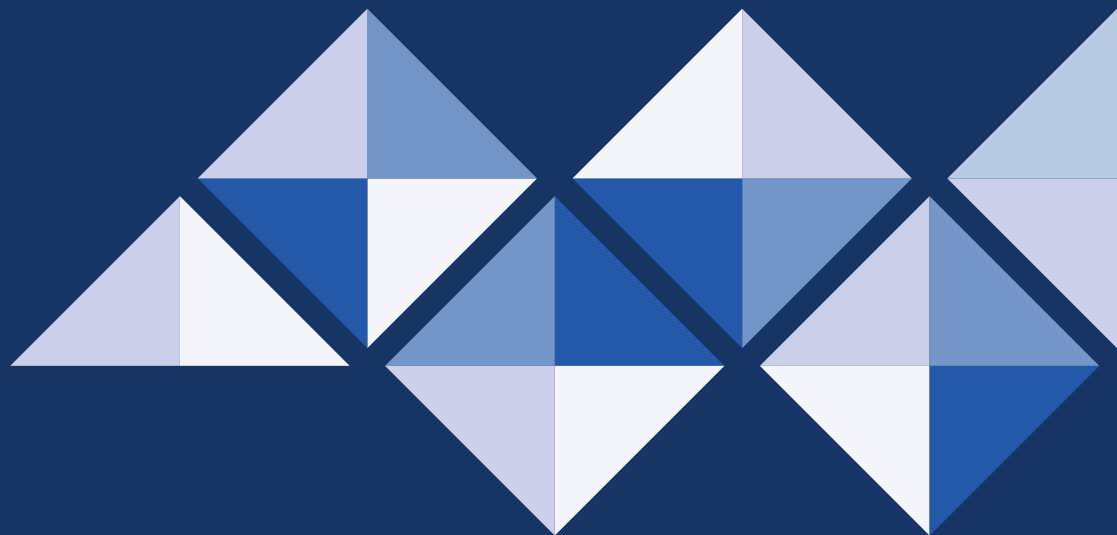


2023 CAS Standards & Guidelines

# CAS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES



**Council** for the  
**Advancement** of  
**Standards** in Higher Education

## **CAS PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

Thank you for your interest in the Standards and Guidelines developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). Standards are developed through a consensus model of member associations and content area experts. You are invited to use the attached materials in the design and assessment of your programs and for your staff training and development. ***These materials may not be duplicated or redistributed for other purposes without permission from CAS.***

These standards and all other standards are available along with information on self-assessment procedures in the most recent version of the e-book ***CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education***. You are particularly encouraged to examine the learning and developmental outcomes (see [www.cas.edu/learningoutcomes](http://www.cas.edu/learningoutcomes)) in the design and assessment of your programs.

This set of standards has an accompanying Self-Assessment Guide (SAG) available for purchase from [www.cas.edu](http://www.cas.edu) for use in program evaluation.

## **CAS MISSION STATEMENT**

CAS advances student learning and success through uniting higher education associations in the use of professional standards for the development, assessment, and improvement of quality programs and services.

## **CAS STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES**

Each set of CAS standards contains 12 common criteria categories (referred to as “general standards”) that have relevance for each and every functional area, no matter what its primary focus. In addition to the general standards, all functional area standards are comprised of both specialty standards and guidelines. All standards use the auxiliary verbs “**must**” and “**shall**” and appear in **bold print** so that users can quickly identify them. Guidelines are designed to provide suggestions and illustrations that can assist in establishing programs and services that more fully address the needs of students than those mandated by a standard. CAS guidelines appear in regular font and use the auxiliary verbs “should” and “may.”

## **OVER FORTY YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) has been the pre-eminent force for promoting standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs since its inception in 1979. For the ultimate purpose of fostering and enhancing student learning, development, and success and in general to promote good citizenship, CAS continues to create and deliver a dynamic and credible book of professional standards and guidelines and Self-Assessment Guides that are designed to lead to a host of quality-controlled programs and services. These standards respond to real-time student needs, the requirements of sound pedagogy, and the effective management of 50 functional areas, consistent with institutional missions. Individuals and institutions from approximately 43 CAS member organizations comprise a professional constituency of over 115,000 professionals.

