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CAS Self-Assessment Guide for  
Orientation Programs

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## **THE ROLE of ORIENTATION PROGRAMS**

### ***CAS Standards Contextual Statement***

To understand current trends in orientation programs, it is helpful to view today's practice within an historical context. The history of orientation programs in the United States is virtually as old as the history of the country's higher education. Harvard College was the first to formalize a system by which experienced students assisted new students in their transition to the institution. In addition to a personalized support system, students also experienced certain rites of passage which, from today's perspective, would likely be considered hazing. While the system was somewhat flawed, it was the beginning of the formalization of orientation as a process that included support of students and their families as the transition to higher education began.

Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Harvard institutionalized faculty-student contact by assigning faculty members educational and administrative responsibilities outside the classroom. One of these responsibilities was the orientation of new students. Soon other colleges took an interest in the concerns specific to freshman students.

Increases in the number and diversity of college students in the mid-1900s posed issues that many institutions had not previously considered. Today's orientation programs responded to changing demographics by changing institutional agendas across the nation. Programs evolved from simply providing individualized faculty attention to focusing on a multitude of important issues while responding to the needs of an increasingly diverse student and family population.

Today, most orientation programs seek to provide a clear and cogent introduction to an institution's academic community. Orientation is viewed by most as an important tool for student recruitment and retention. Most institutions include academic advising and registration for classes in their orientation programs as an impetus for active participation. Many institutions are implementing continuing orientation programs via a freshman orientation course. Because of such changes, colleges and universities are taking steps to encourage student and parent attendance by formalizing and marketing orientation programs from a decidedly academic perspective, but which address many issues of interest and concern.

One of the most important changes is that orientation is now viewed as a comprehensive process rather than as a minimal program. Colleges and universities nationally and

internationally are developing wide-ranging orientation programs that truly address the transitional needs of students and families.

What trends will guide future approaches to orientation programs? It is certain that recruitment and retention will continue to be major forces in the development of orientation programs. Likewise, attempts to foster an environment responsive to the individual needs of students and families will have a significant effect on orientation programming. Additionally, funding for orientation programs will continue as a matter of concern. Demographic changes in institutions of higher education and in society at large will require institutional and programmatic accommodations. Maintaining current orientation programs by reacting to change does little to address the interests of all constituents. New and creative programs and methodologies must be assessed, planned, and implemented if the personal and educational needs of new and transfer students and their families are to be met.

The CAS Orientation Programs Standards and Guidelines that follow have utility for national and international institutions and provide criteria to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of orientation programs.

### **References, Readings, and Resources**

*Designing Successful Transitions: A Guide for Orienting Students to College*, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208

National Orientation Directors Association: [www.nodaweb.org](http://www.nodaweb.org)

*National Orientation Directors Data Bank*, University of Maryland at College Park, College Park, MD 20742

*The Journal of College Orientation and Transition*, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115

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# CAS

## Orientation Programs Self-Assessment Guide (SAG)

### Introduction and Instructions

#### I Purpose and Organization of the Guide

This *Self-Assessment Guide* (SAG) translates the *CAS Orientation Programs Standards and Guidelines* into a format enabling self-assessment. Educators can use this *Guide* to gain informed perspectives on the strengths and deficiencies of their services and programs and to plan for improvements. Grounded in the self-regulation approach to quality assurance in higher education endorsed by CAS, this SAG provides institutional and agency leaders a tool to assess programs and services using current generally accepted standards of practice.

The *Introduction* outlines the self-assessment process, describes how to put it into operation, and is organized into four sections. These include I Purpose and Organization, II Self-Assessment Process, III Rating Examples, and IV Formulating an Action Plan. The introduction is followed by the *Self-Assessment Worksheet*, which presents the *CAS Orientation Programs Standards and Guidelines* and incorporates a series of criterion measures for rating purposes.

**SAG Worksheet Format.** CAS standards and guidelines are organized into thirteen components.

- Part 1. Mission
- Part 2. Program
- Part 3. Leadership
- Part 4. Organization and Management
- Part 5. Human Resources
- Part 6. Financial Resources
- Part 7. Facilities, Technology, and Equipment
- Part 8. Legal Responsibilities
- Part 9. Equity and Access
- Part 10. Campus and External Relations
- Part 11. Diversity
- Part 12. Ethics
- Part 13. Assessment and Evaluation

A rating scale designed for assessment purposes is displayed following the standards and guidelines along with a series of criterion measures to be rated. Making performance judgments by applying the rating scale to individual items (criterion measures) facilitates an initial assessment of the program.

#### II Self-Assessment Process

CAS self-assessment procedures involve several steps, including:

- A. Establishing the self-study process and review team
- B. Understanding the CAS Standards and Guidelines and the Self-Assessment Guide
- C. Compiling and reviewing documentary evidence
- D. Judging performance
- E. Completing the assessment process

##### **Step A: Establish and Prepare the Self-Assessment Review Team**

The first step is to identify an individual to coordinate the self-assessment process. Once a leader is designated, members of the institutional community [e.g., professional staff members, faculty members, and students] need to be identified and invited to participate. Whether a sole functional area or a full

division is to be reviewed, the self-study team will be strengthened by the inclusion of members from outside the area(s) undergoing review.

As a group, the review team should examine the standards carefully before implementing the study. It may be desirable for the team, in collaboration with the full staff, to discuss the meaning of each standard. Through this method, differing interpretations can be examined and agreement generally reached about how the standard will be interpreted for purposes of the self-assessment. Whatever procedures are used to arrive at judgments, deliberate discussions should occur about how to initiate the rating process and select the optimal rating strategy. In such discussions, it is expected that disagreements among team members will occur, and that resulting clarifications will inform all participants. It is important that the team achieve consensual resolution of such differences before proceeding.

### **Step B: Understanding the CAS Standards and Guidelines**

CAS *Standards* represent best practices as formulated by representatives of multiple professional associations concerned with student learning and development in higher education. CAS *Guidelines*, on the other hand, are suggestions for practice and serve to elaborate and amplify standards through the use of suggestions, descriptions, and examples. Guidelines can often be employed to enhance program practice. Following a long-standing CAS precedent, the functional area standards and guidelines published in *The CAS Book of Professional Standards for Higher Education 2006* and presented in this SAG are formatted so that standards (i.e., essentials of quality practice) are printed in **bold type**. Guidelines, which complement the standards, are printed in slightly smaller, light-face type. Standards use the auxiliary verbs “**must**” and “**shall**” while guidelines use “should” and “may.”

In this SAG, the CAS Standards and Guidelines, presented in boxed text format, have been translated into multiple criterion measures for rating purposes. Each criterion measure focuses on a particular aspect of the standard. For each of the 13 component parts, there is a series of numbered criterion measures that team members may rate. If the assessment team decides to incorporate one or more of the guidelines into the review process, each guideline can be similarly sub-divided to facilitate the rating process.

### **Step C: Compile and Review Documentary Evidence**

Collecting and documenting evidence of program effectiveness is an important step in the assessment process. No self-assessment is complete without relevant data and related documentation being used. It is good practice for programs routinely to collect and file relevant data that can be used to document program effectiveness over time.

Documentary evidence often used to support evaluative judgments includes:

- *Student Recruitment and Marketing Materials*: brochures and other sources of information about the program, participation policies and procedures, and reports about program results and participant evaluations
- *Program Documents*: mission statements, catalogs, brochures and other related materials, staff and student manuals, policy and procedure statements, evaluation and periodic reports, contracts, and staff memos
- *Institutional Administrative Documents*: statements about program purpose and philosophy relative to other educational programs, organization charts, financial resource statements, student and staff profiles, and assessment reports
- *Research, Assessment, and Evaluation Data*: needs assessments, follow-up studies, program evaluations, outcome measures and methodologies, and previous self-study reports
- *Staff Activity Reports*: annual reports, staff member vitae; service to departments, colleges, university, and other agencies; evidence of effectiveness; scholarship activities, and contributions to the profession
- *Student Activity Reports*: developmental transcripts, portfolios, and other evidence of student contributions to the institution, community, and professional organizations; reports of special student accomplishments; and employer reports on student employment experiences

Having a variety of evidence assists raters to make judgments about the wide range of program expectations articulated in the standards. Whatever is determined appropriate under given circumstances, multiple forms of evidence used should be reviewed and reported in the narrative section of the SAG worksheets. The self-study rating process may identify a need to obtain additional information or documentation before proceeding to lend substance to judgments about a given assessment criterion. Support documentation should be appended and referred to in the final self-assessment report.

### **Step D: Judging Performance**

Assessment criterion measures are used to judge how well areas under review meet CAS Standards. These criterion measures, provided in the *Work Form* section of the SAG, are designed to use a 4-point rating scale. In addition to the numerical rating options, *Not Rated* (NR) and *Not Done* (ND) ratings are provided. This rating scale is designed to estimate broadly the extent to which a given practice has been performed.

#### **CAS CRITERION MEASURE RATING SCALE**

ND Not Done	1 Not Met	2 Minimally Met	3 Well Met	4 Fully Met	NR Not Rated
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Under rare circumstances, it may be determined that a criterion measure used to judge the standard is not applicable for the particular program (e.g., a single sex or other unique institution that cannot meet a criterion measure for that reason). In such instances, a ND rating can be used and the rationale for excluding the practice reflected in the criterion measure presented in the self-study report. The NR response can be used when relevant data are unavailable to support a judgment. When either the ND or the NR ratings are used, an explanatory note should be entered. NR items should generate careful group consideration and follow-up action as appropriate.

Program leaders may wish to incorporate additional criterion measures, such as selected CAS Guidelines or other gauges, into the rating procedures before the self-assessment process begins. Such practice is encouraged and space is provided to incorporate additional criterion measure *yardsticks* for judging the program. In such instances, additional pages to accommodate the additional criterion measures may be required.

### **Step E: Completing the Assessment Process**

A two-tiered (individual and group) judgment approach for determining the extent to which the program meets the CAS Standard is suggested. First, self-assessment team and functional area staff members individually should rate each criterion measure using separate copies of the *CAS Self-Assessment Guide*. This individualized rating procedure is then followed by a collective review and analysis of the individual ratings.

When the individual ratings have been reviewed and translated into a collective rating, the team is ready to move to the interpretation phase of the self-assessment. Interpretation typically incorporates considerable discussion among team members to assure that all aspects of the program were given fair and impartial consideration prior to a final collective judgment. At this point, persistent disagreements over performance ratings may call for additional data collection. After the team review is completed, a meeting with concerned administrators, staff members, and student leaders should be scheduled for a general review of the self-assessment results. The next step, including discussion of alternative approaches that might be used to strengthen and enhance the program, is to generate steps and activities to be incorporated into an action plan.

## **III Rating Examples**

### **Rating Standard Criterion Measures**

All CAS Standards, printed in **bold type**, are viewed as being essential to a sound and relevant student support program and include the verbs “**must**” or “**shall**.” Likewise, many standard statements incorporate multiple criteria that, to facilitate more precise judgment, have been subdivided into measurable parts for rating purposes. Consequently, a single standard statement may require several criterion measure statements that allow raters to judge it part by part rather than broadly. This approach often requires multiple judgments concerning a specific standard statement, but facilitates accomplishing

a more precise assessment. Using a “Program” standard as an example, the following illustrates how several criterion measures are used to assess a single standard statement:

## Part 2: Program

**Programs must identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes and provide programs and services that encourage the achievement of those outcomes.**

	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
	Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated
<b>Criterion Measures</b>						<b>Rating Scale</b>
2.1 The program promotes student learning and development that is purposeful and holistic	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
2.2 The program has identified student learning and development outcomes that are relevant to its purpose	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
2.3 The program provides students with opportunities designed to encourage achievement of the identified outcomes	ND	1	2	3	4	NR

### Using Guidelines to Make Judgments about the Program

The CAS Standards are often accompanied by guidelines. Because many guidelines can provide additional evidence of good practice, program leaders may wish to include selected guidelines to be rated along with the standards. To accomplish this, criterion measure statements must be written for the guidelines selected. The self-study team can readily create statements to be judged as part of the rating process. Programs generally considered as being in compliance with the standards can benefit especially by using guidelines in this way because guidelines typically call for enhanced program quality. The following “Human Resources” program guidelines rating example illustrates the process.

