DO’s and DON’Ts of the FIFTH-YEAR INTERIM REPORT

Alana T. Veal
Coordinator of Legal and Governmental Affairs, and Commission Support

2015 Summer Institute
Session Objectives

- Outline the Fifth-Year Interim Review Process and the components of the Review
- Review the Do’s and Don’ts for the most cited standards for institutions completing Fifth-Year Interim Reports
- Share available resources
- Review components of the QEP Impact Report
- Share tips from evaluators
- Address questions about the process
Why a Fifth-Year Interim Review?

- Ensure compliance with federal regulations
  - SACSCOC is required to engage in more periodic reviews.
  - SACSCOC is required to review any new off-campus instructional sites approved since an institution’s last reaffirmation.
Steps in Process

NOTIFICATION

Sent 11 months in advance

Track A Institutions
By: October 15

Track B Institutions
By: April 25
Steps in Process

**NOTIFICATION**

**SUBMISSION**

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**Track A Institutions**

Report Due: **September 15**

**Track B Institutions**

Report Due: **March 15**
Steps in Process

NOTIFICATION

SUBMISSION

REVIEW

Track A Institutions
Reviewed in December

Track B Institutions
Reviewed in June
Steps in Process

NOTIFICATION

SUBMISSION

REVIEW

RESULTS

Track A Institutions
Notified by: mid-January

Track B Institutions
Notified by: mid-July
Steps in Process

1. Notification
2. Submission
3. Review
4. Results
5. Follow-up

If requested by Committee, . . .

Referral Report
Southern Region College

Due the following:
April or September
Where can you find information about the Fifth-Year Interim Review Process?

Visit the SACSCOC website.

http://www.sacscoc.org/FifthYear.asp

From the home page, click Institutional Resources. Then scroll to the link, THE FIFTH-YEAR INTERIM REPORT: INFORMATION, FORMS, AND TIMELINES
Fifth-Year Interim Review Consists of:

- Review of off-campus instructional sites approved since last reaffirmation but not reviewed by a committee (*indicated in notification letter*)
- Submission of Fifth-Year Interim Report (Five Parts)
Review of New Off-Campus Instructional Sites

- Review and verify sites listed
- Communicate any discrepancies with your SACSCOC Vice President *(May require submission of notification to Substantive Change Office)*
- Work with SACSCOC Vice President to schedule visit(s)
Components of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

Part I: Signatures Attesting to Integrity

Part II: Institutional Summary Form Prepared for Commission Reviews

Part III: Fifth-Year Compliance Certification

Part IV: Followup Report *(applicable only to select institutions)*

Part V: Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan
Components of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

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Part V: Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan
Institutional Summary Form

- Serves as the blueprint for evaluators in conducting the review of your institution
  - Governance
  - History and Characteristics
  - List of Degrees (and number of graduates)
  - Off-Campus Instructional Locations and Branch Campuses
  - Distance and Correspondence Education
  - Agencies that Accredit the Institution and its Programs
  - Relationship to the U.S. Department of Education
Components of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

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Part III: Fifth-Year Compliance Certification

Core Requirements

Comprehensive Standards

Federal Requirements

2.8 Faculty
2.10 Student Support Services
Part III: Fifth-Year Compliance Certification

3.2.8 Qualified Administrative/Academic Officers
3.3.1.1 Institutional Effectiveness: Educational Programs, to include Student Learning Outcomes
3.4.3 Admissions Policies
3.4.11 Academic Program Coordination
3.11.3 Physical Facilities
3.13 Policy Compliance
- “Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies”
- “Complaint Procedures Against the Commission or Its Accredited Institutions”
- “Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports”
Part III: Fifth-Year Compliance Certification

Core Requirements

- 4.1 Student Achievement
- 4.2 Program Curriculum
- 4.3 Publication of Policies
- 4.4 Program Length
- 4.5 Student Complaints
- 4.6 Recruitment Materials
- 4.7 Title IV Program Responsibilities and CS 3.10.2 Financial Aid Audits
- 4.8 Distance and Correspondence Education
- 4.9 Definition of Credit Hours