## **DISCLAIMER**

The standards and guidelines published in *CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education* by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) and referred to in each of the CAS Self-Assessment Guides (SAGs) are developed through the voluntary efforts of leaders of professional associations in higher education. The purpose of the standards and guidelines is to identify criteria and principles by which institutions may choose to assess and enhance various areas of their academic, administrative, or student affairs programs and services. CAS specifically disclaims any liability or responsibility for any perceived or actual shortcomings inherent in the text or application of the standards. Further, CAS does not certify individuals nor accredit programs. No institution, whether it has met some or all of the CAS standards, is authorized to indicate that it is “approved, endorsed, certified, or otherwise sanctioned by CAS.” Institutions that have conducted a self-assessment of one or more functional areas addressed by CAS Standards and Guidelines using the appropriate CAS Self-Assessment Guide (SAG) may, where that self-assessment provides evidence that an institution meets these standards, make accurate representations to the effect that the designated program or service meets the CAS Standards.

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# CAS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

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As we near the 20th anniversary of *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus Wide Focus on the Student Experience (Learning Reconsidered)* (NASPA & ACPA, 2004), it is fitting to dedicate this revision of the CAS Student Learning, Development, and Success Domains and Dimensions to the legacy of this seminal document. The text is widely regarded as the roadmap to frame cocurricular programs and student services with the intention of enhancing student learning as a primary outcome of participation (Collins & Roberts, 2012; Fried, 2007; Kerr, et al., 2020). Subsequently, as CAS committed to alignment with higher education priorities, the call to action in *Learning Reconsidered* directed the purpose of the organization toward the work of student learning and development (Lange, 2017). The connection CAS creates amongst college educators to encourage and implement learning- and development-centered programs and services is at the core of the consortium's work (Gordon, 2016). The authors of *Learning Reconsidered* (2004) explained this important charge:

It is quite realistic to consider the entire campus as a learning community in which student learning experiences can be mapped throughout the environment to deepen the quality of learning. Mapping the learning environment for sites in which learning can occur provides one approach to supporting transformative learning that identifies strength in collaboration—linking the best efforts of educators across the institution to support student learning (p. 13).

CAS provides a framework to link functional areas across common goals. The mission of CAS is to “advance student learning, development, and success through uniting higher education associations in the use of professional standards for the creation, assessment, and improvement of quality programs and services” (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2023).

## The Evolution of Student Learning, Development, and Success in CAS

Since the inception, CAS standards have required functional areas to identify, assess, and articulate how their programs and services contribute to student learning and development. CAS historically listed desirable outcomes of programmatic efforts, but in the early editions of the book, they were simply examples such as intellectual growth, clarification of values, and achievement of personal goals. In response to the increased focus on student outcomes, CAS in 2003 articulated sixteen domains of learning outcomes, with associated “examples of achievement indicators.” The first edition of the *Frameworks for Assessing Learning and Development Outcomes (FALDOs)* (Council for the Advancement of Standards, et al., 2006) arose from the need to help practitioners practically apply the sixteen domains.

After the publication of *Learning Reconsidered* (NASPA & ACPA, 2004), *Learning Reconsidered 2* (Keeling, 2006), and other learning outcomes-related literature, CAS reviewed the learning outcomes it had promoted and decided an integration of multiple learning outcomes models would enhance the profession's efforts in promoting student learning and development. Consequently, CAS hosted a “think tank” involving writers of *Learning Reconsidered* and *Learning Reconsidered 2*, CAS directors, and prominent practitioners and faculty members in student affairs to make recommendations for a revised learning outcomes document. Finalized in 2008, the revised student learning and development outcomes model included six broad categories (called domains): knowledge acquisition, construction, integration, and application; cognitive complexity; intrapersonal development; interpersonal competence; humanitarianism and civic engagement; and practical competence. This model further defined or clarified each of the six domains by identifying more specific learning outcome dimensions within each domain. Offering dimensions of learning allows for a more focused assessment approach and more opportunities for alignment with institutional mission and priorities. For each of the dimensions, CAS also offers examples illustrating achievement of the student learning outcomes. The *Frameworks for Assessing Learning and Development Outcomes (FALDOs)* were revised in 2021 to focus on more recent applications of the domains and dimensions, including the addition of a student success focus (Roberts & Biddix, 2021). Those domains, dimensions, and examples as they exist today are shown in Table 1 below.

