Best Practices in Certification Program Oversight

KNAPP

Our experience. Your success.

Role of oversight bodies

- Define and support the mission of the certification program

- Serve as the standard bearer for the profession

- Make policies and decisions based on what is in the best interest of maintaining professional standards and/or protecting the public, rather than what is politically expedient

- Guard against undue influence

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Governance vs. management

- Governance is the responsibility of the oversight body

- Policy is the mechanism by which the oversight body fulfills its governance responsibilities

- Policy is a guiding principle that helps in deciding a course of action

- The governing body sets general policy

- Implementation-level policies and procedures are delegated to staff

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Governance functions

- Setting direction
  - Current and future course

- Ensuring the necessary resources
  - People, $$, and credibility/image

- Providing oversight
  - Accountability, program monitoring and evaluation

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Setting direction: Current course

- Ensure that everyone (staff, board, committees) is on the same page with respect to what is important and what needs to be accomplished

- Ensure that operational plans, including budgets, support the desired direction

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Setting direction: Current course

- What goals and strategies are needed to support our mission?

- Is the allocation of our resources consistent with our priorities?

- Are our policies reflective of our mission?

- Are we properly balancing our responsibility to the profession, individual candidates/certificants and the public?

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Setting direction: Future course

- Ensure that the board can continue to effectively carry out the organization's mission in the years ahead

- Ensure that a strategic perspective is maintained; emphasis is on overall direction and strategy, not day-to-day operations and minutia

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Setting direction: Future course

- What are our organizational strengths and weaknesses?

- What are the opportunities and challenges in the environment in which we are operating?

- How can we capitalize on our strengths and opportunities, minimize our weaknesses and successfully meet challenges?

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Ensuring resources: People & $

- Ensure that there are sufficient personnel and financial resources available to effectively support the mission

Ensuring resources: People & $

- Do we have sufficient resources for the immediate future?

- How can we ensure that we have adequate resources to safeguard our long-term viability?

- Are our financial and personnel resources spread too thin?

- Are we using our resources effectively?

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Ensuring resources: Credibility

- Ensure that the credibility and image of the programs are safeguarded and if possible, enhanced

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Ensuring resources: Credibility

- What aspects of our programs are linked with perceived credibility and positive image and what should we do to support this linkage?

- How can we best maintain relationships with, and influence the perceptions of, our diverse stakeholder groups (regulators, employers, certificants)?

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Provide oversight

- Ensure accountability through monitoring and evaluation

- Accountability encompasses fiscal, legal, and moral/ethical aspects

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Provide oversight: Financial

- Ensure that financial viability is tracked and take corrective actions when necessary

- Ensure that there are mechanisms in place for anticipating long-term financial needs

Provide oversight: Financial

- What are the trends in our revenue sources and major expense categories?

- Does the budget reflect our strategic priorities?

- Why are we spending more/less than budgeted in particular areas?

Provide oversight: Risk management

- Ensure that policies are in place to protect our future and our ability to successfully accomplish our mission by guarding against the loss of resources ($$, reputation, etc.)

- Ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Provide oversight: Risk management

- Do we have adequate crisis management plans in place?

- Are our policies and requirements (e.g., appeals/ discipline, special accommodations) consistent with applicable laws and legal guidelines?

- Are our eligibility requirements, examination development processes, and scoring procedures legally defensible?

KNAPP

Our experience. Your success.

Provide oversight: Monitoring and evaluation

- Ensure that there are established metrics/indicators for monitoring and gauging performance

- Ensure that there are mechanisms for regular evaluation of programs and services

Provide oversight: Monitoring and evaluation

- How do we know we are accomplishing our strategic and operational goals?

- Are we maintaining the desired level of quality in our programs and services?

- Are we able to achieve desired outcomes with an acceptable level of resource expenditure?

- Are we providing the right types (and mix) of programs and services?

KNAPP

Our experience. Your success.

Provide oversight: Moral/ethical

- Ensure that our actions are consistent with the organization's moral/ethical responsibilities to stakeholders

Provide oversight: Moral/ethical

- Do our policies reflect what is best for the standards?

- Do our policies reflect current practices regarding fairness in testing?

- Our our policies and decisions free from personal bias and political and financial influence?

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Accreditation supports the governance function

- Credibility/image: Accreditation provides a thorough evaluation by an external, objective entity

- Risk management: Accreditation standards are consistent with legal recommendations

- Monitoring/evaluation: Accreditation standards serve as tools for determining whether programs meet quality standards and accepted psychometric practice

KNAPP

Our experience. Your success.

Sample policy #1

- Job analysis methodologies and the frequency with which such analyses are conducted should be consistent with NCCA accreditation standards.

Considerations

- NCCA and other accreditation standards are perhaps best viewed as minimum, general standards

- Certification program policies may need to be more specific than the standards

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Going beyond the standards

Policy also should take into consideration:

- The mission of the certification organization

- The level of stakes (high vs. low)

- The nature of the candidate population

- Stakeholder perceptions and reactions

- Recommended psychometric procedure

- Best practices/commonly accepted practices in credentialing

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Common practices in certification

- Of those certifying bodies that conduct formal content validation studies, 94% indicated that these studies included a survey of practitioners.

- 79% of certifying bodies update their job analyses studies every five years or less.

2003 K&AI/ANSI Certification Industry Scan

KNAPP

Our experience. Your success.

Sample policy #2

- A survey methodology will be utilized to validate the content of examinations. Surveys will be conducted at least every 5 years.

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

Considerations

- Policies should not be so prescriptive that they: (a) cannot accommodate a variety of situations and (b) ultimately appear arbitrary to outside observers

Sample policy #3

- A survey methodology will be utilized to validate the content of the examinations. Surveys will include a representative sample of respondents, half of which will be certificants and half of which will be noncertificants. The survey instrument will include both task and knowledge statements. Surveys will be conducted at least every 5 years.

Role of governing body vis a vis accreditation

- Be fully conversant with accreditation standards

- Periodically monitor program operations against the standards

- Evaluate whether policy revisions or new policies are needed to support compliance with standards

- Ensure that there is appropriate documentation of compliance

- Serve as advocates for the importance of accreditation standards

KNAPP
Our experience. Your success.

knappinternational.com