
Procedures for Interim Reports

Between comprehensive evaluations, the Commission requires, per its Policy on the Periodic Review of Accredited Institutions, that member institutions complete an interim report, typically at the fifth year of a ten-year review cycle. Interim reports require institutions to review how they continue to meet the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation*; analyze, appraise, and reflect upon progress made since the last comprehensive review; and project the institution's areas of focus for the following five years leading up to the next comprehensive review. The interim report process serves as a vehicle for stimulating improvements within the institution, for strengthening the institution's ongoing system of self-evaluation, and for supporting the Commission in its role of assuring the public of the quality of the institution and of higher education as an enterprise.

The following procedures provide assistance to institutions with the process and format of completing interim reports. Procedures, policies, and supporting documents related to the interim report may be found on the [Interim Report](#) page of the Commission website.

Reminders to the Institution

Approximately eighteen months in advance of the Commission's consideration of the interim report, the institution is reminded of the requirement via a letter to the CEO with a copy to the Accreditation Liaison Officer and CAO. A second reminder will be sent the semester before the report is due.

Workshop

Approximately fifteen months before the interim report is due, Commission staff will offer a workshop for institutions completing a report. Institutions are strongly encouraged to send at least two representatives to the workshop.

Staff Visit

To ensure the institution gets the most out of the interim report process, an in-person or virtual visit from Commission staff is strongly advised. Staff will meet with those responsible for the preparation of the interim report and/or members of the administration to discuss Commission expectations and to answer any questions.

Review of Programs offered at Off-Campus Locations

In keeping with federal regulations, institutions with general approval for off-campus programming that have added instructional locations since the last comprehensive review will undergo a visit to a sample of the new locations to validate the institution's continued capacity to administer its off-campus instructional sites. The [Procedures for the Review of Off-Campus Sites At the Time of the Interim Report For Institutions with General Approval](#), available on the Interim Report page of Commission's website, provides further guidance. The visit typically takes place the semester before the interim report is due.

Submission of the Report

The institution is asked to submit an electronic (single, searchable pdf file) copy of the entire report to the Commission through the NECHE Institution Portal by the required date. Typically, fall reports are due by August 15 and spring reports are due by January 15. The institution reminder will specify the due date for the report.

Peer Review

The interim report will first be reviewed by a peer evaluator who will prepare a brief report to the Commission, identifying areas of strength and areas of improvement.

Commission Review and Action

The interim report and peer evaluator report will be reviewed and acted on by the Commission at one of its two regular meetings the semester the report is submitted. The institution will receive a notification letter detailing the Commission's action and any scheduled follow-up monitoring specified (e.g., reports, focused evaluations, or areas of emphasis for the self-study).

Format for the Interim Report

Generally, interim reports are 50 pages long, exclusive of the Appendix (see Section 8 below). Institutions that have been asked to address more than three or four areas of emphasis (Section 4) may find they need to exceed the 50-page limit for their report.

1. Cover Page (1 page)
Include the name, location of the institution, the date of the report's submission, and a notation that this is an interim report.
2. Introduction (1 page)
Briefly describe the process by which the report was prepared and indicate the names and positions of those involved in its preparation.
3. Institutional Overview (1 page)
Provide an overview of the institution, including its mission, purposes, setting, and scope.
4. Response to Areas Identified for Special Emphasis (~ 2 pages per area of emphasis)
In its notification letters to the institution, the Commission frequently identifies areas that should be given particular emphasis in the interim report, referencing numbered paragraphs from the *Standards for Accreditation*. In this section of the report, the institution is asked to discuss, analyze, and appraise actions taken regarding the areas of emphasis, and, as appropriate, include a projection of what needs continued attention, so that the Commission will be adequately apprised of the current state of development in these areas. As appropriate, refer to the Interim Report Forms and the Making Assessment More Explicit (E series) Forms.

If an area identified for special emphasis is addressed in the Standards Narrative (Section 5) or Narrative on Educational Effectiveness (Section 6), please clearly indicate that in this section of the report.

5. Standards Narrative (~15 pages)
Respond briefly to Standards 1-7 and 9:
 - a. address any significant changes since the comprehensive evaluation;
 - b. discuss how the institution continues to meet each Standard;
 - c. support the narrative with evidence, contextualized analysis and appraisal, commenting on noteworthy trends observed in the Interim Report Forms and the Making Assessment More Explicit (E Series) Forms.

