



ACCJC

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR
COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

EXCERPTED SECTION ON EVIDENCE

**Manual for Institutional
Self-Evaluation**

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linkages between the self-evaluation process and institutional planning, decision making, resource allocation, and continuous improvement. The changes made and plans for future action should be placed in the Self-Evaluation Report following the relevant grouping of standards (for example, I.A, I.B, I.C, II.A, etc.). The discussion should include any timelines for implementation and expected outcomes. It is suggested that the institution develop a chart summarizing changes made in response to its self-evaluation process and future actions planned for ease of institutional tracking and monitoring.

5.4 Requirements for Evidentiary Information

As mentioned in Section 5.2 above, the Commission requires the institution to provide specific kinds of data and other sources of evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Commission's Standards. The USDE continuously revises and interprets federal regulations; in response, the Commission updates its list of federal requirements for its manuals and policies. Institutions are accountable for knowing and maintaining their reporting relationships with the USDE and other regulators and for meeting USDE requirements. The data required by the USDE which must be included in the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report are marked with an asterisk (*) in the following sections.

Colleges are expected to set for themselves institutional standards of acceptable performance below which the institution would find its performance unacceptable and take corrective action. New federal regulations also require evaluation teams to review the standards institutions have set for student learning and achievement; how well the institution believes it is meeting its standards, and whether those standards are reasonable. (See Institution-set Standards for Student Performance, page 27.)

All evidentiary information included in the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report must be discussed and cited within the various Accreditation Standards and sub-sections where reference to the information is relevant. Furthermore, the information should be supported by analysis in terms of its alignment with the institutional mission and how the outcome of the data analysis will impact the future planning and development of the institution.

*i. Student Achievement Data**

Student achievement data is end-point data that provides an institution with basic information about achievement of its educational mission. Collected longitudinally, such data and analyses will inform the college whether changes in pedagogy or services are effective in improving student completion, or whether a decline in student completion needs to be given attention and study so that trends can be reversed. It will also keep institutions informed about fluctuations and serve as a warning if completion rates decrease and trends need to be reversed. When collected in disaggregated form, it may also provide information about barriers to completion and transfer, the need to collect additional data, and indicate attention that needs to be given to various groups.

The ACCJC has developed a generic template for the presentation of institutional and programmatic student achievement data to assist institutions in implementing data-driven and informed evaluation and planning processes. The template is accompanied by a list of questions to encourage institutional analysis of data and

identification of areas both in need of improvement and worthy of special note (see Appendix G). Some institutions and district/systems may have developed other means of presenting data for campus and district/system-wide discussion and decision-making. Those templates may be acceptable as well.

Student achievement data should be in disaggregated form by:

- Age
- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Socio-economic status
- Delivery mode
- Instructional site
- Cohort group
- Other, as relevant to the institution's service area and mission

The data should be provided separately for the following credit/non-credit programs:

- Liberal Arts or Liberal Education/Transfer Programs
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs
- Basic Skills and English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs

Data on Incoming Students

- Student preparedness for college, including need for academic advising, assessment scores indicating need for remedial instruction and orientation, etc.
- Student training needs, including local employment training needs, transfer education needs, basic skills and/or ESL needs, etc.
- Student educational goals

Data on Enrolled Students* (When an institution reports rates in the following categories, it must specify the denominator.)

- FT/PT student enrollment across the institution's range of instructional programs
- Annual growth/decline in headcount enrollment (numbers or rates)
- Course completion (numbers or rates)
- Persistence of students from term to term (numbers or rates)
- Student progression to the next course in a sequence of courses/next level of course (numbers or rates)
- Student program completion (numbers or rates)
- Certificate/Degree completion (numbers or rates)
- Student transfer to four-year institutions (numbers or rates)

Data on Graduates* (When an institution reports rates in the following categories it must specify the denominator)

- Student job placement (number or rates) as appropriate
- Licensure/certification exam (numbers or rates) as appropriate

Other required evidence related to student achievement*

- Policies and procedures for award of credit, including application of the credit hour definition in the Commission's "Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits"
- Policies and procedures for transfer of credit, including examples of the decision-making process
- Comprehensive list of agreements with other institutions on transfer of credit

ii. Evidence of Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment of Outcomes

The institution must provide evidence of institutional student learning outcomes and samples of student learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates and degrees. Institutions need to identify the end point learning outcomes that students must achieve, in a course/program/certificate/degree, i.e., the data that derive from summative assessments of how well students have mastered institutional and programmatic learning outcomes. Institutions should use and be able to provide aggregated data and analyses that can inform the question "How well is the institution achieving its educational (and programmatic) mission(s)?"

