A5** The mission statement is reviewed periodically by program leadership.
Standard B	**Governance** - *Governance is typically provided by a Board of Directors, an Advisory Board, or School Board. In a quality online program, governance and leadership work hand in hand, developing the operational procedures for the program and its leadership and staff.*	*A quality program will have a clear governance structure with transparent roles and responsibilities designed to ensure long-term success and sustainability.*

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	Members are knowledgeable about K12 online learning and/or receive appropriate training after joining the governing board.	**B1** Governance members are knowledgeable about K-12 online learning.
	Supports the organization by securing necessary resources.	**B2** Governance members ensure the program or organization is adequately resourced through securing and/or approving resource allocations in a manner that aligns with the mission, vision, and strategic goals of the program or organization.
	Fulfills the role defined for it in the by-laws of the institution.	**B3** Programmatic or organizational bylaws clearly define the unique roles of the governance and leadership teams. Each of these groups works within the established guidelines.
	Collaborates with program leadership to implement policies and procedures that are in compliance with state education statutes and/or regional accrediting agencies.	**B4** Governance members collaborate with the leadership team who implements the policies and procedures that are in compliance with state educational statutes and/or regional accrediting agencies.
	The legal status of the online program is clearly defined with no ambiguities in ownership, control, or responsibility.	**B5** The program bylaws articulate the organization to which it belongs, the roles and responsibilities of its board and leadership, and comply with all state and federal regulations.
Standard C	**Leadership** - *The leadership of a quality online program is accountable to the program's governance body, and is responsible for setting and meeting the operational and strategic goals in support of the program's mission and vision statement.*	*The leadership of a quality online program is accountable to the program's governance body and is responsible for setting and meeting the operational and strategic goals in support of the program's mission and vision statements.*
	Is responsible for meeting the organization's annual goals and communicating these goals to its constituents.	**C1** The leadership team establishes annual program or organizational goals, implements action plans designed to meet or exceed goals, and monitors and communicates progress on goals to stakeholders.

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	Maintains a disciplined knowledge of its future with projections of income, expense, enrollment, and trends in its educational and business environment.	**C2** The leadership team maintains a disciplined knowledge of trends in its educational and business environment in order to inform budget projections.
	Provides a productive collaborative environment for learning and work, and the leadership necessary to plan both day-to-day operations and the long-term future of the online program.	**C3** The leadership team provides a productive collaborative environment for learning and work.
	Verifies that measures are in place to ensure quality, integrity and validity of information.	**C4** The leadership team verifies that measures are in place to ensure the quality, integrity, and validity of information.
		Relocated from Standard S **C5** The leadership team develops and implements program or organizational policies and procedures that are reviewed and updated regularly.
Standard D	Planning- A quality online program makes planning, managed by the leadership and staff of the organization a regular part of the program. There are several types of planning activities, including strategic planning, long-range and operational planning, which defined annual goals. Effective planning is not a one-time activity, but instead should provide opportunities for reflection on how to improve the organization's performance.	*A quality program engages in regular strategic planning in order to reflect upon and improve organizational effectiveness.*
Strategic Plan		**Removed** this label.
	Is developed that addresses 3-5 years of actions and has been approved by the program's leadership and governance.	**D1** A strategic plan is developed and updated regularly to address long-term actions.

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	Is updated on a regular basis (at least every 3-5 years) and includes historical data, baseline information, trend data, and projections, allowing data-driven decision making.	**Combined** into explanations of **D1**.
	Addresses the requirements for resources that effectively and efficiently serve their students and faculty, including curriculum, technology, support, professional development, and fiscal visibility	**D2** The strategic plan addresses the requirements for resources that effectively and efficiently serve their learners and faculty, including curriculum, technology, academic support, professional development, and fiscal viability.
Organizational goals		**Removed** this label.
	Are aligned with the strategic plan.	**D3** Organizational goals are aligned to the approved strategic plan and updated annually.
	Are updated annually based on past year's accomplishments.	**Combined** into **D3**.
	Are shared and supported throughout the organization.	**D4** Organizational goals are shared and supported throughout the organization.
Standard E	Organizational Staffing - A quality online program recognizes appropriate levels of staffing are critical to the success of an online program. Staff should be well-trained in order to successfully meet their performance goals, and are provided with appropriate levels of support, resources, feedback and management.	Now entitled, "**Organizational Staff**." *A quality online program has appropriate levels of qualified, well-trained, and supported staff who have the resources needed to achieve personal and organizational goals.*
	Sufficient, professional, administrative and support staff are provided to carry out the mission and annual organizational goals.	**E1** Sufficient qualified professional, administrative, and support staff are provided to achieve the organization's mission and annual goals.
	Ongoing training and support are provided to the staff to carry out the mission of the program.	**E3** Ongoing training and support are provided to the staff to carry out the mission, vision, and goals of the