## Part 5. Human Resources

**The program must employ qualified professional, technical, and support staff members who have the ability to provide well-maintained facilities, services, and programs that are responsive to student development goals, student input, and student participation inherent in its mission.**

Desirable qualities of staff members should include: (a) knowledge of and ability to use management and leadership principles, including the effective management of volunteers; (b) skills in assessment, planning, training, and evaluation; (c) interpersonal skills; (d) technical skills; (e) understanding the program’s mission; (f) commitment to institutional mission; and (g) understanding of and ability to apply student development and learning theories.

	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
	Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated
<b>Criterion Measures</b>						<b>Rating Scale</b>
Guideline 5: Staff members possess knowledge and skills to:						
5a manage volunteers	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
5b train volunteers	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
5c evaluate volunteers	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
5d apply student development theory	ND	1	2	3	4	NR
5e apply learning theories	ND	1	2	3	4	NR

Not all programs under review will incorporate guidelines to be rated as part of its self-study. Even though the guidelines are optional for rating purposes, raters are strongly encouraged to read and review them as part of the training process. When CAS Guidelines or other criterion measures are rated, they should be treated as if they were standards.

## IV Formulating an Action Plan

Typically, the assessment process will identify discrepancies between the program and the standards. Action planning designed to overcome program shortcomings and provide program enhancements must then occur.

To complete the process, a final summary document that (1) explains the mission, purpose, and philosophy of the program; (2) reviews available data; and (3) recommends specific plans for action needs to be prepared. Following is an outline of recommended steps for establishing a comprehensive

plan of action using the CAS self-assessment worksheets. Space is provided in the SAG for recording relevant information.

**Step 1. Answer Overview Questions (In the Instrument)**

- a. Respond, in writing in the space provided, to the *Overview Questions* (A., B., C., etc.) that immediately follow the rating section of each of the 13 components.
- b. Use answers to the Overview Questions to stimulate summary thinking about overarching issues, to facilitate interpretation of the ratings, and for development of the self-study report.

**Step 2. Identify Areas of Program Strength (Work Form A)**

- a. Identify criterion measure ratings where *excellent* performance or accomplishment (i.e., program exceeds criterion and is viewed as excellent or exemplary) was noted.
- b. identify criterion measures in which performance was found to be *satisfactory or good* (acceptable practice).

**Step 3. Identify Areas of Program Weakness (Work Form A)**

- a. Identify criterion measures where program weaknesses (i.e., program shortcomings that fail to meet criterion measures and/or rating discrepancies among raters of two points or more) were noted.
- b. Identify criterion measures viewed as being *Unsatisfactory* by one or more reviewer.

**Step 4. Describe Practices Requiring Follow-up (Work Form A)**

- a. Note criterion measure numbers deemed less than satisfactory and describe practice shortcomings that need to be strengthened.

**Step 5. Summarize Actions Required for the Program to Meet Standards (Work Form B)**

- a. List each criterion measure and/or related practices that the self-study process identified as being "Not Done," "Unsatisfactory," or wherein rater discrepancies were noted. Be specific when noting the rationale for each shortcoming identified.
- b. List *specific actions* identified in the self-study that require implementation
- c. Prioritize the list by importance, need, and achievability of the desired change.

**Step 6. Summarize Program Enhancement Actions (Work Form C)**

- a. List each specific action identified in the self-study that would enhance and strengthen services.
- b. Establish specific priorities for the action plan.

**Step 7. Write Program Action Plan**

- a. Prepare a comprehensive action plan for implementing program changes.
- b. Identify resources (i.e., human, fiscal, physical) that are essential to program enhancement.
- c. Set dates by which specific actions are to be completed.
- d. Identify responsible parties to complete the action steps.
- e. Set tentative start-up date for initiating a subsequent self-study.

# CAS

## Self-Assessment Guide Orientation Programs

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### Part 1: MISSION

The mission of Orientation Programs (OP) must include facilitating the transition of new students into the institution; preparing students for the institution's educational opportunities and student responsibilities; initiating the integration of new students into the intellectual, cultural, and social climate of the institution; and supporting the parents, partners, guardians, and children of the new student.

OP must incorporate student learning and student development in its mission. OP must enhance overall educational experiences. OP must develop, record, disseminate, implement, and regularly review its mission and goals. Mission statements must be consistent with the mission and goals of the institution and with the standards in this document. OP must operate as an integral part of the institution's overall mission.

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

<b>PART 1. MISSION</b> <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>	<b>Rating Scale</b>
1.1 A program mission and goals statement is in place and is reviewed periodically.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
1.2 Student learning, development, and educational experiences are incorporated in the mission statement.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
1.3 The mission is consistent with that of the host institution and the CAS standards.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
1.4 The program functions as an integral part of the host institution's overall mission.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
1.5 The OP mission encompasses the overall transition process for students and their families.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

### Part 1: Mission Overview Questions

A. What is the program mission?

The primary mission of the orientation process at Utah State University is to assist with the academic, geographic, and social transition and integration of students into Utah State University community. This mission is accomplished through a holistic approach that provides assistance with advising and registration processes through academic and social transitions.

B. How does the mission embrace student learning and development?

Student learning and development are embraced by the mission of orientation programs at Utah State in several different respects. First, within the context of orientation programs, students are introduced to the academic processes and procedures of the university, essentially providing them with the gateway to the learning processes that will take place thereafter. Additionally, student development processes are initiated at these orientation programs, as well, as students engage academic advisors, peer mentors, career services professionals, major professors, and many other campus professionals,

faculty, staff, and peers, all of whom will continue to play a role in the active encouragement of student development throughout the remainder of these students' experiences. Intentional contact with peers, mentors, professors, and professional staff, all of whom play an integral role in student development, is facilitated extensively through the orientation programs at Utah State.

C. In what ways does the program mission complement the mission of the institution?

The mission of Utah State University is to be one of the nation's premier student-centered land-grant and space-grant universities by fostering the principle that academics come first, by cultivating diversity of thought and culture, and by serving the public through learning, discovery, and engagement. Orientation programs at Utah State essentially facilitate student entry into these processes of learning, discovery, and engagement, and provide an introduction to the core values that characterize the institution.

## Part 2: PROGRAM

**The formal education of students consists of the curriculum and the co-curriculum, and must promote student learning and development that is purposeful and holistic. Orientation Programs (OP) must identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes and provide programs and services that encourage the achievement of those outcomes.**

**Relevant and desirable outcomes include: intellectual growth, effective communication, realistic self-appraisal, enhanced self-esteem, clarified values, career choices, leadership development, healthy behaviors, meaningful interpersonal relationships, independence, collaboration, social responsibility, satisfying and productive lifestyles, appreciation of diversity, spiritual awareness, and achievement of personal and educational goals.**

**OP must provide evidence of its impact on the achievement of student learning and development outcomes.**

The table below offers examples of evidence of achievement of student learning and development.

<b>Desirable Student Learning and Development Outcomes</b>	<b>Examples of Achievement</b>
<b>Intellectual Growth</b>	Develops educational goals; Examines information about academic majors and minors; Understands the requirements of an academic degree plan; Examines the core curriculum; Demonstrates knowledge about internships and volunteer opportunities; Develops personal goals; Makes decisions based on complex information from a variety of sources including personal experience, personal values, and orientation programs
<b>Effective Communication</b>	Examines personal and academic strengths and weaknesses which affect academic plans and communicates that information to academic advisors; Demonstrates the ability to use information on academic policy, student support services, and financial services; Demonstrates the ability to use technological resources; Composes appropriate questions when inquiring about particular requirements, departments, and resources; Appropriately introduces oneself and initiates conversations with others

<b>Enhanced Self-esteem</b>	Shows respect for self and others; Demonstrates assertive behavior and evaluates reasonable risks with regard to academic course selection and course load when conferring with academic advisors; Produces a schedule of classes in consultation with orientation staff or academic advisors
<b>Realistic Self-appraisal</b>	Evaluates personal and academic skills, abilities, and interests and establishes appropriate educational plans for the first semester; Ranks academic strengths and weaknesses; Focuses on areas of academic ability and interest and mitigates academic weaknesses; Uses information on course selection, course load, and course schedule in order to construct a schedule; Formulates opportunities for involvement in co-curricular activities
<b>Clarified Values</b>	Demonstrates ability to evaluate personal values and beliefs regarding relationships, diversity, substance use, academic integrity, and other ethical issues; Analyzes personal, work, and lifestyle values and explains how they influence decision-making in regard to course selection, course load, and level of personal involvement in the campus community; Acts in congruence with values
<b>Career Choices</b>	Describes career choice options of academic major and minor based on interests, skills, abilities, and values; Identifies the purpose and role of career services in the development and attainment of academic and career goals
<b>Leadership Development</b>	Demonstrates awareness of leadership opportunities, including those in part-time jobs on and off campus and internships
<b>Healthy Behavior</b>	Describes personal behaviors and environments that promote health and reduce risk; Identifies services provided to support the advancement of a healthy lifestyle and a healthy campus community; Articulates the relationship between health and the development of lifelong goals
<b>Meaningful Interpersonal Relationships</b>	Creates relationships with fellow students, orientation staff, faculty members, academic advisors, and other institution staff to be engaged with the institution in a meaningful way; Demonstrates ability to listen to others' points of view; Treats others with respect
<b>Independence</b>	Operates autonomously by attending prescribed student orientation programs while parents and family are attending different programs; Selects, schedules, and registers for academic courses with the advice and counsel of academic advisors and orientation staff; Manages the campus physical environment (i.e., location of buildings, understand a bus schedule)
<b>Social Responsibility</b>	Understands the requirements of the codes of conduct; Has knowledge of institution governance systems
<b>Collaboration</b>	Works cooperatively with others; Seeks the involvement of others; Seeks feedback from others; Contributes to achievement of a group goal; Exhibits effective listening skills
<b>Satisfying and Productive Lifestyles</b>	Determines the balance between academic course load requirements, work, and leisure time; Constructs goals for academic course requirements, work, and leisure time activities; Identifies obstacles that hamper the achievement of stated goals; Decides the importance of functioning on the basis of personal, ethical, spiritual, and moral values
<b>Appreciating Diversity</b>	Becomes aware of the impact of culture on individuals; Becomes aware of educational offerings related to diversity; Demonstrates an appreciation for diversity and the impact it has on society; Seeks involvement with people different from oneself; Challenges appropriately the abusive use of stereotypes
<b>Spiritual Awareness</b>	Develops and articulates personal belief system; Understands the role of spirituality in personal and group values and behaviors;

	Identifies campus and community spiritual and religious resources
<b>Personal and Educational Goals</b>	Determines personal and academic goals and objectives; Uses personal and academic goals to guide decisions; Considers the effect of one's personal and academic goals on parents, family, and others

**OP must be (a) intentional, (b) coherent, (c) based on theories and knowledge of learning and human development, (d) reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the student population, and (e) responsive to needs of individuals, special populations, and communities.**

**OP must aid students and their families (i.e., parents, guardians, partners and children) in understanding the nature and purpose of the institution, their membership in the academic community, and their relationship to the intellectual, cultural, and social climate of the institution.**

OP should introduce students to the learning and development that will occur throughout the collegiate experience.

**OP must continue as a process to address, as appropriate, transitional events, issues, and needs. The orientation process must include pre-enrollment, entry, and post-matriculation services and programs.**

Components of OP may include credit and non-credit courses, seminars, adventure programs, service learning, summer readings, learning communities, Freshmen Interest Groups (FIGs), web-based educational opportunities, comprehensive mailings, electronic communications, and campus visitations and may be administered through multiple institutional offices.

**OP must:**

- **be based on stated goals and objectives**
- **be coordinated with the relevant programs and activities of other institutional units**
- **be available to all students new to the institution, as well as to families**

First-year, transfer, and entering graduate students, as well as their families should be served as distinct populations with specific attention given to the needs of sub-groups such as students with disabilities, athletes, adult learners, under-prepared students, under-represented students, honor students, and international students.

- **assist new students as well as their families in understanding the purposes of higher education and the mission of the institution**

New students should have a clear understanding of the overall purpose of higher education and how this general purpose translates to the institution they are attending. The roles, responsibilities, and expectations of students, faculty and staff members, and families should be included.

