

Introduction to the ISCA Student Standards Learning Progression

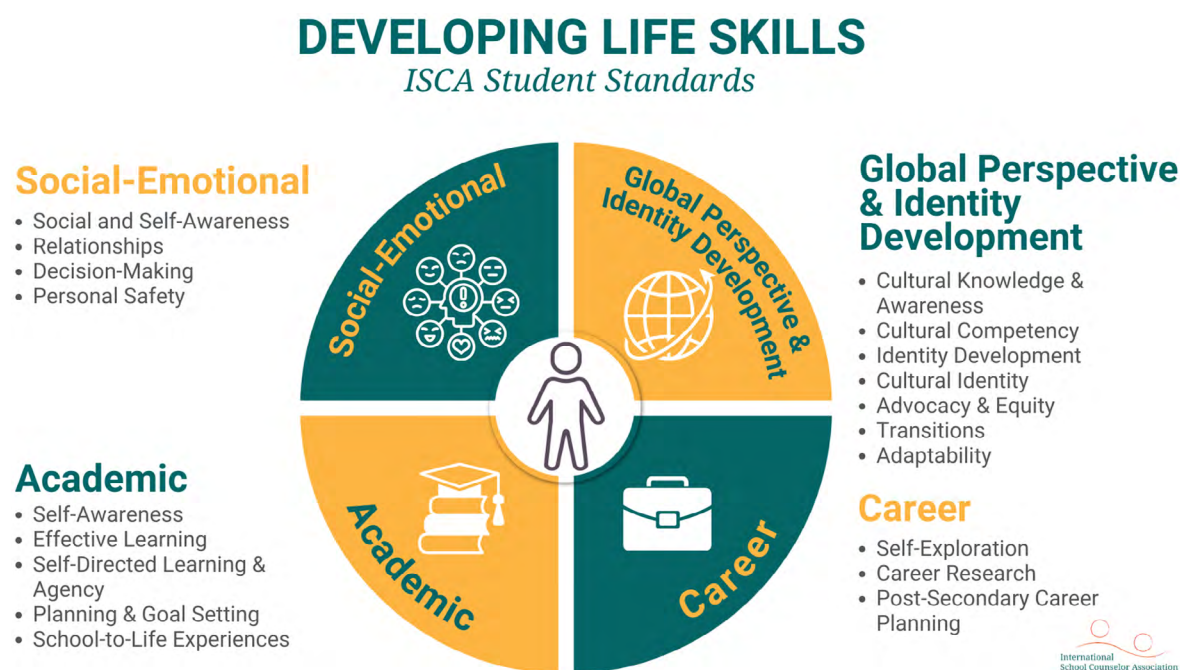
The **ISCA Student Standards Learning Progression (2024)** provides clear learning outcomes for social-emotional learning, global perspective, identity development, academic skills, and career readiness. By adopting this tool school-wide, every member of the school community—counselors, teachers, and administrators—can play a vital role in nurturing these essential skills. This tool is most effective when adopted school-wide, with each member of the school community playing a distinct role in fostering these skills. While school counselors play a central role, the responsibility for helping learners develop these essential life skills extends beyond them. These skills should be integrated throughout all aspects of the school experience and across all disciplines, ensuring that every learner is supported in their holistic development.

What are the ISCA Student Standards?

The **ISCA Student Standards (2022)** are internationally recognized content standards that outline the specific knowledge, attitudes, and skills across four domains: social-emotional, global perspective and identity development, academic, and career. In May 2022, ISCA revised these student standards to meet several critical goals, including incorporating identity development within the Global Perspective and Identity Development Domain, promoting equity, reducing harm, improving access for all learners, and aligning with the most recent research and developments in education.

While school counselors use the standards to guide the planning and implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program, the ISCA Student Standards are meant to be adopted school-wide and articulated within and across the curriculum. When all educators adopt these standards, schools create a unified and integrated approach to the development of all learners. Throughout this document ISCA is intentionally using the term “educators,” which encompasses school counselors, administrators, and subject/academic teachers. ISCA chose the term “learner” instead of “student” because “student” suggests a limited focus on skills needed only for school, while “learner” emphasizes the concept of lifelong learning.

The infographic below highlights the four main domains of the ISCA Student Standards and the specific standards within each domain. It illustrates how these components collectively support the development of essential life skills.



What Is a Learning Progression?

A learning progression is an organized sequence of outcomes that a learner is expected to meet at various stages of their educational journey. It provides a clear developmental pathway, enabling educators to design learning experiences that support ongoing growth and progression.

The **ISCA Student Standards Learning Progression (2024)** specifies **what learners are expected to know and be able to do by the end of a grade band**. A school’s instructional program should emphasize developing learners’ abilities to acquire and apply these standards. The curriculum must ensure appropriate accommodations for the diverse populations of learners in schools. These standards are not instructional or assessment tasks, but statements of what learners should achieve after instruction. Decisions on how to best help learners meet these program goals are left to individual schools.