**TABLE 1. CAS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES<sup>1</sup>**

Dimensions of Outcome Domain <sup>2</sup>	Examples of Learning and Development Outcomes
<b>KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, INTEGRATION, AND APPLICATION</b>	
<b>Understanding knowledge from a range of disciplines</b>	Possesses knowledge of human cultures and the physical world; possesses knowledge of [a specific] one or more subjects
<b>Connecting knowledge to other knowledge, ideas, and experiences</b>	Uses multiple sources of information and their synthesis to solve problems; knows how to access diverse sources of information such as the internet, text observations, and data bases
<b>Constructing knowledge</b>	Personalizes learning; makes meaning from text, instruction, and experience; uses experience and other sources of information to create new insights; generates new problem-solving approaches based on new insights; recognizes one's own capacity to create new understandings from learning activities and dialogue with others
<b>Relating knowledge to daily life</b>	Seeks new information to solve problems; relates knowledge to major and career decisions; makes connections between classroom and out-of-classroom learning; articulates career choices based on assessment of interests, values, skills, and abilities; provides evidence of knowledge, skills, and accomplishments resulting from formal education, work experience, community service, and volunteer experiences, for example in resumes and portfolios
<b>COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY</b>	
<b>Critical thinking</b>	Identifies important problems, questions, and issues; analyzes, interprets, and makes judgments of the relevance and quality of information; assesses assumptions and considers alternative perspectives and solutions <sup>3</sup>
<b>Reflective thinking</b>	Applies previously understood information, concepts, and experiences to a new situation or setting; rethinks previous assumptions
<b>Effective reasoning</b>	Uses complex information from a variety of sources including personal experience and observation to form a decision or opinion; is open to new ideas and perspectives
<b>Creativity</b>	Integrates mental, emotional, and creative processes for increased insight; formulates a new approach to a particular problem
<b>Adaptability</b>	Demonstrates the ability to adjust thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and attitudes when responding to new, changing, or uncertain circumstances

<sup>1</sup> This document is an adaptation of *Learning Reconsidered* (2004) and the CAS Learning Outcomes (2006)

<sup>2</sup> Categories adapted from *Learning Reconsidered* (2004) and Kuh, Douglas, Lund, & Ramin Gyurmek (1994)

<sup>3</sup> These examples are adopted from the George Mason University *Critical Thinking Assessment Report* (2006)

Dimensions of Outcome Domain, cont.	Examples of Learning and Development Outcomes
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### INTRAPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

<b>Realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, and self-respect</b>	Assesses, articulates, and acknowledges personal skills, abilities, and growth areas; uses self-knowledge to make decisions such as those related to career choices; articulates rationale for personal behavior; seeks and considers feedback from others; critiques and subsequently learns from past experiences; employs self-reflection to gain insight; functions without need for constant reassurance from others; balances needs of self with needs of others
<b>Identity exploration and development</b>	Explores and integrates various parts of their identity to form a coherent whole, that allows for a personalized explanation of who they are; recognizes and exhibits interdependence in accordance with environmental, cultural, and personal values; considers many potential identities and considers their influence on important aspects of self.
<b>Commitment to ethics and integrity</b>	Incorporates ethical reasoning into action; explores and articulates the values and principles involved in personal decision-making; acts in congruence with personal values and beliefs; exemplifies dependability, honesty, and trustworthiness; accepts personal accountability
<b>Spiritual awareness</b>	Develops and articulates personal belief system; understands roles of spirituality in personal and group values and behaviors; critiques, compares, and contrasts various belief systems; explores issues of purpose, meaning, and faith

### INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCE

<b>Meaningful relationships</b>	Establishes healthy, mutually beneficial relationships with others; treats others with respect; manages interpersonal conflicts effectively; demonstrates appropriately assertive behavior
<b>Interdependence</b>	Seeks help from others when needed and offers assistance to others; shares a group or organizational goal and works with others to achieve it; learns from the contributions and involvement of others; accepts supervision and direction as needed
<b>Collaboration</b>	Works cooperatively with others, including people different from self and/or with different points of view; seeks and values the involvement of others; listens to and considers others' points of view
<b>Effective leadership</b>	Demonstrates skill in guiding and assisting a group, organization, or community in meeting its goals; identifies and understands the dynamics of a group; exhibits democratic principles as a leader or group member; communicates a vision, mission, or purpose that encourages commitment and action in others
<b>Teamwork</b>	Builds mutually beneficial and collaborative relationships grounded in respect and consideration for others to achieve a shared goal or desired outcomes.

