

# The Hexagon Tool: A Readiness Protocol for Implementing the Quality Indicators

SEPTEMBER 2025

Modified from Metz, A. & Louison, L. (2019) The Hexagon Tool: Exploring Context. Chapel Hill, NC: [National Implementation Research Network](https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/), Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Based on Kiser, Zabel, Zachik, & Smith (2007) and Blase, Kiser & Van Dyke (2013). <https://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/resource/the-hexagon-an-exploration-tool/>

Table of Contents

[Hexagon Tool Instructions 3](#_Toc208304136)

[Practice Indicators 3](#_Toc208304137)

[Agency Indicators 3](#_Toc208304138)

[When to Use 3](#_Toc208304139)

[How to Use 4](#_Toc208304140)

[Hexagon Tool Overview 5](#_Toc208304141)

[Assessment: 6](#_Toc208304142)

[Evidence 7](#_Toc208304143)

[Usability 12](#_Toc208304144)

[Supports 17](#_Toc208304145)

[Need 22](#_Toc208304146)

[Fit 24](#_Toc208304147)

[Capacity 26](#_Toc208304148)

[Contact NCADEMI 29](#_Toc208304149)

## Hexagon Tool Instructions

The Hexagon Tool, developed by the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), helps organizations evaluate the fit and feasibility of implementing programs or practices in a given context. This version of the tool has been modified by the National Center on Accessible Digital Educational Materials & Instruction (NCADEMI) to specifically address the *Quality Indicators for the Provision and Use of Accessible Digital Educational Materials* and/or the *Quality Indicators for the Provision and Use of Accessible Formats* as the practice being evaluated (collectively referred to as the “Quality Indicators”). This tool is designed to be used by a team to facilitate discussion and ensure critical voices and perspectives are represented in a discussion of the Hexagon Tool’s six contextual fit and feasibility factors of the Quality Indicators, broken into two categories: Practice Indicators and Agency Indicators.

### Practice Indicators

Practice Indicators assess the extent to which the Quality Indicators demonstrate evidence, usability across a range of contexts, and supports for implementation.To support informed decision-making, leadership engagement, and confident participation in implementation with technical assistance from NCADEMI, **you will find overviews of the evidence, usability, and supports for implementation of the Quality Indicators provided in each of these sections.**

### Agency Indicators

The Agency Indicators assess the extent to which the Quality Indicators align with the state or local educational agency (SEAs or LEAs) along the following domains: population need, fit, and capacity. Agency Indicators support SEA and LEA understanding of current practices and help diagnose implementation challenges related to contextual fit or implementation readiness.

### When to Use

The Hexagon Tool can be used at any stage in the implementation of the provision and use of accessible digital educational materials and/or accessible formats, as demonstrated in the Quality Indicators (to determine which set of Quality Indicators to assess, refer to the [Two Sets of Quality Indicators Resource](https://ncademi.org/quality-indicators/use/two-sets/)). This tool is most commonly used during the exploration stage, the period when a site is assessing readiness to begin large-scale implementation, but it can be used at any point within the implementation cycle (exploration, installation, initial implementation, and full implementation) to identify and correct any gaps in the system or agency.

### How to Use

#### Prior to Use

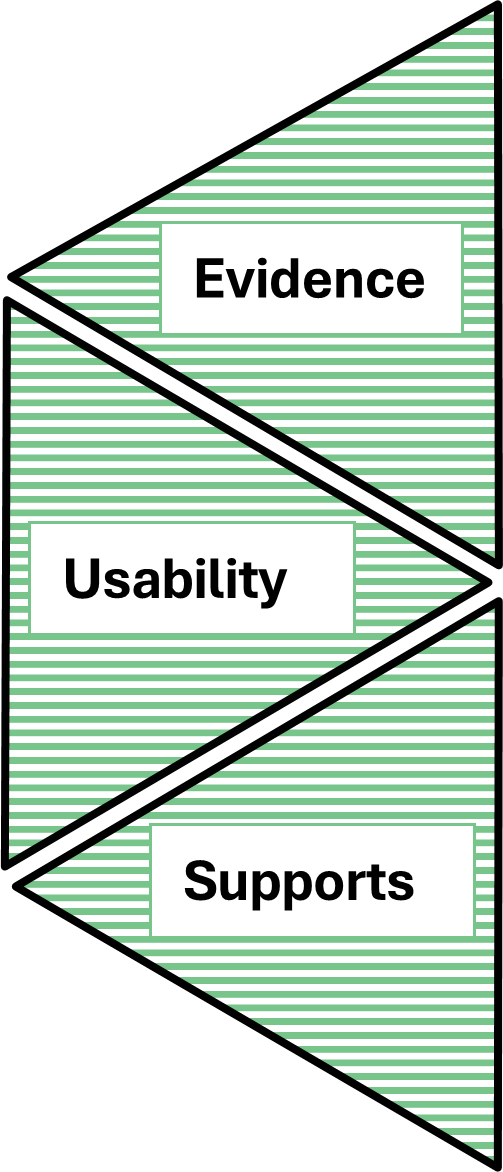
1. Develop a shared understanding of the broad need to be addressed, the target population, and whether the provision and use of accessible digital educational materials (ADA Title II) or the provision and use of accessible formats (IDEA), or both, are to be assessed.
2. Review the discussion questions prior to meeting to ensure any data or resources that need to be reviewed for this discussion are available.
3. Identify a team to participate in the discussion. If the site has an implementation team, such as a steering committee described in Quality Indicator 1, that team can complete the assessment as part of their work. If not, identify key internal and external interested parties who have critical perspectives on the need and how the provision and use of accessible digital educational materials or the provision and use of accessible formats address that identified need. Suggested team members include administrators, technology staff, general and special educators, staff in procurement and adoption, students, families, and community partners.

