

# PA 6: Institutional Climate

## Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions with programs designed to support and assess the institutional climate for underrepresented groups. An inclusive and welcoming climate and underlying culture are critical for the academic and social success of all community members. To help foster such a culture, support programs can be designed to address existing social inequities and structured assessment processes can be used to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

## Applicability

Applicable to all institutions.

## Points available

A maximum of 3 points are available for this credit.

## Criteria

### 6.1 Support for students from underrepresented groups

An institution earns 1 point when it supports one or more programs, initiatives, or networks designed to address the specific needs of A) students with disabilities, B) students that identify as members of **marginalized racial, ethnic, and/or Indigenous groups**, C) **LGBTQ+** students, D) **low-income** and/or **first-generation students**, E) refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced, and/or undocumented students, and F) students from one or more additional underrepresented groups. Partial points are available and earned as outlined in Table I.

Table I. Points earned for indicator 6.1

Criterion. Institution supports one or more programs, initiatives, or networks designed to address the specific needs of:	Points available	Points earned
A. Students with disabilities	0.167	
B. Students that identify as members of marginalized racial, ethnic, and/or Indigenous groups	0.167	
C. LGBTQ+ students	0.167	
D. Low-income and/or first-generation students	0.167	

E. Refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced, and/or undocumented students	0.167	
F. Students from one or more additional underrepresented groups	0.167	
Total points earned →		

## Measurement

Report on the current status of the institution's programs, initiatives, and networks. Examples include targeted grants, scholarships, and awards; mentorship programs; affinity groups and peer support networks; targeted academic support programs; and other programs and initiatives that explicitly aim to support individuals from each underrepresented group. To qualify, the specific group for which points are being claimed must be mentioned in the description of a program, network, or initiative.

Commitments, plans, protocols, statements, recruitment activities, and generalized programs (e.g., that are open to all students) do not qualify in the absence of one or more of the targeted programs, initiatives, or networks described above.

## Documentation

Report the following information in the online Reporting Tool.

- Does the institution support one or more programs, initiatives, or networks designed to address the specific needs of students with disabilities? (required)

*If Yes, the following field is also required:*

- Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution's programs, initiatives, and networks for students with disabilities
- Does the institution support one or more programs, initiatives, or networks designed to address the specific needs of students that identify as members of marginalized racial, ethnic, and/or Indigenous groups? (required)

*If Yes, the following field is also required:*

- Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution's programs, initiatives, and networks for students that identify as members of marginalized racial, ethnic, and/or Indigenous groups
- Does the institution support one or more programs, initiatives, or networks designed to address the specific needs of LGBTQ+ students? (required)

*If Yes, the following field is also required:*

- Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution's programs, initiatives, and networks for LGBTQ+ students

- Does the institution support one or more programs, initiatives, or networks designed to address the specific needs of low-income and/or first-generation students? (required)

*If Yes, the following field is also required:*

- Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution’s programs, initiatives, and networks for low-income and/or first-generation students
- Does the institution support one or more programs, initiatives, or networks designed to address the specific needs of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced, and/or undocumented students? (required)

*If Yes, the following field is also required:*

- Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution’s programs, initiatives, and networks for refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced, and/or undocumented students
- Does the institution support one or more programs, initiatives, or networks designed to address the specific needs of students from additional underrepresented groups? (required). For example, survivors and veterans of conflict; international students; women and other marginalized gender identities; and/or incarcerated or formerly incarcerated students.

*If Yes, the following field is also required:*

- Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution’s programs, initiatives, and networks for students from additional underrepresented groups

## 6.2 Support for employees from underrepresented groups

An institution earns 1 point when it supports one or more programs, initiatives, or networks designed to address the specific needs of A) **employees** with disabilities, B) employees that identify as members of marginalized racial, ethnic, and/or Indigenous groups, C) LGBTQ+ employees, and D) employees from one or more additional underrepresented groups. Partial points are available as outlined in Table II.

Table II. Points earned for indicator 6.2

Criterion. Institution supports one or more programs, initiatives, or networks that address the specific needs of:	Points available	Points earned
A. Employees with disabilities	0.25	
B. Employees that identify as members of marginalized racial, ethnic, and/or Indigenous groups	0.25	
C. LGBTQ+ employees	0.25	

D. Employees from one or more additional underrepresented groups	0.25	
Total points earned →		

## Measurement

Report on the current status of the institution's programs, initiatives, and networks. Examples include mentorship programs, affinity groups and peer support networks, and other programs and initiatives that explicitly aim to support individuals from each underrepresented group. To qualify, the specific group for which points are being claimed must be mentioned in the description of a program, network, or initiative.

Commitments, plans, protocols, statements, recruitment activities, and generalized programs (e.g., that are open to all employees) do not qualify in the absence of one or more of the targeted programs, initiatives, or networks described above.

