

SELF-STUDY
WRITING GUIDELINES

Developed for the
University of Kentucky
Self-Study Committee

December, 2000

Writing Guidelines
University of Kentucky
Self-Study Report

In-put into the self-study report will be submitted to the Steering Committee from the principal committees. These committees were established according to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) 1998 Criteria for Accreditation. There is a specific committee to address each area of the Criteria.

The Criteria contains 460 must statements with which the University is required to comply in order to receive reaffirmation of accreditation. Committees are charged with review of the must statements within their individual sections of the Criteria. They may also share responsibility for must statements in other sections of the Criteria (see Shared Responsibility). When a committee completes its review, it will then prepare and submit a written report of its findings.

Research and public service are prominent in the University's mission. Staff support is critical in achieving all University goals and objectives. Because of this, committees have been formed to review these areas. Upon completion of review, these committees will also prepare and submit written reports of their findings. (See Committees with No Must Statements, page 2, if applicable).

Format

The Steering Committee agreed to adopt a format similar to that used by universities within our region that have recently undergone SACS review. Using this format, each committee will begin its report with a narrative section if needed. The committee will then list each must statement (individually) and report whether the University is in compliance with that statement. Specific examples of the format and an example of a documentation list are attached .

Method

After indicating the University's compliance status with respect to a particular must statement, the committee will write a brief narrative that discusses the data reviewed (supporting documentation) in order to reach this conclusion. If the University does not comply with a specific must statement, the committee recommends action which the University should take in order to comply with the statement. In addition to reporting on compliance with the Criteria, reports should also note areas where the University is performing beyond the minimum requirements for certification.

Documentation

Supporting data may consist of anything from reports and publications prepared by University committees to copies of budgets, contracts, etc. Documentation of all this data must be gathered and submitted to the Self-Study office. The supporting documentation will be used to create an electronic library as well as a "hard copy" library for the SACS

review team's use while on campus. Each committee's report should include a list of supporting documentation as a final part of the written report. An example of a list is attached.

Committees that have questions about what supporting documentation they need should refer to the Criteria and the Handbook for Peer Evaluators, both SACS publications. Chairs and Vice Chairs have been provided a copy of each publication for their group's use. The Criteria is available online at the SACS web site (www.sacscoc.org) as well as via the UK site (www.uky.edu/index.html). The Handbook for Peer Evaluators is particularly useful as a reference of supporting documentation needed by specific committees. This publication has been given to each member of all the SACS review committees as a guide to individual and group responsibilities in conducting the site visit. Each chapter of this book has the following sections that should prove valuable in both conducting the review and preparing the committee's report: "Examples of questions related to" (for each specific section); "Examples of questions related to others sections of the Criteria", and "Additional documents to be reviewed".

The Self-Study Office may be able to acquire additional copies of the Handbook for committees requesting it.

Narrative

The narrative of each committee's response to the must statements will come from its research findings. Committees may conduct interviews with appropriate individuals or focus groups. Specialized accreditation reports may be examined for areas that have individual accreditation such as the College of Engineering, the Medical School, the College of Nursing, etc. Other documents ranging from budgets, contracts, minutes of meetings, correspondence, to the University's Mission Statement may be reviewed/used by different committees according to the must statements they are to address.

Committees may also utilize results from the university-wide surveys. (Please note that committees do not have to have the survey results to begin writing their reports.)

Shared Responsibility

In many cases, several committees share responsibility for a single must statement. This being the case, members of all committees are encouraged to review the total (numbered) list compiled by the Self-Study Office and to remain in good communication with the other committees with whom they share responsibilities for must statements. The summary of shared must statements was distributed electronically to all committee chairs and vice chairs. Any committee member may request an electronic copy by sending an e-mail to csvaug1@pop.uky.edu.

Committees With No Must Statements

The University "aspires to excellence in teaching, research, and public service". Neither research nor public service is specifically addressed in the Criteria. Because of their importance to the institution's mission, they must be reviewed and included in the self-study report, and accordingly, principal committees were established for research and public service. In addition, since staff is critical to achieving the University's goals and

objectives, a staff subcommittee was formed as part of the Educational Support Services Committee.

These committees have no formal must statements to address. They are to review the Strategic Plan and Strategic Indicators for content that is specifically related to their area. For example, the Values section of the Strategic Plan includes the statement,

"The values of the University guide our decisions and behavior. We value:
-the personal and professional development of our faculty and staff ...
-service to local, state, national, and international communities"

The statement dealing with development of faculty and staff would be an item that the Staff Subcommittee would review and include in their report. The statement regarding service would be reviewed and included in the report of the Service Committee. By reviewing the entire Strategic Plan and Indicators, these groups can generate their own lists of "must" statements.

The reports of these committees and subcommittees can be written in the manner described previously and shown in the attached examples. Using this format, a committee will begin its report with a narrative section if needed. The committee will then list each must statement (specific applicable items from the Strategic Plan listed individually) and report whether the University is in compliance with that statement. See examples.

After indicating the University's compliance status with respect to a particular goal, the committee will write a brief narrative that discusses the documentation reviewed (supporting documentation) in order to reach this conclusion. If the University is not in compliance with a specific goal, the committee will write a recommendation of what action the University is to take in order to comply with the statement.

Sections from the 1991 University of Kentucky Self-Study Report (Public Service, Staff) are attached as examples of how these sections may also be written using straight narrative form. Please note that neither of the examples from the 1991 report is complete. They are meant to serve only as a general guideline.

Regardless of which format is chosen, recommendations must be included. Must statements and recommendations are to be in bold print using either format. (See Typing/Word Processing). Chairs of principal committees have been provided copies of the 1991 Self-Study Report.

Typing/Word Processing

Each committee and subcommittee is to prepare a typed/word processed draft of its report. Principal committees will submit their reports directly to the Steering Committee. Subcommittees will submit their reports to their committee chair. All committees will submit an electronic copy of their reports to the Self-Study Office.

A first draft of the entire report will be completed and reviewed by the Steering Committee by 21 February, 2001. The Steering Committee will note any changes or additional information needed and return the drafts to individual groups. All groups will then prepare and submit a final draft.

Committees are requested to use Microsoft Word to prepare their reports. Use one-inch margins and double space between paragraphs. The font selected for the report is Times New Roman, 12 point. Must statements and Recommendations should be in bold print as shown in the attached examples. Pages are to be numbered and centered at the bottom as done in this document.

Appendices

A list of appendices from the 1991 Self Study Report is attached for review. Appendices can consist of a wide variety of documents. "Interview Questions and Procedures for Assessment of the University Studies Program" (2-A), "Summary of Focus Group Discussions: Sample" (5-B), and "Ratio of Students to Faculty 1986-1991" (8-A), are examples of only a few of the documents that can be used as appendices. In general, any table, chart, script of questions for focus groups etc. that groups prepare as part of their reports (and which may be included in their chapters) should also be forwarded as an appendix.

Projected Layout of Self-Study Report

1. Introduction
2. Principles and Philosophy of Accreditation
3. Institutional Purpose
4. Institutional Effectiveness
5. Educational Programs
 - Undergraduate
 - Graduate
 - Professional
 - Distance Learning
 - Continuing Education
6. Faculty
7. Educational Support Services
 - Library
 - Information and Instructional Technology
 - University Staff
 - Student Development
 - Intercollegiate Athletics
8. Administrative Processes
9. Research
10. Public Service
11. Summary
12. Recommendations