Dimensions of Outcome Domain, cont.	Examples of Learning and Development Outcomes
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### HUMANITARIANISM AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

**Understanding, appreciating, and embracing intercultural and human differences**

Understands one's own identity and culture; seeks involvement with people different from oneself; articulates the advantages and impact of a diverse society; identifies systematic barriers to equality and inclusiveness, then advocates and justifies means for dismantling them; in interactions with others, exhibits respect and preserves the dignity of others

**Global perspective**

Understands and analyzes the interconnectedness of societies worldwide; demonstrates effective stewardship of human, economic, and environmental resources

**Social responsibility**

Recognizes social systems and their influence on people; appropriately challenges the unfair, unjust, or uncivil behavior of other individuals or groups; participates in service/volunteer activities that are characterized by reciprocity; articulates the values and principles involved in personal decision-making; affirms and values the worth of individuals and communities

**Sense of civic responsibility**

Demonstrates consideration of the welfare of others in decision-making; engages in critical reflection and principled dissent; understands and participates in relevant governance systems; educates and facilitates the civic engagement of others

### PRACTICAL COMPETENCE

**Pursuing goals**

Sets and pursues individual goals; articulates rationale for personal and educational goals and objectives; articulates and makes plans to achieve long-term goals and objectives; identifies and works to overcome obstacles that hamper goal achievement

**Communicating effectively**

Conveys meaning in a way that others understand by writing and speaking coherently and effectively; writes and speaks after reflection; influences others through writing, speaking or artistic expression; effectively articulates abstract ideas; uses appropriate syntax and grammar; makes and evaluates presentations or performances; listens attentively to others and responds appropriately

**Technological competence**

Demonstrates technological literacy and skills; demonstrates the ethical application of intellectual property and privacy; uses technology ethically and effectively to communicate, solve problems, and complete tasks; stays current with technological innovations

**Managing personal affairs**

Exhibits self-reliant behaviors; manages time effectively; develops strategies for managing finances

**Managing career readiness**

Conveys the requisite competencies necessary for a transition to professional work; Understands the role of supervisors and managers in enacting their chosen work; values the contributions of others in enacting their work; recognizes areas of continued growth while distinguishing professional strengths

Dimensions of Outcome Domain, cont.	Examples of Learning and Development Outcomes
<b>Demonstrating professionalism</b>	Accepts supervision and direction as needed; values the contributions of others; holds self accountable for obligations; shows initiative; assesses, critiques, and then improves the quality of one's work and one's work environment
<b>Maintaining health and wellbeing</b>	Engages in behaviors and contributes to environments in ways that support their health and happiness and that of others; articulates the relationship between their goals and how those contribute to overall life satisfaction; exhibits behaviors that advance the collective wellbeing of communities
<b>Living a purposeful and satisfying life</b>	Makes purposeful decisions regarding balance among education, work, and leisure time; acts in congruence with personal identity, ethical, spiritual, and moral values

### At the Center: Student Learning, Development, and Success

A commitment to student learning, development, and success has long guided the field of student personnel (Barber, 2020, Evans et al., 2010). One of the earliest documents in the field argued that a primary task of higher education was to

...assist the student in developing to the limits of his [sic] potentialities and in making his contribution to the betterment of society...This philosophy imposes upon educational institutions the obligation to consider the student as a whole...It puts emphasis, in brief, upon the development of the student as a person rather than upon his intellectual training alone (American Council on Education, 1937/1994, p. 68).

Additionally, for almost 70 years, the theories and frameworks widely considered under the umbrella of student development have provided a structure to think about how students develop skills, attitudes, approaches, and mindsets, among others. (Evans, et al., 2010; THE Project, 1975).

*Learning Reconsidered* (NASPA & ACPA, 2004) emerged after other attempts to center learning at the heart of student affairs work including *The Student Learning Imperative: Implications for Student Affairs* (American College Personnel Association, 1994) and *Powerful Partnerships: A Shared Responsibility for Learning* (1998, American Association of Higher Education, American College Personnel Association, and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators). Why did *Learning Reconsidered* speak to student affairs educators when other efforts had not? It may have been the right time or it may have been the structure provided in the creation of the specific domains of learning and development, creating a “playbook to unite higher education” (Fried, 2007):

Student affairs, in this conceptualization, is integral to the learning process because of the opportunities it provides students to learn through action, contemplation, reflection and emotional engagement as well as information acquisition. For example, every student club or organization provides learning opportunities for its participants to develop and practice such skills as leadership, time management, collaboration, and goal setting; the specific focus of each organization further provides opportunities to learn new information and to develop recreational or practical skills, from skiing to carpentry (*Learning Reconsidered*, 2003).