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		program.
	Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are evident to create a collegial team to assure effective delivery of quality education.	**E4** Clearly defined individual and team roles and responsibilities are evident to help create a collegial team that provides effective delivery of quality education.
	Evaluations of staff and faculty occur on a regularly scheduled basis.	**E5** Evaluations of staff and faculty occur on a regularly scheduled basis.
		New Indicator: **E2** Sufficient organizational staff are provided to oversee the instructional learning environment.
Standard F	Organizational Commitment - In a quality online program governance, leadership, and staff are responsible for creating an organization that demonstrates a commitment to attaining the program's goals and mission statement. Everyone within the organization understands the mission statement and works to achieve it.	**Removed**. Inherently addressed in other Standards and indicators within this set.
	Activities and accomplishments of the organization are aligned to the mission statement.	**Removed**. Addressed in C1 and E1.
	Programs that function under the authority of another educational organization have a demonstrated commitment from the parent organization to support the implementation and ongoing operation of this program.	**Removed**. Addressed in Standard B
	Sustainability of the program is articulated through strategic and operational planning and implemented through ongoing operations (e.g. commitment to sustainable funding,	**Removed**. Addressed in B2.

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	maintaining quality staff, and compliance with applicable educational statutes).	
	Is accredited by a recognized accrediting body.	**Removed**. Addressed in B4
Standard G	Financial and Material Resources - A quality online program has adequate financial and material resources to accomplish the mission of the organization. These resources are appropriately planned for and expended using sound business practices.	*New Standard F* *A quality online program plans for and expends financial and material resources using sound business practices to accomplish the organization's mission and vision.*
	Are available to assure a quality educational experience in alignment with the organization's mission statement.	
	Are managed in a responsible manner according to prescribed budget and accounting principles.	**F1** Resources are managed in a responsible manner according to local, state, and/or federal budget regulations and accounting principles.
	Are allocated in support of mission statement that demonstrates sustainability over time.	**F2** Resources are adequate and allocated to help ensure sustainability over time, according to the organization's strategic plan, mission, and vision.
Standard H	Equity and Access - A quality online program's policies and practice support students' ability to access the program. Accommodations are available to meet a variety of student needs.	**New Standard G** *A quality online program's policies and practices support students' ability to access the program. Accommodations are available to meet a variety of student needs.*

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	Policies clearly state eligibility requirements for the program.	**G1** Policies clearly state learner eligibility requirements for the program and are communicated to stakeholders.
	Policies and practices are in place that provide accommodations for students with disabilities.	**G2** Program faculty and staff work with students and families to personalize programs and adhere to accommodations as dictated by local policies and laws.
	Ensures that students have equitable access to the program consistent with its mission and purposes.	**G3** All learners are ensured equitable access to the program.
Standard I	Integrity and Accountability - In a quality online program, leadership is transparent in its management of the program, providing regular and timely information on progress towards attainment of goals, alignment with policies and standards, and achievement of student learning outcomes.	**New Standard H** *In a quality online program, leadership is transparent in its management of the program, providing regular and timely information on progress towards attainment of goals, alignment with policies and standards, and achievement of student learning outcomes to all stakeholders.*
	The online program discloses accurate information relating to its mission, accreditation, course and programs, services, policies, fees, recruitment processes and incentives, and other factors considered important to prospective and current students and stakeholders.	**H1** Accurate information is disclosed to prospective and current stakeholders.
	The program results in learning appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the course, program, or diploma completion requirements.	**H2** The program meets or exceeds industry standards related to course rigor and diploma-completion requirements.

