

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING INSTITUTIONAL REPORTS TO THE COMMISSION

*A Publication of the Accrediting Commission
for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges*

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Edition

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Background

Institutions must meet the Eligibility Requirements (ERs), Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies at all times. External evaluation teams visit every six years to verify that institutions meet these requirements. However, other reports and visits may be required to verify that colleges have resolved deficiencies noted by external evaluation teams and continue to meet the ERs, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies. Institutional reports to the Commission can occur at any time.

A **Midterm Report** is required of all institutions in the third year following visits by external evaluation teams. A **Follow-Up Report** is required when an institution must provide evidence that demonstrates it has addressed recommendations and resolved deficiencies identified in External Evaluation Team reports. When the Commission receives information that raises significant concerns about an institution, a **Special Report** is required to provide information about the institution that the Commission will specify in a formal letter. All reports to the Commission must provide evidence that supports the information in the report.

While not covered in these Guidelines, a Show Cause Report is required when an institution must demonstrate to the Commission why its accreditation should not be withdrawn and that it is in compliance with ERs, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The requirements for the Show Cause Report will be noted in the Commission action letter.

Helpful resources include the ERs, Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, the *Guide to Evaluating Institutions*, the *Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education*, and the *Accreditation Reference Handbook*.

The Commission reviews institutional reports at its next regularly scheduled meeting and notifies institutions in an action letter as to what further action, if any, the institution must take.

Information for Preparation of All Reports

Presentation of Reports

The institution is required to submit one hard copy and one electronic copy (including evidence) of its reports to the Commission. Colleges may be asked to provide additional hard copies to accommodate special needs. The electronic version of the report is required to be submitted in MS Word. The report should include an appendix of evidence supporting the narrative statements made. The evidence listed should be included in the Table of Contents under Appendices. All evidence submitted with reports must be in electronic format (e.g., on a clearly labeled CD or flash drive/USB stick, or using active hyperlinks within the body of the report). Send hard and electronic copies of the report and the evidence to:

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Novato, CA 94949
accjc@accjc.org

Unnecessarily long reports can be difficult to follow. A report should concisely state the institution's resolution of any deficiencies and its current and sustained compliance with Eligibility Requirements (ERs), Accreditation Standards and Commission policies. If additional work remains for the future, concrete details, plans, timelines, and outcomes for that work should be included in the report.

If there is a visit by Commission representatives planned in connection with the report, team members must be provided with an electronic copy of the report and evidence in advance of the visit. A roster of the visiting team members will be sent to the institution, and the institution must send a copy of the report to each team member.

Evidence

Evidence should be provided that clearly supports the institution's claim that it has resolved the deficiencies noted and meets the ERs, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies. Citations to large documents, without links to the sections that are supportive of the institution's claims, make it difficult to determine specifically what the institution wishes to have noted. Institutions should carefully select relevant evidence to support the elements of compliance stated in the report narrative.

Evidence should accompany each copy of the college report and should be submitted in electronic format (e.g., on a clearly labeled CD, flash drive/USB stick, or via active hyperlinks within the body of the report). Links to web pages should be checked to ensure they are active. The *Manual for Institutional Self Evaluation*, *Guide to Evaluating Institutions*, and *Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education* provide further guidance about selection and presentation of evidence associated with the ERs, Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, and areas of institutional practice. The best evidence is meaningful to an institution's constituents and used in planning, operations, assessment, decision-making, and improvement practices.

Midterm Report

Institutions are required to submit a Midterm Report in the third year following the External Evaluation Team visit. The Midterm Report includes a narrative analysis and evidence that demonstrates how deficiencies have been resolved, describes work accomplished on recommendations for improvement, and identifies the status of the institution's self-identified improvement plans (formerly planning agenda items) from the Institutional Self Evaluation Report.

Requirements and Format for Midterm Reports

The following elements are required in a Midterm Report:

1. Cover Sheet (Appendix A)

The Cover Sheet identifies it is a Midterm Report and includes the name and address of the institution and the date of submission.

2. Certification Page (Appendix B)

The Certification Page certifies there was broad participation in the preparation of the Report and the Report is an accurate reflection of the nature and substance of the institution. The college Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chair of the Governing Board, and other college personnel as appropriate, sign this certification attesting to their review of the Report.

3. Table of Contents

The Table of Contents is a listing of the contents of the Report, including appendices.

4. Report Preparation

This section describes the process used to prepare the Report and identifies those who were involved in its preparation.