Most of those who do the work within the functional areas understand that enacting environments in which student learning, development, and success occurs must be a primary focus in how we deliver programs and services (Gordon, 2016). From pre-college exploration and matriculation, through engagement in student life and growth in academic, social, identity, career, and other developmental pursuits, we are all doing the work of learning, development, and success to help students on their distinctive and individualized journeys. We must consider how we attend to learning, development, and success in a way that truly supplements the experience students have with their faculty as they pursue general education, major, and elective requirements that will prepare them for “life after college” (Peck, 2017).

Student affairs educators are not the sole purveyors of student learning, development, and success. The integration of student learning and development domains into CAS coincided with a recognition across higher education that learning has since shifted from classroom-specific to a more holistic student learning and development approach, a view championed by the American Association of Colleges and University's (AAC&U) Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Initiative (Fried, 2007). In the last twenty years, higher education at large has moved to a deep understanding of the complementary position cocurricular experiences and academic and student support programs and services play in the completion of academic courses and the pursuit of a degree. While not all areas of higher education fully understand the contributions of the other, CAS provides a shared language that each can use when discussing what happens when students are engaged in their learning across all parts of the academy.

While CAS promotes the incorporation of learning and development outcomes centered on these domains, CAS also recognizes the existence of several other related resources. Among these are AAC&U's LEAP (2011), *Learning Reconsidered* (NASPA & ACPA, 2004) and *Learning Reconsidered 2* (Keeling, 2006), learning outcomes detailed by academic accrediting agencies (Drechsler Sharp, et al., 2011), and the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) (Adelman, et al., 2014; NILOA, 2021), which focuses on the knowledge and skills students should have upon degree completion. Each of these resources offers learning domains like those promoted by CAS, as detailed in the Table 2 below.

Similarities in themes and values are easily recognized across these resources, with word choice being the primary difference. Adelman (2015) advocates for the adoption of a common language for learning outcomes, but no such agreement currently exists. Regardless of specific terminology, CAS advocates for incorporation of learning outcomes, generally, in efforts to enhance the work of student affairs and create quality programs for student learning, development, and success across higher education. These terms can guide the work but the individual

**TABLE 2. LEARNING DOMAINS FROM OTHER RESOURCES**

CAS Domains	LEAP (AAC&U)	Learning Reconsidered	Academic Disciplines	Degree Qualifications Profile
Knowledge acquisition, construction, integration, & application	Knowledge of Human Cultures & the Physical & Natural World	Knowledge acquisition, integration, & application	Knowledge bases	Specialized/Industry Knowledge; Broad & Integrative Knowledge
Cognitive complexity	Intellectual & Practical Skills	Cognitive complexity	Critical thinking	Intellectual Skills
Intrapersonal Development	Personal & Social Responsibility	Interpersonal & intrapersonal competence	Intrapersonal attributes and competencies	Civic/Democratic and Global Learning
Interpersonal Competence		Humanitarianism	Interpersonal relations with diverse others	
Humanitarianism & Civic Engagement		Civic engagement	Ethics Management & collaborative leadership	
Practical Competence	Integrative & Applied Learning	Practical competence Persistence & academic achievement	Professional skills Life-long learning	Applied & Collaborative Learning



contexts in which they are adopted may require different language; essentially, honor the premise of the domain without tying too closely to the title affiliated.

### Updates in the 11th Version

After more than a decade without revision, the first significant update was made in 2019 to include that of “persistence and academic achievement.” Conceptually, the idea of outcomes that focus on students’ ability to “manage the college experience to achieve academic and personal success; leading to academic goal success including degree attainment” was thought to be a broader outcome of the learning and development domains adopted by CAS. In 2019, however, CAS determined the importance of the concept of student success should be integrated into the standards, signaling that when learning and development is at the core of programs and services, then student success will be achieved.