#### During Use

1. The team reviews any provided information and discusses the questions for each Hexagon Tool indicator (Practice Indicator and Agency Indicator) and documents relevant considerations. Extra space is included in each section for notes and additional questions identified by the team to address unique needs and contexts.
2. After discussing each Practice Indicator and Agency Indicator, the team rates the Indicator using the 5-point Likert scale in each section.
3. Using the discussion notes and ratings, the team makes a determination of readiness to implement the Quality Indicators. If readiness is not apparent, the team makes recommendations for improving the agency’s contextual readiness for implementation. While ratings should be considered during the decision-making process, the ratings alone should not be used to determine final recommendations.

## Hexagon Tool Overview

The Hexagon can help agencies determine their readiness to implement the Quality Indicators for Accessible Digital Educational Materials and/or the Quality Indicators for Accessible Formats.

Practice Indicators

**Evidence of the Quality Indicators**

• Outcome, fidelity, and cost effectiveness data

• Strength of evidence: for whom and in what conditions

**Usability of the Quality Indicators**

• Well-defined practice

• Adaptations for context and populations

**Supports of the Quality Indicators**

• Expert assistance

• External resources for implementing site

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AI-generated content may be incorrect.**Agency Indicators

**Need of the SEA or LEA**

• Identification of target population

• Use of multiple data sources to understand needs and assets

• Student, family, and community perceptions of need

**Fit with the SEA or LEA**

• Fit with family and community values, culture, and history

• Impact on other initiatives

• Alignment with other priorities of the agency

**Capacity of the SEA or LEA**

• Implementation costs

• Resources needed and available for implementation

## Assessment:

Today’s Date:

Facilitator(s):

Individuals Participating in the Assessment:

Which set of Quality Indicators are you assessing? (mark all)

* Accessible Digital Educational Materials
* Accessible Formats

After the assessment is complete, fill in the table with the numerical ratings for one or both sets of Quality Indicators.

| Hexagon Indicator | Ratings of Quality Indicators for Accessible Digital Educational Materials | Ratings of Quality Indicators for Accessible Formats |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Evidence |  |  |
| Usability |  |  |
| Supports |  |  |
| Need |  |  |
| Fit |  |  |
| Capacity |  |  |

Practice Indicator

### Evidence

#### Your Evidence Rating:

**Instructions:**

1. Review the evidence rating scale below and the discussion questions on the next page. This will help you understand how the evidence of the Quality Indicators (QIs) is being evaluated and what factors to consider.
2. Read the description of the evidence for the QIs and respond to the discussion questions. This ensures everyone has a shared understanding of the evidence and can explore any gaps, strengths, or differing interpretations before assigning a rating.
3. Return to this page to rate the quality of evidence of the QIs.

**5 – Strong Evidence**

The practice (QIs) has documented evidence of effectiveness based on at least two rigorous, external research studies with the target population and control groups and has demonstrated sustained effects at least one year post implementation.

**4 – Moderate Evidence**

The practice (QIs) has demonstrated effectiveness with one rigorous, external research study with the target population and a control group or through multiple implementation cycles with documented, measurable results in real-world settings aligned with the target population.

**3 – Promising Evidence**

The practice (QIs) shows some evidence of effectiveness through less rigorous research studies with the target population and comparison groups.

