

ISBE Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading (CRTL) Standards

Alignment Reflection, Review, and Feedback Tool

Overview

Alignment of the [ISBE Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading \(CRTL\) Standards](#) within educator preparation is intended to support the realization of the transformational potential of culturally responsive education within K–12 education throughout the state of Illinois. This tool outlines several priority areas that characterize effective planning related to the alignment of institutions of higher education (IHE) with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards and demonstrates the values of culturally responsive education. Given the need for alignment at multiple levels (e.g., institutional, organizational, professional, individual) of universities, colleges, and educator preparation programs¹ and the various starting points for alignment, this tool provides multiple examples of strategies and foci through which various priority areas that may be central to alignment efforts can be considered.

Purpose and Utility of the Tool

The purpose of this tool is twofold:

- It supports ISBE personnel in reviewing and providing feedback and guidance to Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading planning and alignment teams in order to help ensure effectiveness of alignment efforts.
- It is a resource for IHE teams in creating and carrying out effective alignment plans.

This tool is not intended to serve as a “checkbox” guide for alignment planning, nor is it intended to be evaluative. Rather, it is intended to support critical reflection and dialogue about practice in a way that pays close attention to issues of local context and capacity-building. Additionally, it is intended to guide ISBE in its efforts to identify needs at the program

¹ Neri et al., 2019; Pollock et al., 2009; Richards et al., 2007.

and institutional levels and to determine how best to provide guidance and support to IHEs as they align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.

Users of the tool should consider the various starting points and focus areas (e.g., specific Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards of Focus & Recommended Activities) present throughout alignment plans, using the priority areas (specific and measurable objectives, alignment strategy, quality of strategies and activities, data and measurement, and team and capacity) described in the section Priority Areas of the Rubric to determine the approaches needed to cultivate and sustain institutional conditions for successful alignment plans.

This document's appendix offers brief descriptions of key terms and how they are used in this tool.

Materials to Include in Review

Teams that use this tool should consider a variety of documentation in their review in order to capture all relevant information needed to reflect on and improve their alignment planning and strategy. This documentation includes

- the IHE Self-Assessment Tool,
- the Illinois Higher Education Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards Alignment and Reporting Guide, and
- the program/IHE-based supplementary self-assessment and/or planning documentation.

Rubric Scale

Not on track: The priority area is not present, it is in its beginning stages, and/or not enough explanation is provided that details the area's core features and how efforts in this area support alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.

On track: The plan considers the elements of the priority area and their connection to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards. Although details that explain the priority area and how it will support alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards are present, there still may be additional improvements that can be made to the plan as the IHE alignment team continues its work.

Strong: Details that describe how the plan considers the elements of the priority area, how the elements align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards, and how these efforts impact candidate capacity to be culturally responsive educators are consistently present throughout the plan and the strategies it outlines.

Priority Areas of the Rubric

Specific and Measurable Objectives

This area addresses the extent to which the objectives stated in the plan are clearly defined, measurable, feasible, and time bound and support alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.

Alignment Strategy

This area addresses the extent to which the plan reflects a clear strategic vision for the work, a plan to provide staff with professional learning, and a systems approach that takes into account institutional conditions needed to support alignment to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.

Quality of Strategies and Activities

This area is focused on the anticipated impact that efforts will have on the effective alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards. Specifically, this area considers whether the plan's strategies are high leverage and will result in substantive steps toward embedding the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards into coursework, assignments, assessments, field placements, and so on in ways that will prepare candidates to be culturally responsive in their practice. Here, "high leverage" refers to plans that are (a) high impact, in that if you get them right, they will have a significant impact on the system and (2) as low effort as possible, in that they are feasible and do not require large or unrealistic investments of resources and time.

Data and Measurement

This area has to do with the extent to which there is a plan to evaluate Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards alignment efforts by using program and candidate data and experiences (e.g., Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Candidate Assessment Rubric, empathy interviews, student–faculty check-ins) and how data and measurement will be used to make decisions about how to adapt initiatives to improve alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards and cultural responsiveness of candidates and faculty.