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Standard J	Curriculum and Course Design – A quality online program will have a well thought-out approach to its curriculum and course design whether it develops its own courses and/or licenses curriculum from other educational providers.	**New Standard I** *A quality online program will adopt and implement instructional design methods that enable effective online instruction for both institutionally developed courses as well as licensed content from other sources.*
	Has clearly stated and attainable educational goals.	**I1** The program has clearly stated educational goals.
	Is clear and coherent in its organization.	**I2** The program clearly organizes course offerings in a way that stakeholders can easily navigate.
	Utilizes quality instructional materials and appropriate technology that enable and enrich student learning.	**I3** Courses included in the program integrate quality instructional materials to enable and enrich student learning. **I4** Courses offered through the program utilize regularly evaluated technology that supports the learning goals and enhances the learning experience.
	Demonstrates rigorous course content.	**I5** Courses included in the program contain content that aligns with appropriate learning standards and includes provisions for both intervention and accelerated learning opportunities.
	Provides opportunities for high-degree of interaction between teacher, learners, parents, and among learners themselves.	**I6** Courses included in the program provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning.
	Embeds critical thinking, problem solving, analysis, integration, and synthesis abilities in learning activities.	**I7** Courses included in the program provide a variety of activities that include options for in-depth learning through authentic problem-solving and experience.

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	Meets requirements of appropriate state or national standards, including applicable end of course assessments.	**Removed**. **Combined** into **I3**, and **I4**.
	Meets requirements of accessibility for individuals with disabilities.	**Removed**. **Combined** into **I3**, and **I4**.
	Meets requirements of copyright and fair use.	**I8** Courses offered through the program meet content copyright law and fair use guidelines.
	Is designed to accommodate different learning styles.	**I9** Courses offered through the program are designed using research-based design principles, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), that improve access to learning for all participants.
	Is designed with consideration for time and place limitations of students.	**I10** Courses offered through the program include opportunities for both asynchronous and synchronous learning.
Standard K	Instruction – A quality online program takes a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensuring excellent online teaching for its students. This process begins with promising practices but is equally committed to continuous improvement and adaptation to student learning needs through professional development.	**New Standard J** *A quality online program takes a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensuring excellent teaching for its students.*
	Is grounded to the program's mission, beliefs, and expectations for student learning.	**J1** The program adopts clear expectations for curriculum design and teaching practices that align with its stated vision, mission, principles, or values.
	Is supported by research and best practice.	**J2** Instruction is guided by evidence-based practices.

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	Is continually refined based on assessment of stakeholders' needs.	**J3** Teachers incorporate a process of continual self-assessment, using learning analytics to inform changes in pedagogy and instructional practices.
	Is adaptable to best serve different student learning styles.	**J4** Instruction is inherently inclusive for all learners.
	Is sensitive to the cultural differences of students.	**Removed**. Addressed in **I9**.
	Includes frequent teacher to student interaction, teacher to parent interaction, and fosters frequent student-to-student interaction.	**Removed**. Addressed in **I6**.
	Is sensitive to time and place limitations of students.	**Removed**. Addressed in **I10**.
	Faculty hold the required state certifications.	**Relocated** into **Standard E**, indicator **E1**.
	Faculty are trained in and demonstrate competency in online instructional methodologies and learning techniques.	**Removed**. Addressed in **E1**.
	Includes a process to monitor that the work and assessments are completed by the students registered for the course.	**J5** The program implements strategies to ensure the academic integrity of course assignments and assessments in order to increase student accountability.
Standard L	Assessment of Student Performance - A quality online program values student academic performance and takes a comprehensive integrated approach to measuring student achievement. This includes use of multiple assessment measures and strategies that align closely to both program and learner objectives with	**New Standard K:** Now entitled, "**Assessment and Learner Performance**." *A quality online learning program values positive learner outcomes and takes a comprehensive, integrated approach to measuring and monitoring progress toward defined learning objectives.*

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	timely, relevant feedback to all stakeholders.	
	Enables students to monitor their own learning progress.	**Removed**. Addressed in **J2**.
	Enables teachers to adapt their instruction to meet learner needs.	**Removed**. Addressed in **J3**.
	Uses multiple methods to assess student performance.	**K1** The program uses multiple methods to assess the degree to which stated learning goals are met.
	Uses formative assessments to inform instructional practice.	**K2** Formative assessments are included that provide data for targeted remediation or intervention when needed.
	Informs ongoing course design and revisions.	**Removed**. Addressed in **N2** and **N6**.
	Measures student attainment of the course's educational goals.	**K3** Assessments are aligned to learning objectives.
	Provides for timely and frequent feedback about student progress.	**K4** The program provides standards for timely, effective feedback as an integral role of assessment.
Standard M	Faculty - A quality online program supports the faculty by providing opportunities for them to develop their professional skills through mentoring, professional development, and technical assistance.	**New Standard L:** Now entitled, "**Faculty and Staff Support**." *A quality online program supports faculty and staff by providing mentoring, technical assistance, and timely professional development.*
	Provides and encourages participation in induction and mentoring programs.	**L1** The program provides and encourages participation in induction and mentoring programs.
	Provides regular feedback regarding teacher performance.	**L2** Teachers are provided regular feedback regarding their performance and student achievement/progress.