**2 – Demonstrates a Rationale**

The practice (QIs) is guided by a well-developed theory of change or logic model for the target population and has demonstrated a relationship between the practice and outcomes based on an evaluation or practice-based evidence.

**1 – No Evidence**

The practice (QIs) does not have a well-developed theory of change or logic model and has not demonstrated a relationship between the practice and outcomes based on an evaluation or practice-based evidence.

Practice Indicator

**Evidence**

#### Evidence Discussion Questions:

1. Are the Quality Indicators grounded in federal policy and established implementation research? If yes, describe or provide citations or links to reports or publications.
2. What is the strength of the evidence? Under what conditions was the evidence developed?
3. Are other states or districts successfully implementing this framework with measurable impact? Is there evidence of implementation success in agencies with a similar context?
4. Does internal or external evaluation suggest potential for improved outcomes? What outcomes are expected when the QIs are implemented in our context? How much of a change can be expected?
5. Are the Quality Indicators endorsed or supported by current or former technical assistance (TA) centers (e.g., NCADEMI, AEM Center)?

##### Additional Questions/Notes

Practice Indicator

**Evidence**

#### Evidence of the Quality Indicators

The Quality Indicators for the Provision and Use of Accessible Digital Educational Materials and the Quality Indicators for the Provision and Use of Accessible Formats (collectively referred to as the Quality Indicators or QIs) are grounded in a robust foundation of federally funded policy research, technical assistance, and implementation. The QIs are research-informed, practice-validated, and developed through national collaboration with practitioners, policy makers, and experts.

The QIs are grounded in a fifteen-year foundation of multiple cycles of implementation by state educational agencies with partnering school districts. First developed in the late 2000s with funding from the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education, the original Quality Indicators were modeled after the research-based Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT) (Reed et al., 2024). Fifteen states in the OSEP-funded Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) Consortium (2007-2008), collaborated on the development of the first version of the Quality Indicators.

Between 2009-2014, ten states implemented the QIs with technical assistance (TA) from the OSEP-funded National AIM Center at CAST. Based on feedback from the state teams, the QIs were revised prior to being implemented by a new cohort of eight states receiving TA from the National Center on Accessible Educational Materials at CAST (AEM Center) between 2014-2019. This five-year cycle of implementation informed another phase of revisions in 2019-2020 in preparation for implementation by a cohort of seven states between 2020-2025 with technical assistance from the AEM Center at CAST and NCADEMI. Across the fifteen-year evolution of the QIs, collaboration and co-design with practitioners from the state and local levels have guided every phase of iteration and implementation.

Two case studies demonstrate effective implementation of the QIs at the state education agency level (Shaheen & Curry, 2023; Shaheen, 2024). These studies reveal the following measurable systems-level improvements:

* Cross-departmental partnerships,
* Development of comprehensive professional learning opportunities,
* Creation of robust procurement processes and written guidelines that proactively address accessibility, and
* Successful leverage of federal dollars to fund a new accessibility specialist position within a state education agency.

The case studies document how two separate agencies overcame common implementation barriers, such as competing priorities, limited capacity, and fragmented approaches, through strategic use of the QIs’ coordinated systems approach, resulting in replicable accessibility practices that serve as models for other states.

While the QIs have not been validated via randomized control trials (RCTs), the available evidence reflects:

* A well-developed theory of change, rooted in implementation science and policy alignment (ADA Title II, IDEA).
* Practice-based and community-validated evidence drawn from feedback cycles with multiple state and local education agencies and NCADEMI’s National Advisory Council.
* Evidence of successful use in real-world educational contexts through national intensive and targeted technical assistance funded by OSEP between 2007-2024, and as documented by the former AEM Center at CAST (Shaheen & Curry, 2023; Shaheen, 2024).

The QIs are designed to produce system-level outcomes such as:

* Increased consistency of timely access to accessible materials for students with disabilities.
* Greater cross-agency consistency in leadership, procurement, and instruction.
* Improved integration of accessibility into general education and digital innovation efforts.

Implementation of the QIs is expected to lead to continuous improvement in student outcomes, including increased participation in curriculum and improved compliance with ADA and IDEA mandates.

Both sets of QIs are accompanied by tools and services (a readiness protocol, self-assessment, and technical assistance) that help agencies collect data on implementation fidelity and outcomes. This supports iterative improvement even in the absence of experimental data.