Team and Capacity

This area addresses the extent to which Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading alignment teams have been identified, disrupt traditional patterns of leadership by being inclusive and reflective of the educational communities they are a part of, and have clearly defined roles and responsibilities throughout the plan and whether team members have the authority, time, capacity, and expertise to carry out the strategies detailed in the plan. Additionally, this area addresses the extent to which program leadership is involved in, and creates the conditions for, alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.

The Rubric

Reviewer:

Date:

IHE program:

Focus on Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards. Although an IHE’s alignment plans should address all of the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards, it is likely that its plan for some standards will be stronger than it is for others. In the following table, indicate whether the IHE’s strategic plan to align to each specific standard is not on track, on track, or strong. Specifying the status of each standard provides not only an opportunity for an IHE to reflect on which Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards it needs to focus on but also an opportunity for ISBE to differentiate its support and guidance for an IHE in relation to specific standards.

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standard	Not on track, on track, or strong?
Self-awareness and relationships to others	
Systems of oppression	
Students as individuals	
Students as co-creators	
Leveraging student advocacy	
Family and community collaboration	
Content selections in all curricula	
Student representation in the learning environment	

Strategies and activities. The following strategies and activities are examples of some of the key areas of the program that should be included in plans to align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards. This list is not exhaustive, nor is it prescriptive. The important thing is to create a coherent plan for how these strategies support one another in the effective alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards. For example, aligning to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards within coursework without also considering the professional learning needs of faculty will likely hinder the alignment efforts within the first area of focus.

1. Which of the following elements of the system for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards alignment are being addressed?
 - Inclusive syllabi
 - Field placements
 - Visioning and messaging
 - Curricula and content design
 - Instructional strategies
 - Assessment of Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading dispositions and practices in candidates
 - Professional learning (for program faculty and/or community partners)
 - Reflection and awareness-building opportunities for faculty
 - School and community partnerships
 - Relationship building
 - Other (explain):

2. For which of these strategies and activities might the IHE need additional support or guidance?

Specific and Measurable Objectives

Where are we trying to go?

Specific and measurable aim	Not on track	On track	Strong
How connected are the objective(s) to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards and demonstrated abilities?	The objective has little or no connection to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards and demonstrated abilities.	The objective is connected to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards and demonstrated abilities, and it supports alignment to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards and demonstrated abilities.	The objective is strongly connected to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards and demonstrated abilities, and it directly supports alignment to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards and demonstrated abilities.
Are the objective(s) measurable?	The objective is not measurable, cannot be tracked over time, or is unclear or dependent on variables that are out of the program's control.	The objective is measurable, can be tracked over time, and is clear and dependent on variables that are mostly within the program's control.	The objective is measurable, can be tracked over time, and is supported by a plan that details how data will inform ongoing improvement efforts.
Are the objective(s) feasible and within their spheres of influence or control?	The objective is not within reason and cannot be achieved.	The objective is reasonable given the program's abilities and what the program can influence or control within the programs represented by the alignment team, and it will likely be achieved.	The objective is mostly or fully reasonable given the program's abilities, there is evidence that shows that the program has developed key relationships and partnerships that have broadened its areas of influence and control outside of the programs represented by the alignment team, and it will most likely be achieved.
Is there a clear time frame for when the objective(s) will be accomplished?	The objective does not specify dates or specifies a period of time for completion that is far beyond the time frame.	The objective specifies a time frame, but the time frame may be open ended and lack clarity regarding when specific objectives or milestones should be accomplished.	The objective specifies a clear date of completion and a clear time frame.

Alignment Strategy

What is our vision for how to get there?

