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**Accreditation Visit (AV) Team Report Directions and Template**

# **Purpose of the Team Report**

The team report conveys to the Commission and the institution the team’s findings regarding the standards and the team’s conclusions and recommendations about the institution’s level of engagement with the required and optional essays.

A preliminary team report is written after the Offsite Review (OSR). The preliminary report is then modified after the Accreditation Visit (AV) to create a final team report.

# **Team Chair and Assistant Chair Responsibility for the Team Report**

The chair and assistant chair work together to prepare and finalize the team report as follows:

1. After the OSR, team members prepare a preliminary draft of their assigned sections.
2. The assistant chair compiles and edits the team members’ drafts into one coherent document and forwards this preliminary team report narrative to the team before the AV.
3. The team conducts the AV and the assistant chair incorporates the team members’ changes to the preliminary report narrative to create a draft report based on the AV.
4. The chair or assistant chair sends the draft team report to the team and WSCUC staff liaison for comment and incorporates, as appropriate, any suggested revisions.
5. The chair sends the resulting draft team report as a PDF file to the CEO of the institution for correction of errors of fact and redaction of proprietary information, requesting a letter setting forth any desired changes.
6. When the CEO’s comments are received, the chair makes any revisions that are deemed necessary in consultation with the assistant chair and WSCUC liaison.
7. The team chair sends the final team report to the WSCUC Accreditation Process Manager, who will then send the final report to the CEO. WSCUC also invites the CEO to submit a response to the team’s findings, to be shared with the Commission

# **Contents of the Report**

The report contains the following:

1. Title page
2. Table of contents with page numbers
3. Team report
4. Required appendices: federal compliance forms (credit hour and program length review, marketing and recruitment review, student complaints review, and transfer credit review)
5. Additional appendices, if relevant: distance education and/or off-campus locations

# **Report Length and Page Format**

Team reports are generally 30–40 pages in length, using a standard-sized font (e.g., Times New Roman 12-point or Calibri 11-point), and with double-spaced lines. Page numbers should be included.

The report is the work of the team and not of WSCUC staff. Therefore, the WSCUC logo should not appear on the report.

# **Style Guide**

Refer to the WSCUC Style Guide for guidance on writing team reports.

# **Using the Standards of Accreditation and Core Commitments and Citing the CFRs**

The Standards of Accreditation provide the warrant and framework for the team’s review and the Commission’s action. While the Standards are not intended to be applied mechanically, it is crucial for the team to identify and cite the Standards and Criteria for Review (CFRs) that apply to the concerns that the team is evaluating. For example, cite CFR 1.3 in addressing academic freedom.

# **Confidential Team Recommendation Form**

The team recommendation form is confidential and intended only for the WSCUC team, WSCUC staff, and the Commission. It is not part of the team report, and is not shared with the institution. It should be sent to WSCUC as a separate document before or at the same time the final version of the report is submitted.

*Revised, July 2017*

# **Sample Title Page Format**

## **REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM**

For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Name of Institution)

Date of Visit

### **Team Roster**

List names of chair, assistant chair, team members, and WSCUC staff liaison. Include title and institution for each person.

|  |
| --- |
| The team evaluated the institution under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation and prepared  this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the  institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).  The formal action concerning the institution’s status is taken by the Commission and  is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the  Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website. |

# **Table of Contents**

## **Section I – Overview and Context**

1. Description of the Institution and its Accreditation History, as Relevant
2. Description of Team’s Review Process
3. Institution’s Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

## **Section II – Evaluation of Institutional Essays**

1. Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions
2. Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and compliance with federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators
3. Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality and integrity of degrees
4. Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation
5. Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation
6. Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program review, assessment, use of data and evidence
7. Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment
8. Component 8: Optional essay on institution-specific themes
9. Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement

## **Section III – Other Topics, as Appropriate (such as Substantive Change)**

## **Section IV – Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations from the Team Review**

## **Appendices**

1. Federal Compliance Forms
   1. Credit Hour and Program Length Review
   2. Marketing and Recruitment Review
   3. Student Complaints Review
   4. Transfer Credit Review
2. Off-Campus Locations Review, as appropriate
3. Distance Education Review, as appropriate

## **Section I – Overview and Context**

(Approximately 10–20% of entire report, 3–8 pages)

**A. Description of Institution and Accreditation History**

* Provide background information on the mission and nature of the institution, including brief history, location(s), size, levels and kinds of degrees awarded.
* Provide information on the institution’s recent accreditation history.
* Indicate whether the institution has off-campus locations or distance education programs and, if so, which ones were reviewed as a part of this review. (A separate report on any such matters should be included as an appendix and should be discussed, as appropriate, within the body of the report.)
* Indicate where any special follow-up related to substantive change was conducted in connection with this visit. (A report on any such matters should be included in Section III.)

**B. Description of Team’s Review Process**

Provide a brief description of how the review was conducted, including a brief description of the team’s process for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting information, e.g., interviews conducted, materials examined such as institutional documents, confidential email account, and so on. Do not append a schedule.

**C. Institution’s Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence**

Describe the overall quality of the institution’s report and update and its value in the review process.

* Was the report well organized and clearly written and presented?
* Did the report accurately portray the condition of the institution?
* What was the extent of institutional involvement in the review and report preparation? How were faculty included in discussion of issues and recommendations?
* Did the institution implement the review as a rigorous inquiry with searching questions, appropriate methodology, and effective use of evidence?
* Did the data and evidence support claims made by the institution?
* Did the institution’s self-review lead to a greater understanding of its effectiveness, systems of quality improvement, and student learning?
* Did the update address team’s issues and questions?