Notably, the development of the QIs included deliberate feedback from agencies serving a wide range of racial, cultural, and linguistic populations, ensuring they reflect multiple settings and context-responsive practices. However, more disaggregated research on specific student populations is an area for continued exploration.

##### Summary of Evidence

The QIs demonstrate evidence based on multiple implementation cycles with documented, measurable results in real-world settings aligned with the target population. While not based on randomized controlled trials, the evidence includes:

* **Real-world documentation:** Effective implementation documented in varied educational contexts through national intensive and targeted technical assistance
* **Practice-based evidence**: Documentation of system-level outcomes in two case studies
* **Federal alignment:** Grounding in established federal policy (ADA Title II, IDEA) and implementation science frameworks
* **Practitioner validation**: Validation through national collaboration with practitioners, administrators, and policymakers, as well as the NCADEMI National Advisory Council

The evidence reflects sustained, measurable impact in real-world educational settings with the target population of state and local educational agencies serving students with disabilities. NCADEMI recognizes the need for additional research, including experimental studies and more comprehensive outcome data, to further strengthen the evidence base for the Quality Indicators.

##### Citations and Source References

National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (2020). AEM Quality Indicators with Critical Components for K-12. <https://bit.ly/aem-qis-v3-2020>

Reed, P., Bowser, G., Carl, D., Fonner, K., Foss, T., Korsten, J., Lalk, K., Breslin Larson, J., Marfilius, S., McCloskey, S., Newton, M., Paige, S., Springer, S., & Wojcik, B. (2024). Quality indicators for assistive technology: How an idea grew. Assistive Technology Outcomes and Benefits, 18(1), 137-155.

Shaheen, N. L. (2024). Getting unstuck: How a few determined educators strategically and serendipitously advanced accessible educational materials. National AEM Center at CAST. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED662895>

Shaheen, N.L., & Curry, C. (2023). A southern story: Providing accessible educational materials. National AEM Center at CAST. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED628761.pdf>

Practice Indicator

### Usability

#### Your Usability Rating:

**Instructions:**

1. Review the usability rating scale below and the discussion questions on the next page. This will help you understand how the usability of the Quality Indicators (QIs) is being evaluated and what factors to consider.
2. Read the description of the usability of the QIs and respond to the discussion questions. This ensures everyone has a shared understanding of the usability and can explore any gaps, strengths, or differing interpretations before assigning a rating.
3. Return to this page to rate the usability of the QIs.

**5 – Highly Usable**

The practice (QIs) has operationalized principles and core components that are measurable and observable, a validated fidelity assessment, and clearly defined and adaptable components to support contextualization for new settings or populations.

**4 – Usable**

The practice (QIs) has operationalized principles and core components that are measurable and observable and resources to monitor fidelity, but it lacks a validated fidelity measure. Adaptable components are identified to support contextualization for new settings or populations.

**3 – Somewhat Usable**

The practice (QIs) has operationalized principles and core components that are measurable and observable, but it lacks a fidelity assessment and adaptable components.

**2 – Minimally Usable**

The practice (QIs) has identified principles and core components, but the principles and components are not defined in measurable or observable terms. Adaptable components are not identified.

**1 – Not Usable**

The practice (QIs) does not identify principles or core components.

Practice Indicator

**Usability**

#### Usability Discussion Questions:

1. Are the Quality Indicators and their Critical Components clearly defined and written in a way that staff can understand and act on?
2. Are there resources like sample templates, self-assessments, or readiness tools available to guide implementation for our context?
3. Can the system be adapted without losing fidelity to its core purpose?
4. What do we know about key reasons for previous successful replications?

##### Additional Questions/Notes

Practice Indicator

**Usability**

#### Usability of the Quality Indicators

The Quality Indicators for the Provision and Use of Accessible Digital Educational Materials and the Quality Indicators for the Provision and Use of Accessible Formats (collectively referred to as the Quality Indicators or QIs) are highly usable for state and local education agencies due to their structure, clarity, and adaptability. Each QI includes a clear Statement of expected practice, a concise Intent description, and Critical Components that break down the specific actions needed to achieve that Indicator. This format supports immediate understanding and application without requiring interpretive translation from practitioners.

Importantly, the QIs were developed through multiple cycles of field testing and feedback from a national cohort of state and local educational agencies with practical implementation experience. As documented in the 2020 AEM Quality Indicators and subsequently updated by the National Center on Accessible Digital Educational Materials & Instruction (NCADEMI), this iterative process ensures that the QIs are grounded in real-world conditions and align with varying agency capacities.

