
5.1 Purpose of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report

The outcome of the self evaluation process is an Institutional Self Evaluation Report. An important purpose of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report is to provide a written analysis of strengths and weaknesses of educational quality and institutional effectiveness based on the institution’s continuous evaluation and quality improvement activities which have been considered in the self evaluation process.

Unnecessarily long reports can make them difficult to follow. A good Institutional Self Evaluation Report should concisely state the institution’s resolution of any deficiencies noted by the previous evaluation team and its current and sustained compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. If additional work remains for the future, the Report should generate concrete details and actionable improvement plans including timelines and outcomes for that work. Self-identified actionable improvement plans (formerly Planning Agendas) should be integrated into planning processes of the institution for implementation and follow-up. And the institution may wish to use them as evidence to demonstrate planning processes and results.

The College is asked to discuss, in a Quality Focus Essay, two or three areas it has identified for further study, improvement, and to enhance academic quality, institutional effectiveness, and excellence (see Section 5.3 below).

The evidence appended to the Report should clearly verify the statements made in the Report. When possible, the Report should incorporate passages from the evidence. This approach provides the External Evaluation Team with the best starting point for the review of the institution’s ability to assure and improve its own quality. In the preparation of the Report, it is useful if the institution reviews previous college reports, team reports and Commission action letters.

Furthermore, a good Institutional Self Evaluation Report, when addressing the Accreditation Standards, makes direct reference to the institution’s mission and institutional objectives. The Report also makes reference to evidence of achieved results, evaluation of the results, and examples of improvements which are integrated into the institutional planning processes rather than only describing processes and/or intentions which are not supported by evidence of achievement. Through this approach, the institution will demonstrate to the External Evaluation Team how the institution’s evaluation, improvement, and planning cycle functions. At the same time, the Report should be clear and concise. It should make reference to previous sections in order to avoid unnecessary repetition.

In summary, a good Report must be meaningful and useful to the members of the institution as well as provide sufficient information for the External Evaluation Team about the institution, evidence of its achievements, and how it meets the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies.
year of establishment. The introduction should highlight the major developments that the institution has undergone since the last educational quality and institutional effectiveness review, including student enrollment data, summary data on the service area in terms of labor market, demographic and socio-economic data. The introduction should also include the names and locations, including addresses, of sites where 50% or more of a program, certificate or degree is available to students and any other off-campus sites or centers, including international sites. Institutions should clearly state in the Self Evaluation Report, as it does to the public, any specialized or programmatic accreditation held.

B. Presentation of Student Achievement Data and Institution-set Standards
Institutions are required to gather and analyze data on student achievement. Student achievement data provides the institution with basic information about achievement of its educational mission (see 5.4 i). ACCJC has developed a generic template for the presentation of disaggregated student achievement data that will assist institutions in implementing data-driven and informed evaluation and planning processes (Appendix G).

Institutions are also required to establish institution-set standards for success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution’s mission. Institutions are expected to set expectations for each of the areas of student achievement (See 5.4 vii), demonstrate that they gather data on these standards, analyze the results on student achievement, and make appropriate changes/improvements to increase student performance (Appendix H).

External evaluation teams will verify that institutions collect student achievement data and use it in the decision-making and integrated planning processes. Teams will also review the institution-set standards, determine their appropriateness and whether the institution is meeting its own expectations, and ensure that plans to improve student performance are developed and implemented whenever the standards are not met.

C. Organization of the Self Evaluation Process
The institution should explain, either in narrative or chart form, how it organized the self evaluation process, the individuals who were involved, and what their responsibilities were.

D. Organizational Information
The Institutional Self Evaluation Report should include organizational charts for the institution and for each major function, including names of individuals holding each position. In a corporate structure, the relationship to the accredited institution, including roles and responsibilities of both entities, must be included in this section. The institution should provide a list of its contracts with third-party providers and non-regionally accredited organizations.

Colleges in multi-college districts/systems must provide an account of whether primary responsibility for all or parts of specific functions that relate to the Standards are vested at the college or district level. The overview of the responsibilities of key functions in institutions in multi-college districts/systems must be presented in the form of a Functional Map. (Examples of Functional
The institution will provide to the External Evaluation Team members an electronic copy in Word of the Self Evaluation Report and electronic access to evidence (which can be in PDF format) in advance of the visit. During the visit, the team members should also have access to the evidence and data upon which the institutional analysis is based at the time of the institution’s submission of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report. It is helpful for readers when the electronic copy of the Report contains hyperlinks to the relevant evidence. Links should be to evidence stored on an electronic memory device (flash drive/USB stick). Links to websites or other materials should be for supplemental information only and not content for the Report itself. Screen shots of relevant online material can be included in the electronic evidence files. The institution should ensure that all links are active and all evidence on flash drives is correct (see Appendix J).