- **articulate the institution's expectations of students (e.g., scholarship, integrity, conduct, financial obligations, ethical use of technology) and provide information that clearly identifies relevant administrative policies and procedures and programs to enable students to make well-reasoned and well-informed choices**
- **provide new students with information and opportunities for academic and personal self-assessment**

OP should assist students in the selection of appropriate courses and course levels, making use of relevant placement examinations, entrance examinations, and academic records.

- **use qualified faculty members, staff, or peer advisors to explain class scheduling, registration processes, and campus life**
- **provide new students as well as their families, with information about laws and policies regarding educational records and other protected information**

OP should emphasize the independence of students in accomplishing their goals while acknowledging their interdependence with their peers and families.

- **inform new students as well as their families about the availability of services and programs**
- **assist new students as well as their families in becoming familiar with the campus and local environment**

OP for students and families should provide information about the physical layout of the campus, including the location and purposes of campus facilities, support services, co-curricular venues, and administrative offices. Information about personal health, safety, and security should also be included.

- **assist new students, as well as their families in becoming familiar with the wide range of electronic and information resources available and expectations for their use**

OP should provide information about technological resources used to conduct institutional business and scholarly work including information about student information systems, electronic databases, email, and online course software. Information about how to manage responsible and ethical use of institutional technological resources should also be presented.

- **provide time for students to become acquainted with their new environment**
- **provide intentional opportunities for new students to interact with fellow new students as well as continuing students, faculty and staff members**

OP should design and facilitate opportunities for new students to discuss their expectations and perceptions of the campus and to clarify their personal and educational goals.

OP should design and facilitate opportunities for new students to meet their peers and begin forming new relationships.

**OP must inform students about the history, traditions, and campus cultures to facilitate an identification with and integration into the institution.**

<b>ND</b> Not Done	<b>1</b> Not Met	<b>2</b> Minimally Met	<b>3</b> Well Met	<b>4</b> Fully Met	<b>NR</b> Not Rated
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<b>PART 2. PROGRAM</b> <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>	<b>Rating Scale</b>
2.1 The program promotes student learning and development that is purposeful and holistic.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

2.2 The program has identified student learning and development outcomes that are relevant to its purpose.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.3 The program provides students with opportunities designed to encourage achievement of the identified outcomes.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.4 The program provides evidence of its impact on the achievement of student learning and development outcomes in the domains checked.	
<u>List student learning and/or developmental outcomes in spaces provided</u>	
2.4.1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Growth <u>Through their participation in Connections, students obtain academic skills and strategies that will assist them in further intellectual endeavors.</u>	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.4.2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Effective Communication <u>Students who attend Connections are called upon to improve communication skills, both written and verbal.</u>	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.4.3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhanced Self-Esteem <u>Though not necessarily an intentional focus of these programs, self-esteem is engendered when students are given the opportunity to succeed early in their college careers, as they are with Connections.</u>	ND 1 <b>2</b> 3 4 NR
2.4.4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Realistic Self-Appraisal <u>By participating in academic advising, discussions with faculty members, conversations with career counselors, and other students, incoming students encounter many intentional opportunities to engage in realistic self-appraisal.</u>	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.4.5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clarified Values <u>In conjunction with many of the workshops, sessions, and events at orientation programs, students are encouraged to think strongly about their values and make determinations about the type of college experience and life they wish to pursue.</u>	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.4.6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Career Choices <u>Both SOAR and Connections feature a component that introduces students to career planning and resources.</u>	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.4.7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership Development <u>Various events, activities, and projects at both SOAR and Connections are structured around intentional opportunities to allow students to further develop leadership skills.</u>	ND 1 <b>2</b> 3 4 NR
2.4.8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Healthy Behavior <u>A required workshop at Connections discusses healthy behaviors at length, and additional information beyond this workshop is available.</u>	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.4.9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meaningful Interpersonal Relationships <u>Included in the aforementioned workshop at Connections is a discussion of</u>	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

healthy relationships. New relationships are also fostered at these programs.	
2.4.10 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Independence <u>In assisting students with their integration into to a new environment away from parents, orientation programs at USU assist student transitions to independence.</u>	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.4.11 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration <u>Students work together in a number of meaningful ways in participating in projects and activities when they participate in orientation programs at USU.</u>	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.4.12 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Responsibility <u>Workshops, classroom activities, and unstructured elements all contribute to discussions of social responsibility at Connections.</u>	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.4.13 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Satisfying and Productive Lifestyle <u>Time management and organizational skills are a component of the Connections curriculum.</u>	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.4.14 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appreciate Diversity <u>By exposing new students to other incoming students from different backgrounds, orientation programs at USU provide a safe forum for the cultivation of diversity.</u>	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.4.15 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spiritual Awareness <u>Campus and community religious groups are invited to participate and have a presence at USU orientation programs.</u>	ND 1 <b>2</b> 3 4 NR
2.4.16 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal and Educational Goals <u>Goal setting and big picture thinking also play a prominent role in the Connections curriculum.</u>	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.5 Program offerings are intentional, coherent and based on theories of learning and human development.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.6 Program offerings are designed to meet the developmental needs of relevant student populations and communities.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.7 OP includes information and events on pre-enrollment, entry, and post-matriculation processes.	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
2.8 OP provides families with: 2.8a the nature and purpose of the institution	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.8b their role and relationship in the community	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.9 OP is available to all students and their families.	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
2.10 OP assists students and parents in understanding the purposes of higher education.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.11 OP teaches students about the institution's expectations.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.12 OP provides opportunities for student self-assessment.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

2.13 OP uses qualified personnel to explain scheduling, registration and campus life.	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
2.14 OP provides pertinent information on federal, state/provincial, and local laws.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.15 OP informs students and families about available support services and programs.	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
2.16 OP helps students and families become familiar with campus and the local community.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.17 OP assists students and families with electronic resources and expectations for use.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.18 OP provides students with the history, traditions, and campus culture of the institution.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
2.19 OP provides opportunities for new students to interact with fellow students.	ND 1 2 3 4 NR

## Part 2: Program Overview Questions

### A. What are the primary elements of the program?

Orientation at Utah State consists of a two-tiered approach. All incoming first-year students are required to participate in SOAR (Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration) where they receive information about campus policies and procedures, complete matriculation processes, obtain academic advising, and register for classes. Students participate in this program on any number of dates throughout the summer either on-campus, or online. Different types of SOAR are available, including Express, Extended, and Outdoor. Sample agendas for SOAR are provided as an addendum to this section. The second tier to orientation at Utah State consists of an academic course taught in sixty separate sections by instructors culled from faculty and professional staff from across campus called University Connections. Students attend Connections beginning a week prior to the onset of Fall Semester, and meet weekly with their class for the first three weeks of the semester. At Connections, students are introduced to campus resources and facilities, learn academic skills, and engage in extensive social interaction with their fellow incoming students and peer mentors, and students who complete the course receive graded credit for their efforts. Approximately two-thirds of incoming first-year students participate in Connections. A section of the syllabus denoting the curriculum for Connections has been included as addendum to this section.

### B. What evidence exists that confirms the program contributes to student learning and development?

Assessment is a significant component of both SOAR and Connections, and students are asked to assess the level and value of their participation in the various components of both programs. Because academic advising and peer mentoring play such a significant role in SOAR, particular attention is paid to student assessment of these areas, noting the importance of these factors in contributing to positive student development. Because these programs are based on national models that incorporate student development theory and best practices in encouraging student learning, research and literature support the notion that Utah State's orientation programs contribute to student learning and development. Additional studies and figures, conducted and derived on an institutional level, support this notion, and will be discussed in the next section in conjunction with program goals and achievement. Assessment summaries for both programs are provided in the addendum to section 13.

### C. What evidence is available to confirm program goals' achievement?

Students have consistently positively identified critical areas including academic advising and peer mentoring and assistance, among others, in their SOAR assessments and evaluations as being vital and helpful in their efforts to transition to Utah State. For Connections students, both assessment and quantitative figures have confirmed the influence of the course on student learning and development. Assessment and program result summaries for both programs are provided in the addendum to section 13.

# Addendum: Sample Express SOAR Agenda

<b>College Orientation Advising Locations</b>	
Agriculture .....	Department Offices
Business .....	BUS 309
Education & Human Services .....	Department Offices
Engineering .....	ENGR 304
Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences .....	TSC 302
Natural Resources .....	NR 120
Science .....	TSC International Lounge
Undeclared .....	TSC Ballroom

  



**Evaluations**

Don't forget to turn in your SOAR evaluation to get FREE Aggie Ice Cream!

  

<b>Information Fair</b>	
Please take a moment to visit the following campus and community organizations in the lounge from 11:45-12:35 p.m.:	
Air Force ROTC	Parking
Army ROTC	Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
Bookstore	St. John's Episcopal Church
Campus Christians	Student Involvement and Leadership
Campus Recreation	University Connections
Faith and Fellowship Center	University Inn
First Presbyterian Church	USU Bands
Hillel Association for Jewish Students	USU Distribution (Post Office)
Honors Program	USU Fraternities and Sororities
Housing and Dining Services	USU Library
HURD	USU Police Department
LDS Institute and Student Association	Wellness Center
Newman Center	Writing Center

<b>Express Orientation Schedule</b>	
<b>Check-in</b> .....	<b>7:45-9:30 a.m.</b>
TSC Sunburst Lounge	
<b>Workshop Sessions</b> .....	<b>8:15-9:40 a.m.</b>
See Below	
<b>Welcome</b> .....	<b>10:00-10:15 a.m.</b>
TSC Ballroom	
<b>Transitions to College</b> .....	<b>10:20-11:45 a.m.</b>
TSC Various Locations	
<b>Lunch and Information Fair</b> .....	<b>11:45-12:35 p.m.</b>
TSC Sunburst/ International Lounges	
<b>University Requirements</b> .....	<b>12:45-1:20 p.m.</b>
TSC Ballroom	
<b>Advising</b> .....	<b>1:30-2:30 p.m.</b>
USU Campus Various Locations	
<b>Registration</b> .....	<b>2:30-4:00 p.m.</b>
TSC Sunburst Lounge	
<b>Campus Tour (Optional)</b> .....	<b>2:30, 3:00, 3:30 p.m.</b>
TSC Sunburst Lounge (Information Table)	

  

<b>Optional Workshops</b>	
<b>Session I - 8:15-8:40 a.m.</b>	
Life as an Aggie .....	TSC Auditorium
Study Abroad .....	TSC Walnut Room
University Connections .....	TSC Ballroom
<b>Session II - 8:45-9:10 a.m.</b>	
Life as an Aggie .....	TSC Auditorium
Study Abroad .....	TSC Walnut Room
University Connections .....	TSC Ballroom
Financial Aid .....	TSC 336
Deciding on a Major .....	TSC 335
Fraternities and Sororities .....	TSC Sunburst Lounge
<b>Session III - 9:15-9:40 a.m.</b>	
Life as an Aggie .....	TSC Auditorium
Study Abroad .....	TSC Walnut Room
University Connections .....	TSC Ballroom
Housing .....	TSC 336
Deciding on a Major .....	TSC 335
Fraternities and Sororities .....	TSC Sunburst Lounge

## Addendum: Sample Extended SOAR Agenda

### Extended Orientation Schedule

Day One - Thursday, June 22

- Check-in** ..... 8:45-9:30 a.m.  
Merrill Hall
- Welcome** ..... 9:45-10:15 a.m.  
TSC Ballroom
- Transitions to College** ..... 10:15-11:45 a.m.  
TSC Various Locations with A-Team
- Lunch and Info. Fair** ..... 11:45-12:35 p.m.  
TSC International Lounge
- University Requirements** ..... 12:45-1:20 p.m.  
TSC Ballroom
- Advising** ..... 1:20-2:30 p.m.  
USU Campus Various Locations
- Registration and Tours** ..... 2:30-4:30 p.m.  
TSC Sunburst Lounge (ours leave intermittently starting at 3:00)
- Aggie Olympics** ..... 4:00-6:30 p.m.  
University Quad
- Dinner** ..... 6:30-7:30 p.m.  
University Quad
- Break** ..... 7:30-8:15 p.m.
- College Dating Workshop** ..... 8:15-9:30 p.m.  
TSC Auditorium
- SOAR Party 2006** ..... 9:30-11:30 p.m.  
TSC Ballroom
- Bedtime** ..... 12:00 a.m.  
Residence Halls Locked After This Time

Day Two - Friday, June 23

- Wake up** ..... 8:00 a.m.
- Check-out** ..... 8:00-9:00 a.m.
- Breakfast** ..... 9:00-9:50 a.m.  
The Junction
- Student Services** ..... 10:00-10:50 a.m.  
TSC Various Locations with A-Team
- Workshop Session I** ..... 11:00-11:25 a.m.  
See Facing Page
- Workshop Session II** ..... 11:30-11:55 a.m.  
See Facing Page
- Aggie Ice Cream/Evaluations** ..... 12:00-12:30 p.m.  
TSC International Lounge

### Workshops

Day 2 - Friday, June 23

#### Session I - 11:00-11:25 a.m.

- Life as an Aggie ..... TSC Auditorium  
Study Abroad ..... TSC Walnut Room  
University Connections ..... TSC Ballroom  
Financial Aid ..... TSC 336  
Deciding on a Major ..... TSC 335  
Fraternities and Sororities ..... TSC Sunburst Lounge

#### Session II - 11:30-11:55 a.m.

- Life as an Aggie ..... TSC Auditorium  
Study Abroad ..... TSC Walnut Room  
University Connections ..... TSC Ballroom  
Housing ..... TSC 336  
Deciding on a Major ..... TSC 335  
Fraternities and Sororities ..... TSC Sunburst Lounge

### University Connections 2006

Get a jump start on your academic success at Utah State University by taking Connections! With different options to fit your different needs, Connections can work for you. Connections is the place to meet new people, better understand Utah State, and gain additional academic strategies for success. For more information, attend the Connections workshop, look for the brochure in your packet, and check it out online at <http://www.usu.edu/connections>.