Include in this section a discussion of the institution's off-campus locations, distance education programming, competency-based programs, and dual enrollment programs, if relevant. The [Policy on the Review of Off-campus Programming](#), [Policy on the Review of Distance Education](#), [Guidelines for the Evaluation of Competency-Based Education Programs](#), and [Policy on Dual Enrollment Programs](#) (all available on the [Policies & Procedures](#) page of the Commission's website) provide further guidance.

6. Narrative on Educational Effectiveness (~ 15-20 pages)
This section of the report is a narrative essay focused on Standard 8: *Educational Effectiveness*:

The institution demonstrates its effectiveness by ensuring satisfactory levels of student achievement on mission-appropriate student outcomes. Based on verifiable information, the institution understands what its students have gained as a result of their education and has useful evidence about the success of its recent graduates. This information is used for planning and improvement, resource allocation, and to inform the public about the institution. Student achievement is at a level appropriate for the degree awarded.

The essay should address assessment efforts at the course, program, and institutional level, focusing on what the institution is learning about student success and what improvements it is making. The analysis of student learning should address *all students, all locations, and all modalities*.

There are two options for the format of the narrative: the traditional essay, and the alternative essay:

Traditional Essay:

The traditional essay will be an evidence-based narrative that highlights the institution's efforts to understand, evaluate, and improve student learning and success. It will consist of five sections, as outlined below:

1. What and How Students are Expected to Learn
 - a. Discuss the process for reviewing and revising learning outcomes statements at the course, program, and institutional level.
 - b. How are learning outcomes communicated to students?
 - c. How do learning outcomes align with the institutional mission as well as with curricula and pedagogy?
2. Current Assessment Processes and Activities
 - a. In what ways has the institution created a systematic and sustainable process for assessing student achievement?
 - b. How are faculty, staff, and institutional research engaged in assessment and the analysis of assessment results?
 - c. What resources are allocated to support assessment activities?
3. Evidence of Student Learning
 - a. Analyze student learning and success measures (IPEDS and others), including retention and graduation rates, direct assessment of student learning, mission-appropriate student outcomes, etc. Please include disaggregated analysis as appropriate.
 - b. What are the institution's goals for these success measures and is the institution meeting those goals?
 - c. What has the institution learned about the success of its students?
 - d. What has the institution learned about the success of its graduates?
4. Improving Student Learning and Success
 - a. Based on the analysis of student learning and success measures, what steps has and/or is the institution taking to improve the achievement of its students?
5. Future Plans
 - a. What are the institution's assessment plans and goals for the next five years?

Alternative Thematic Structure: As an alternative approach, if the institution has focused its attention with respect to student learning and success on a particular area or initiative since its self-study (e.g., diversity, equity, and inclusion; guided pathways; or similar student success initiatives) it may choose to use that focus as the theme for its essay. An institution considering this approach is asked to consult with Commission staff to discuss its plans. An alternative structure will consist of three sections, as outlined below:

1. Thematic Introduction
 - a. Describe the initiative, stakeholders that are engaged in the work, and the goals for student learning and achievement.
2. Initiative
 - a. Describe the initiative's activities.
 - b. What data has been collected and analyzed? Include an analysis of disaggregated student data as appropriate, including any specific populations that the institution is focusing on.
 - c. What has the institution learned about the success of its students and graduates, if applicable?
 - d. What changes and improvements have been or will be made based on the data analysis?
3. Future Plans and Goals
 - a. What are the institution's future plans regarding this initiative and its impact on student learning and success?

7. Institutional Plans (~ 3 pages)

Conclude the interim report with a summary of what the institution anticipates will be its most significant issues and initiatives for the next five years, including those that may represent a substantive change as specified by the [Policy on Substantive Change](#).

8. Appendix

- a. Affirmation of Compliance with Federal Regulations Relating to Title IV.
A completed copy of this form, signed by the institution's chief executive officer, affirms the institution's compliance with key provisions of federal regulations.
- b. Most recent audited financial statements.
- c. The auditor's management letter: The management letter is any communication containing the auditor's specific recommendations to the institution on its financial controls and practices. Please indicate if no management letter was provided.
- d. Interim Report forms: A modified set of the Commission's Data First forms.
- e. Making Assessment More Explicit (The E Series) forms.

August 1997, October 2003, February 2004, January 2005, August 2007, February 2009, June 2009, October 2010, July 2011, September 2012, April 2014, April 2015, June 2015, February 2016, August 2016, September 2022.