The numbering of the evidentiary documents referenced in the Institutional Self Evaluation Report should align with the relevant Standards, together with a brief title, e.g., Strategic Plan. Documents which are relevant to more than one Standard should be allocated a number in the first chapter where they are relevant and referenced thereafter. In addition to the evidence and data the institution submits with the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, the External Evaluation Team may also request additional evidence to be available during the site visit.

5.3 Content for the Institutional Self Evaluation Report

The Commission has developed a list of content that an Institutional Self Evaluation Report must include. The content requirements for an Institutional Self Evaluation Report are presented below.

Cover Sheet
The cover sheet should include the name and address of the institution, and a notation that the Institutional Self Evaluation Report is in support of an application for candidacy, initial accreditation, or reaffirmation of accreditation, and date submitted (see Appendix D).

Certification Page
The Institutional Self Evaluation Report should include a certification page which includes the college Chief Executive Officer’s confirmation of the purpose of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report and that the Report accurately reflects the nature and substance of the institution. The certification page should attest to effective campus participation in the Report preparation, accuracy, and that the governing board has read the Report and was involved in the self evaluation process. The institution should include signatures of the district/system chief executive officer (if appropriate), governing board chair, and other campus constituent groups as determined by the institution (see Appendix B).

Table of Contents
The Institutional Self Evaluation Report should include a table of contents to facilitate the External Evaluation Team’s use of the Report.

Structure of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report
A. Introduction
   The introduction should include a brief history of the institution, including the...
Maps can be found in Appendix E.) The institution should also provide an analysis of the effectiveness of this division of responsibilities.

E. Certification of Continued Institutional Compliance with Eligibility Requirements
The USDE, as part of the recognition process of accrediting commissions, requires that the accrediting commissions ensure their accredited institutions provide evidence they meet the commissions’ eligibility requirements at any given time. The Institutional Self Evaluation Report must include the institution’s analysis and evidentiary information demonstrating that the institution meets the Eligibility Requirements (see 3.1 above). The Eligibility Requirements as well as the list of documents needed to substantiate continued eligibility can be found in Appendix F.

F. Certification of Continued Institutional Compliance with Commission Policies
The Accreditation Standards reference specific Commission policies. The Institutional Self Evaluation Report must address how the institution is in compliance with these policies in conjunction with their assessment of how they meet the Standards. Some Commission policies are not integrated in the Accreditation Standards. The Institutional Self Evaluation Report must include the institution’s analysis and evidentiary information demonstrating that the institution addresses policies specific to the college mission and activities. A complete list of the policies that institutions must specifically address can be found in Appendix A.

G. Structure of the Institutional Analysis
The main body of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report must identify and address each of the Accreditation Standards including the subsections. When preparing this part, it is useful for institutions to keep the principles underlying the Accreditation Standards in mind, i.e., the Commission expects institutions to:

- design and implement an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, re-evaluation, and improvement,
- analyze its programs and services while paying particular attention to program review data, student achievement data, and student learning outcomes data, and
- take action to improve based on the analysis supported by adequate sources of data and other evidence and make improvement plans when warranted.

The following elements should guide the structure of the analysis of each of the Standards.

Evidence of Meeting the Standard
The institution should describe and document the factual conditions at the college, including college practices and policies, which demonstrate how each Standard is being met.

Analysis and Evaluation
Based on the evidence provided, the institution should analyze and systematically evaluate its performance against each Accreditation Standard and its institutional mission. This analysis should result in actionable conclusions about institutional effectiveness, educational quality, and decisions for
improvement. The basic questions to explore are whether or not, and to what degree, institutional evidence demonstrates that the institution meets each Accreditation Standard and how the institution has reached this conclusion. The Commission expects current and sustained compliance with Standards, focusing on accomplishments and outcomes that have been achieved and not just structures or processes used.

**H. Quality Focus Essay**
Continuous quality improvement is a mark of institutional effectiveness. As an institution evaluates its programs and services in the continuous cycle of data analysis, planning, resource allocation, and evaluation, it examines its effectiveness in accomplishing its mission in the context of student learning and student achievement. During that examination, it identifies areas of needed change, development, institutionalization, and expansion. Within the accreditation focus on continuous quality improvement, the institution will identify two or three areas coming out of the institutional self evaluation on which the institution has decided to act (action projects), and which will have significance over a multi-year period. These will be described in a Quality Focus Essay (QFE). The Essay will have a 5,000 word limit and will discuss in detail the identified areas to be acted upon, including the manner, timeline, and anticipated outcomes, and including impact on academic quality and institutional effectiveness. The Essay will be related to the Accreditation Standards and should come out of data, be realistic, observable and measurable. The Essay should be consistent in its factual basis and analysis with the other portions of the college’s Self Evaluation Report. It will provide the institution with multi-year, long-term directions for improvement and demonstrate the institution’s commitment to excellence. The areas identified in the Essay will become critical focal points for the institution’s Midterm Report.