5. Response to Team Recommendations and the Commission Action Letter

Each recommendation identified by the External Evaluation Team must be addressed. This section of the Report must include the following items:

- Demonstration that the institution has resolved the deficiencies identified in the External Evaluation Team Report; that the institution meets the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies; and that the changes/improvements have been sustained.
- Description of the institutional response to the recommendations of the External Evaluation Team meant to increase institutional effectiveness.

6. Response to Self-identified Issues

This section reports on the progress made on the institution's self identified improvement plans (formerly planning agendas) from its Institutional Self Evaluation Report and specifies timelines for completion and responsible parties.

7. Appendices

The Midterm Report shall include appropriate evidence to support the information provided in the Report.

Follow-Up Report

The Commission may require a Follow-Up Report at any time between external evaluation visits. This Report includes a narrative analysis and evidence that describes the resolution of deficiencies identified in the Commission action letter; verifies that the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies are met; and affirms that the changes/improvements have been sustained.

Requirements and Format for Follow-Up Reports

The following elements are required to be included in a Follow-Up Report:

- 1. Cover Sheet** (Appendix A)

The Cover Sheet identifies it is a Follow-Up Report and includes the name and address of the institution and the date of submission.

- 2. Certification Page** (Appendix B)

The Certification Page certifies there was broad participation in the preparation of the Report and the Report is an accurate reflection of the nature and substance of the institution. The college Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chair of the Governing Board, and other college personnel as appropriate, sign this certification attesting to their review of the Report.

- 3. Table of Contents**

The Table of Contents is a listing of the contents of the Report, including appendices.

- 4. Report Preparation**

This section describes the process of report preparation and identifies those who were involved in its preparation.

- 5. Response to the Commission Action Letter**

Each deficiency identified by the Commission in its action letter must be resolved. The Report must provide a narrative analysis and evidence that demonstrates the institution has addressed each recommendation and resolved the associated deficiencies. It must also demonstrate that the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies are met and affirm that the institution will sustain the changes/improvements.

- 6. Appendices**

The Follow-Up Report shall include appropriate evidence to support the information provided in the Report.

Special Report

As provided for in Commission policy (“Policy on Student and Public Complaints against Member Institutions,” “Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of ACCJC and Member Institutions,” and “Policy on Commission Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions”), the Commission may require a Special Report when it receives information that raises significant concerns about an institution’s compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and/or Commission policies. The specific requirements of a Special Report will be contained in a letter from the Commission to the institution.

Requirements and Format for Special Reports

The following elements are required to be included in a Special Report:

1. Cover Sheet (Appendix A)

The Cover Sheet identifies it is a Special Report and includes the name and address of the institution and the date of submission.

2. Certification Page (Appendix C)

The Certification Page certifies that the Report is an accurate reflection of the nature and substance of the institution. The college Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Chair of the Governing Board, and other college personnel as appropriate sign this certification attesting to the preparation and review of the Report.

3. Table of Contents

The Table of Contents is a listing of the contents of the Report, including appendices.

4. Report Preparation

This section describes the process of report preparation and identifies those who were involved in its preparation.

5. Response to the Commission Letter

Each issue identified by the Commission in its letter to the institution must be addressed in the Special Report.

6. Appendices

The Special Report shall include appropriate evidence to support the information provided in the Report.

Appendix A

Institutional Report - Sample Cover Sheet

Name of Institution

[Name of Report]

Submitted by:

(Name of Institution)

(Address of Institution)

Submitted to:

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges,
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Date Submitted

Appendix B

[Name of Report] - Sample Certification Page

(To be inserted in the Midterm/Follow-Up Report following the Cover Sheet)

To: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges,
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

From:

(Name of Chief Executive Officer)

(Name of Institution)

(Address)

I certify there was broad participation by the campus community and believe this Report accurately reflects the nature and substance of this institution.

Signatures:

(Chief Executive Officer) (Date)

(Chairperson, Governing Board) (Date)

(Name, Title, Representing) (Date)

(Name, Title, Representing) (Date)

(Name, Title, Representing) (Date)

(Name, Title, Representing) (Date)

Appendix C

Special Report - Sample Certification Page

(To be inserted in the Special Report following the Cover Sheet)

To: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges,
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

From:

(Name of Chief Executive Officer)

(Name of Institution)

(Address)

I certify there was broad participation by the campus community and believe this Report accurately reflects the nature and substance of this institution.

Signatures:

(Chief Executive Officer) (Date)

(Chairperson, Governing Board) (Date)

(Name, Title, Representing) (Date)

(Name, Title, Representing) (Date)

(Name, Title, Representing) (Date)

(Name, Title, Representing) (Date)