## **Section II – Evaluation of Institutional Essays**

(Approximately 50% of the report, 15-25 pages)

The purpose of Section II is to help the Commission understand how the institution has responded to the requirements of the comprehensive review process. Team reports should address each of the specific components that the institution wrote about. A version of the following questions/prompts was provided to institutions. Institutions were not required to respond to them specifically, but they could use them as a platform from which to launch their own inquiries. Team evaluators should consider the prompts as setting a context for reading the institution’s report.

While preparing Component 2, remember that, per WSCUC policy, only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards. The Commission relies, however, on the discernment of peer reviewers as they exercise their collective judgment regarding an institution’s compliance with the Standards. The team report should provide clear evidence and analysis to support findings regarding compliance or non-compliance for each of the Standards. Both the team report and the Confidential Team Recommendation form will inform the Commission’s deliberations in making a final determination.

### **Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions**

Describe issues raised in previous Commission actions and reviews, along with a summary of how the institution has addressed these issues.

Also set forth any other major changes that have occurred since the last WSCUC visit that may affect the Commission’s evaluation of the institution.

### **Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and compliance with federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators**

Did the institution

* Complete the Review under WSCUC Standards in a reflective and analytical way?
* Show any gaps in policies and procedures related to the Criteria for Review (CFRs)?
* Provide plans to address areas needing improvement?
* Meet federal requirements for credit hour, marketing and recruitment, student complaints, and transfer policy?
* Complete the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) in a reflective and analytical way?
* Demonstrate compliance with each of the Standards?
  + To note compliance, please use the following language: “The team’s finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard.” Noting compliance does not preclude a team from expressing any significant concerns that don’t rise to the level of non-compliance. Specific CFRs should be cited regarding these concerns. A Notice of Concern can be issued while still finding the institution to be in compliance with the Standards.
  + To note non-compliance, please use the following language: “The team’s finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has not provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard.” Please cite specific CFRs and evidence that led to this finding. An institution that is out of compliance with a Standard will usually be issued a Sanction (see Confidential Recommendation Form).
  + The following language must appear at the end of this section, “Final determination of compliance with the Standards rests with the Commission.”

### **Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality and integrity of the degrees**

Did the institution:

* Define what it means for a graduate to hold a degree from the institution?
* Describe and explain the processes it uses to ensure the meaning, integrity, and quality of the degree?
* Delineate the standards it uses to measure meaning, quality and integrity?

### **Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation**

Did the institution:

* Discuss the methods it uses to assess student learning and achievement of core competencies?
* Address what actions it takes if it identifies achievement gaps? Did it describe how it “closes the loop” by using assessment results to improve its teaching/learning methods?
* Delineate evidence that shows competencies and key learning outcomes are being met?

### **Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation**

Cite in the report the institution’s aggregated undergraduate and graduate retention and graduation rates, in whatever format the institution collects, analyzes, interprets and uses these data. Discuss disparities, if any, in disaggregated retention and graduation rates.

Did the institution:

* Provide a definition of student success, in the specific context of the institution’s mission, values, and character?
* Describe how it promotes student success?
* Identify specific ways, as appropriate, it could improve so that more students are successful?
* Discuss the graduation rate dashboard?

### **Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program review, assessment, use of data and evidence**

Did the institution:

* Use the results of program reviews to inform decision-making and improve instruction and student learning?
* Carry out an assessment of student learning and make changes as a result?
* Make use of institutional data to support and inform decision-making, planning and improvement?

### **Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment**

Did the institution:

* Provide evidence of how it will continue financial stability and secure appropriate resources for the intermediate term?
* Embrace a discussion of educational effectiveness related to the provision of appropriate resources?
* Consider how systems and processes will guide educational effectiveness work, how deeply embedded those systems and processes are, and what priority they have within the institution’s formal plans?
* Discuss global, national, regional, and local events that could most affect the institution and describe plans or activities for dealing with those events?

### **Component 8: Optional essay on institutional specific themes**

* Did the institution describe the topic the institution studied, explain its lines of inquiry, state what it learned, analyze the meaning of those lessons, and set forth next steps related to that analysis?

### **Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement**

* Did the institution summarize the findings, interpretations, conclusions, and plans as a result of its self-study and institutional report? NOTE: Reflections and plans for improvement can be within each component or compiled into a separate essay at the end. The essay can be an outline, bullet points or a narrative, as appropriate.

## **Section III – Other Topics (such as Substantive Change)**

(Approximately 5-10% of the report, 2-4 pages, if there are important issues not addressed elsewhere in the report)

## **Section IV – Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations**

(Approximately 5-10% of entire report, 2-4 pages)

The Commission takes action on the institution’s accreditation status following the visit. To provide the Commission with the information it needs to make this important decision, the team is expected to address the following matters in this final section of the report:

* Address briefly the extent to which the institution fulfilled the intended outcomes for the complete comprehensive review and the impact of the entire review process on the institution.
* Set forth the team’s findings, commendations, and recommendations on major areas. The team should seek a balance between commendations and recommendations such that the institution knows that its work has been both recognized and critiqued. Commendations should highlight specific practices or accomplishments, broader institutional commitments, and the overall effort evidenced in the institution’s report. Commendations do not need to be linked to a specific CFR. Recommendations should address overarching and important areas and should encompass issues to be addressed before the next comprehensive review. All recommendations should be supported by evidence and analysis set forth in the body of the report. Each recommendation should cite one or more relevant CFRs.
* Other suggestions and observations that do not rise to the level of recommendations may be made in the report but should not be included in this section.

## **Appendices**

The report includes the following appendices:

### **A. Federal Compliance Forms**

* 1. Credit Hour and Program Length Review
  2. Marketing and Recruitment Review
  3. Student Complaints Review
  4. Transfer Credit Review

### **B. Off-Campus Locations Review, as appropriate**

### **C. Distance Education Review, as appropriate**