Comprehensive Standards

Federal Requirements
Institutions Receiving Citations at the Fifth-Year (2012-2014) (216 institutions)
Institutions Receiving Citations at the Fifth-Year (2012-2014) (216 institutions)
CR 2.8 Faculty

• The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each of its academic programs.
## CR 2.8 Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO’s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Describe the distribution/disaggregation of full-time and part-time faculty by academic program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Explain why the numbers presented are adequate, if indeed they are, or describe the plan for coming into compliance if any numbers are not adequate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Demonstrate that there is a sufficient number of full-time faculty to fulfill basic faculty functions to provide direction and oversight of academic programs offered at off-campus instructional sites and via distance education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CR 2.8 Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DON’Ts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X Do not attempt to address CS 3.7.1 (Faculty Qualifications) for this standard. Faculty rosters are not needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Do not forget to address faculty workloads outside of teaching responsibilities that ensure integrity and quality of educational programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CS 3.3.1.1 Institutional Effectiveness: Educational Programs

- 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 areas:
  - 3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
CS 3.3.1.1 Sample Interpretation

• Statements of Expected Outcomes
  ▫ Define and list “educational programs”
  ▫ Identify expected outcomes for each educational program
  ▫ Identify SLOs for each educational program

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CS 3.3.1.1 *Sample* Interpretation

- **Data Collection**
  - Describe how data are collected
  - Set performance standards for expected outcomes
  - Administer assessments, present data, make judgment

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CS 3.3.1.1 *Sample* Interpretation

**Use of Assessment Findings for Program Improvement**

- Analyze assessment findings in context of program mission
- Identify areas for improvement
- Articulate strategies to make improvements
- Implement strategies

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**CS 3.3.1.1 Institutional Effectiveness: Educational Programs**

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ If presenting a sampling, use a <em>representative</em> sampling and include a rationale for what makes the sample appropriate and representative of the programs offered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Include evidence that represents <em>a full cycle</em> of implementation. If using a new system, provide data from the previous system, if necessary and possible, to demonstrate ongoing compliance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CS 3.3.1.1 Institutional Effectiveness: Educational Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DON’Ts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X Don’t assume the committee will understand how/why the selected programs are included in the sampling. Provide a rationale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Don’t ignore significant variation in the quality of assessment reports across programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Don’t be silent about programs offered at off-campus instructional sites and via distance education. Consider comparability, if appropriate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CS 3.4.11 Academic Program Coordinators

• 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.
CS 3.4.11 Academic Program Coordinators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Take the time to organize your information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Be consistent throughout your Report with the identification of academic programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Make a case for each coordinator’s qualifications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CS 3.4.11 Academic Program Coordinators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DON’Ts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✗ Don’t forget the academic programs offered at off-campus instructional sites and via distance education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Don’t forget to address situations when a coordinator oversees several programs in which some are not in his/her field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ When listing the coordinator’s degree, don’t omit the major.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CS 3.11.3 Physical Facilities

• 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.
## CS 3.11.3 Physical Facilities

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ <strong>Include evidence.</strong> Examples of documentation that could be used include: current Facilities Master Plan, space utilization reports, satisfaction survey results, and facilities maintenance schedules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Address facilities at off-campus instructional sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Provide discussion for any data presented that indicates a lack of adequate physical facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CS 3.11.3 Physical Facilities

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X Don’t let the data alone tell the story. Provide a narrative to explain the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Don’t forget to provide narrative and supporting evidence that addresses how your physical facilities appropriately serve the needs of the institution’s educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CS 3.13 Policy Compliance

CS 3.13.3 “Complaint Procedures Against the Commission or Its Accredited Institutions”

• **Applicable Policy Statement.** Each institution is required to have in place student complaint policies and procedures that are reasonable, fairly administered, and well-publicized. *(See FR 4.5)*. The Commission also requires, in accord with federal regulations, that each institution maintains a record of complaints received by the institution. This record is made available to the Commission upon request. This record will be reviewed and evaluated by the Commission as part of the institution’s decennial evaluation.
CS 3.13 Policy Compliance

CS 3.13.3 “Complaint Procedures Against the Commission or Its Accredited Institutions”

**Documentation:** The institution should provide information to the Commission describing how the institution maintains its record and also include the following:

(1) **individuals/offices** responsible for the maintenance of the record(s);
(2) **elements** of a complaint review that are included in the record; and
(3) **where** the record(s) is/are located (centralized or decentralized).
CS 3.13.3 “Complaint Procedures Against the Commission or Its Accredited Institutions”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Use the Fifth-Year Interim Report template to determine needed information to demonstrate compliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Be sure to address each component of the standard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CS 3.13.3 “Complaint Procedures Against the Commission or Its Accredited Institutions”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DON’Ts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X  Don’t forget to address how complaints are handled from students enrolled at off-campus instructional sites and via distance education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X  Do not confuse this standard with FR 4.5 Student Complaints.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FR 4.5 Student Complaints

• The institution has **adequate procedures** for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for **demonstrating that it follows those procedures** when resolving student complaints.
## FR 4.5 Student Complaints

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<th>DO’s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Provide documentation that reflects a resolved written student complaint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Redact student information from evidence</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## FR 4.5 Student Complaints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DON’Ts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>X</strong> Don’t provide an example of implementation and enforcement that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doesn’t follow your institution’s policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>X</strong> Don’t provide summaries of how the institution’s policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was followed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Distinction Between CS 3.13.3 and FR 4.5

**CS 3.13.3**  
*(Policy Compliance – Student Complaints)*

Describe how the institution maintains its record of written student complaints, including:

1) individuals/offices responsible for the maintenance of the record(s),
2) elements of a complaint review that are included in the record, and
3) where the record(s) is located (centralized or decentralized).

**FR 4.5**  
*(Student Complaints)*

Provide:

- evidence of the institution’s published policy for handling student complaints,
- evidence that the institution has implemented and enforced its policy, applying its procedures for resolving student complaints.
FR 4.1 Student Achievement

- The institution **evaluates** success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission. Criteria may include: enrollment data; retention, graduation, course completion, and job placement rates; state licensing examinations; student portfolios; or other means of demonstrating achievement of goals.
FR 4.1 Student Achievement

DO’s

- Identify and Align
  - Criteria → Thresholds of Acceptability → Achievement Data
- Clearly explain how each identified criterion is related to the mission of the institution
- Clearly explain how thresholds of acceptability/benchmarks/levels of achievement were set for each criterion and why they are reasonable for the institution
- Provide student achievement data for each identified criterion
  - Discuss what the data tell about institutional success with regard to student achievement
### FR 4.1 Student Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X Don’t provide data without explaining how the data is used to evaluate success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X If you utilize benchmarking with other institutions, don’t neglect defining your threshold of acceptability for each criterion along with a rationale.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FR 4.7 Title IV Program Responsibilities and CS 3.10.2 Financial Aid Audits

• The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended. *(Federal Requirement 4.7)*

• The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. *(Comprehensive Standard 3.10.2)*
## DO’s

- Work with auditors well in advance to ensure that audit results are available by report due date.
- Include **financial aid** audit results.

## DON’T

- (For public institutions), don’t forget to present evidence of financial aid audits as required by **state regulations**, not just federal, for CS 3.10.2.
Addressing Standards that Require a Policy

The policy implementation statement in the prefaces of Sections 2, 3, and 4 of the *Principles* reads as follows:

*Implicit in every standard mandating a policy or procedure is the expectation that the policy or procedure is in writing and has been approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and implemented and enforced by the institution.*
Addressing Standards that Require a Policy

When a standard requires that an institution have a policy, the Commission expects that the institution will:

(1) provide a copy of the policy,
(2) produce evidence that it is published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and
(3) demonstrate that the policy has been implemented and enforced.

