Navigating the Fifth-Year Interim Report

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Session Learning Outcomes

- Understand the Fifth-Year Review Process
- Identify key areas and standards that have been commonly cited in past reviews
- Examine helpful tips and pointers from past evaluators of Fifth-Year Interim Reports
Ahoy Mate! Do you know...?

5 things you should know:

• Your institution’s SACSCOC Staff representative (VP).
• The SACSCOC accreditation liaison at your institution.
• Your institution’s reaffirmation class (year).
• Due date of your institution’s SACSCOC Fifth-Year Interim Report.
• When your institution’s Fifth-Year Interim report will be reviewed.
Fifth-Year Interim Review: WHY?

The Fifth-Year Interim Review:
Five years before next decennial review

- Ensure compliance with federal regulations
- Review new off-campus sites approved since last reaffirmation
The Fifth-Year Interim Review: Steps in the Process

Notification | Submission | Review | Results | Referral Report (if Applicable)
Steps in Process: Notification

**NOTIFICATION**

Sent 11 months in advance

Dr. John Doe  
President  
Southern Region College  
123 First Street  
City, State 00000

*Track A* Institutions  
By: *October 15*

*Track B* Institutions  
By: *April 25*
Steps in Process: Submission

**Track A** Institutions
Report Due: September 15

**Track B** Institutions
Report Due: March 15
Submission of the Report

• Submit 8 copies of the report.

  Southern Region
  College
  Fifth-Year Interim
  Report Parts I, II, III, V

• Electronic Submissions (Preferred):
  - Package each flash drive separately.
  - Label each flash-drive’s package (above left).
  - Make sure Institutional Summary Form and QEP Impact Report are in PDF or Word format (for archiving).

• Mail all 8 report copies (in one large package) to your SACSCOC VP (above right)

My SACSCOC VP
SACSCOC
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033
Steps in Process: Review

- Notification
- Submission
- Review

Reports reviewed during Meeting of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees in December and June by a Committee of Special Readers.

**Track A** Institutions
Reviewed in **December**

**Track B** Institutions
Reviewed in **June**
Steps in Process: Review (Committee Composition)

Four clusters of *experienced* evaluators

One Cluster Coordinator (per cluster)

Two academic, one IE, and one student services evaluator

Two or more finance evaluators (per cluster)

Chair (member of SACSCOC Board of Trustees)
Steps in Process: Review (Clusters of Institutions)

Institutions grouped (clustered) based on level, governance, size, programs, etc.

Evaluators are selected using similar guidelines.

Institutions are reviewed within clusters prior to meeting.

Institutional cases are discussed and consensus is reached on findings by entire committee at the June or December Board meeting.

Committee members with conflicts of interest are recused during committee deliberations.
Steps in Process: Results

NOTIFICATION

SUBMISSION

REVIEW

RESULTS

Track A Institutions
By: mid-January

Track B Institutions
By: mid-July
Steps in Process: Referral to C&R (if applicable)

If requested by the Committee,

Referral Report x 6
(six copies)

Southern Region
College

Due the following
April or
September
The Fifth-Year Interim Review:

Components of the Review

✓ Review of off-campus instructional sites (if applicable)

✓ Review of Fifth-Year Interim Report
Review of Off-Campus Instructional Sites (if applicable)

- List of approved sites that may be subject to a visit are sent with notification letter
- Review list and verify
- Communicate discrepancies with your SACSCOC Vice President (May require submission of notification to Substantive Change Office)
- Work with SACSCOC Vice President to schedule visit(s)
Components of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

Part I: Signatures Attesting to Integrity

Part II: Institutional Summary Form

Part III: Fifth-Year Compliance Certification

Part IV: Follow-up Report
(applicable only to select institutions)

Part V: QEP Impact Report
Components of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

Part I:
Signatures Attesting to Integrity
(applicable to all institutions)

Signatures of CEO and Accreditation Liaison
Components of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

Part II:
Institutional Summary Form
(applicable to all institutions)

- “Blueprint” of the institution
- Key components for reviewers:
  - List of Degrees (and number of graduates)
  - Off-Campus Instructional Locations and Branch Campuses
  - Distance and Correspondence Education
  - Agencies that Accredit the Institution and its Programs
Components of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

Part III:
Fifth-Year Compliance Certification
(applicable to all institutions)

Institution determines compliance with the Fifth-Year standards, explains findings, and provides documentation in support of its determination.
Components of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

Part IV:
Follow-up Report
(applicable to select institutions)

A Fifth-Year Follow-Up Report addresses an institution’s continued compliance with standards and requirements identified at the time of an institution’s last review.
The **QEP Impact Report** is a report demonstrating the extent to which the QEP has affected outcomes related to student learning.
Components of the Fifth-Year Interim Report

Part V:

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Impact Report
(applicable to all institutions)

Four elements should be addressed:
1. a list of the initial goals and intended outcomes of the Quality Enhancement Plan;
2. a discussion of changes made to the QEP and the reasons for making those changes;
3. a description of the QEP’s impact on student learning and/or student success, as appropriate to the design of the QEP.
4. a reflection on what the institution has learned as a result of the QEP experience.