Implementation strategy	Not on track	On track	Strong
Where is the program in its journey to align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards?	<i>Exploration stage:</i> Alignment strategy is focused on establishing consensus in support, and building understanding, of the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	<i>Installation stage:</i> Alignment strategy is focused on building infrastructure to align, or is at the beginning stages of initial alignment, with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	<i>Full alignment stage:</i> Alignment strategy is focused on gaining consistency with and/or sustaining the implementation of the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.
Are initiatives built from a clear strategic plan for aligning major initiatives with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards?	There is no strategic plan, or the plan fails to inform major initiatives and lacks alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	Major initiatives are situated within some broader efforts and strategic planning related to alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	All major initiatives in the strategic plan are clearly aligned with Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.
Does the strategy address the institutional conditions needed to align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards?	The alignment strategy does not address systemic inequities , nor does it establish or maintain the institutional conditions needed to align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	The alignment strategy is at the beginning stage, or surface level, of understanding and addressing systemic inequities. It establishes or maintains some of the institutional conditions needed to align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	The alignment strategy indicates a clear understanding of and plan to address systemic inequities and promote the institutional conditions, structures, and practices needed to align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.

Implementation strategy	Not on track	On track	Strong
How will team members and staff learn about the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards and how to align their practice with the standards?	There is no professional learning plan to train team members and program staff to understand and align their practice to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	There is a professional learning plan that is aligned to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards and focuses on one or more dimension(s) of capacity (e.g., knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, behaviors).	A professional learning plan articulates an approach to professional learning for team members and program faculty to understand and align their practice to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards that addresses all dimensions of capacity building needed.

Program feedback, questions, and needs

Reviewer feedback

Recommended areas of focus

Quality of Strategies and Activities

How will we make an impact?

Quality of change plans	Not on track	On track	Strong
Are the strategies and activities high leverage?	The strategies and activities require great effort and have little promise of impacting alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	The strategies and activities require reasonable effort but only some promise of impacting the alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards. Or the strategies and activities have promise of impact but require unreasonable effort.	The strategies and activities require reasonable effort and have promise of impacting alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.
How have Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Self-Assessment findings, other systems investigations, and information on candidate experience informed change priorities?	The strategies and activities do not stem from systems investigation and show a lack awareness of candidates' needs and experiences navigating the system.	The strategies and activities are based on Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Self-Assessment findings and systems investigation and show some evidence of efforts to take into account candidates' needs and experiences navigating the system.	The strategies and activities stem from Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Self-Assessment findings and systems investigation, and they meaningfully consider and address candidates' needs and experiences navigating the system.

Program feedback, questions, and needs

Reviewer feedback

Recommended areas of focus

Data and Measurement

How will we know we are making progress?

Data/ measurement	Not on track	On track	Strong
How are evaluation measures and outcomes used to make decisions about alignment efforts?	There is no plan to use evaluation measures and outcomes to inform decisions about adapting alignment efforts with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards. Or some evaluation plans exist but are vague, lack actionable results, and are only loosely tied to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	There is a general plan to use both formative and summative evaluation measures and outcomes to inform decisions about alignment with Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	Formative and summative evaluation measures and outcomes have been designed for all major initiatives and are integral to making decisions about how to adapt efforts to align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.
How are candidate data and experiences used to assess progress and make key decisions?	Little or no analysis of candidate data and experience is used to determine program adoption decisions and program priorities.	Careful analysis of candidate data and experience determines program adoption decisions and program priorities.	Rigorous, comparative analyses of candidate data and experience drive program adoption decisions and program priorities.
What routines and structures are in place that allow the team to learn from data on a regular and iterative basis?	There is no mention of how frequently the team will collaborate to gather, review, interpret, and take action on data, nor what data systems are in place to support the data inquiry process.	There is mention that the team will gather and learn from data and/or that data systems are in place, but there is no mention of a specific meeting cadence to gather, review, interpret, and take action on data.	There is a clear data inquiry plan that specifies how frequently the team will meet and how it will use data systems to gather, review, interpret, and take action on data.