### College Orientation Advising Locations

- Agriculture ..... Department Offices  
Business ..... BUS 309  
Education & Human Services ..... Department Offices  
Engineering ..... ENGR 304  
Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences ..... TSC 302 and 336  
Natural Resources ..... NR 120  
Science ..... TSC Sunburst Lounge  
Undeclared ..... TSC Ballroom

## Addendum: Connections Syllabus

### Week-at-a-Glance

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#### Connections 2007 Week-at-a-glance Outline (Master Schedule)

##### Tuesday, August 21

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Student check-in and Welcome to USU Fair in the International Lounge of the Taggart Student Center

##### Wednesday, August 22

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. President's Welcome—Kent Concert Hall  
10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Class Time—Welcome and Introductions  
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch  
1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Class and/or Workshop (depending on individual class schedule)  
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Dinner on the TSC patio  
6:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. Evening Activity: TBA

##### Thursday, August 23

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Class and/or Workshop (depending on individual class schedule)  
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch  
1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Class and/or Workshop (depending on individual class schedule)  
3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Free Time  
5:30 p.m. Evening Activities: TBA

##### Friday, August 24

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Class\* and/or Workshop (depending on individual class schedule)  
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch on the Quad  
1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Class\* and/or Workshop (depending on individual class schedule)  
3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Free Time  
6:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. Evening Activities: TBA

\*Suggested topic for class discussion: "Finding a Major/Using Your Advisor"

##### Saturday, August 25

9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Meet in classroom to prepare questions for Convocation Lecture  
9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Convocation Lecture—Kent Concert Hall  
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon Discussion in the Classroom: Convocations Lecture  
12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m. Meet the Author/Book Signing TSC International Lounge  
Evening Activities to be announced

##### Sunday, August 26

Sunday Welcome  
Menu of Activities include:

- Worship services at the various faith communities
- Residence hall activities
- Groups exploring Logan Canyon and other local recreational sites

# Week-at-a-Glance

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## Connections 2007 Week-at-a-glance Outline (Master Schedule)

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3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Free Time  
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Evening Activities to be announced

### Sunday, August 26

Sunday Welcome  
Menu of Activities include:

- Worship services at the various faith communities
- Residence hall activities
- Groups exploring Logan Canyon and other local recreational sites



# Syllabus

## Connections 2007 Syllabus

### Course Dates

- Pre-semester Session: August 22-25
  - Class meetings
  - Convocation
  - 4 workshops (Faculty Panel, SAAVI, Technology, Library)
- First Semester Session: August 28-30
- Second Semester Session: September 4-6
- Third Semester Session: September 11-13
- Coursework completed by: September 28

### Required Texts

- Complications, by Atul Gawande
- Connections Student Manual
- 2007-2009 USU General Catalog
- Fall 2007 Schedule of Classes

### Course Fee

\$50.00 (paid as part of course registration) - Fee provides students with two meals, t-shirt, USU planner, Convocation speaker, class activities, and supplies.

Welcome to Connections and to Utah State University, home of the Aggies! The faculty and staff of Connections are pleased to note your arrival on campus and the start of an exciting and challenging year ahead. Our commitment to you is to make the time we spend together in this course challenging, stimulating, rewarding, and productive in helping you make the transition to university life.

University Connections is designed to give you an early introduction to the expectations and challenges of university life, as well as emphasize some of the learning skills you will need to successfully achieve your goals at the University. The course explores problems common in the transition from high school to university life, in an atmosphere that encourages the development of enduring relationships between you, your instructor, and your fellow classmates.

Connections also provides an orientation to a breadth of University services and resources, to basic policies and procedures governing the conduct of staff and students, and to the physical layout of the USU campus and Cache County community.

**Connections curriculum and activities are specifically designed to:**

- Introduce students to the expectations of Utah State and promote academic success.
- Share, discuss, and analyze a common reading experience that will enhance students' connection to the campus community.
- Develop in students the desire and ability to be an "informed participant" in the educational process.



# Syllabus

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- Help students identify and address the anxieties involved in the transition to university life and help them make the transition to USU a productive learning experience.
- Introduce the role of the academic library in a college career, including the range of resources available and the role of librarians in providing assistance.
- Broaden the educational experience by encouraging student involvement in co-curricular and service-learning activities.
- Create an environment that helps students establish friendship and support networks.
- Explore the Cache Valley community and opportunities for personal and spiritual growth.

All classes have a common core syllabus and assignments. However, there are 60 sections of Connections 2007! With this large number of classes, there is bound to be a variety of teaching styles and personalities among the faculty, as is true of the University at large. There are differences in teaching styles and some differences between classes in content and activities, and that's OK! We don't want every class to be exactly the same.

## Core Curriculum

All Connections classes will cover the following **skills** through assignments, class discussions, workshops, activities, and guidance to appropriate resources.

1. Reading, discussing, and analyzing a common literature reading
2. Developing self-management skills: Time management, syllabus analysis
3. Becoming aware of University policies and procedures
4. Developing an understanding of the role of the academic advisor in a college career
5. Developing an awareness of effective academic skills:
  - The value of understanding a course syllabus
  - Note-taking styles and processing information from class notes
  - Test-preparation strategies
  - Test-taking strategies
  - Reading textbook strategies
6. Exploring college transition issues: - How college differs from high school
7. Understanding how to interact comfortably with campus and community personnel
8. Becoming familiar with campus resources and knowing when to use them
9. Gathering technology information: Introduction to the CIL requirement, campus computer labs, the library, and WebCT.
10. Participating in a Sexual Assault and Anti-Violence Information (SAAVI program) workshop.
11. Becoming oriented to the physical layout of campus as well as campus mobility options, including the LTD, Aggie Shuttle, bikes, and walking.
12. Gathering information about the local community and resources to make connections to explore personal and spiritual opportunities for continual growth and development.

# Syllabus

## Honor Pledge

Upon admission to the University, students agree to abide by the Utah State University Honor System by signing the Honor Pledge, which reads: "I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community.

## Attendance

Class sessions will start promptly, and students are expected to participate during the entire class period. Early departure, as well as anticipated absences, should be kept to a minimum and coordinated with the instructor prior to class. Please, as a courtesy to all, turn off all cell phones before coming to class. (If you have a situation requiring an adjustment to this policy, please discuss this with the instructor).

## Participation

Frequently students will ask: "Do I have to attend class?" The answer is YES! Much of your learning will occur as a result of your attendance and participation. Class participation includes asking appropriate questions and sharing comments with the class, bringing materials for in-class work, and attending the lectures. It is important to practice looking alert, taking notes, and thinking about the ideas presented in class. In-class assignments will be part of the class format. **Missed class activities and assignments may not be made up. Late assignments are only accepted under unusual circumstances and are reduced five percent for each day late.**

## Grading Scale

The grading scale that is used by all of the classes is as follows:

• Summer Literature Reflection Journal	150
• Get Acquainted with USU Policies and Procedures	25
• Learning About Campus Resources	50
• Time Management and Syllabus Analysis	100
• Set Up Library Resources Account	25
• Exploring a Major	100
• Connecting to Campus	50
• CIL Tests (2@50 points each)	100
• Course Evaluation	50
• Academic Skills	75
• Connections Attendance and Participation (determined by instructor)	275
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>1,000</b>



# Syllabus

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## Assignment Descriptions

(All assignments and directions are available in the Connections Student Manual and on the Connections WebCT site.)

### Summer Literature Reflection Journal

150 Points

Due: August 22

Complete the summer literature journal questions for *Complications*. Questions are available at SOAR and on the Connections website: <http://www.usu.edu/connections/literatureassignment/>.

### Get Acquainted with USU Policies and Procedures

25 points

Due: August 27-31

Students will access a quiz through the Connections WebCT site that requires them to utilize the USU General Catalog and the Fall Schedule of Classes to learn policies and procedures of the University that directly affect them as a student.

### Learning About Campus Resources

50 points

Due: August 27-31

Using the Connections site, students will complete an activity that requires them to explore the many resources available to them. Students will learn to access the useful departmental Websites, which can support and assist students in a variety of areas including academics, health and wellness, safety, and social venues.

### Time Management and Syllabus Analysis

100 points

Due: September 4-7

*"How am I going to get everything done?!"* For college students who juggle academic, job, extracurricular, social, and personal demands, this question describes the continual challenges students face during their college experience. Time can be their ally or foe, depending on how skilled they are at managing it. As a result, time management will be one of the most important skills students will need and use during their college experience.

Students will access this assignment from the Connections WebCT site. They will be asked to audit their time for a week designated by the instructor. Students will create a semester calendar and analyze the course requirements in each of their classes.

### Set Up Library Resources Account

25 points

Due: September 28

The Merrill-Cazier Library is at the heart of the USU campus. You will spend many hours there doing research, studying, and socializing. The Connections experience introduces you to the library and its resources. In order to check books out of the library, you need to create an account in the Library Online Catalog. This account will also enable you to renew books online and update account information.

### Exploring a Major

100 points

Due: September 28

Finding a major that suits your skills, abilities, and interests will enrich your academic experience. Some of you enrolled with a specific major in mind, while others are exploring and deciding. To facilitate the process, the Connections program requires you to explore possible career opportunities or develop a long-range plan for your selected major.



## Part 3: LEADERSHIP

Effective and ethical leadership is essential to the success of all organizations. Institutions must appoint, position, and empower Orientation Program (OP) leaders within the administrative structure to accomplish stated missions. Leaders of OP at various levels must be selected on the basis of formal education and training, relevant work experience, personal skills and competencies, and relevant professional credentials. Leaders of OP must promote learning and development in students, apply effective practices to educational processes, and enhance institutional effectiveness. Institutions must establish accountability for leaders and fairly assess their performance.

Leaders of OP must exercise authority over resources for which they are responsible to achieve their respective missions.

Leaders of OP must:

- articulate a vision for their organization
- set goals and objectives based on the needs and capabilities of the population served
- promote student learning and development
- prescribe and practice ethical behavior
- recruit, select, supervise, and develop others in the organization
- manage financial resources
- coordinate human resources
- plan, budget for, and evaluate personnel and programs
- apply effective practices to educational and administrative processes
- communicate effectively
- initiate collaborative interaction between individuals and agencies that possess legitimate concerns and interests in the functional area

Leaders of OP must identify and find means to address individual, organizational, or environmental conditions that inhibit goal achievement.

Leaders of OP must promote campus environments that result in multiple opportunities for student learning and development.

Leaders of OP must continuously improve programs and services in response to changing needs of students and other constituents, and evolving institutional priorities.

