

PROCEDURES FOR FIFTH-YEAR REPORTS

All institutions on a ten-year evaluation cycle are required to submit an interim report five years after the comprehensive visit. The purpose of this report is to provide the Commission an opportunity to review the institution's current status in keeping with the Commission's policy on Periodic Review. The following procedures have been adopted for the development and consideration of the fifth-year report.

Procedures

- I. Reminder to the Institution: Approximately a year in advance of the Commission's consideration of the fifth-year report, the institution is reminded of the requirement and provided a copy of these procedures.
- II. Staff Visit: At the institution's request, a member of the Commission's staff will visit the institution, meeting with those responsible for the preparation of the report, to discuss its preparation in light of Commission expectations.
- III. Preparation of the Report: The Commission prescribes no methodology for the report's preparation. Institutions are encouraged to use the occasion as an opportunity to undertake an assessment of their educational planning and effectiveness both for their own purposes and in reference to their fulfillment of the Commission's *Standards*. Where on-going systems of self-evaluation exist, institutions should utilize the results of those efforts in the preparation of their reports.

Institutions that have electronically offered degree programs (in which students can complete 50% or more of the courses on-line) and off-campus programming (branch campuses and other instructional locations at which students can complete 50% or more of their degree) included as part of their accreditation should address these programs at appropriate points within their presentation of the institution as a whole. Institutions which offer such programs but have not yet completed the "substantive change" process to include them in the institution's accreditation should contact the Commission offices.

The Commission asks that the following guidelines be used for the format and content of the report.

1. Cover Page. The cover page includes the name and location of the institution, the date of the report's submission, and a notation that this is a fifth-year report.
2. Statement on Report Preparation. The institution should describe briefly the process by which the report was prepared and indicate the names of those involved in its preparation.
3. Institutional Overview. This section should provide an overview of the institution, including its purpose, setting, and any special circumstances that would help the reader understand its nature and scope.

4. Response to Areas Identified for Special Emphasis. Frequently, in its actions specifying fifth-year interim reports, the Commission will identify areas which should be given particular emphasis in the report. Institutions in preparing their report should give special consideration to these matters, providing sufficient information so that the Commission will be adequately apprised of the current state of development in the areas indicated.
5. Major Changes. A description of major changes or significant developments at the institution since the time of the last comprehensive evaluation should be provided. Information included in the previous section should not be repeated.
6. Efforts to Enhance Institutional Effectiveness. The *Standards for Accreditation* seek to assure that institutions assess their effectiveness to verify and enhance the fulfillment of their mission and purposes, giving primary focus to the attainment of educational objectives. The institution should describe its efforts since the comprehensive visit to enhance the fulfillment of the *Standards* in this regard. For further information see the attached Policy Statement on Institutional Effectiveness.
7. Summary Appraisal and Plans. The report's narrative concludes with a summary appraisal of the fifth-year report as a representative snapshot of the institution's continuing development at this point in time. It would be helpful for institutions preparing their reports to indicate a prioritization from the three major topics of the report "Areas Identified for Special Emphasis" (if applicable), "Major Changes," and "Efforts to Enhance Institutional Effectiveness" in terms of what is considered most important for ongoing attention by the institution. Also included here should be a brief description of any significant changes contemplated during the next five years.
8. Enrollment and Fiscal Data. The institution should append to the report enrollment and fiscal data covering the years since the comprehensive visit. It should also provide summary projections for enrollment and financial development for the next five years. Affiliated independent institutions should complete forms 1-7 as well as the Summaries, Ratios and Graphs available on the enclosed disk. Public institutions should submit the attached forms.

The institution should send three copies of the report and three institutional catalogs to the office of the Commission by the required date of submission. After reviewing the report, the Commission will notify the institution of its action.

- IV. Commission Action: Interim reports are considered by the Commission at one of its regular meetings. Following its review, the Commission may take one of the following actions:
1. to accept the report and confirm the established date for the next comprehensive evaluation in five years;
 2. to accept the report but also request further information on specific issues. The submission of such information may be followed by an on-site evaluation;
 3. to accept the report but require that a follow-up visit be undertaken by a small team of evaluators;
 4. to reject the report and request that a new one be prepared and submitted within a specified period of time. Such reports may be followed by an on-site evaluation;

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5. to receive the report and require that a self-study be undertaken at the earliest possible date, to be followed by an on-site evaluation;
6. in extreme cases, to require that the institution show cause why it should not be placed on probation or its accreditation should not be terminated.

Attachments

CIHE: August, 1997

Revised: October, 2003

February, 2004

POLICY STATEMENT ON INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

In revising its standards for accreditation, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education has reaffirmed the importance of each institution measuring its effectiveness. An institution's efforts and ability to assess its effectiveness and use the obtained information for its improvement are important indicators of institutional quality. The Commission, through its evaluative processes, will appraise these quality indicators. Just as assessment is now a pervasive theme throughout the revised standards, so too should it be a theme in all comprehensive self-studies.

The Commission views such assessment as a means of enhancing institutional effectiveness. The assessment process requires the gathering and analysis of evidence of congruence between an institution's stated mission, purposes, and objectives and the actual outcomes of its programs and activities. In order to inform its planning, decision-making, and resource allocation, an institution needs to determine how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its mission and purposes. Moreover, the institution needs documentary evidence to support assertions of quality made in its self-study and in its communications with its constituencies.

The Commission expects each institution, as part of its dedication to institutional improvement, to monitor its effectiveness in achieving its mission and purposes. Accordingly, the institution collects and analyzes relevant data and uses this information in the institutional planning process as a basis for sustaining quality and self-improvement. Thus, assessment functions as a tool for the encouragement of such improvement as well as a basis for quality assurance.

There is no one best way to assess institutional effectiveness, and the Commission prescribes no formula that an institution must use for measuring or demonstrating its effectiveness. Assessment efforts will vary among different types of institutions as well as among institutions of the same type. Successful assessment efforts are compatible with the institution's mission and its available resources.

Assessment is not a one-time activity; rather, it is evolutionary, ongoing, and incremental. The Commission realizes that an institution initially engaging in assessment will be likely to do so on a limited basis. However, it expects that in due time its assessment efforts will be more comprehensive, systematic, integrative, and organic. Regardless of their scope, these efforts will be both qualitative and quantitative. Assessment does not require standardized or even professionally developed instruments or complicated methods of statistical analysis.

While assessment is an overall institutional concern, as reflected in the various standards for accreditation, its primary focus is the teaching-learning experience. To the greatest extent possible, therefore, the institution should describe explicit achievements expected of its students and adopt reliable procedures for assessing those achievements.

Ultimately, assessment and accreditation share the common goal of enabling the institution to reach its fullest academic potential by providing the highest quality education possible. In pursuing that goal, institutional autonomy should be preserved, innovation encouraged, and the distinct character of each institution recognized and honored.

January 22, 1992