Report should not exceed 10 pages
Changing Course
Some Commonly Cited Standards

• 5.4 Qualified Administrative/Academic Officers
• 6.2.c. Program Coordination
• CR 8.1 Student Achievement
• 13.8 Institutional Environment
• 14.4 Representation to Other Agencies
5.4 QUALIFIED ACADEMIC/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

• The institution employs and regularly evaluates administrative and academic officers with appropriate experience and qualifications to lead the institution.
5.4 QUALIFIED ADMINISTRATIVE/ACADEMIC OFFICERS

• The Commission considers an evaluation cycle of *every three years or less* to meet the expectation of “regular” evaluation.

• Standard applies to key decision makers within the institution’s governance structure. *Does not apply the CEO.*

• Organizational chart clarifying leadership roles, job descriptions and names is very helpful to evaluators.

• The institution should provide a rationale for the group of persons addressed by the standard.

• Resumes, if provided, should be *current.*
6.2.C. PROGRAM COORDINATION

- For each of its educational programs, the institution assigns appropriate responsibility for program coordination.
6.2.C PROGRAM COORDINATION

• Take the time to organize your information.
• Be consistent throughout your Report with the identification of academic programs.
• Include the program coordinator’s name, background (degree and field), and the programs he/she is responsible for coordinating.
• Address situations when a coordinator oversees programs which are not in his/her field or major.
• Include academic programs offered at off-campus sites and via distance learning.
CR 8.1 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

• The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution’s mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success.
CR 8.1 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- For each criteria:
  - Identify goals ➔ Evaluate data (outcomes) ➔ Publish data (goals and outcomes)

- Provide rationale/justification for criteria selected and thresholds of acceptability

- Graduation/completion rates must be among criteria addressed in 8.1
  - Address in the context of baseline indicator selected by the institution and reported to SACSCOC (IPEDS, NSC, Profile Data) and discuss steps taken to improve student achievement against the selected metric (especially if the targets are not met).

- Disaggregation of graduation/completion data (race, gender, etc.) will be expected going forward (beginning in March 2020)
13.8 INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

• The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community.
13.8 INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

- As of March 2017, Institutions must include within 13.8 information relating to any investigations by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR) for possible violations alleging sexual violence as part of its narrative addressing a healthy, safe, and secure campus environment.

- Open investigations as well as closed investigations that were active or that occurred since the last SACSCOC comprehensive review.

- Don’t be silent if there were no incidents/investigations.
  - Institution is expected to explicitly state that there were no investigations since last SACSCOC comprehensive review.
14.4 REPRESENTATION TO OTHER AGENCIES

- The institution (a) represents itself **accurately** to all U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting agencies with which it holds accreditation and (b) informs those agencies of any change of accreditation status, including the imposition of public sanctions.

  - Reference SACSCOC policy “Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies”
14.4 REPRESENTATION TO OTHER AGENCIES

- Institution describes itself accurately and consistently with how it describes itself to SACSCOC.
- Keep SACSCOC apprised in change of status with other U.S. Dept. of Ed. recognized accreditors (see policy “Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies”)
- Informs other accreditors of changes in accreditation status including public sanctions.
- Sample documentation:
  - Excerpts of reports prepared for/by other accreditors
  - Screenshot or printout on the institution from other accreditors
  - Copies of correspondence mailed to/from SACSCOC notifying change in accreditor status
Tips from Evaluators of Fifth-Year Interim Reports

- Writing the Narrative
- Packaging the Report
- Presenting Data
- Quality Control
Writing the Narrative

• Organize narrative to align with the wording of the standard.

• Save the reader time by:
  • pointing directly to the specific supporting documentation
  • excerpting when it makes sense
  • having links go directly to the page being referenced
Presenting the Data

• Provide an **analysis** of data, not just a data dump.

• Use **tables and graphs** when appropriate, along with narrative to support what you are trying to illustrate.

• Connect the dots for the reader—remember you are **building a case for compliance**.
Presenting the Data

• If you plan to use sampling:
  • Be sure it is representative of the institution’s mission.
  • Include a valid cross-section of programs from every division and at each degree level.
  • Make a compelling case as to why the sampling and assessment findings are an appropriate representation of the institution’s programs.
Quality Control

• Use outside readers to identify blind-spots and assist with editing.

• Ensure that there is consistency throughout the report.

• Double-check embedded links to sites and documents.

• When in doubt, ask your SACSCOC staff representative for advice.
Packaging the Report

• Follow the directions outlined in the Report template.

• If using electronic media:
  • Invest in a quality product.
  • Include instructions on how to access the Report.
  • Label flash drives appropriately and clearly.
Thank you for your attendance!