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

<b>PART 3. LEADERSHIP</b> <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>	<b>Rating Scales</b>
3.1 The host institution has selected, positioned, and empowered a leader for OP.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
3.2 Leaders are qualified on the bases of education, experience, competence, and professional credentials.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
3.3 Leaders apply effective practices that promote student learning and institutional effectiveness.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
3.4 Clearly defined leader accountability expectations are in place.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

3.5 Leader performance is fairly assessed on a regular basis.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
3.6 Leaders exercise authority over program resources and use them effectively.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
3.7 Program leaders	
3.7a articulate organizational vision and goals that includes promotion of student learning and development based on the needs of the population served	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
3.7b prescribe and practice appropriate ethical behavior	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
3.7c recruit, select, supervise, instruct, and coordinate staff members	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
3.7d manage fiscal, physical, and human resources effectively	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
3.7e apply effective practices to educational and administrative processes	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
3.8 The leader communicates effectively and initiates collaborations with agencies to enhance program functions.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
3.9 The leader works effectively with individuals and environmental conditions that inhibit goal achievement.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
3.10 The leader encourages campus environments that promote multiple opportunities for student learning and development.	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
3.11 The leader strives to improve the program in response to evolving student needs and institutional priorities.	

### Part 3: Leadership Overview Questions

A. In what ways are program leaders qualified for their roles?

Program leaders for orientation at Utah State are qualified by over 25 years of combined professional experience in administering programs for students in transition. These program leaders have academic training in areas fundamental to orientation, transition, and student-focused programs, and have held positions of leadership in state, regional, and national organizations related to orientation, first-year, and academic support programming.

B. In what ways are program leaders positioned and empowered to accomplish the program mission?

With the creation of the Office of Retention and First-Year Experience, program leaders for all aspects of the two primary orientation-related programs at Utah State are housed within the same unit for the first time. This new proximity allows for greater collaboration between programs, a more consistent message for students, and better tracking of student data and information. The collaboration engendered by this organizational alignment has additionally allowed for greater exposure for all elements of orientation programming across campus and to new and different constituents. All program leaders are empowered not only by their position within this new unit, but also by their relationship with Student Services administrators and University administration. The administration continues to foster an environment wherein orientation program leaders are entrusted to utilize their extensive experience in implementing programs and services that reflect best practices nationally, as well as the best interests of the unique student populations that comprise Utah State.

C. How are program leaders accountable for their performance?

Program leaders are held accountable in annual performance reviews, which include administrative and 360 degree review processes. Additionally, program leaders are held accountable for participation levels within their programs, including student participation and attendance, faculty participation, and, to a more limited extent, campus enrollment figures. Because participation in these programs is so widespread, encompassing to some degree virtually every incoming first-year student, orientation leaders are also held accountable in accordance with student assessment of these programs. Funding, support, and additional resources are typically more likely to be allocated in accordance with demonstrated effectiveness, innovation, efficiency, and student perception.

D. What leadership practices best describe program leaders?

Due to the nature of the relationships that program leaders must sustain with faculty and professionals from across campus and in the community, it is imperative that these program leaders exercise a collaborative leadership style. The degree to which they must obtain buy-in from various constituents and stakeholders in order to effectively manage and expand programs certainly dictates this collaboration, but it is also worth noting that the individuals who currently hold these positions are leaders who would favor and encourage collaboration in any environment. Orientation program leaders are also supportive and encouraging, and are concerned about both processes as well as outcomes, and their leadership practices reflect these emphases.

**Part 4: ORGANIZATION and MANAGEMENT**

**Guided by an overarching intent to ensure student learning and development, Orientation Programs (OP) must be structured purposefully and managed effectively to achieve stated goals. Evidence of appropriate structure must include current and accessible policies and procedures, written performance expectations for all employees, functional workflow graphics or organizational charts, and clearly stated service delivery expectations.**

**Evidence of effective management must include use of comprehensive and accurate information for decisions, clear sources and channels of authority, effective communication practices, decision-making and conflict resolution procedures, responsiveness to changing conditions, accountability and evaluation systems, and recognition and reward processes. OP must provide channels within the organization for regular review of administrative policies and procedures.**

All institutional offices involved in program delivery should be involved in the review of administrative policies and procedures.

**Coordination of OP must occur even though a number of offices may be involved in the delivery of structured activities.**

The size, nature, and complexity of the institution should guide the administrative scope and structure of OP.

<b>ND</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>NR</b>
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

<b>PART 4. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT</b> <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>	<b>Rating Scale</b>
4.1 The program is structured purposefully and managed effectively.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
4.2 Written policies, procedures, performance expectations, workflow graphics, and clearly stated delivery expectations are in place.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
4.3 Effective management practice exists that includes access to and use of relevant data, clear channels of authority, and viable communications, accountability, evaluation, and reward systems.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
4.4 Channels are in place for regular review of administrative policies and procedures.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
4.5 Coordination of orientation occurs.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

**Part 4: Organization and Management Overview Questions**

A. What are the institutional organizational structures that define, enable, or restrain the program?

Enabled by strong connections within student services and from campus auxiliary services, orientation

programs at Utah State are managed by a small number of professionals that rely on these connections to provide both depth and breadth to these programs. Orientation programs also receive strong administrative support from within Student Services, and are bolstered by partnerships with academic units and individual faculty members. On the other hand, orientation programs are constrained, in a sense, by this reliance on partnerships with other offices, primarily because the consent, buy-in, and particularly financial support needed from other offices, or from academic administration, limits the singular innovative and decision making capacities of those who lead these orientation programs. In other words, the small, but capable staff that lead orientation programs at Utah State are very skilled at making the best of limited resources.

**B. What protocols or processes are in place to insure effective management of the program?**

The Office of Retention and First-Year Experience functions in accordance with its established policy manual, sections of which have been appended to this section, and regular administrative review of program policies and practices allows for proper oversight and perspective. Because these programs are managed by such a small population of professionals, an organization chart for orientation programs simply consists of a Director, Assistant Director, and Program Administrator, with classified staff and student employees also on this chart. All employees know their roles, but are collaborative to a degree that they are able to check and balance each other in their responsibilities and roles, ultimately resulting in more efficient and effective programs. Finally, top level administrators from Student Services and the central administration periodically review these orientation programs with program leaders to ensure the programs are being effectively managed, and student needs are being met.

## **Addendum: RFYE Policy Manual Introduction**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This manual is intended to provide to the Division of Student Services, staff, faculty and students information regarding the procedures and policies of the Retention and FYE Office. Within the framework of the missions of Utah State University (USU), Student Services Division, and the Retention and First-Year Experience Office (Ret/FYE), the Ret/FYE strives to serve students, faculty, and staff, and university parents. Policies and procedures contained in this manual were developed by the staff of the Retention First-Year Experience Office, and these staff members review and update them annually along with the Vice President for Student Services. Policies or procedures that are related to or have an impact on other University departments are reviewed and approved by the appropriate person(s) on a yearly basis.

All policies and procedures of the Retention and First Year Experience office adhere to the Office of Human Resources (HR) USU Policy Manual Section 303.1 regarding equal opportunity <http://www1.usu.edu/hr/policies/303.htm>.

(Full policy manual available upon request.)

## **Part 5: HUMAN RESOURCES**

**Orientation Programs (OP) must be staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish its mission and goals. Within established guidelines of the institution, OP must establish procedures for staff selection, training, and evaluation; set expectations for supervision; and provide appropriate professional development opportunities. OP must strive to improve the professional competence and skills of all personnel it employs.**

Faculty involvement in the development and delivery of OP is essential to its success. Faculty members should be included as part of the overall staffing.

**OP professional staff members must hold an earned graduate degree in a field relevant to the position they hold or must possess an appropriate combination of educational credentials and related work experience.**

**Degree or credential-seeking interns must be qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and by relevant experience. These individuals must be trained and supervised adequately by professional staff members holding educational credentials and related work experience appropriate for supervision.**

**Student employees and volunteers must be carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated. They must be trained on how and when to refer those in need of assistance to qualified staff members and have access to a supervisor for assistance in making these judgments. Student employees and volunteers must be provided clear and precise job descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing staff development.**

**Student staff must be informed as to the limits of their authority, the expectation for appropriate role modeling, and their potential influence on new students.**

**OP must have technical and support staff members adequate to accomplish its mission. Staff members must be technologically proficient and qualified to perform their job functions, be knowledgeable of ethical and legal uses of technology, and have access to training. The level of staffing and workloads must be adequate and appropriate for program and service demands.**

**Salary levels and fringe benefits for all OP staff members must be commensurate with those for comparable positions within the institution, in similar institutions, and in the relevant geographic area.**

**OP must institute hiring and promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, and non-discriminatory. Programs and services must employ a diverse staff to provide readily identifiable role models for students and to enrich the campus community.**

**OP must create and maintain position descriptions for all staff members and provide regular performance planning and appraisals.**

**OP must have a system for regular staff evaluation and must provide access to continuing education and professional development opportunities, including in-service training programs and participation in professional conferences and workshops.**

<b>ND</b> Not Done	<b>1</b> Not Met	<b>2</b> Minimally Met	<b>3</b> Well Met	<b>4</b> Fully Met	<b>NR</b> Not Rated
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<b>PART 5. HUMAN RESOURCES</b> <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>		<b>Rating Scale</b>
5.1	The program is staffed adequately with personnel qualified to accomplish its mission.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
5.2	Procedures are in place for staff selection, training, evaluation; supervision, and professional development opportunities.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
5.3	The program strives to improve the professional competence and skills of all staff members.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
5.4	Professional staff members hold either a relevant graduate degree or possess an appropriate combination of formal education and related work experience.	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
5.5	Professional staff members providing services hold earned graduate degrees or appropriate license in a field relevant to the position description or possess appropriate combination of educational credentials and related work experience.	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
5.6	Degree or credential-seeking interns are qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and by relevant experience and are trained and supervised by professional staff members with appropriate credentials and work experience.	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
5.7	Student employees and volunteers are carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated and have access to a qualified supervisor for guidance when exposed to situation beyond their training.	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
5.8	Student employees and volunteers are provided precise job descriptions, pre-service training, and continuing staff development.	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
5.9	Technologically trained and proficient staff members who are knowledgeable of ethical and legal uses of technology are in place to carry out essential program functions.	ND 1 <b>2 3</b> 4 NR
5.10	Staffing and workload levels are adequate and appropriate to meet the demands placed on the program by students and other constituents.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
5.11	Staff member compensation is commensurate with those in comparable positions in comparable institutions and situations in the relevant geographical region.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
5.12	Hiring and promotion practices are fair, inclusive, and non-discriminatory.	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
5.13	A diverse program staff is in place that provides readily identifiable role models for students.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
5.14	Position descriptions for all staff members are in place and used for performance appraisal and planning purposes.	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
5.15	The program has a system for regular staff evaluation.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
5.16	The program provides staff members with continuing education and professional development opportunities including in-service programs and professional conferences and workshops.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

### Part 5: Human Resources Overview Questions

#### A. What is the strategic plan for staffing the program?

A very small number of professional staff members actually staff orientation programs at Utah State, particularly relative to peer institutions and those in the state, but large-scale programs and services are still carried out thanks to the competence of current professional staff and reliance on extensive student

staff support. Though in the long term, the addition of more professional staff members to work on orientation programs would assuredly benefit these programs and the university, at present these programs are currently managed effectively and staffed appropriately with student employees to meet current needs. As for the strategic plan for student staffing, a staff of students is hired annually in the fall to work as orientation facilitators and peer mentors. Student staff members often work in this capacity for several years, and the most outstanding student employees are called upon to serve as coordinators for orientation and peer mentoring. Additionally, outstanding student employees seeking careers in student services and university administration have often been met with opportunities to continue their work in this department and across the university in professional capacities.

**B. In what ways are staff members' qualifications insured and their performance judged?**

Qualifications are ensured at hiring, when professional staff members are evaluated on the basis of their education and experience. These qualifications are further ensured by ongoing professional development, participation in national organizations, and review of current practices and literature. Performance is judged through regular annual performance appraisals, in accordance with personal goals, administrative recommendations, institutional requirements, and other stipulations. Performance is judged on a case by case basis based upon job descriptions, professional skills, and other factors.

