The Gardner Institute Institutional Transformation Assessment

Current ITA Rubric areas and sample questions are available below. Respondents rate their perception of the statements on a scale – strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree, or not applicable.

Starting September 1, 2024, The Gardner Institute became the home of the Institutional Transformation Assessment (ITA) a tool that drives sensemaking, a facilitate conversation, to help postsecondary stakeholders (administrators, faculty, staff, and students) reflect on existing student success efforts and the organizational structures that support them. The process helps stakeholders learn more about their institution's areas of strength and improvement, which are a critical input to prioritizing and planning further action to enhance success for all students.

The ITA is supported by rubrics across 11 unique but integrated topics central to institutional transformation to advance student success. In partnership with the Gates Foundation, higher education practitioners and experts created the assessment content. In Spring / Summer 2025, Gardner Institute staff worked with an external advisory committee and evaluation recommendations from the Indiana University Postsecondary Research Center to update the ITA language. Since 2017, more than 17,000 college and university stakeholders have completed the ITA.

For the 2026-2027 academic year, advisory committees are working with Gardner Institute to add the following areas: Teaching/Learning/Pedagogy, Transfer, and Governing Boards/Executive Leadership.

Pathways

Pathways – The institution's ability to systematically define student pathways, map pathways to student end goals, help students choose a pathway, keep students on a pathway, and ensure that students are learning.

1. The institution provides academic support for all students from enrollment to completion.
2. The institution prioritizes addressing both academic and non-academic challenges to help students succeed.

Solution Areas

Advising – The institution's focus on assessing and improving advising and student support services by leveraging people, processes, and technology, connecting advising and planning and creating student services that are proactive, structured, personalized, and sustained.

1. Institutional leaders are aligned with the institutional community on providing resources for advising that is sustained, strategic, integrated, proactive, and personalized to support each student and their unique needs.
2. The Institutional community uses coordinated technologies across advising and related services to support course/career planning, early alerts, and to track student progress.

Developmental Education

1. Institutional leaders incorporate evidence-based practices into developmental education reform policies.
2. Institutional leaders engage stakeholders in the use of data to improve developmental education reforms.

Digital Learning – The institution's progress in developing, implementing, and supporting an institution-wide strategy for delivering high-quality digital teaching and learning in face-to-face, hybrid, and online learning modalities for parity in learning outcomes for all student populations.

1. The institution's digital learning infrastructure supports student outcomes across all course modalities.
2. The institution has a robust review process for digital teaching and learning policies to ensure all students are succeeding.

Emergency Aid – The institution's ability to build and sustain an emergency aid program that provides timely grants, loans, and/or basic needs support to students facing an unexpected financial crisis.

1. Leadership has a comprehensive emergency aid program that identifies the type of resources the institution should offer to help students overcome barriers.
2. Faculty and staff are informed about the institution's emergency aid program(s).

Operating Capacities

Information Technology – The institution's ability to provide leaders, faculty, and advisors with the tools and information they need to contribute to student success and develop and monitor meaningful student success initiatives.

1. Technology solutions are a strategic asset supporting all student success initiatives.
2. The institution provides training for student success technology.

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Institutional Policy – The institution's ability to change institutional policies, processes, and procedures to support, sustain, and institutionalize efforts to improve student success and achieve parity in student outcomes.

1. The institution's use of data to develop and refine institutional policies and procedures is coordinated and supported.
2. The institution's major policy decisions are evaluated based on their impact on achieving parity in student success.

Institutional Research – The institution's ability to use inquiry, action research, data, and analytics to intentionally inform operational, tactical, and strategic accomplishment of an institution's student success mission. The function – occurring inside and outside of an institutional research office – provides timely, accurate, and actionable decision support to administrators, faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders.

1. The institution uses data to inform strategies to address student performance differences across populations.
2. The institution facilitates professional development that aligns with data literacy expectations for student-facing staff.

Leadership and Culture – The institution's ability to develop and lead the execution of a strategic agenda focused on student success.

1. Student success is clearly defined by our institution.
2. Institutional leaders believe adequate resources have been allocated to support student success.

State Policy – The institution's ability to leverage existing state policies or develop and/or advocate for new evidence-based state policies (which could include, depending on local context, legislative policies, board policies, rules and/or guidance documents) to support efforts to achieve parity in student success at scale.

1. Institutional leaders have full understanding of how policy conditions in the state support achieving parity of outcomes in student success.
2. Institutional leaders consistently influence state policy around issues focused on achieving parity of outcomes in student success.

Strategic Finance – The institution's ability regarding the strategic and effective allocation and management of resources in support of the institution's vision, mission, goals, and priority initiatives.

1. The institution uses relevant performance, cost data, and analytics to inform resource allocation.
2. In general, the functional units have the resources they need to accomplish their student success goals.