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	Provides a wide variety of professional development opportunities.	**L3** The program provides a wide variety of professional development opportunities to faculty and staff, which are aligned to the National Standards for Quality Online Teaching.
	Provides timely, effective technical support.	**L5** The program provides teachers and staff with timely and effective technical support.
		New indicator L4 The program provides professional development opportunities to guidance staff focused on student needs unique to online learning and the network of services available to support online learning.
Standard N	Students - A quality online program has student support services to address the various needs of students at different levels within the organization. The levels of support are appropriate and adequate for a student's success.	**New Standard M:** Now entitled, "**Learner and Parent/Guardian Support**." *A quality online program provides learner and parent/guardian support services to address the various needs of learners at different levels within the organization. The levels of support are appropriate and adequate for learner success.*
	Provides an orientation to online learning technologies and successful online student practices.	**M1** Learners are provided with an orientation to online learning technologies and successful online learning practices.
	Provides academic and administrative services to address their academic and developmental needs.	**M2** The program provides academic services and academic advising to address learners' academic and developmental needs.
	Provides support services for individual needs.	**M3** The program provides accessibility support services that comply with special education policies and procedures.

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	Provides access to learning and assessment content, instruction, technologies and resources.	**M4** The program provides access to the learning management system(s), as well as all appropriate learning and assessment content.
	Establishes standards for teacher to student communication.	**M5** The program establishes standards for teacher communications with learners and parents/guardians.
	Provides timely and meaningful assessment feedback.	**Removed.** Addressed indicator **K4**.
	Provides timely, effective technical support.	**M6** The program establishes standards for timely, effective technical support for learners.
		New indicator M7 The program has guidance services and academic advising to support learners and parents/guardians to ensure the success of the online program from the decision-making process through the renewal process or graduation for all educational goals to be met.
Standard O	Guidance Services - A quality online program has guidance services to support students and parents to ensure success of the online program. Depending on the program, these services are either directly provided by the program or a service provider, or in the case of supplemental programs, these services may be provided by the local school.	**Removed.** Indicators relocated into other standards.
	Ensures academic advising is provided for students to meet requirements of the program and/or school.	**Relocated** to **Standard M**, indicator **M7**.
	Provides staff training in the unique student needs of online learning.	**Relocated** to **Standard L**, indicator **L4**.

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	Provides tools and/or information to assist student in determining the appropriateness of specific courses for their academic needs.	**Relocated** to **Standard M**, indicator **M7**.
	Understands the network of services to support online learning.	**Relocated** to **Standard L**, indicator **L4**.
Standard P	Organizational Support - A quality online program has organizational support to oversee the instructional learning environment as it is conveyed through technology. Some organizational support services may be distributed between the program and other entities, depending on the physical location where the students are taking their online courses.	**Removed**. Addressed in revised **Standard E** and **C**.
	Provides an online learning environment that is appropriately maintained, secure and is a productive and safe work environment for students and staff.	**Removed**. Addressed in indicator **E2**.
	Provides a work environment consisting of the resources, tools, and organizational policies that enables staff to implement the program's mission, beliefs, and objectives.	**Removed**. Addressed in indicator **C3**.
Standard Q	Parents/Guardians - In a quality online program, parents and guardians play an integral part in their students' educational life. They work as a team with faculty, administrators, guidance services, and organizational support to ensure a quality educational experience for their students.	**Removed**. **Combined** into **Standard M**.