Data/ measurement	Not on track	On track	Strong
How will data be made transparent, accessible, and actionable for key interest holders?	There is no plan to make findings and action plans from the data inquiry process transparent, accessible, and actionable for key interest holders.	There is a plan to make findings and action plans from the data inquiry process transparent for key interest holders. Members of the community are aware of the changes being made but have less ability to contribute feedback because the data is not accessible or there is no clear process for contributing.	There is a plan to make findings and action plans from the data inquiry process transparent, accessible, and actionable for key interest holders. Members of the community understand the data displays, how the changes being made will impact them, and how to contribute their feedback.

Program feedback, questions, and needs

Reviewer feedback

Recommended areas of focus

Team and Capacity

Who do we need at the table to make it happen?

Team/capacity	Not on track	On track	Strong
Is the team equipped with the personal and professional knowledge needed to align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards?	The team has not been identified.	Team members have been identified, with some key personnel possessing personal and professional knowledge and experience related to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	All team members possess personal and professional knowledge and experience related to the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards, or there is a meaningful plan to build this capacity within the team.
Is the team representative of the faculty, the student body, and the communities the program serves?	The team is not at all or is only somewhat reflective of the communities the program serves and is mostly composed of dominant identities .	The team is representative of the faculty, the student body, and the communities the program serves, and it includes representation from nondominant groups.	The team is representative of the faculty, the student body, and the communities the program serves, and it prioritizes centering the voices of nondominant groups.
Are there clear roles and responsibilities for team members?	Team roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined and are weakly aligned with the goals and strategies of the efforts to align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	Some or most team roles and responsibilities are defined and aligned to the major goals and strategies of the efforts to align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	All team roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and aligned to the major goals and strategies of the efforts to align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.
Does the team have the authority and time investment needed to carry out the work?	There is no consideration of, or there is a lack of clarity about, the power and investment needed to execute alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	Some of the team members have the authority and investment needed to carry out the work of aligning with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	Team members are strategically chosen for the authority and investment needed to effectively align with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.

Team/capacity	Not on track	On track	Strong
What is the role of leadership in these efforts?	There are loose or no plans for engaging leadership support and expertise in the alignment with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.	The plan includes some details related to leaders' roles in supporting Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards alignment and how it connects to broader efforts to address systemic inequities.	The plan explicitly details how leaders will be strategically engaged to motivate and lead Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards alignment and how it connects to broader efforts to address systemic inequities.

Program feedback, questions, and needs

Reviewer feedback

Recommended areas of focus

Appendix: Explanations of Key Terms

dimensions of capacity. Research and approaches to coaching and capacity building for culturally responsive education recognize that educators should engage in reflection and learning on a personal level (e.g., awareness of self, beliefs, aspirations), a strategic level (understanding both concepts and ideas and the ability to put ideas into practice), and an institutional level (policies, processes, and systems).

dominant identities. Those identities typically represented in, or in full control of, leadership positions, steering committees, and institutions (e.g., White, male, English-dominant, able-bodied).

high-leverage strategies and activities. Strategies and activities that are (a) high impact, in that if you get them right, they will have a significant impact on the system and (b) as low effort as possible, in that they are feasible and do not require large or unrealistic investments of resources and time.

leadership. In this document, those who hold the positional authority that is essential for executing, making decisions about, allocating resources to, and sustaining the work. Leaders might include administrative chancellors; academic deans; faculty senates and representatives; university leadership; department chairs; diversity, equity, and inclusion directors; or student-body leadership.

[phases of implementation planning.](#) The various stages institutions go through on their journey from identifying goals, exploring innovations to implement, planning for implementation, beginning implementation, and full implementation. See [the video “Implementation Stages”](#) from the State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center (SISEP) video series for further information.

[spheres of influence or control.](#) The different levels of influence or control (or lack thereof) that people, teams, or institutions can impact.

systemic inequities. The various manifestations of systems of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, ableism) that exist and manifest in IHEs, programs, and the broader institutional community and that impact the experiences and outcomes that faculty, staff, students, and community partners have with the program or institution.

systems investigation. All systemic reviews and self-assessment efforts, including those that are formally a part of aligning with the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards (e.g., IHE Self-Assessment Tool) and those that are not directly linked (e.g., equity reviews, student surveys).

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