

ACE Mentor Program of America, Inc. Introduction to the Maturity Matrix

Executive Summary

Effective standards are a critical element in the management of the ACE Mentor Program and its ability to provide quality, consistency and continuity throughout all the communities we serve. Standards facilitate the continuous improvement of processes and procedures nationwide while concurrently serving as a tool for self-assessment locally.

The standards that follow have been developed by ACE National. This set of operating goals will promote consistency in service delivery and demonstrate our commitment and accountability to our students, schools, mentors and sponsors.

Introduction

Organizations that implement an effective standards program demonstrate a commitment to continuously improving their service to their client—in this case the students we serve. An effective program allows affiliates to document experiences so the ACE organization as a whole, can learn from each affiliate's experiences.

Definition of a Standards Program

A standards program is defined as knowledge gained from experience, successful or otherwise (lessons learned), for the purpose of improving future activities. Examples include:

- A lesson that is incorporated into the mentor process
- A tip to enhance future performance
- A solution to a problem or a corrective action
- A lesson that is incorporated into a guideline for better program performance
- An adverse situation to avoid

A review through a maturity matrix also is a method of self-evaluation to measure a program against the norm. As ACE grows, the Maturity Matrix will help us evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our program from within.

Key Components to the ACE Maturity Matrix

The National Affiliate Council identified eight key areas that effect the evaluation of an ACE affiliate. They are:

- Board Effectiveness
- Growth
- Mentors
- Programming and Student Participation
- Community Connections and Visibility
- Financial Management
- Support for Student Advancement into Industry
- Administration

Each of the eight characteristics can be assessed in terms of four levels of maturity within an affiliate. The higher the maturity level, the more fully the standards of excellence program has been embedded into the affiliate's culture.

An affiliate may rank low on the maturity matrix (level 1) in some areas and high (level 4) in others. The Maturity Matrix directs the affiliates to the areas in which more effort is needed.

Affiliate Self-Assessment

The first step in analyzing or developing effective standards and lessons learned in the program is self-assessment based on the eight characteristics of the Matrix.

To assess yourself, an affiliate only needs to read the criteria of each level for each characteristic and rate their affiliate accordingly. After completing this task for all eight characteristics, the organization gets a snapshot of where you are now and a target for future improvement. Assessment using the Maturity Matrix provides a subjective evaluation of each affiliate and can provide the national leadership a comparison of the ACE program across the country.