To further promote usability, the QIs are supported by a readiness protocol, self-assessment tools, and exemplary technical assistance models. These supports make it easy for agencies to scaffold implementation and align roles, responsibilities, and systems without starting from scratch. They are flexible enough to be adapted to different state and district contexts, yet structured enough to ensure fidelity to core practices.

Examples of successful implementation in multiple states (see Shaheen & Curry, 2023; Shaheen, 2024) confirm that the QIs are practical, scalable, and replicable. In particular, agencies noted the importance of an ongoing, coordinated, and cross-disciplinary team approach that includes high-level agency leadership with the authority to make timely decisions. Agencies also found the ability to flexibly implement the interdependent QIs and Critical Components crucial for coordinating the work of administration, general and special education teams, procurement offices, and technology departments.

The usability of the QIs is also supported by their alignment with other research-based implementation tools, including the Innovation Configuration model and the Active Implementation Frameworks (Bailey et al., 2020; Hall & Hord, 2001; Kennedy & Jackson, 2022; Roy & Hurd, 2004). Additionally, the QIs are modeled after well-established practice frameworks such as the Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT) (Reed et al., 2024), further enhancing their credibility and application across educational systems.

##### Summary of Usability

The QIs demonstrate usability through their structured design and comprehensive implementation support. The usability features include:

* **Clear structure**: Each QI includes Statement, Intent, and Critical Components that are measurable and observable
* **Implementation tools**: Accompanied by a readiness protocol and self-assessment tools to ensure implementation fidelity
* **Proven adaptability**: Effectively contextualized across diverse state and district settings while maintaining core fidelity
* **Field-tested**: Developed through multiple cycles of practitioner feedback and real-world implementation

The QIs provide clear guidance for implementation while allowing appropriate adaptation to local contexts.

##### Citations and Source References

Bailey, T. R., Colpo, A. & Foley, A. (2020). [Assessment Practices Within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports](https://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Assessment-Practices-Within-a-Multi-Tiered-System-of-Supports-2.pdf) (ufl.edu) (Document No. IC-18). Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website.

Hall, G. E., & Hord, S. M. (2001). *Implementing change: Patterns, principles, and potholes*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Kennedy, S., & Jackson, K.R. (2022). [PDSA Cycles: Improvement and Implementation](https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/blog/pdsa-cycles-improvement-and-implementation/). Retrieved from University of North Carolina, National Implementation Research Network, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute website.

National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (2020). AEM Quality Indicators with Critical Components for K-12. <https://bit.ly/aem-qis-v3-2020>

Reed, P., Bowser, G., Carl, D., Fonner, K., Foss, T., Korsten, J., Lalk, K., Breslin Larson, J., Marfilius, S., McCloskey, S., Newton, M., Paige, S., Springer, S., & Wojcik, B. (2024). Quality indicators for assistive technology: How an idea grew. Assistive Technology Outcomes and Benefits, 18(1), 137-155.

Roy, P., & Hord, S. M. (2004). Innovation configurations chart a measured course toward change. *Journal of Staff Development, 25*(2), 54–58.

Shaheen, N. L. (2024). Getting unstuck: How a few determined educators strategically and serendipitously advanced accessible educational materials. National AEM Center at CAST. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED662895>

Shaheen, N.L., & Curry, C. (2023). A southern story: Providing accessible educational materials. National AEM Center at CAST. <https://eric.ed.gov/?q=source%3A%22National+Center+on+Accessible+Educational+Materials%22&id=ED628761>

Practice Indicator

### Supports

#### Your Supports Rating:

**Instructions:**

1. Review the supports rating scale below and the discussion questions on the next page. This will help you understand how the supports for the Quality Indicators (QIs) are being evaluated and what factors to consider.
2. Read the description of the supports for the QIs and respond to the discussion questions. This ensures everyone has a shared understanding of the evidence and can explore any gaps, strengths, or differing interpretations before assigning a rating.
3. Return to this page to rate the quality of supports of the QIs.

**5 - Well Supported**

Comprehensive supports for implementation are available, including expert technical assistance, training, coaching, tools, and data systems that build both staff competencies and organizational infrastructure; support is ongoing and aligned to implementation stages.

**4 - Supported**

Some supports are available to facilitate implementation, including limited resources for building staff competency (e.g., training and coaching) and for enabling organizational changes (e.g., data systems). The agency has clear plans or partnerships in place to address remaining gaps.

**3 - Somewhat Supported**

Some supports are available to facilitate competency development or organizational development, but not both.

**2 - Minimally Supported**

Limited supports are available beyond a recorded informational webinar.