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	Are provided information about the program, successful online student practices and supportive learning environments.	**Combined** into indicator **H1**.
	Receive timely responses from faculty and staff.	**Combined** into indicator **M5**.
	Receive critical information about student progress and are encouraged to communicate with faculty and administrators to best support the online learning student.	**Combined** into indicator **M5**.
Standard R	Program Evaluation - A quality online program recognizes the value of program evaluation. Program evaluation is both internal and external and informs all processes that effect teaching and learning. Internal evaluations often are more informal in nature and may provide immediate feedback on a targeted area of inquiry. External program evaluations typically look at the entire program from an objective perspective that will bring additional credibility to the results.	**New Standard N** *A quality online program recognizes the value of program evaluation. Program evaluation is both internal and external and informs all processes that affect teaching and learning. Internal evaluations often are more informal in nature and may provide immediate feedback on a targeted area of inquiry. External program evaluations typically look at the entire program from an objective perspective that will bring additional credibility to the results.*
	Conducts ongoing internal evaluations that include regularly collecting and analyzing data based on national, state, and/or program metrics.	**N1** Ongoing internal evaluations are conducted to regularly collect and analyze data based on national, state, and/or program metrics.
	Conducts ongoing internal evaluations that include using clearly articulated measures to evaluate its learners.	**N2** Ongoing internal evaluations are conducted using valid and reliable measures to evaluate learner success and to drive instructional and management decision-making.

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	Conducts ongoing internal evaluations that include determining program success by measuring student achievement and satisfaction based on valid and reliable assessment techniques.	**N3** Ongoing internal evaluations are conducted to determine program success and plan for continuous improvement by measuring learner achievement and satisfaction based on valid and reliable assessment techniques.
	Conducts ongoing internal evaluations that include ensuring students participate in state or national standardized testing, as appropriate and evaluating results against state or national data.	**N4** Regular internal evaluation of state or national standardized test results designed to measure achievement of all learners are conducted to inform the program's impact on student outcomes.
	Conducts ongoing internal evaluation that include consistently evaluating faculty to assure instructional quality, using clear, consistent policies, measures and procedures.	**N5** Faculty are evaluated on an ongoing basis to assure instructional quality, using clear, consistent policies, measures, and procedures.
	Conducts ongoing internal evaluations that include reviewing and evaluating courses to ensure quality, consistency with the curriculum, currency, and advancement of the student learning outcomes.	**N6** A process for reviewing and evaluating courses is implemented to ensure quality, consistency with the curriculum, currency, and advancement of student learning outcomes.
	Conducts periodic external evaluations that include validating internal evaluation process and results.	**N7** Periodic external evaluations are conducted by highly qualified parties with a demonstrated ability to deliver an objective and comprehensive evaluation of internal evaluation processes and results.
	Conducts periodic external evaluations that include independently assessing progress towards goals, mission and strategic plan for the online program.	**N8** Periodic external evaluations are conducted by highly qualified parties with a demonstrated ability to deliver an objective and comprehensive evaluation of progress towards the program's goals, mission, and strategic plan.

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	Conducts periodic external evaluations that include informing an improvement plan for the online program.	**N9** Findings from external evaluations conducted by highly qualified parties with a demonstrated ability to deliver objective and comprehensive evaluations supported by current research are used to develop and implement an improvement plan.
	Program evaluation communicates evaluation results to program stakeholders.	**N10** Evaluation results are communicated to program stakeholders.
Standard S	Program Improvement: A quality online program establishes a culture of continual program improvement. Improvement planning focuses on using program evaluations, research, and promising practices to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness. It fosters continuous improvement across all aspects of the organization and ensures the program is focused on accomplishing its mission and vision.	**Removed.** Indicators either relocated into or addressed in other standards.
	Uses strategic, long-range and operational planning and evaluation to continuously improve its educational programs and services.	**Removed**. Addressed in **D1**.
	Used data effectively to drive instructional and management decision-making.	**Relocated** into indicator **N2**.
Is based on:		**Removed** this label.
	Advancement of the program's vision and mission.	**Removed**. Addressed in **A5**.
	Student achievement.	**Removed**. **Combined** into **N3**.

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	Internal and external evaluation.	**Removed**. Combined into **N9**.
	Current research in the relevant areas.	**Removed**. Combined into **J2**.
	Promising practices.	**Removed**. Addressed in **J1**,**J2**, **J3**, and **M1**.
Includes provisions for:		**Removed** this label.
	Beta testing and peer review.	**Removed**. Addressed in **N6**.
	Satisfaction surveys by students, parents, teachers and schools as appropriate.	**Removed**. Addressed in **N3**.
	Evaluation of curriculum and instruction as it relates to student achievement.	**Removed**. Addressed in explanation of indicator **I5**.
	Regular online teacher performance evaluations.	**Removed**. Addressed in **N5**.
	Reviewing and updating policies and procedures.	**Relocated** into **C5**.
	Reviewing appropriateness, effectiveness and quality of teaching and learning technologies.	**Removed**. Addressed in **I4**.
	Regular online course reviews.	**Removed.** Addressed in **N6**