**C. In what ways does the program train, supervise, and evaluate staff members?**

Training for staff members, particularly student staff, is ongoing. Supervision is clearly coordinated, though each responsible staff member is empowered to carry out their responsibilities without unnecessary scrutiny or oversight. Evaluation takes place on the basis of performance in accordance with job descriptions and expectations, and is carried out on a regular basis.

**Part 6: FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

**Orientation Programs (OP) must have adequate funding to accomplish its mission and goals. Funding priorities must be determined within the context of the stated mission, goals, objectives, and comprehensive analysis of the needs and capabilities of students and the availability of internal or external resources.**

**OP must demonstrate fiscal responsibility and cost effectiveness consistent with institutional protocols.**

OP should be funded through institutional resources. In addition to institutional funding, other sources may be considered, including state appropriations, student fees, user fees, donations, contributions, concession and store sales, rentals, and dues.

Overnight programs may require students and their families to stay on campus. Recovering room and board costs directly from participants is an acceptable practice.

Resources, such as grants or loans, should be available to those students unable to afford the cost associated with orientation.

<b>ND</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>NR</b>
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

<b>PART 6. FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b> <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>	<b>Rating Scale</b>
6.1 The program has adequate funding to accomplish its mission and goals.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
6.2 Funding priorities are determined within the context of program mission, student needs, and available fiscal resources.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
6.3 The program demonstrates fiscal responsibility and cost effectiveness consistent with institutional protocols.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

## Part 6: Financial Resources Overview Questions

### A. What is the funding strategy for the program?

Orientation programs at Utah State receive their funding from a number of different sources. SOAR is funded by revenue from fees collected of students and parents who participate in the program, as well as by an annually allocated budget that primarily serves to pay wages for student employees. Connections also receives student-fee based revenue funding, as well as central funding from the Provost's Office to pay for program elements and faculty salaries, and additional funding from Student Services. Though occasionally tenuous, these funding strategies have certainly allowed for these orientation programs to continue to grow and improve their services to students.

### B. What evidence exists to confirm fiscal responsibility and cost-effectiveness?

Simply put, fiscal responsibility is an imperative, not an option for orientation programs at Utah State. An annual review of student fee revenues compared with costs is conducted, primarily to determine if costs can still be met by the nominal fee charged of students to participate. Additional funding, still limited, is entirely utilized by student staff and other specific needs. There is simply no room for excess expenses, and all programs and purchases are consistently reviewed to ensure they are the most cost effective in light of financial constraints. As for products and services purchased in conjunction with orientation programs, all are subject to bid processes as outlined by the University Purchasing department.

## Part 7: FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, and EQUIPMENT

**Orientation Programs (OP) must have adequate, suitably located facilities, adequate technology, and equipment to support its mission and goals efficiently and effectively. Facilities, technology, and equipment must be evaluated regularly and be in compliance with relevant federal, state, provincial, and local requirements to provide for access, health, safety, and security.**

Cooperation from the campus community is necessary to provide appropriate facilities to implement orientation programs. Whenever possible, a single office location to house personnel and provide adequate workspace should be conveniently located and suitable for its high level of interaction with the public.

<b>ND</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>NR</b>
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

<b>PART 7. FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, and EQUIPMENT</b> ( <i>Criterion Measures</i> )	<b>Rating Scale</b>
7.1 The program has adequate, suitably located facilities, technology, and equipment to support its mission.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
7.2 Program facilities, technology, and equipment are evaluated regularly.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
7.3 Facilities, technology, and equipment are in compliance with relevant legal and institutional requirements that ensure access, health, safety, and security of students and other users.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

## Part 7: Facilities, Technology, and Equipment Overview Questions

### A. How are facilities, technology, and equipment inventoried and maintained?

With the advent of the new Retention and First-Year Experience office, orientation programs are now housed in close proximity. Though space remains at something of a premium, particularly for student workers, the facilities where orientation programs are housed are certainly pleasant and sufficient. Facilities available for orientation programming in the student center and across campus are readily available. Connections utilizes a sizable number of classrooms across campus, and occasional scheduling difficulties aside, these classrooms are suitable for their purposes. Technology, equipment, and software are up to date, and the only primary difficulty in the area of technology involves the current

inability to link SOAR and Connections databases with the University's Banner system. Discussions are underway as of this assessment, and it is hopeful that this link will be made possible in coming years. All other physical equipment is obtained in conjunction with regular assessments of both departmental and student needs. Technology and equipment are inventoried centrally, and are maintained by office staff, and, when needed, with assistance from Student Services technical professionals or other campus computing and technology professionals.

B. What evidence exists to confirm facilities, technology, and equipment access, health, safety, and security for all who are served by the program?

Waivers must be signed by all participants in programs which require physical activity, exertion, or significant travel away from, or even using certain University facilities. Safety of programmed events is a paramount concern, and Campus Police are always informed regarding large-scale events conducted in conjunction with orientation programs. In addition, access to all facilities, technology, and equipment are not only ensured at orientation, but students are notified of their rights to such access while at orientation, and taught how to access these resources as a part of their orientation process.

## Part 8: LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

**Orientation Programs (OP) staff members must be knowledgeable about and responsive to laws and regulations that relate to their respective responsibilities. Staff members must inform users of programs, services, and officials, as appropriate, of legal obligations and limitations including constitutional, statutory, regulatory, and case law; mandatory laws and orders emanating from federal, state/provincial and local governments; and the institution's policies.**

**OP staff members must use reasonable and informed practices to limit the liability exposure of the institution, its officers, employees, and agents. Staff members must be informed about institutional policies regarding personal liability and related insurance coverage options.**

**The institution must provide access to legal advice for OP staff members as needed to carry out assigned responsibilities.**

**The institution must inform OP staff and students in a timely and systematic fashion about extraordinary or changing legal obligations and potential liabilities.**

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

<b>PART 8. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES</b> ( <i>Criterion Measures</i> )	<b>Rating Scale</b>
8.1 Staff members are knowledgeable about and response to laws and regulations relevant to their respective responsibilities.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
8.2 Staff members inform users and officials of legal obligations and limitations associated with implementing the program.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
8.3 Staff members use informed practice to limit the liability exposure of the institution and its personnel.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
8.4 Staff members are informed about institutional policies regarding personal liability and related insurance coverage options.	ND 1 <b>2</b> 3 4 NR
8.5 Legal advice is available to staff members as needed to carry out assigned responsibilities.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
8.6 Both staff members and students are informed in systematic fashion about extraordinary or changing legal obligations and potential liabilities.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

## Part 8: Legal Responsibilities Overview Questions

A. What are the crucial legal issues faced by the program?

The primary legal issue faced by orientation programs at Utah State on a daily basis involves FERPA and student privacy. Because these programs collect, handle, and possess a large amount of personal information regarding students, it is imperative that they remain educated on the legalities surrounding student privacy, the issues surrounding appropriate possession and release of this information, and best practices in maintaining this information. Additional ongoing legal issues primarily surround student and staff safety and release of liability at events and in conjunction with orientation programs that require physical activity or exertion. Other legal issues exist, though not at levels that exceed other units within Student Services or the University at large.

B. How are staff members instructed, advised, or assisted with legal concerns?

Staff members are required to attend seminars covering topics on various general and specific legal issues. When specific unit-related legal concerns arise, consultations are initiated either with experts for specific areas (i.e. FERPA matters are first discussed with appropriate professionals from the Registrar's Office) or with University Counsel.

## Part 9: EQUITY and ACCESS

**Orientation Programs (OP) staff members must ensure that services and programs are provided on a fair and equitable basis. Facilities, programs and services must be accessible. Hours of operation and delivery of and access to programs and services must be responsive to the needs of all students and other constituents. OP must adhere to the spirit and intent of equal opportunity laws.**

**OP must be open and readily accessible to all students and must not discriminate except where sanctioned by law and institutional policy. Discrimination must be avoided on the basis of age; color; creed; cultural heritage; disability; ethnicity; gender identity; nationality; political affiliation; religious affiliation; sex; sexual orientation; or social, economic, marital, or veteran status.**

**Consistent with their mission and goals, OP must take affirmative action to remedy significant imbalances in student participation and staffing patterns.**

**As the demographic profiles of campuses change and new instructional delivery methods are introduced, institutions must recognize the needs of students who participate in distance learning for access to programs and services offered on campus. Institutions must provide appropriate services in ways that are accessible to distance learners and assist them in identifying and gaining access to other appropriate services in their geographic region.**

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

<b>PART 9. EQUITY AND ACCESS</b> <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>	<b>Rating Scale</b>
9.1 All programs and services are provided on a fair and equitable basis.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
9.2 All program facilities and services are accessible to prospective user.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
9.3 Program operations and delivery are responsive to the needs of all students and other users.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
9.4 All services adhere to the spirit and intent of equal opportunity laws.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

9.5	Program policies and practices do not discriminate against any potential users.	ND	1	2	<b>3</b>	4	NR
9.6	The program acts to remedy imbalances in student participation and staffing.	ND	1	2	<b>3</b>	4	NR
9.7	Services are conveniently available and accessible to distance learner students or arrangements have been made for students to have access to related services in their geographical area.	ND	1	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	4	NR
9.8	Outreach to underrepresented populations for membership is conducted.	ND	1	2	<b>3</b>	4	NR

### Part 9: Equity and Access Overview Questions

A. How does the program insure non-discriminatory, fair, and equitable treatment to all constituents?

All programs are not only open and available to all students, but all students are equally encouraged to participate. Students who must travel to SOAR are accommodated, and students who live a prohibitive distance are allowed to complete SOAR online rather than have to travel an unreasonable distance. Students who are unable to attend SOAR for other reasons are also provided with the option of completing SOAR online. In short, all students have access to the same options for orientation, and are all treated fairly in accordance with their specific needs and constraints.

B. What policies and/or practices are in place to address imbalances in participation among selected categories of students and imbalances in staffing patterns among selected categories of staff members?

Students are required, in some way, to complete SOAR, so participation among selected categories of students is not an issue. At Connections, all students are encouraged to participate, and though there is no specific targeted recruiting plan for Connections, any imbalances in representation among selected categories of students are met with active recruitment. It should be noted that the demographics of both SOAR and Connections participation typically closely mirror the demographics of the University as a whole. In terms of staffing patterns, student staff members are selected with uniqueness of background in mind in conjunction with their application process. It is recognized as an imperative that the student staff reflect the diversity of the University, and it is important that incoming students, no matter what their background, feel that there is someone on the orientation staff with whom they share a similar background. For this reason, when the student facilitators for orientation and peer mentors are selected, they are selected with, among many other factors, their own background in mind.

### Part 10: CAMPUS and EXTERNAL RELATIONS

**Orientation Programs (OP) must establish, maintain, and promote effective relations with relevant individuals, campus offices, and external agencies.**

OP should be an institution-wide process that systematically involves student affairs, academic affairs, and other administrative units, such as public safety, physical plant, and the business office.

OP should establish policies and practices that address how the institution should interact with parents and families.

<b>ND</b> Not Done	<b>1</b> Not Met	<b>2</b> Minimally Met	<b>3</b> Well Met	<b>4</b> Fully Met	<b>NR</b> Not Rated
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<b>PART 10. CAMPUS and EXTERNAL RELATIONS</b> <i>(Criterion Measures)</i>	<b>Rating Scale</b>
10.1 The program has established, maintained, and promoted effective relations with relevant campus and external individuals and agencies.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

### Part 10: Campus and External Relations Overview Questions

A. With which relevant individuals, groups, campus offices, and external agencies must the program maintain effectively relations?

Due to the extraordinarily broad reach of these programs across campus, and the impact these programs have on incoming students, both SOAR and Connections must maintain relations with a vast number of offices, groups, and agencies to remain successful. Partners include: University Advising, Registrar's Office, Health and Wellness, Multicultural Student Services, Women's Center, Re-entry Student Services, ASUSU, Student Involvement and Leadership, Card Office, Financial Aid, Admissions, Housing and Residence Life, Bookstore, Computer Labs, Library, Information Technology, University Inn, Alumni, Analysis, Assessment and Accreditation, VP for Student Services, Provost's Office, Judicial Affairs, TSC, Scheduling, Student Support Services, Dining Services, Distribution, Publication, Design and Production, Parking, University Police, Outreach, Conference Services, all colleges and academic departments, faculty from across campus, and many others. External agencies include all community religious denominations, the Logan Downtown Alliance, Cache Valley Tourism and Chamber of Commerce, community libraries, and multiple other community organizations.