## Documentation

Report the following information in the online Reporting Tool.

- Does the institution support one or more programs, initiatives, or networks designed to address the specific needs of employees with disabilities? (required)

*If Yes, the following field is also required:*

- Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution's programs, initiatives, and networks for employees with disabilities
- Does the institution support one or more programs, initiatives, or networks designed to address the specific needs of employees that identify as members of marginalized racial, ethnic, and/or Indigenous groups? (required)

*If Yes, the following field is also required:*

- Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution's programs, initiatives, and networks for employees that identify as members of marginalized racial, ethnic, and/or Indigenous groups
- Does the institution support one or more programs, initiatives, or networks designed to address the specific needs of LGBTQ+ employees? (required)

*If Yes, the following field is also required:*

- Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution's support for LGBTQ+ employees
- Does the institution support one or more programs, initiatives, or networks designed to address the specific needs of employees from additional underrepresented groups? (required). For example, refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people; survivors

and veterans of conflict; women and other marginalized gender identities; and/or formerly incarcerated individuals

*If Yes, the following field is also required:*

- Narrative and/or website URL providing an overview of the institution’s programs, initiatives, and networks for employees from additional underrepresented groups

## 6.3 Institutional climate assessment

An institution earns 1 point for A) having conducted an **institutional climate** assessment within the previous three years and B) publishing the results of its institutional climate assessments. Partial points are available and earned as outlined in Table III.

Table III. Points earned for indicator 6.3

Criterion	Points available	Points earned
A. Institution has conducted an institutional climate assessment within the previous three years.	0.5	
B. Institution publishes the results of its institutional climate assessments.	0.5	
Total points earned →		

### Measurement

Report on assessments completed within the previous three years and the results of the most recent assessment to have been finalized.

### Documentation

Report the following information in the online Reporting Tool.

- Has the institution conducted an institutional climate assessment within the previous three years? (required) To qualify, an assessment must address the experiences and perceptions of underrepresented groups such that their level of satisfaction, comfort, or safety may be compared to those of dominant groups.

*If Yes, the following field is also required:*

- Description of the methodology used to assess institutional climate  
For example, the variables, definitions, and timeframes used.
- Does the institution publish the results of its institutional climate assessments? (required)

To qualify, the results (or a summary of the results) of the most recent assessment to have been finalized must be publicly accessible, either on the institution's website or in its STARS report.

*If Yes, at least one the following fields is also required:*

- Published results of the institution's most recently finalized institutional climate assessment. Upload.
- Online resource where the results of the institution's institutional climate assessments are publicly available. Website URL.

## Glossary

**First-generation students** – Undergraduate students whose parents do not have a baccalaureate degree. If another definition has been formally adopted by the institution (e.g., an undergraduate student who is the first member of their immediate family to attend college), it may be used. [Adapted from the definition used by the NASPA Center for First-Generation Student Success.]

**Institutional climate** – The current attitudes, behaviors, and standards of students and employees concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities, and potential. Also known as a campus climate assessment, an institutional climate assessment measures the extent to which all students and employees, irrespective of their underrepresented status, feel welcomed, valued, and supported in their work, studies, and/or research.

**LGBTQ+** – An acronym intended to be inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual, and other gender identities, gender expressions, sexualities, and asexualities. [Adapted from the LGBTQIA Resource Center Glossary (University of California, Davis).]

**Low-income** – Having or earning relatively little money compared to others. This may include individuals who are living in poverty, at risk of poverty, or eligible for or in receipt of need-based assistance. Low-income students may be identified by their receipt of or qualification for need-based assistance (e.g., US Pell or Canadian Full-Time/Part-Time Student Grants), a family income threshold (e.g., a local, national, or international poverty line), geographic origin (e.g., economically divested communities), or as otherwise tracked by the institution.

**Marginalized racial, ethnic, and/or Indigenous groups** – Social groups that have less power and access to resources than one or more dominant groups and are subject to racism, settler-colonialism, and other forms of oppression and discrimination related to their racialized status, ethnicity, indigeneity, nationality, religion, or language. Dependent on an institution's context, these groups may include:

- Indigenous and tribal peoples
- Racialized people with non-dominant status, e.g., Black people, people of African descent, people of color, "visible minorities"
- Roma, Sinti, and Travelers
- Ethnic, national, religious, and linguistic minorities

[Adapted from the work of The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights).]

**Underrepresented groups** – Social groups that have historically been denied access or suffered institutional discrimination and/or are currently underrepresented or disadvantaged relative to one or more dominant groups. Individuals from underrepresented groups may include, but are not limited to:

- Ethnic, national, religious, and linguistic minorities
- Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals
- Indigenous peoples
- LGBTQ+ individuals
- Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers
- People with disabilities
- Racialized people
- Residents of economically divested areas
- Roma, Sinti, and Travelers
- Survivors and veterans of conflict
- Women