PA 8: Affordability and Access

4 points available

A. Credit Rationale
This credit recognizes institutions that are implementing strategies to improve their accessibility and affordability. Achieving a college degree is a valuable tool in addressing inequity, but in order for higher education to help society move toward greater equity, schools must be accessible to low-income populations and non-traditional students.

B. Criteria

Part 1
Institution has policies and programs in place to make it accessible and affordable to low-income students and/or to support non-traditional students. Such policies and programs may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Policies and programs to minimize the cost of attendance for low-income students
- Programs to equip the institution’s faculty and staff to better serve students from low-income backgrounds
- Programs to prepare students from low-income backgrounds for higher education (e.g. U.S. federal TRIO programs)
- Scholarships provided specifically for low-income students
- Programs to guide parents of low-income students through the higher education experience
- Targeted outreach to recruit students from low-income backgrounds
- Scholarships provided specifically for part-time students
- An on-site child care facility, a partnership with a local facility, and/or subsidies or financial support to help meet the child care needs of students

Part 2
Institution is accessible and affordable to low-income students as demonstrated by one or more of the following indicators:

A. The percentage of entering students that are low-income

B. The graduation/success rate for low-income students

C. The percentage of student financial need met, on average

D. The percentage of students graduating with no interest-bearing student loan debt
C. Applicability
This credit applies to all institutions.

D. Scoring
Each part is scored independently.

Part 1
An institution earns the maximum of 1 point available for Part 1 of this credit by having policies and programs in place to make it accessible and affordable to low-income students and to support non-traditional students. Partial points are available. For example, an institution that has policies and programs in place to support non-traditional students but not low-income students, would earn 0.5 points (half of the points available for Part 1).

Part 2
Institutions earn up to the maximum of 3 points available for Part 2 of this credit based on performance measured by one or more of the indicators listed. For example, an institution that reports 100 percent for three of the four indicators would earn 3 points for this credit. Likewise, an institution that reports 75 percent or more for all four indicators would earn 3 points. Incremental points are available; for example, an institution that reports 50 percent for 3 of the four indicators would earn 1.5 points (half of the points available for Part 2 of this credit). Points are earned according to the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility/Affordability Indicator</th>
<th>Percentage (0-100)</th>
<th>Multiply</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Equals</th>
<th>Total Points Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The percentage of entering students that are low-income</td>
<td>_______</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The graduation/success rate for low-income students</td>
<td>_______</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The percentage of student financial need met, on average</td>
<td>_______</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The percentage of students graduating with no interest-bearing student loan debt</td>
<td>_______</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Points Earned (Up to 3 available)
Scoring Example: Affordability and Access (Part 2)

The following data describe Example University:

A. The percentage of entering students that are low-income = 15
B. The graduation/success rate for low-income students = 72
C. The percentage of student financial need met, on average = 80
D. The percentage of students graduating with no interest-bearing student loan debt = 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accessibility/Affordability Indicator</th>
<th>Percentage (0-100)</th>
<th>Multiply</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Equals</th>
<th>Total Points Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The percentage of entering students that are low-income</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The graduation/success rate for low-income students</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>=</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The percentage of student financial need met, on average</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>=</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The percentage of students graduating with no interest-bearing student loan debt</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>=</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Points Earned → 1.79

E. Reporting Fields

Required

- An indication of whether the institution has policies and programs in place to make it accessible and affordable to low-income students
- An indication of whether the institution has policies and programs in place to support non-traditional students
- An indication of whether the institution wishes to pursue Part 2 of this credit (accessibility and affordability indicators)
- An affirmation that the submitted information is accurate to the best of a responsible party’s knowledge and contact information for the responsible party. The responsible party should be a staff member, faculty member, or administrator who can respond to questions regarding the data once submitted and available to the public.
**Conditional**

**Required if institution is reporting policies and programs to make it accessible and affordable to low-income students:**
- A brief description of the policies and programs the institution uses to improve its accessibility and affordability in the following categories (at least one description is required):
  - Policies and programs to minimize the cost of attendance for low-income students
  - Programs to equip the institution’s faculty and staff to better serve students from low-income backgrounds
  - Programs to prepare students from low-income backgrounds for higher education
  - Scholarships for low-income students
  - Programs to guide parents of low-income students through the higher education experience
  - Targeted outreach to recruit students from low-income backgrounds
  - Other admissions policies or programs to make the institution accessible and affordable to low-income students
  - Other financial aid policies or programs to make the institution accessible and affordable to low-income students
  - Other policies and programs to make the institution accessible and affordable to low-income students not covered above

**Required if institution has policies and programs in place to support non-traditional students:**
- A brief description of the policies and programs the institution uses to support non-traditional students (at least one description is required):
  - Scholarships provided specifically for part-time students
  - An onsite child care facility, a partnership with a local facility, and/or subsidies or financial support to help meet the child care needs of students
  - Other policies and programs to support non-traditional students (please specify)

**Required if the institution is pursuing Part 2 of this credit (accessibility and affordability indicators) (at least one indicator is required):**
- The percentage of entering students that are low-income (0-100)
- The graduation/success rate for low-income students (0-100)
- The percentage of student financial need met, on average (0-100)
- The percentage of students graduating with no interest-bearing student loan debt (0-100)

**Optional**
- The percentage of students that participate in or directly benefit from the institution’s policies and programs to support low-income and non-traditional students (0-100)
The website URL where information about the institution's affordability and access programs is available

Notes about the submission

F. Measurement

Timeframe

Part 1
Report on current programs, policies, and practices.

Part 2
Report the most recent data available.

Sampling and Data Standards

Part 1
In addition to institution-wide policies or programs, report on policies and programs pertaining to the institution's largest admissions group or student cohort (e.g. undergraduate students). Institutions may choose to include or omit programs and policies offered by smaller schools or departments within the institution.

Part 2
Report on the institution's largest admissions group or student cohort (e.g. undergraduate students). Institutions may choose to include or omit smaller schools or departments within the institution.

For guidance in identifying low-income students, see Standards and Terms. Institutions may report graduation rates, success rates and/or combined graduation/success rates as appropriate to their particular context and types of programs offered.

Institutions may meet student financial need in a variety of ways, for example:

- Scholarships and grants
- Self-help (e.g. work study, employment)
- Tuition waivers or not requiring tuition
- Subsidized or no-interest loans
- Athletic awards

Exclude non-need-based aid, any aid awarded in excess of need, and unsubsidized or interest-bearing loans. Institutions that do not assess student need as a matter of standard practice may report the percentage of cost met, on average, for low-income students.