The ISCA Learning Progression DOES Provide	The ISCA Learning Progression DOES NOT Provide
An organized sequence of learning expectations or benchmarks	A curriculum
A clear pathway for the development of learners	Specific requirements about the design of lesson plans or organization of units
Statements of the observable learning outcomes	Instructional or assessment tasks
Specific details about what learners should know and do by the end of each grade band, allowing for flexibility in how and when these skills are integrated into the curriculum	Rigid instructions on where specific skills should be integrated into the curriculum or at which exact grade level they should be taught
Support that encourages continuous growth and achievement	Specific information about how to help learners meet program goals

Why Was the Learning Progression Created?

The **ISCA Student Standards Learning Progression (2024)** was created to address the increasing need for schools to design a holistic learning experience for students—one that integrates social-emotional learning, global perspective and identity development, academic skills, and career readiness into a cohesive framework. Traditionally, this responsibility has often been assigned primarily to counselors. This tool empowers schools to adopt a school-wide approach, ensuring that every educator contributes to the comprehensive development of each learner throughout their educational journey. The Learning Progression encourages educators to work collaboratively, ensuring that all learners receive a consistent, high-quality education that prepares them for postsecondary education, future careers, and global citizenship.

ISCA's objective was to develop a tool that offers sufficient guidance while granting educators the freedom to apply the ISCA Student Standards in their own unique school environments. As such, the Learning Progression provides a common language for schools to follow and outlines skills that are clear and directive without being overly prescriptive.

How Was It Created?

As an organization, ISCA is committed to ongoing research and development. As such, the Learning Progression was created through a rigorous process that reflects the latest insights and best practices in education, ensuring that it meets the evolving needs of learners and educators alike. Our dedicated team of international school counselors, curriculum developers, school leaders, expert reviewers, and consultants—representing various specializations and developmental levels, including higher education—mapped out the progression of all standards, ensuring they are developmentally appropriate and sequential. This comprehensive approach aligns with current educational best practices and the latest research, allowing for a more cohesive and effective implementation of the ISCA Student Standards. The ISCA Learning Progression underwent several rounds of feedback and review. The drafts were shared at ISCA events, including the virtual collaborative and annual conferences, enabling hundreds of counselors and other educators to contribute their expertise. A complete list of official contributors and resources that guided our research can be found at the end of this introduction.

Intended Audience for the Learning Progression

- The **ISCA Student Standards Learning Progression (2024)** is for:
- **School Counselors:** To design developmentally appropriate lessons and activities, essential for building a comprehensive school counseling program.
 - **Teachers:** To integrate social-emotional learning, global perspective, identity development, academic skills, and career readiness across all subjects and grade levels.
 - **Administrators:** To support and lead school-wide initiatives that align with strategic goals related to holistic student development.
 - **Curriculum Leaders:** To ensure that the curriculum meets diverse learning needs and aligns with the ISCA standards for comprehensive education.
 - **Other School Staff:** To play a role in fostering essential life skills in students, contributing to a unified approach to student development.
 - **Parents and Learners:** To provide clear expectations and support equity in education, helping to understand and meet the learning goals across different cultural and educational contexts.

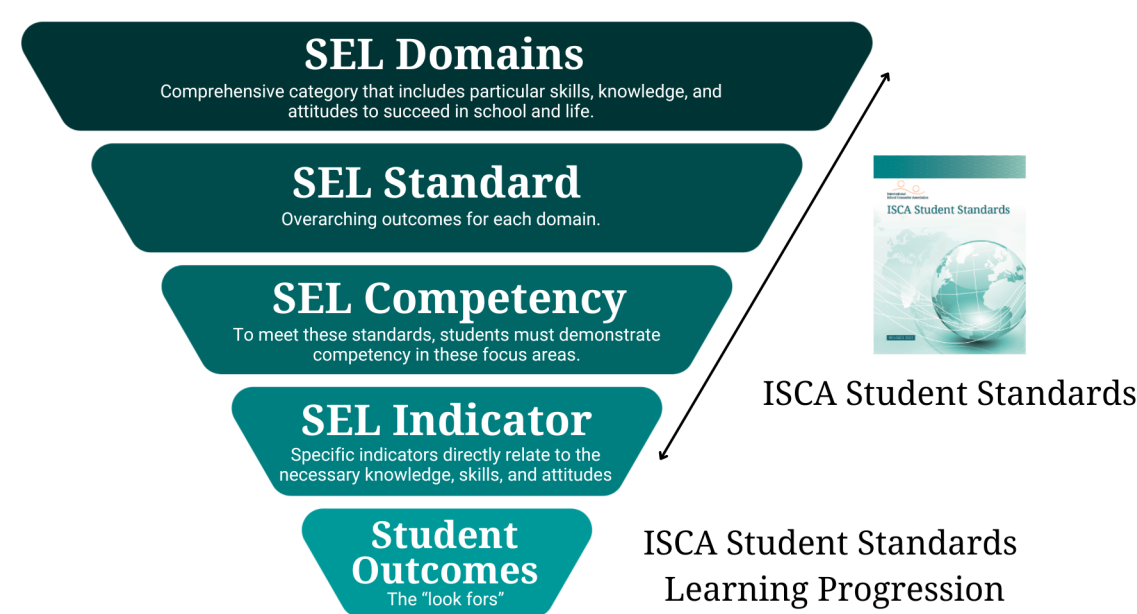
How Is the Learning Progression Organized?

