Substantive Change Follow-up Site Visit Guide and Template

# Purpose of the Visit

The site visit is designed to evaluate whether the change is being implemented as presented to and approved by the Commission and in keeping with the Standards of Accreditation and related policies, and fulfill WSCUC and/or federally mandated requirements for a follow-up visit following such a change. A site visit to a new off-campus or international location is designed to verify that the location has the personnel, facilities, and resources described in the substantive change proposal.

# Setting up the Visit

Generally, one member of the Substantive Change Committee or other designated person conducts the visit, although occasionally two people may visit the location, if necessary. The visit typically lasts one day. Reviewers are selected by WSCUC staff based on their previous work on the matter or related expertise. Whenever possible, members of the substantive change panel that reviewed the original proposal will be assigned to the visit. WSCUC staff will coordinate the date of the visit with the institution and the team.

# Documentation Provided to the Reviewer(s)

WSCUC staff will provide the reviewer(s) with following material in advance of the visit:

* Team roster
* Accreditation history
* Substantive or Structural Change action letter regarding this action
* WSCUC Reimbursement Form

# The Visit

The reviewer(s) will determine what meetings and other activities need to be conducted on the visit in order to evaluate the institution’s progress in implementing the change and related issues set forth in the action letter and under the Standards of Accreditation. Visit activities usually include on-site interviews, review of relevant materials and, if appropriate, classroom observations. The reviewer(s) coordinates the agenda with the Accreditation Liaison Officer of the institution in advance of the visit.

# The Visit Report

At the end of the visit, we ask that you submit to WSCUC a brief report using the report template attached. The report is due in the WSCUC office within two weeks of the visit. Upon receipt, the report is reviewed by the WSCUC staff liaison. Once finalized, the report is sent back to the WSCUC staff and is forwarded to the institution with a letter confirming that the visit has been completed.

# Team Recommendations

The reviewer(s) may make recommendations at the end of the report, which will be passed on to the next reviewers. The next reviewers may be the next visit team or an Interim Report Committee panel. The team will know what the next scheduled WSCUC interaction is from the documentation provided by the staff. If the reviewer(s) finds that additional or more urgent follow-up is required on matters that have implications under the Standards of Accreditation, a confidential recommendation may be made to the Commission that an Interim Report or Special Visit be requested. Reviewers that are considering making such a recommendation should consult with the assigned WSCUC staff liaison and see more detailed information about this process provided on the attached report template.

# Format of the Report

## SECTION I – Overview and Context

(approximately two pages)

**A. Description of Institution and the Change**

* Provide **background information** on the mission and nature of the institution, including brief history, location(s), size, levels and kinds of degrees awarded.
* Provide brief information on the institution’s **recent accreditation history** leading up to this visit.
* Describe the change that is the subject of this visit, including the nature of the change and the impact on the institution.

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

* Briefly describe how the team conducted the review, with general information about the nature of the pre-visit activities and the activities that comprised the visit. The team should not append a schedule.

SECTION II – Evaluation of the Change  
(two to five pages)

This section of the team report should be organized by issue or topic. Each issue should be identified, followed by:

* A statement of the evidence reviewed by the team on this issue.
* Analysis of the effectiveness of institutional plans to address this issue.
* Findings and conclusions about this issue and the extent to which the change affects the institution’s compliance with WSCUC Standards.

The report should verify if the location has the personnel, facilities and resources described in the substantive change proposal.

The institution should also identify major changes that have occurred since the change was implemented that have implications under the Standards of Accreditation. If any changes have occurred or issues have arisen that affect the institution’s functioning under the WSCUC Standards, whether or not related to the proposal, the team should report on such matters in this section.

1. **Issue: [heading]**

**Issue: [heading]**

**Issue: [heading]**

**Other Issues Arising on the Visit [if any]**

SECTION III – Commendations and Recommendations (one page)

This section of the report sets forth the team’s commendations and recommendations on the areas reviewed during this visit, and on any new areas of concern identified by the team. All recommendations should be supported by evidence and analysis that is set forth in Section II of the report. Recommendations contained in Section III should concern broad and overarching areas that the team finds need to be addressed. 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. Each recommendation should cite one or more relevant Standard and CFR.

## APPENDICES [if any]

# Drafting the Body of the Report

## Using the Standards of Accreditation and Core Commitments

The Standards of Accreditation provide the warrant and framework for the team’s review and Commission action. The Standards are not intended to be applied mechanically but provide the basis for the review.

## Citing the CFRs

Identify, where appropriate, the Standards and CFRs that apply to the issue the team is addressing, e.g., cite CFR 1.3 in discussing academic freedom. The team’s recommendations need to be tied to one or more CFRs.

## Applying the Standards and CFRs

If the team believes that the institution is not in compliance with a Standard or CFR, evidence and analysis supporting this finding should be included. However, the team should not utilize language concluding that the institution is “not in compliance,” as this determination is made by the Commission. Likewise, reports should not state that the institution is “in compliance.”

## Presenting Issues, Analyzing Evidence and Formulating Conclusions

Identify the following elements for each issue identified by the team:

* State the issue.
* Describe the evidence that the team reviewed in evaluating this matter.
* Analyze the evidence, i.e., what does the evidence show about this issue? What did the institution conclude from this evidence?
* State the team’s conclusions and recommendations, based on the analysis of the evidence.

## Report Writing Guidelines

Please review and use the Editorial [Style Guide](https://wascsenior.box.com/s/gmpcmhp29saqwz3do30j) for WASC Reports**.**

* Avoid using the names of personnel.
* Use formal language tone (avoid “we/us” and “they/them”).
* Consider multiple audiences for the report: institution, Commission, and next team.
* Make commendations, but don’t overdo it.
* Avoid prescribing solutions to challenges that you see.

(Template)

REPORT ON THE FOLLOW-UP

SITE VISIT

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

(Name of Institution)

Type of Change

Date of Visit

Team Roster:

List Names of Team Members with Titles and Institutional Affiliations

and WSCUC Staff Liaison, if in attendance

|  |
| --- |
| The team conducted its review and 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 WSCUC Senior College and University Commission. |

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**SECTION I** – **Overview and Context**

**A. Description of Institution and the Change**

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

**SECTION II – Evaluation of the Change**

1. **Issue: [heading]**

**Issue: [heading]**

**Issue: [heading]**

**Other Issues Arising on the Visit [if any]**

**SECTION III – Commendations and Recommendations**

**APPENDICES** [if any]