It is implicit that a policy published in appropriate institutional documents is written and has been approved.
Addressing Standards that Require a Policy

Applicable standards in the Fifth-Year Interim Report:

CS 3.4.3 (Admission policies)
FR 4.3 (Publication of policies)
FR 4.5 (Student complaints)
FR 4.8.2 (Distance and correspondence education)
FR 4.8.3 (Distance and correspondence education)
FR 4.9 (Definition of credit hours)
Addressing Standards that Require a Policy

Points to Consider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS 3.4.3 (Admissions policies)</th>
<th>FR 4.3 (Publication of Policies)</th>
<th>FR 4.5 (Student complaints)</th>
<th>FR 4.9 (Definition of credit hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Address special admissions policies</td>
<td>Be sure to include information on how the policies/procedures are communicated to those affected by them</td>
<td>Provide documentation of a resolved student complaint that follows the policy/procedures</td>
<td>Include discussion of how aberrations are handled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be clear on whether admission policies differ for various delivery methods and why</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Explain connection between policies and the mission</td>
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</table>

Provide documentation of a resolved student complaint that follows the policy/procedures.
Use the *Resource Manual*

- **Rationale and Notes**
  - Provides further explanation of the standard
- **Relevant Questions for Consideration**
  - Designed to help the institution examine its current processes and practices
- **Documentation**
  - Evidence that may be helpful in demonstrating compliance
- **Reference to Commission Documents**
  - Other resources such as Commission policies, guidelines, good practices, and approved interpretations
- **Cross-References to Other Related Standards**
  - Helps identify the distinction between/among standards
View the SACSCOC Training Modules


- Review the modules:
  - Institutional Effectiveness
  - Finance
  - Student Services

- Other available modules:
  - Governance
  - QEP
Components of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

Part I: Signatures Attesting to Integrity

Part II: Institutional Summary form Prepared for Commission Reviews

Part III: Fifth-Year Compliance Certification

Part IV: Followup Report (applicable only to select institutions)

Part V: Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan
QEP Impact Report

Four elements should be addressed:

1. a succinct list of the initial goals and intended outcomes of the Quality Enhancement Plan;
2. a discussion of changes made to the QEP and the reasons for making those changes;
3. a description of the QEP’s impact on student learning and/or the environment supporting student learning, as appropriate to the design of the QEP. This description should include the achievement of identified goals and outcomes, and any unanticipated outcomes of the QEP; and
4. a reflection on what the institution has learned as a result of the QEP experience.
QEP Impact Report

<table>
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<tr>
<th>DO’s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Address <strong>ALL</strong> four elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Use your 10 pages wisely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Be sure there is clear alignment with goals/outcomes and assessment results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Include data from assessment (tables, charts, etc.) that was used to demonstrate impact and the achievement of goals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QEP Impact Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>X Don’t exceed the page limit requirements with additional links embedded within the document.</td>
</tr>
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<td>X Don’t provide data without explaining it.</td>
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</table>
Tips from Evaluators of the Fifth-Year Interim Report
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- Treat this Report the same as you would your Compliance Certification Report for Reaffirmation.
- Follow all directions.
- Save the reader time by pointing directly to the specific supporting documentation - excerpting when it makes sense. For long electronic supporting documentation, have links go directly to the page being referenced.
Tips from Evaluators of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

• Provide an **analysis** of data, not just a data dump.
• Use tables and graphs when appropriate, along with narrative to help the reader understand what you are trying to illustrate.
• **Connect the dots for the reader**—remember you are translating, providing a context, and **building a case for compliance**.
Tips from Evaluators of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

• If you plan to use sampling:
  • Be sure it is representative of the institution’s mission
  • Include a **valid cross-section of programs** from every school or division and at each degree level
  • Make a compelling case as to why the sampling and assessment findings are an appropriate representation of the institution’s programs.

• How many years of data are needed?
  • It depends; what are you trying to illustrate/document?
Tips from Evaluators of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

- Use outside readers to identify blind-spots and assist with editing.
- **Make sure all electronic devices and links work!**
- Ensure that there is consistency throughout report, including the Institutional Summary Form.

- When in doubt, ask your SACSCOC staff representative for advice.
Tips from Evaluators of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

- Submit 1 printed copy for archival purposes, but the other copies can be printed or electronic.
- Consider the ease of the evaluators, who might not always have access to the internet or a specific type of computer. (Limit restrictions.)
- For electronic media:
  - Invest in a quality product.
  - Include instructions for how to access or make the starting point obvious.
  - Label clearly.
QUESTIONS?
Contact Information

Alana Veal
Coordinator of Legal and Governmental Affairs, and Commission Support
404-679-4501, ext. 4596
aveal@sacscoc.org

For questions related to developing your Fifth-Year Interim Report, contact your SACSCOC staff representative.