- Catalog and other descriptions of programs, including the recommended sequence of courses, and their related student learning outcomes
- Course outlines/syllabi with stated student learning outcomes
- Samples of student work/performance (portfolios, productions, recitals, projects, etc.)
- Grading rubrics where they exist
- Examples of authentic assessment and/or embedded assessment
- Summary data on assessed student learning outcomes attainment
- Examples of improvement of the teaching/learning process and increased student success and institutional improvement as a result of the analysis of the above

iii. Evidence of Quality Program Review

- Program review cycles/timelines
- Policies on curricular review
- Evidence that SLO assessment data are used for institutional self-evaluation, planning, and improvement of teaching and learning
- Action taken (improvements) on the basis of program review
- Connection to the budgeting and resource allocation processes
- Impact on institutional effectiveness, educational quality, and student success

iv. Evidence of Quality of Student Support Services

- Student support services program reviews (including student learning outcomes assessment data and analysis)
- Student satisfaction and follow-up surveys
- Records of student use of services
- Student loan default rates
- Student support services planning documents
- Catalog, handbook, and website descriptions of student support services
- Policies on academic progress, integrity, codes of conduct, grievances and complaint procedures, including information provided to students about how to file a complaint with the institution's accreditor and/or its state approval/licensing entity
- Availability and accessibility of services, including off-campus and distance education/correspondence education (DE/CE) students

v. Evidence of Financial Performance and Integrity*

- Annual external financial audits
- Federal audits
- Audits of any foundations that are not separately incorporated
- Actuarial studies for post-retirement health benefits, collective bargaining agreements, related board policies, plans for funding the liability. For private institutions, the notes to financial statements dealing with employee benefit plans, commitments and contingencies
- Leave accrual policies and records
- Records of self-insurance for health benefits, workers compensation and unemployment
- Records of obligations for future total compensation expenditures including employment agreements, collective bargaining agreements, and management contracts, including any buy-out provisions
- Records from bond funding, if any, including audit reports and minutes from bond oversight committee meetings
- Policies and procedures for purchasing
- Plans related to facilities and technology, capital expenditure budgets and total cost of ownership plans
- Financial Aid Compliance Reports, USDE audits

vi. Evidence of Quality of International Activities

- Lists of programs for non-U.S. nationals recruited abroad
- Lists of programs for internally recruited international students organized through the college or the district/system
- List of study abroad programs for U.S. students

vii. Evidence of Compliance with other Areas Related to Federal Requirements*

(See also Appendix H Evaluation Team Responsibilities for Compliance with U.S. Department of Education Regulations and Appendix K Checklist for Comprehensive Evaluation Teams Evaluating Compliance with Federal Regulations and Commission Policies.)

Distance Education and Correspondence Education

An accrediting commission recognized by the USDE is not required to have separate standards for distance education and correspondence education (DE/CE). The accrediting commissions need, however, to ensure that DE/CE offered by their accredited institutions meet the accreditation standards. Institutions accredited by the ACCJC, therefore, need to demonstrate they assure the quality of DE/CE to the same extent as education delivered in face-to-face classes by providing disaggregated data and analysis (See Appendix H). Evaluation teams should have access to distance education programs and services approximately one month before the evaluation team visit for purposes of assessing quality and compliance with the Commission's policy. Additionally, the evaluation team must evaluate that the institution has correctly applied federal definitions for DE/CE and must determine whether the award of credit for DE/CE meets federal requirements. Institutions must provide the team:

- List of courses, programs, certificates and degrees where 50% or more is offered in distance education or correspondence education mode
- Means of verification of identity of students registered in distance education or correspondence education classes
- College policies on regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty
- College policies on student privacy

Public Information

The institution shall assure clarity, accuracy and accessibility of information regarding:

- Recruiting practices
- Admission practices
- Academic calendar
- Catalogs, publications
- Award/transfer of credit
- Credit requirements for courses, programs, certificates and degrees

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- Length and costs of programs
 - Student degree/certificate completion rates
 - Transfer rates
 - Job placement and licensure pass rates
 - Campus crime statistics
 - Grading practices
 - Advertising practices
 - Representation of the institution

Campus Sites

Names and addresses of off-campus sites and centers, including international, noting where 50% or more of a program, certificate or degree is offered

Institution-set Standards for Student Performance

The institution must establish standards of success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission (ER 11, Standard I.A.2 and I.B.3). It will set expectations for course and program completion, student persistence from term to term, degree and certificate completion, State licensing examination scores, job placement, and transfer rates. The institution must demonstrate it gathers data on institution-set standards, analyzes results on student achievement, and makes appropriate changes/improvements to increase student performance, educational quality, and institutional effectiveness (ER 11 and Standard I.B.3). Evaluation teams will identify these institution-set standards, determine their reasonableness, review the data and analyze the college's performance, describe the institution's overall performance, and determine whether the institution is meeting its standards. (See Appendix H)

Clock to Credit Hour Conversion

If the institution converts clock to credit hours for purposes of federal financial aid, it should adhere to the federal formula for clock to credit hour conversion. (See Appendix I)

Records of Student Complaints

Institutions are required to have established and clearly publicize policies and procedures for filing formal complaints and/or grievances. The institution must provide evidence that these policies and procedures are being followed and whether patterns of the complaints are obvious and could indicate a need to be addressed by the institution. Complaint files should be available for the period since the last comprehensive evaluation visit. The institution must also demonstrate that it clearly communicates how to file a formal complaint with the institution's accreditor and/or state authorizing agency. (See Appendix H)