**1 - Not Supported**

Few to no supports are available for implementation.

Practice Indicator

**Supports**

#### Supports Discussion Questions:

1. Are internal technical assistance supports available to assist with implementation planning and execution? Are there costs associated? Enter costs in notes section.
2. Are external technical assistance supports available to assist with implementation planning and execution? Are there costs associated? Enter costs in notes section.
3. Is professional development (orientation, training, and coaching) related to implementing the Quality Indicators available? Are there costs associated? What other training/coaching might be needed? Enter costs in the notes section.
4. Do we have existing partnerships that can help sustain implementation (e.g., State School for the Blind or Deaf, AT Act programs, National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC))?

##### Additional Questions/Notes

Practice Indicator

**Supports**

#### Supports for the Quality Indicators

State and local educational agencies implementing the Quality Indicators for the Provision and Use of Accessible Digital Educational Materials and/or the Quality Indicators for the Provision and Use of Accessible Formats (collectively referred to as the Quality Indicators or QIs) have access to a comprehensive system of supports, designed to ensure successful and sustainable implementation. These supports are provided by the National Center on Accessible Digital Educational Materials & Instruction (NCADEMI) and its partners through a tiered technical assistance model rooted in implementation science.

##### Technical Assistance

NCADEMI serves as the national intermediary for supporting implementation of the QIs. The Center brings together experts in digital accessibility, IDEA and ADA Title II compliance, procurement, instructional technology, and implementation science.

Implementation teams with committed leadership receive no-cost training and coaching through NCADEMI’s annual Professional Learning Group (PLG). Teams that complete one year in a PLG, can continue receiving technical assistance (TA) through an NCADEMI-facilitated Community of Practice (CoP). These offerings are aligned with the Active Implementation Frameworks and informed by adult learning principles and include:

* Recurring meetings
* Regular cycles of Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA)
* Opportunities to problem-solve implementation barriers
* Access to TA staff with expertise in both accessibility and implementation

**Contact:** ncademi@usu.edu | https://ncademi.org

##### Start-Up Costs

There are no fees charged by NCADEMI for participation in its technical assistance offerings. Resources, self-assessments, coaching, and professional learning are open source and federally funded. Agencies may incur internal costs related to staff time for participation and integration, but no licensing, subscription, or membership fees are required.

##### Implementation Resources

The QIs are accompanied by virtual orientation and coaching sessions, readiness protocols, self-assessment tools, and guides for implementation that are freely available. These materials:

* Can be adapted to reflect the diversity of implementation teams
* Include tools representative of a wide range of implementation contexts
* Meet strict digital accessibility requirements (minimum WCAG 2.1 AA)
* Are readily available through the NCADEMI website

##### Data Systems Support

The QIs include explicit data-related components (see Indicators 6), with guidance for:

* Tracking the provision and use of accessible materials
* Gathering user feedback from students, families, and educators
* Using IDEA Part B data to identify students who may need accessible formats
* Maintaining inventories of accessible tech
* Protecting student and family privacy

##### Orientation and Engagement

NCADEMI supports orientation and engagement through a Hexagon-based readiness process, readiness and self-assessment coaching webinars, and onboarding sessions for new implementation teams. These are designed to:

* Introduce the QIs in manageable language
* Clarify connections to compliance (ADA and IDEA)
* Align with agency priorities like multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), digital learning, and accountability
* Support internal leadership and cross-role commitment

##### Partnerships

Implementation is further supported by existing federal and state-level partnerships, many of which provide free or low-cost access to accessible materials and services. These partnerships help agencies scale and sustain QI-aligned practices.

###### Federally Available Supports

* [Bookshare](https://bookshare.org/) – Provides accessible digital books in multiple formats at no cost to eligible students and families
* [Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP)](https://dcmp.org/) – Offers captioned and described educational videos for free
* [National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC)](https://www.nimac.us/) – Repository for NIMAS source files used to produce accessible formats
* [Louis Database of Accessible Materials](https://louis.aph.org/#/) – Central database of accessible materials from over 50 organizations
* [National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS)](https://www.loc.gov/nls/) – Offers braille and audio books via a network of state libraries

###### State-Level Partners (vary by state)

* Instructional Resource Centers (IRCs) – Maintain state-level libraries and process material requests through the [State AEM Contact](https://ncademi.org/resources/state-aem-contacts)
* State Schools for the Blind and Deaf – Provide expertise, training, and sometimes material production
* [Assistive Technology Act Programs](https://at3center.net/state-at-programs/) – Offer state-specific support in accessible tech tools and training
* Public and State Libraries – May participate in NLS distribution and offer digital access programs

These partnerships represent critical infrastructure for sustaining implementation of both the Accessible Formats and Accessible Digital Educational Materials Quality Indicators.