This version welcomes two other changes. After previously being part of the Programs and Services section of the general standards, the domains and learning outcome dimensions are now embedded in each functional area standard in part three as a specific section. This latest version moves away from listing all the dimensions within the document toward a single hyperlink where they can be found. Additionally, the names of domains have changed and dimensions have been added and revised to reflect more contemporary language relative to some of these domains and dimensions.

Finally, the emphasis on learning, development, and success is much more than a reference to domains and dimensions in the newly created part three of the standards. The concept of well-prepared cocurricular educators determining priorities and using the resources at their disposal to create outstanding programs and services cuts across the twelve sections in different ways. Some standards attend to the delivery of learning and development centered programs and services (part two). Other standards focus on the creation of spaces in which diverse students can have access to experiences in which they are valued and included (part five). Additional standards center how the physical environment is structured and how staff reflects a commitment to ongoing development in order to ensure they have the skills and resources necessary to create these spaces (sections on leadership, human resources, financial resources for example). These standards and the student learning, development, and success domains and dimensions provide the framework needed to create environments for student learning, development, and success.

### Planning and Assessing Student Learning, Development, and Success Outcomes

How can this commitment to learning, development and success be strengthened today? With an increased focus on the whole student experience comes an increased responsibility for student affairs professionals to join faculty in developing and measuring student learning outcomes. While the contribution of student affairs to student learning and development has sometimes been “overlooked and underutilized” (Schuh & Gansemer-Topf, 2011, p. 3), Schuh & Gansemer-Topf (2011) suggest three ways to showcase the contributions of student affairs to student learning.

1. Link the student affairs mission to the institutional mission, purpose, and strategic plan
2. Foster partnerships with faculty
3. Share existing expertise on student learning and development by incorporating learning outcomes and assessment as a routine part of student affairs work.

There are also planning and assessment practices that must be implemented to support learning and development in cocurricular and service providing settings (Sousa & Rose, 2021; Yousey-Elsener, et al., 2015). Determining outcomes and identifying strategies to enhance student learning, development, and success is the work we all must do when prioritizing the focus of student programs and services in the cocurricular arena. Assessing those outcomes should be infused into a larger commitment to continuous improvement and results should inform the modification of future outcomes determined as important to our work (Bingham, et al., 2015).

In 2020, higher education was greatly impacted by the pandemics of virus and supremacy. The COVID-19 will continue to affect students' lives endemically and through the profound and prolonged adjustments to learning modality and opportunities. Additionally, a racial reckoning occurred after the murder of George Floyd that built on the challenges our institutions face in providing environments free from discrimination and racism. How higher education has responded to supporting diverse students during these times has been both a testimony to its resilience and the rearing of new responsibilities and approaches that will be needed to ensure student success and wellbeing.

CAS domains and dimensions can continue to be a relevant framework for structuring functional area priorities based on shared objectives but also what makes programs and services particularly different from each other. Using these domains and dimensions to create outcomes for learning, development, and success, we can capture what makes our work distinctive from others and what connects us as educators. The future will require us to each adopt responsibility for learning, development, success in ways that supplement curricular pursuits, attend to the unique functions of our areas, and connect faculty and staff in learning partnerships. CAS domains and dimensions can be actively applied to support these goals.

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Self-Assessment Guides (SAGs) provide an instrument to conduct self-assessment using the CAS standards and guidelines in this book. Each downloadable SAG file includes a contextual statement, providing historical and functional perspective to the area; instructions for conducting self-assessment using the SAG; and the self-assessment instrument as an interactive PDF comprised of the SAG, criterion statements, rating scales, and evaluation forms for compiling team assessment and planning improvements. SAGs are available individually, as part of a complete package, or packaged with the *CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education* (11th Version). The complete package contains all functional area SAGs and contextual statements, a PowerPoint for presentations, and resources on conducting self-assessment.

## **Cross-Functional Frameworks (CFFs) and CFF Self-Assessment Guides**

CAS Cross-Functional Frameworks (CFFs) provide an approach for addressing emerging, evolving, and ongoing issues or topics from a multi- and inter-disciplinary perspective through teams of higher education professionals from different fields or functional areas. As of 2023, CAS has released CFFs for Advancing Health and Well-Being, First-Year Experiences, and Identifying and Responding to Behavioral Concerns.

## **Implementing a Program Review of a Multi-Functional Area (MFA)**

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