

Directions and Guidelines for Completion of Part III of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

Part III: The Fifth-Year Compliance Certification

CONDUCTING THE COMPLIANCE REVIEW AND DOCUMENTING COMPLIANCE

1. Refer to the *Handbook for Institutions Seeking Reaffirmation of Accreditation* for (1) conducting the compliance review, (2) documenting compliance, (3) evaluating the evidence supporting compliance, and (4) making the case for compliance (pp 17-25).

For an electronic version of the *Handbook*, access <http://www.sacscoc.org/handbooks.asp>, click onto *Handbook for Institutions Seeking Reaffirmation of Accreditation*

2. See the attached addendum for page references in the *Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation* for each of the 14 standards that are part of the Fifth-Year Interim Report.

For an electronic version of the *Resource Manual*, access <http://www.sacscoc.org/handbooks.asp>, click onto the *Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation* and then refer to the attached addendum for the pages specific to each of the 14 standards.

3. Reminders:
 - Provide a concise, clear, and complete report. Ensure that documentation is appropriate for demonstrating fulfillment of the requirement. Specify actions that have been taken and document completion.
 - Ensure that your narrative explains the use of the documentation and how the documentation supports compliance.
 - Provide definitive evidence, not documents that only address the process.
 - Specify actions that have been taken and provide documentation that such actions have been completed.
 - When possible and appropriate, provide samples of evidence of compliance rather than all documents pertaining to all activities associated with compliance. Sampling should include a representation of programs and services in accord with an institution's mission and should explain the method used for the sample selection.
 - When a requirement requests that the institution have a policy, provide examples of policy implementation.
 - Integrate the evaluation and analysis of **compliance for all distance learning programs and off-site programs and services** described in Part II of your Report. Focus particularly on CR 2.8, CR 2.10, CS 3.3.1.1, CS 3.4.11, and FR 4.2 – 4.6.

REPORTING AND COMMUNICATION FORMAT

- Materials may be submitted in print form, on DVD/CD, flash/thumb drive. If an audit has been requested, it must be submitted in print form only.
- If print documents are submitted, copy all documents front and back, double space the copy, and use no less than a 10 point font. Do not submit documents in a three-ring binder; staple or soft bind the document.
- If electronic documents are submitted, all documents must be included on the electronic device. Each device smaller than 4"x 4" must be submitted in a paper or plastic envelope not smaller than 4"x 4" and the envelope must be labeled with the name of the institution, the title of the report, and the list of document contents. The device itself must be labeled with the name of the institution and the name of the report. Submit the name and contact numbers of an individual who can be contacted if readers have problems accessing the documents on the electronic devices.

Be sure to check the electronic device before mailing it to the Commission office to ensure that all intended documents are included. It also would be helpful to field test access to the electronic documents by individuals unfamiliar with the institution.

- When possible, excerpt passages from text and incorporate the narrative into the report instead of sending an entire document. Provide definitive evidence, not documents that only address the process.
- Reread the report before submission and eliminate all narrative that is not relevant to the focus of the report.
- ***Provide SEVEN copies of the Report by the date designated in your letter from the Commission President.***

ADDENDUM A

REFERENCES TO PAGE NUMBERS IN THE *RESOURCE MANUAL* THAT ADDRESS EACH OF THE 14 STANDARDS IN THE FIFTH-YEAR INTERIM REPORT

1. The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs. (*Core Requirement 2.8*) Note: It is important that institutions disaggregate the numbers of full-time faculty by academic program.
See pages 16-17 of the Resource Manual.
2. The institution provides **student support programs**, services, and activities consistent with its mission. (*Core Requirement 2.10*)
See pages 18-19 of the Resource Manual.
3. The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience, competence, and capacity to lead the institution. (*Comprehensive Standard 3.2.8*)
See pages 29-30 of the Resource Manual. Include qualifications of identified officers.
4. The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in the following area: (*part of Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1*)
3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
See pages 34-35 of the Resource Manual. The current standard is a revision of the former Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.
5. The institution publishes admissions policies that are consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students.
(*Comprehensive Standard 3.4.3*)
See pages 37-38 of the Resource Manual.
6. For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration. (*Comprehensive Standard 3.4.11*)
See page 48 of the Resource Manual. The current standard is the same as the old Comprehensive Standard 3.4.13.
7. The institution operates and maintains physical facilities, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities. (*Comprehensive Standard 3.11.3*)
See pages 67-68 of the Resource Manual. The current standard is the same as the old Comprehensive Standard 3.10.7

8. The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, State licensing examination, and job placement rates. *(Federal Requirement 4.1)*
See page 69 of the Resource Manual.
9. The institution's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded. *(Federal Requirement 4.2)*
See pages 69-70 of the Resource Manual.
10. The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies. *(Federal Requirement 4.3)*
See page 70 of the Resource Manual.
11. Program length is appropriate for each of the institution's educational programs. *(Federal Requirement 4.4)*
See pages 70-71 of the Resource Manual.
12. The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints. *(Federal Requirement 4.5)* Note: Please provide a copy/copies of the process for addressing student complaints and document the implementation of the procedure.
See page 70 of the Resource Manual. Please include examples of the application of the procedures—very important.
13. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices and policies. *(Federal Requirement 4.6)*
See page 72 of the Resource Manual.
14. The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments. *(Federal Requirement 4.7)* The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. *(Comprehensive Standard 3.10.3)* (Note: Please provide your institution's most recent financial aid audit.)
(CS 3.10.3 requires the audits; FR 4.7 requires compliance. See Addendum B)

ADDENDUM B

FIFTH-YEAR INTERIM REPORT SUPPORT FOR COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD 3.10.3 AND FEDERAL REQUIREMENT 4.7

COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD 3.10.3

The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations.

What types of documentation, or patterns of evidence, would document compliance with the standard?

- Most recent external audit of federal financial aid programs.
- Most recent external audit of state financial aid programs.
- If public, documentation from auditor indicating audit schedule and frequency.
- Recent copies of correspondence received from the U.S. Department of Education related to delays in receiving, or not receiving, federal awards audit information.

FEDERAL REQUIREMENT 4.7

The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments.

What types of documentation, or patterns of evidence, would document compliance with the standard?

- Most recent OMB A-133 financial aid audit report
- Institutional response to findings in the financial aid audit report
- Copies of recent correspondence from the U.S. Department of Education
- Copies of institutional response to U.S. Department of Education correspondence
- Details regarding negotiated settlement agreements for the payoff of any fines or monies owed in connection with program or fiscal audits
- Copies of any reports on compliance from the U.S. Department of Education