

EXPLORING DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION: A REVIEW OF EVIDENCE TO INFORM PRISON HIGHER EDUCATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Higher education in prison programs have expanded over the past few years, following former President Obama's Second Chance Pell Pilot program, which lifted Federal Pell Grants eligibility bans for currently incarcerated students. The Second Chance Pell Pilot program was significant in demonstrating a national commitment to promote successful alternatives to incarceration. In addition to the Second Chance Pell Pilot program, within the California context, there has been a surge of college initiatives and re-entry programs at the California Community Colleges, California State Universities, and the University of California campuses.

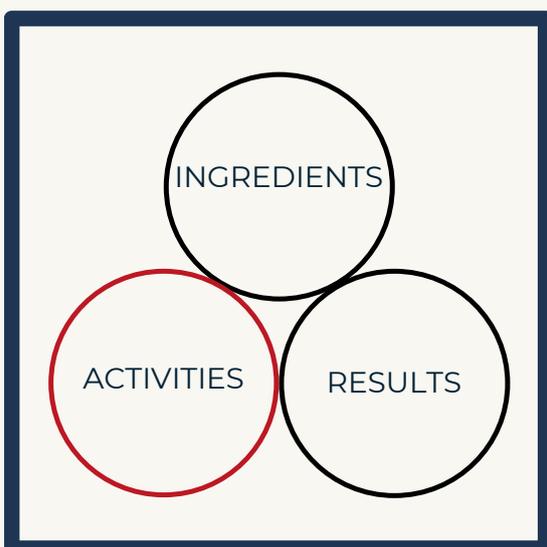
Through the Rising Scholars network, Project Rebound, and Underground Scholars, the educational trajectories and college access opportunities for formerly and currently incarcerated students have garnered significant attention. Yet, across traditional higher education settings and higher education in prison settings, there is an apparent lack of understanding, agreement, or attention to what constitutes higher education quality. This literature review explores how higher education researchers have defined, measured, and conceptualized quality in higher education.

The literature review is concerned with answering the following:

1. What does the literature demonstrate regarding current indicators of quality in higher education?
2. How is quality in higher education currently measured?
3. What are the similarities and differences in measuring/defining quality in higher education among state and federal agencies and higher education organizations, such as the U.S. and State Department of Education, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)?

QUALITY: INGREDIENTS & RESULTS

Four studies measured college quality through a lens of ingredients, which include student test scores, acceptance rates, faculty-student ratios, and faculty salaries. Seven studies measured higher education quality through a lens of results, which included bachelor's degree completion, graduate salaries, and alumni satisfaction. None of the studies explored quality through a lens of activities.



QUALITY INDICATORS: INGREDIENTS

Dillon, E.W. & Smith, J.A. (2017).	student test scores, acceptance rates, faculty-student ratios, and faculty salaries
Glenn, B. & Harris, D.N. (2020).	Admission rate, Avg. SAT score of Entering Freshman, Avg Faculty Salary, instructional expenditures per FT student, student-faculty ratio, completion Rate (within 150% of time)
Meyer, A.G., Hanson, A.R. & Hickman, D.C. (2017).	U.S. News and World Report rankings, instructional expenditures per student, real total expenditures for student, and average of the 75th percentile of an institution of higher ed's verbal and math SAT scores
Smith, J., Hurwitz, M., Avery, C. (2017).	average standardized test scores (ACT and SAT) of incoming students

QUALITY INDICATORS: RESULTS

Andrews, R.J., Li, J. & Lovenheim, M.F. (2016).	25th percentile math SAT, 75th percentile math SAT, faculty student ratio, expenditures per student, instructional expenditures per student, graduation rate, in state tuition
Bettinger, E. & Fidjeland, A. (2024).	Forbes Top Colleges rankings, labor market outcomes (employment status and income), alumni satisfaction, mobility rate
Cohodes, S.R. & Goodman, J.S. (2014).	Barrons Rankings of colleges and IPEDS measures for college quality, which include four-year graduation rates, SAT math 75th percentile, instructional expenditures
Eller, C.C. (2023).	Bachelor's Degree completion outcomes
Green, J.J., Orazem, P.F. & Swepston, N.S. (2024).	Average starting salaries of university graduates
Kurlaender, M., Carrell, S. & Jackson, J. (2016).	number of transferrable units completed during the first year, persistence to second year of community college, transfer to a 4-year college, degree or certificate completion at community college