Grade Bands

The learning outcomes that are outlined in the progression identify what learners should independently know and be capable of achieving by the end of each grade band from Pre-K, K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12. These are based on the US/American grade structures and can be adjusted to suit the developmental stages and naming conventions used in your school. These grade-banded learning outcomes are intentionally designed to support developmental progress by strategically guiding learners toward deeper learning in the subsequent grade band. **They build upon the preceding level, indicating that learners should demonstrate proficiency in both the previous and current grade bands.**

Organization

The learning progression is organized around the four domains of the ISCA Student Standards: social-emotional, global perspective and identity development, academic, and career. Each domain is further broken down by standards, structured as follows:



Coding Structure

The coding structure helps educators quickly identify where specific skills or knowledge are situated within the broader framework of the standards, competencies, and indicators across different domains. It provides a systematic way to organize and reference learning objectives and expectations within educational materials and assessments.

Using the following as an example, the coding system can be interpreted in this way:

- **C:A2:1 Identify career trends and occupations**
- **C:** Represents the **Career Domain**
- **A2:** Indicates **Standard A, Competency 2** within the Career Domain.
- **1:** Refers to **Indicator 1**, which specifies a particular skill or knowledge area related to **Competency 2** under **Standard A** in the **Career Domain**.

Language/Terminology in the Learning Progression

We refer to learners using “they/their” pronouns to promote gender neutrality and inclusivity, ensuring that all learners are represented without bias. This usage aligns with current best practices in academic language, reflecting a commitment to diversity and respect for individual identities.

Using the Learning Progression

Using the **ISCA Student Standards Learning Progression (2024)** involves guiding learners through a structured process of nurturing essential life skills.

Educators can use the Learning Progression to:

- establish clear learning goals aligned with the standards
- assess learners’ current proficiency levels
- track progress over time
- provide ongoing feedback to support development
- adjust instruction based on collected data
- encourage learners to reflect and assess their progress toward goals
- celebrate milestones achieved
- review and communicate with learners and families to ensure transparency and collaboration in fostering growth in these crucial life skills

Important Notes: You have the flexibility to apply these standards based on your school’s specific needs and priorities. Decisions should be made collaboratively, considering identified gaps, redundancies, and priorities. Regular evaluation is crucial for monitoring progress and adjusting approaches to optimize learning outcomes.

ISCA has developed essential tools and expert tips to support schools as they implement the ISCA Student Standards and Learning Progression in their programs. For more information visit: www.iscainfo.com.

About ISCA

The International School Counselor Association (ISCA) is the leading association formed by international school counselors for counselors. ISCA cultivates a safe, open-minded environment to promote community, connection, and professional learning. Our comprehensive programs are culturally competent and empower counselors to effectively advocate for learners. By joining ISCA, members can enhance their professional development, expand their knowledge, and engage with a global community of international school counselors.

Visit ISCA at www.iscainfo.com to learn more and become a part of our community. Moreover, to learn more about developing a comprehensive counseling program, order a copy of the ISCA International Model (2022) at www.iscainfo.com/The-Model.

Acknowledgments

This work would not have been possible without the dedication and expertise of our distinguished Working Group. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to these professionals for their unwavering commitment to the creation of these learning outcomes. Their collaborative efforts, insightful contributions, and tireless work have been instrumental in shaping a progression that is both rigorous and adaptable to diverse educational contexts.

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Acknowledgments *(continued)*

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Expert Reviewers

Jane Baron	Lynn Kogelman
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Progression Preview and Feedback at the ISCA 2023 Bangkok and 2024 Athens Conferences

The progression was shared at the ISCA Annual Conference in 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand, and again in 2024 in Athens, Greece. Over 600 counselors and educators had the opportunity to review, edit, write, and contribute to the development of the learning progression. We are deeply grateful for their time, insights, and unwavering support, which have been invaluable in shaping this important work. Together, the contributions of our Working Group and Expert Reviewers have culminated in a robust Learning Progression that is poised to make a significant impact on student learning outcomes worldwide. We are deeply grateful for their expertise, dedication, and unwavering support in this endeavor.

Resources

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