##### Summary of Supports

Implementing agencies are not alone. NCADEMI and its partners provide the necessary scaffolding to ensure the QIs are actionable, sustainable, and deeply supported. The implementation supports include:

* **Expert technical assistance**: No-cost Professional Learning Groups and Communities of Practice facilitated by NCADEMI with implementation science expertise
* **Comprehensive training**: Orientation sessions, coaching, and professional development aligned to implementation stages
* **Implementation tools**: Validated readiness protocols, self-assessments, and PDSA cycle guidance
* **Data systems support**: Guidance for tracking implementation and outcomes
* **Federal & state-level partnerships**: Supported by supplementary no- and low-cost accessible materials services and agencies

All NCADEMI technical assistance and support is provided at no cost to implementing agencies, with ongoing technical assistance available throughout all implementation stages.

Agency Indicator

### Need

The Need Indicator helps agencies examine whether implementing the Quality Indicators addresses genuine challenges within their system. This assessment goes beyond legal compliance requirements to understand the specific accessibility barriers affecting students with disabilities. Teams should consider both current gaps and future risks, drawing from multiple data sources. Pay particular attention to leadership gaps or inconsistencies across departments that may be contributing to delays, inequitable access, or fragmented approaches to accessible materials. A strong assessment of need demonstrates clear understanding of your target population and how coordinated implementation of accessible materials practices will meaningfully improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

#### Need Discussion Questions:

1. What accessibility challenges are currently affecting students with disabilities (e.g., inaccessible digital materials, delays in accessible formats, lack of staff knowledge/training)?
2. Are leadership gaps or inconsistencies across departments contributing to delays or inequities?
3. What data (e.g., IEP noncompliance, student/parent/caregiver feedback, staff feedback, procurement gaps, IDEA Part B data) suggest a system-wide issue?
4. What are the current and future risks if a coordinated system for ensuring the provision of accessible educational materials is not implemented (e.g., short- and long-term student outcomes, legal liability)?

##### Additional Questions/Notes

Agency Indicator

**Need**

#### Your Need Rating:

**Instructions:**

Considering your team’s discussion, rate your agency’sunderstanding of your target population and how coordinated implementation of accessible materials practices will meaningfully improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

**5 - Strongly Meets Need**

The agency has demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of how the practice (QIs) meets the needs of the target population. The agency has included three or more data sources when conducting the needs assessment, including administrative data and perspectives of staff, community partners, families, and students with and without disabilities, and has data to identify the target population.

**4 - Meets Need**

The agency has demonstrated an understanding of how the practice (QIs) meets the needs of the target population. The agency has included two or more data sources when conducting the needs assessment, including administrative data and perspectives of staff, community partners, families, and students with and without disabilities, and has data to identify needs of the target population.

**3 - Somewhat Meets Need**

The agency has demonstrated some understanding of how the practice (QIs) meets the needs of the target population. The agency has included two or more data sources when conducting the needs assessment, including administrative data and perspectives of staff, community partners, families, and students with and without disabilities.

**2 - Minimally Meets Need**

The agency has demonstrated minimal understanding of how the practice (QIs) meets the needs of the target population. The agency has included only administrative data when conducting the needs assessment.

**1 - Does Not Meet Need**

The agency has not demonstrated an understanding of how the (QIs) practice meets the needs of the target population.

Agency Indicator

### Fit

The Fit Indicator evaluates how well the Quality Indicator (QIs) align with your agency's existing priorities, values, and initiatives. This assessment examines whether implementing accessible materials practices will complement or compete with other ongoing efforts, and whether the approach resonates with your community's values and culture. Teams should consider strategic alignment across departments, potential synergies with current initiatives like MTSS or UDL, and whether accessible materials implementation reflects priorities already emerging within the agency. A strong fit indicates that the Quality Indicators will integrate naturally into your system's broader improvement efforts rather than operating as an isolated compliance activity.

#### Fit Discussion Questions:

1. How do the Quality Indicators align with our strategic priorities (e.g., digital learning and literacy, closing opportunity gaps, raising graduation rates, IDEA and/or ADA Title II compliance)?
2. Are there other initiatives (e.g., multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS), universal design for learning (UDL), edtech procurement reforms) that this would complement or compete with?
3. Do the Quality Indicators reflect values and practices already emerging within our agency?
4. Is there community support or demand for improved accessibility for students with disabilities?