## Part 11: DIVERSITY

**Within the context of each institution's unique mission, diversity enriches the community and enhances the collegiate experience for all; therefore, Orientation Programs (OP) must nurture environments where commonalities and differences among people are recognized and honored.**

**OP must promote educational experiences that are characterized by open and continuous communication that deepens understanding of one's own identity, culture, and heritage, and that of others. OP must educate and promote respect about commonalities and differences in their historical and cultural contexts.**

**OP must address the characteristics and needs of a diverse population when establishing and implementing policies and procedures.**

<b>ND</b> Not Done	<b>1</b> Not Met	<b>2</b> Minimally Met	<b>3</b> Well Met	<b>4</b> Fully Met	<b>NR</b> Not Rated
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<b>PART 11. DIVERSITY</b> ( <i>Criterion Measures</i> )	<b>Rating Scale</b>
11.1 The program nurtures environments wherein commonalities and differences among people are recognized and honored.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
11.2 The program promotes experiences characterized by open communication that deepens understanding of identity, culture, and heritage.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
11.3 The program promotes respect for commonalities and differences in historical and cultural contexts.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
11.4 The program addresses characteristics and needs of diverse populations when establishing and implementing policies and procedures.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

### Part 11: Diversity Overview Questions

A. In what ways does the program contribute to the nurturing of diversity?

Orientation programs at Utah State contribute to the nurturing of diversity in a number of specific ways. For example, a partnership between Multicultural Student Services and SOAR has led to a more active welcome for multicultural students from the MSS office when they first attend SOAR. When students attend Connections, their involvement in small classes of students allows significant intentional opportunities to interact with other incoming students from other backgrounds within their peer groups, ostensibly initiating the nurturing of diversity that will become characteristic of their college experience at Utah State.

B. How does the program serve the needs of diverse populations?

By providing programs for all populations of incoming students, utilizing orientation facilitators and peer

mentors from many different backgrounds, orientation programs at Utah State cultivate an environment wherein diverse populations are served. Additionally, ongoing partnerships with offices and units that serve multicultural students, international students, returning adult students, and many other specific populations allows orientation programs to meet specific needs of diverse populations within the context of their transition and integration into the USU community.

## Part 12: ETHICS

**All persons involved in the delivery of Orientation Programs (OP) must adhere to the highest principles of ethical behavior. OP must develop or adopt and implement appropriate statements of ethical practice. OP must publish these statements and ensure their periodic review by relevant constituencies.**

**OP staff members must ensure that privacy and confidentiality are maintained with respect to all communications and records to the extent that such records are protected under the law and appropriate statements of ethical practice. Information contained in students' education records must not be disclosed without written consent except as allowed by relevant laws and institutional policies. Staff members must disclose to appropriate authorities information judged to be of an emergency nature, especially when the safety of the individual or others is involved, or when otherwise required by institutional policy or relevant law.**

**All OP staff members must be aware of and comply with the provisions contained in the institution's human subjects research policy and in other relevant institutional policies addressing ethical practices and confidentiality of research data concerning individuals.**

**OP staff members must recognize and avoid personal conflict of interest or appearance thereof in their transactions with students and others.**

**OP staff members must strive to insure the fair, objective, and impartial treatment of all persons with whom they deal. Staff members must not participate in nor condone any form of harassment that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive campus environment.**

**When handling institutional funds, all OP staff members must ensure that such funds are managed in accordance with established and responsible accounting procedures and the fiscal policies or processes of the institution.**

**OP staff members must perform their duties within the limits of their training, expertise, and competence. When these limits are exceeded, individuals in need of further assistance must be referred to persons possessing appropriate qualifications.**

**OP staff members must use suitable means to confront and otherwise hold accountable other staff members who exhibit unethical behavior.**

**OP staff members must be knowledgeable about and practice ethical behavior in the use of technology.**

ND	1	2	3	4	NR
Not Done	Not Met	Minimally Met	Well Met	Fully Met	Not Rated

<b>PART 12. ETHICS</b> ( <i>Criterion Measures</i> )	<b>Rating Scale</b>
12.1 Staff members and student leaders adhere to the principles of ethical behavior	

	adopted, published, and disseminated by the program to guide ethical practice.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
12.2	The program has a written statement of ethical practice that is reviewed periodically.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
12.3	Privacy and confidentiality are maintained with respect to all communications and records to the extent protected under the law and program statements of ethical practice.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
12.4	Information contained in students' education records is never disclosed without written consent except as allowed by law and institutional policy.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
12.5	Information judged to be of an emergency nature when an individual's safety or that of others is involved is disclosed to appropriate authorities.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
12.6	Staff members comply with the institution's human subjects research and other policies addressing confidentiality of research data concerning individuals.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
12.7	Staff members avoid personal conflicts of interest or appearance thereof in transactions with students and others.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
12.8	Staff members strive to ensure the fair, objective, and impartial treatment of all persons with whom they deal and do not condone or participate in behavior that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive campus environment.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
12.9	Staff members ensure that funds are managed in accordance with established institutional fiscal accounting procedures, policies, and processes.	ND 1 2 3 <b>4</b> NR
12.10	Staff members perform assigned duties within the limits of training, expertise, and competence and when these limits are exceeded referrals are made to persons possessing appropriate qualifications.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
12.11	Staff members confront and otherwise hold accountable others who exhibit unethical behavior.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
12.12	Staff members practice ethical behavior in the use of technology.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

## Part 12: Ethics Overview Questions

### A. What ethical principles, standards, statements, or codes guide the program and its staff members?

Student information and privacy are paramount, particularly given the sheer number of students who participate in orientation programs at Utah State. These programs are guided by the notion that nothing should encumber the student's right to the pursuit of their own educational experience, and this includes the actions of professional and student staff who facilitate Utah State's orientation programs. Student staff members bear particular responsibility to maintain appropriate relationships due to the proximity of their interaction with new and incoming students, and these student staff members are counseled extensively on appropriateness of relationships with students, and agree to a signed statement of ethics upon their acceptance of the position, which has been appended to this section.

### B. What is the program's strategy for managing student and staff member confidentiality issues?

Again, due to the significant number of students who participate in orientation programs at Utah State, and thus, the amount of private information being handled, confidentiality and privacy remain a paramount concern for this office. Vigilance is the primary strategy for maintaining this confidentiality, and exceptions and anomalies are handled on a case by case basis, in accordance with both propriety and explicit regulations.

### C. How are ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest managed?

Any ethical dilemmas or conflicts of interest are managed on a case by case basis, with opportunities for both discussion and recourse available. These situations are handled in accordance with policy and

procedure, insofar as instructive policies are available or apparent, and are treated with equity and careful judgment.

D. In what ways are staff members informed and supervised regarding ethical conduct?

Professional staff members receive regular training in the form of division and university-wide seminars and other professional development activities. Specific inquiries are directed to Human Resources or other appropriate authorities. Student staff members receive in-depth training, replete with a code of ethics and a guide to conduct within their training course and manual.

**Addendum: Section of Retention and First-Year Experience Policy Manual  
Related to Confidentiality of Student Records**

**EMPLOYEE CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

As an employee of the Retention/First-Year Experience Office, you may have access to confidential information such as grades, student records, test results, student progress in class, and similar data. You must also have verbal or written communication with staff, instructors, or advisors which must be kept confidential. To accept employment in the Retention/FYE office is to accept the responsibility of preserving the confidentiality of the information. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in termination of employment.

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Addendum: A-Team (SOAR Facilitator/Peer Mentor) Code of Ethics

### CODE OF ETHICS

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#### A-Team Code of Ethics

1. By accepting this position, you have made a commitment to the University. If you do not complete the training, retreat, the summer program, or Connections, you may be responsible for reimbursing any current expense incurred or future investments made by the University for your service in this position.
2. Each A-Team member will be given quizzes and a final exam on material covered in training. A passing score of 80 percent or higher must be received on each quiz and the final exam, or that quiz or exam must be retaken. There is a retake limit of two quizzes.
3. Each A-Team member is responsible to all members of Retention and First-Year Experience and to New Student Orientation professional, student, and clerical staff, and is accountable to all professional and clerical staff of the University.
4. An A-Team member is a representative of USU and the administration. You must not encourage participation in questionable activities (e.g. drinking, visitation, etc.) during orientation sessions, Connections, or training sessions. In order to provide quality performance while on duty, the Orientation staff members must not drink alcoholic beverages or use any controlled substances during the 24 hours prior to or during Orientation sessions.
5. A-Team members must not promote the use of alcoholic beverages directly or indirectly. When chaperoning/facilitating orientation activities, any discovery of alcoholic beverages should be reported to campus police.
6. The A-Team member must remain in his or her area of responsibility. Please do not leave for any reason (e.g. library, class, parties, study, etc.).
7. Absence from training sessions or class is excused only for illness or death in the family. A-Team members who miss class will be required to work in the office (unpaid) for the amount of time missed.
8. A-Team members should be careful about their reactions to what a new student or parent says. Example: Do not use extreme words or phrases to describe faculty members, staff, or any University policy.
9. Promote all organizations with words such as: your interests, your choice, everyone is different. Remember, **DO NOT WEAR OR DISPLAY ORGANIZATIONAL PARAPHERNALIA**, as this unfairly promotes specific organizations.
10. The student should see his or her advisor, dean, or counselor for academic advising. A-Team members should make the appropriate referrals. Do not recommend instructors; let the new students make educated decisions. You may give your opinion based on your experience. Only describe a professor's lecture and test style.
11. Respect the confidentiality of student records and other records in this position. Inappropriate and unauthorized disclosure of student records data is grounds for immediate dismissal.
12. Do not make inappropriate social and/or sexual advances toward new students. Do not sexually harass new students, staff, or faculty members.
13. Offensive language, jokes, behavior, or activity will not be tolerated at any A-Team function. Such activity has potentially degrading and divisive effects, and is not acceptable in the context of the relationships among A-Team members, or between A-Team members and students, faculty, and staff.
14. A-Team members found guilty of infractions will, on the first infraction, have a consultation with the Program Administrator. On the second infraction, the A-Team member is subject to dismissal.
15. A-Team members must follow through on their assigned responsibilities, be punctual, and be present at all required orientation sessions.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I understand and will abide by the above ethical code of conduct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Part 13: ASSESSMENT and EVALUATION

**Orientation Programs (OP) must conduct regular assessment and evaluations. OP must employ effective qualitative and quantitative methodologies as appropriate, to determine whether and to what degree the stated mission, goals, and student learning and development outcomes are being met. The process must employ sufficient and sound assessment measures to ensure comprehensiveness. Data collected must include responses from students, parents, and families and other affected constituencies.**

**OP must evaluate periodically how well they complement and enhance the institution's stated mission and educational effectiveness.**

**Results of these evaluations must be disseminated campus wide and be used in revising and improving programs and services and in recognizing staff performance.**

Evaluation of student and institutional needs, goals, objectives, and the effectiveness of orientation programs should occur on a regular basis. A representative cross-section of appropriate people from the campus community should be involved in reviews of orientation programs.

<b>ND</b> Not Done	<b>1</b> Not Met	<b>2</b> Minimally Met	<b>3</b> Well Met	<b>4</b> Fully Met	<b>NR</b> Not Rated
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<b>PART 13. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION</b> ( <i>Criterion Measures</i> )	<b>Rating Scale</b>
13.1 The program conducts regular assessment and evaluations and employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to determine how effectively its stated mission and student learning and development outcomes are being met.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
13.2 The assessment process employs measures that ensure comprehensiveness and data collected include responses from students and other affected constituencies.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
13.3 The program evaluates periodically how well it complements and enhances the institution's stated mission and educational effectiveness.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR
13.4 Results of these evaluations are used to revise and improve the program and to recognize staff member performance.	ND 1 2 <b>3</b> 4 NR

### Part 13: Assessment and Evaluation Overview Questions

A. What is the grand assessment strategy for the program?

Assessment for orientation programs are conducted in myriad ways. All students and parents who attend Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration complete anonymous surveys following their attendance to assess the various components of the program. Students who participate in Connections are required to complete an extensive course evaluation that measures their perceptions of the course and their reactions to the various components of the course. Along with other, smaller ongoing assessments, these measures contribute to a larger assessment strategy for the program that is essentially geared toward the improvement of the experience and services provided to incoming students through these programs.

