

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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ACCJC
10 Commercial Blvd.
Suite 204
Novato, CA 94949

Phone: 415-506-0234
FAX: 415-506-0238
E-Mail: accjc@accjc.org
Website: www.accjc.org

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Background

Institutions must meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies (together Commission's Standards) at all times. Comprehensive evaluation teams visit every six or seven 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 evaluation teams and continue to meet the Commission's Standards. Institutional reports to the Commission can occur at any time.

A **Midterm Report** is required of all institutions midway between comprehensive evaluation visits (in the third or fourth year). A **Follow-Up Report** is required when an institution must provide evidence that demonstrates it has addressed recommendations, resolved deficiencies identified in evaluation team reports, and meets Commission's Standards.

When the Commission receives information that raises significant concerns about an institution, a **Special Report** may be required to provide information about the institution. The Commission will identify the information it is requesting in a formal letter. All reports to the Commission must provide evidence that supports the information in the report and the claims made by the institution.

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Cause Report is required when an institution must demonstrate to the Commission why its accreditation should not be withdrawn and that it is in compliance with the Commission's Standards. The requirements for the Show Cause Report will be noted in the Commission action letter.

Helpful resources include the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, the *Guide to Evaluating and Improving Institutions*, 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:

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)
10 Commercial Boulevard, Suite 204
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, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies (together Commission's Standards). 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 evaluation 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 Commission's Standards. 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 "frozen" at the time of the evaluation visit and checked to ensure they are active. The *Manual for Institutional Self Evaluation* and the *Guide to Evaluating and Improving Institutions*, provide further guidance about selection and presentation of evidence associated with the Commission's Standards, and areas of institutional practice. The best evidence is meaningful to an institution's constituents and used in the institution's ongoing assessment, planning, decision-making, and improvement practices.

Midterm Report

Institutions are required to submit a Midterm Report midway between comprehensive evaluation visits. The Midterm Report includes a report on the work accomplished in response to the improvement recommendations made by the previous comprehensive evaluation team, progress and outcomes from the action projects that were identified in the institution's Quality Focus Essay as described in the Institutional Self Evaluation Report, an update of how improvement plans arising out of the institution's self evaluation were integrated in the institution's ongoing planning and implementation processes, and analysis of longitudinal trend data as described in 5.B below.

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 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 used to prepare the Report and identifies those who were involved in its preparation.

For Institutions That Underwent Comprehensive Visits prior to Spring 2016

5.A Response to Team Recommendations for Improvement and Data Trend Analysis

- Description of the institutional response to the recommendations of the evaluation team meant to increase institutional effectiveness (recommendations to improve). The institution should explain the manner in which each recommendation to improve was considered, and what, if anything, was done by the institution as a result of the recommendation.
- The institution's analyses of data trends from the Annual Reports and Annual Fiscal Reports.

For Institutions That Undergo Comprehensive Evaluation Visits after Spring 2016

5.B QFE Update, Response to Team Recommendations for Improvement, and Data Trend Analysis

- An update on the status of the institution's action projects that were described in

the Quality Focus Essay at the time of the comprehensive evaluation visit.

- Description of the institutional response to the recommendations of the evaluation team meant to increase institutional effectiveness (recommendations to improve). The institution should explain the manner in which each recommendation to improve was considered, and what, if anything, was done by the institution as a result of the recommendation.
- The institution's analyses of data trends from the Annual Reports and Annual Fiscal Reports.

For Institutions That Underwent Comprehensive Visits prior to Spring 2016

6.A Response to Self Identified Improvement Plans

This section reports on the progress the institution has made on the self-identified Improvement Plans (formerly planning agendas) from the Institutional Self Evaluation Report. The institution will specify timelines for completion and responsible parties for those plans that are not yet completed or are continuing. A chart format is appropriate for this section of the report.

For Institutions That Undergo Comprehensive Evaluation Visits after Spring 2016

6.B Plans Arising out of the Self Evaluation Process

This section reports on those improvement plans identified by the institution during the comprehensive self evaluation process that were not completed at the time of the Institutional Self Evaluation Report submittal. The institution should describe how improvement items identified during the self evaluation were integrated into the appropriate ongoing planning and implementation processes. The outcome of those items should be reported. A chart format is appropriate for this section of the report. Any items still pending for action should be clearly identified.

7. Appendices

All Midterm Reports 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 comprehensive 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 (together Commission's Standards) are met; and affirms that the institution will sustain the changes/improvements.

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 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 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 Commission's Standards 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,¹ the Commission may require a Special Report when it receives information that raises significant concerns about an institution's compliance with the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies (together Commission's Standards). 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.

¹ Policy on Student and Public Complaints against Institutions
Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of ACCJC and Member Institutions
Policy on Commission Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions

Appendix A
Institutional Report - Sample Cover Sheet

Name of Institution

[Name of Report - Midterm, Follow-Up, or Special 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

Midterm Report or Follow-Up 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/review 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)

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/review 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)