External evaluation teams will assess the QFE using the Evaluation Tool for Assessing the Quality Focus Essay found in Appendix L.

**I. Responses to Recommendations from the Most Recent Educational Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Review**
The Institutional Self Evaluation Report must include a section, near the end of the Report that demonstrates the institution has addressed recommendations made in the previous External Evaluation Report. Those recommendations represent the observations and analyses of an External Evaluation Team at the time of the visit. The Commission expects that the institution has, as part of its ongoing quality assurance activities, adequately addressed the recommendations, resolved deficiencies noted by the previous External Evaluation Team, and has sustained compliance with the ERs and Accreditation Standards cited within each recommendation.

**J. Changes and Plans Arising out of the Self Evaluation Process**
During the process of self evaluation, institutions commonly find areas where institutional effectiveness can be improved or changes are needed in order to meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or Commission policies. Both the changes made during the self evaluation process and plans for future action should be included in the institution’s Self Evaluation Report. The plans should also be integrated into the institution’s ongoing evaluation and
planning processes for implementation and follow up. The institution should include changes it has made in response to its self evaluation, and of future actions planned. These changes and planned changes demonstrate the necessary linkages between the self evaluation process and institutional planning, decision making, resource allocation, and continuous improvement. The changes made and plans for future action should be placed in the Self Evaluation Report following the relevant grouping of standards (for example, I.A, I.B, I.C, II.A, etc.). The discussion should include any timelines for implementation and expected outcomes. It is suggested that the institution develop a chart summarizing changes made in response to its self evaluation process and future actions planned for ease of institutional tracking and monitoring.

5.4 Requirements for Evidentiary Information

As mentioned in Section 5.2 above, the Commission requires the institution to provide specific kinds of data and other sources of evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The USDE continuously revises and interprets federal regulations; in response, the Commission updates its list of federal requirements for its manuals and policies. Institutions are accountable for knowing and maintaining their reporting relationships with the USDE and other regulators and for meeting USDE requirements. The data required by the USDE which must be included in the Institutional Self Evaluation Report are marked with an asterisk (*) in the following sections.

Colleges are expected to set for themselves institutional standards of acceptable performance below which the institution would find its performance unacceptable and take corrective action. New federal regulations also require external evaluation teams to review the standards institutions have set for student learning and achievement; how well the institution believes it is meeting its standards, and whether those standards are reasonable. (See Institution-set Standards for Student Performance, page 27.)

All evidentiary information included in the Institutional Self Evaluation Report must be discussed and cited within the various Accreditation Standards and subsections where reference to the information is relevant. Furthermore, the information should be supported by analysis in terms of its alignment with the institutional mission and how the outcome of the data analysis will impact the future planning and development of the institution.

i. Student Achievement Data*

Student achievement data is end-point data that provides an institution with basic information about achievement of its educational mission. Collected longitudinally, such data and analyses will inform the college whether changes in pedagogy or services are effective in improving student completion, or whether a decline in student completion needs to be given attention and study so that trends can be reversed. It will also keep institutions informed about fluctuations and serve as a warning if completion rates decrease and trends need to be reversed. When collected in disaggregated form, it may also provide information about barriers to completion and transfer, the need to collect additional data, and indicate attention that needs to be given to various groups.
The ACCJC has developed a generic template for the presentation of disaggregated institutional student achievement data to assist institutions in implementing data-driven and informed evaluation and planning processes. The template is accompanied by a list of questions to encourage institutional analysis of data and identification of areas both in need of improvement and worthy of special note (see Appendix G). Some institutions and district/systems may have developed other means of presenting data for campus and district/system-wide discussion and decision-making. Those templates may be acceptable as well.

Student achievement data should be in disaggregated form by:

- Age
- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Socio-economic status
- Delivery mode
- Instructional site
- Cohort group
- Other, as relevant to the institution's service area and mission

The data should be provided separately for the following credit/non-credit programs:

- Liberal Arts or Liberal Education/Transfer Programs
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs
- Basic Skills and English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs

Data on Incoming Students

- Student preparedness for college, including need for academic advising, assessment scores indicating need for remedial instruction and orientation, etc.
- Student training needs, including local employment training needs, transfer education needs, basic skills and/or ESL needs, etc.
- Student educational goals

Data on Enrolled Students* (When an institution reports rates in the following categories, it must specify the denominator.)

- FT/PT student enrollment across the institution's range of instructional programs
- Annual growth/decline in headcount enrollment (numbers or rates)
- Course completion (numbers or rates)
- Persistence of students from term to term (numbers or rates)
improvement. The basic questions to explore are whether or not, and to what degree, institutional evidence demonstrates that the institution meets each Accreditation Standard and how the institution has reached this conclusion. The Commission expects current and sustained compliance with Standards, focusing on accomplishments and outcomes that have been achieved and not just structures or processes used.

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