##### Additional Questions/Notes

Agency Indicator

**Fit**

#### Your Fit Rating:

**Instructions:**

Considering your team’s discussion, rate your agency’s understanding of the how the Quality Indicators will integrate naturally into your system's broader improvement efforts rather than operating as an isolated compliance activity.

**5 - Strong Fit**

The practice (Qs) fits with the priorities of the agency, its community value (including specific populations), and its other existing initiatives.

**4 - Fit**

The practice (Qs) fits with the priorities of the agency and its community values. While the values of specific populations and alignment with other initiatives have not been assessed for fit, the agency has a clear plan to examine these areas and ensure the practice fits within the broader system.

**3 - Somewhat Fit**

The practice (Qs) fits with all of the priorities of the agency, but it is unclear whether it aligns with community values and other existing initiatives.

**2 - Minimal Fit**

The practice (Qs) fits with some of the priorities of the agency, but it is unclear whether it aligns with community values and other existing initiatives.

**1 - Does Not Fit**

The practice (Qs) does not fit with the priorities of the agency, its community values, or its other existing initiatives.

Agency Indicator

### Capacity

The Capacity Indicator assesses whether your agency has the foundational resources, infrastructure, and support systems needed to successfully implement and sustain the Quality Indicators. This comprehensive evaluation covers financial resources, staffing and leadership structures, administrative systems, technology infrastructure, and ongoing improvement processes. Teams should honestly evaluate current assets while identifying specific gaps that need to be addressed before or during implementation. Strong capacity doesn't require having everything in place initially, but it does require realistic plans and partnerships to build or access necessary supports for sustainable, high-quality implementation.

#### Capacity Discussion Questions:

1. What funding is currently allocated for accessible formats and/or accessible digital educational materials? What other funding opportunities aligned to this initiative are available?
2. Do we have the staffing and leadership infrastructure (e.g. adequate number of personnel, required knowledge and expertise, commitment from leadership, implementation champions, roles and responsibilities aligned to support this work) required to support implementation of the Quality Indicators?
3. Are there existing administrative systems and processes that can support implementation or can be adapted to do so (e.g. accessibility policies or procedures, data tracking, internal and external communication channels, hiring practices and onboarding, procurement procedures, professional development infrastructure)?
4. Do we have the technical infrastructure needed to launch and sustain implementation? Does implementation require new or updated technology (hardware or software, such as a data or reporting system)? Use notes section to explain. List required hardware and/or software. Include costs if known.
5. Do we have the capacity to monitor implementation and use data for continuous improvement? Use notes section to explain.
6. Although there is no purchase cost for the Quality Indicators, what are the indirect costs of implementation (e.g. staff time, coordination, additional training or professional learning resources) to implement the Quality Indicators each year? Use notes section to explain and list costs if known.

##### Additional Questions/Notes

Agency Indicator

**Capacity**

#### Your Capacity Rating:

**Instructions:**

Considering your team’s discussion, rate your agency’s capacity to implement and sustain the Quality Indicators by evaluating whether the necessary resources, infrastructure, and support systems are currently in place or realistically attainable for high-quality, long-term implementation.

**5 - Strong Capacity**

The agency has strong capacity to implement and sustain the practice (QIs) with integrity. This includes a qualified workforce, leadership support, sufficient financial resources, strong technology infrastructure, and administrative systems that support ongoing implementation.

**4 - Adequate Capacity**

The agency has adequate capacity needed for sustainable implementation with integrity, such as staffing, leadership, funding, or administrative or technology systems, and has clear plans or partnerships in place to address remaining gaps.

**3 - Some Capacity**

The agency has some capacity needed for sustainable implementation with integrity, such as a partially qualified workforce or limited funding, but lacks others (e.g., technology infrastructure, administrative support). Efforts to build additional capacity are in progress.

**2 - Minimal Capacity**

The agency has minimal capacity for sustainable implementation with integrity, with only one core component (e.g., some staff or limited funding), and no coordinated strategy to address the remaining gaps.

**1 - No Capacity**

The agency has no meaningful capacity to support implementation with integrity. It lacks all essential components with no plan to develop the capacity required.

## Contact NCADEMI

Please reach out to NCADEMI for support with using the *Hexagon Tool*.

E-mail: [ncademi@usu.edu](mailto:ncademi@usu.edu)

Voice or Text: (435) 554-8213