B. How are tangible, measurable outcomes determined to ensure program mission and goal achievement?

Tangible, measurable outcomes include student participation levels, faculty participation in Connections teaching, quantitative student perception in Likert scale questions in longitudinal course/program evaluation analysis, first-semester and first-year student grades, and ultimately, institutional retention rates. Assessment summaries have been appended to this section.

C. How are student learning and development outcomes determined to ensure their level of achievement?

Student learning and development outcomes are determined primarily by program participation, and the relationship between program participation and grades, student persistence, student participation levels in other University offerings, and student perceptions/attitudes. Summaries of assessment and program results have been appended to this section.

## Addendum: SOAR Evaluations 2006 Summary

SOAR (Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration) is Utah State University's mandatory transition and enrollment program for incoming students. At SOAR, students participate in a number of activities directed toward facilitating their academic, geographic, and social transition to Utah State University, culminating in academic advisement and course registration. Though several different types of SOAR sessions are available to students, certain elements are included in each SOAR session. This document provides a summary of student assessment for those common elements, and includes aggregate data taken from all SOAR sessions.

When students arrive at SOAR, they attend optional workshops and meet with a small group to learn about academic policies and procedures. Later, they learn about university requirements, meet with an academic advisor, and register for classes. Students turn in SOAR Evaluations, which are found in their SOAR packets, at the end of the day in exchange for Aggie ice cream. Below is a summary of the overall number of students who attended each workshop, the average amount of credits for which students registered, and an overall assessment of students' knowledge of university policies and procedures. 930 SOAR Evaluations were returned by students attending SOAR in the summer of 2006, 875 of which were complete and available for analysis.

### Workshops

Seven optional workshops were offered to new students each SOAR day in the morning prior to the official welcome to Utah State University. These workshops were offered during three time blocks. Of the students who indicated on their final SOAR evaluation that they had attended one or more workshop, 90.5% found the workshop(s) they attended helpful.

Workshops - number of students that attended (Out of 472)

14.4%	Housing	68
48.5%	Connections	229
17.4%	Study Abroad	82
14.8%	Deciding on Major	70
4.6%	Greek Life	22
21.8%	Financial Aid	103
55.1%	Aggie Life	260

### Registration Outcome

On the final SOAR evaluation in response to the question, "I am currently registered for \_\_\_\_ credits," the average was 14.59 credits.

### Policies and Procedures

On the final SOAR evaluation, students were asked to respond "yes" or "no" to questions regarding their knowledge of university policies and procedures.

- 98.4 % Know how to modify class schedule.
- 89.7% Know how to contact academic advisor.
- 98.3% Received student ID card.
- 79.9% Know how much tuition and fees are going to be.
- 98.7% Know when the tuition and fee deadline is.
- 96.6% Understand how to pay tuition and fees.
- 95.1% Know where and how to purchase textbooks.
- 86.2% Know where to park and how to get parking pass.
- 93.9% Have housing arrangements made, on or off campus.
- 97.1% Know how to check USU email account.
- 96.7% Had questions about USU satisfactorily answered.

	Yes	No	N/A	875/Yes
1.	861	8	5	98.4
2.	785	83	6	89.7

3.	860	10	4	98.3
4.	699	165	10	79.9
5.	864	8	2	98.7
6.	845	24	5	96.6
7.	832	38	4	95.1
8.	754	115	5	86.2
9.	822	51	1	93.9
10.	850	21	4	97.1
11.	846	20	8	96.7

### **Student Comments**

In addition to quantitative data, we collect and record student comments about the orientation experience and implement them to the best of our ability.

## **Addendum: Connections 2006 Evaluation Synopsis**

### **Connections Features**

Connections students register for two graded credits, and are evaluated on the basis of their completion of a common literature assignment, academic skills assignments, CIL test completion, and other specific resource-focused quizzes and assignments. All Connections students participate in intensive coursework, workshops, and activities during the week prior to the official start of Fall Semester, and then meet weekly with their classes for three weeks into Fall Semester. Through a special arrangement with Housing and Food Services, students participating in Connections are allowed to move into their residence hall a week early, providing first-year students with a valuable transition period.

### **Participation**

Number of Students Attending Fall 2006 Connections: 1,454

Number of Students Attending Fall 2005 Connections: 1,388

### **Organization**

Connections utilizes instructors from varied academic, administrative, and student services departments. Centrally-coordinated, large-group workshops for students are presented to all Connections students by personnel representing campus libraries, computer and information literacy, sexual assault and anti-violence information, and faculty panels. A common curriculum for all sections provides for consistency of information and evaluation while allowing for instructor personalization.

### **Results**

#### **Student Retention**

Among students from official Fall 2005 cohort:

Adjusted retention rate for students who completed Connections: 74.90%

Adjusted retention rate for students who did not complete Connections: 66.13%

#### **Central early-alert mechanism utilization**

Among students from official Fall 2005 cohort:

Adjusted retention rate for students who received a B or higher in Connections: 78.33%

Adjusted retention rate for students who received a B- or lower in Connections: 47.5%

(Students at B- or lower (n=120) targeted for coordinated interventions in October)

#### **Student Assessment**

83% of Connections 2006 students agreed or strongly agreed that they received useful information in this course

72% of Connections 2006 students reported that it was "very important" to get settled before school starts

80% of Connections 2006 students agreed or strongly agreed that Connections helped ease their transition to USU

86% of Connections 2006 students agreed or strongly agreed that because of the course, they were more informed about campus events

Note: A full summary of the 2006 Connections Evaluation was compiled by the Office of Analysis, Assessment, and Accreditation, and is available upon request.

# CAS

## Orientation Programs

### Work Form A Assessment, Ratings, and Significant Items

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

This work form should be completed following individual ratings of the participants. For each of the 13 Parts, identify (**circle**) the criterion measure item number(s) in the column labeled for which there is a substantial rating discrepancy (two or more ratings apart). Items not circled should reflect consensus among judges that practice in that area is satisfactory. Items where judgment variance occurs need to be discussed thoroughly by team members. Follow this action by determining which practices (criterion measures) can be designated as “excellent” or “unsatisfactory” and record them in the *Step One* column. In *Step Two*, list the items requiring follow-up action including any criterion measure rated as being unsatisfactory by any reviewer.

						<b>Step One</b>	
Part	Items					Excellent	Unsatisfactory
<b>1. Mission</b>	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5		
<b>2. Program</b>	2.1 2.4.3 2.4.8 2.4.13 2.6 2.7e 2.11b	2.2 2.4.4 2.4.9 2.4.14 2.7a 2.8 2.11c	2.3 2.4.5 2.4.10 2.4.15 2.7b 2.9 2.11d	2.4.1 2.4.6 2.4.11 2.4.16 2.7c 2.10	2.4.2 2.4.7 2.4.12 2.5 2.7d 2.11a	2.7, 2.9, 2.13, 2.15, 2.19	2.4.3, 2.4.7, 2.4.15
<b>3. Leadership</b>	3.1 3.6 3.7e	3.2 3.7a 3.8	3.3 3.7b 3.9	3.4 3.7c 3.10	3.5 3.7d 3.11	3.7b, 3.7c, 3.11	
<b>4. Organization &amp; Management</b>	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5		
<b>5. Human Resources</b>	5.1 5.6 5.11 5.16	5.2 5.7 5.12	5.3 5.8 5.13	5.4 5.9 5.14	5.5 5.10 5.15	5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.12, 5.14	5.9
<b>6. Financial Resources</b>	6.1	6.2	6.3				
<b>7. Facilities, Technology, &amp; Equipment</b>	7.1	7.2	7.3				
<b>8. Legal Responsibilities</b>	8.1 8.6	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.5		8.4

<b>9. Equity and Access</b>	9.1 9.6	9.2 9.7	9.3 9.8	9.4	9.5		9.7
<b>10. Campus and External Relations</b>	10.1						
<b>11. Diversity</b>	11.1	11.2	11.3	11.4			
<b>12. Ethics</b>	12.1 12.6 12.11	12.2 12.7 12.12	12.3 12.8	12.4 12.9	12.5 12.10	12.9	
<b>13. Assessment &amp; Evaluation</b>	13.1	13.2	13.3	13.4			

**Step Two: List item number(s) for each Part determined to merit follow-up and describe the practice weaknesses that require attention**

1. 2.4.3 Enhanced Self Esteem: Incorporate more fully and intentionally into transition and integration elements of orientation programs
2. 2.4.7 Leadership Development: Create more formal and informal opportunities for student leadership development in orientation programming
3. 2.4.15 Spiritual Awareness: Review possibilities for incorporating this element more fully into orientation programming
4. 5.9 Technologically trained and proficient staff members who are knowledgeable of ethical and legal uses of technology are in place to carry out essential program functions: On one hand, there are many adept users of specific technologies involved with these programs, however, significant gaps do remain among professional staff members in terms of technology users who can carry out essential program functions. Student staff members are relied upon heavily in this area.
5. 8.4: Staff members are informed about institutional policies regarding personal liability and related insurance coverage options: Information is unclear or incomplete.
6. 9.7: Services are conveniently available and accessible to distance learner students or arrangements have been made for students to have access to related services in their geographical area: While services have been made available for all main campus students who need access to services in their geographical area prior to coming to campus, orientation programs, services, and resources from the main campus have only minimally been disseminated and made available for use for distance learner students and students at regional campuses.
- 7.
- 8.

9.
10.
11.
12.
13.

# CAS

## Orientation Programs

### Work Form B Follow-Up Actions

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

The purpose of this work form is to begin the planning for action to be taken on practices judged to merit follow-up (See Step 1, Work Form A). In *Step Three*, transfer short descriptions of the practices requiring follow-up and detail these items using the table format provided.

**Step Three: Describe the current practice that requires change and actions to initiate the change**

Practice Description	Corrective Action Sought	Task Assigned To	Timeline Due Dates
Focus on self-esteem into orientation programming	Increase intentional opportunities for self-esteem enhancement within orientation programs	SOAR, Connections	Ongoing, In place for 2008 programs
Leadership development opportunities in orientation programming	Enhance, augment focus on leadership development opportunities in orientation programming	SOAR, Connections	Ongoing, In place for 2008 programs
Spiritual awareness opportunities in orientation programming	Review needs, possibilities, expand focus of orientation programs to further incorporate this area	SOAR, Connections	Ongoing, In place for 2008 programs
Technological capabilities among professional staff members	Enhance current staff capabilities, and elevate the importance of these abilities in future hires	RFYE Director, Assistant Director, SOAR Program Administrator	Ongoing
Institutional policies for personal liability for legal concerns	Review and consult institutional policies and proliferate awareness	All professional staff	Fall 2007
Services available for distance learners and students at regional campuses	Collaborate with regional campus colleagues to determine appropriate sharing of resources	RFYE Director, Assistant Director, SOAR Program Administrator	Ongoing, In place for 2008 programs


# CAS

## Orientation Programs

### Work Form C Summary Action Plan

#### **Step Four:**

This form concludes the self-assessment process and calls for action to be taken as a consequence of study results. Write a brief action plan statement in the spaces below for each Part in which action is required.

#### **Part 1: Mission**

--

#### **Part 2: Program**

Review and potentially expand intentional aspects of orientation programs to incorporate leadership, self esteem, and spiritual awareness.
--

#### **Part 3: Leadership**

--

#### **Part 4: Organization and Management**

--

#### **Part 5: Human Resources**

Expand technological capabilities among professional staff members to better incorporate needed and essential functions.
--

#### **Part 6: Financial Resources**

--

#### **Part 7: Facilities, Technology, and Equipment**

--

#### **Part 8. Legal Responsibilities**

Enhance awareness of institutional legal responsibilities and individual liabilities.
---

#### **Part 9: Equity and Access**

Foster greater collaboration with regional campuses to proliferate resources and provide more consistent access to information and services.
--

#### **Part 10: Campus and External Relationships**

--

#### **Part 11: Diversity**

--

#### **Part 12: Ethics**

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#### **Part 13: Assessment and Evaluation**

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