Fifth-Year Interim Report: Compliance on the Most Cited Standards
Tips and Guidelines to Avoid Citations in SACSCOC Interim Reports

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Outline and Learning Outcomes

Outline
- Introduction to AUD and its timeline
- General Tips and Guidelines for Writing an Effective Fifth Year Interim Report
- Most Cited Standards for Fifth-Year Interim Reports Over a 5-Year Period
- Discussion

Learning Outcomes
- Develop an understanding of the process for effective planning and development of the Fifth-Year Interim Report.
- Identify strategies and skills to achieve compliance on the standards most cited in the reviews of Fifth-Year Interim Reports.
- Identify the requirements that must be addressed by each of most cited standards.

Introduction and Timeline
- Established: 1995
- First SACSCOC Affirmation: 2007
- Reaffirmed: 2012
- Most Recent Fifth Year Interim Report: 2018
- Next reaffirmation: 2022
General Approach

• Maintaining SACSCOC accreditation is a continuous improvement process
• Started narrative preparation over 18 months in advance
• Conducted planning sessions with different stakeholders
• Assigned standards to specific AUD leaders who are clear on the standards
• Set an agreed-upon timeline with owners, dependencies and deliverables
• Agreed to forward first/follow-up drafts to President, Provost/COA & IE leader
• Writeups & narratives for individual standards were written, reviewed and re-written and re-reviewed several times
• Templates, documents and plans were reviewed repeatedly to align them with SACSCOC Compliance Standards

General Tips and Guidelines for Writing an Effective 5th Year Interim Report

Overview – Preparing an Effective 5th Year Interim Report

• Ensure familiarity with the standards and requirements of the 5th-Year Interim Report
• Ensure buy-in throughout the institution
• Assign most capable individuals to write the narratives
  1. Ensure familiarity with SACSCOC resources
  2. Be organized – A coherent report
  3. Include links to all data submitted in the narratives
  4. Explain graphs and charts
  5. Explain data samples
  6. Seek and solicit appropriate external resources and support
  7. Engage necessary stakeholders in internal deliberations and reviews
  8. Be very specific with relevant details
Tips and Guidelines
1. Ensure familiarity with SACSCOC resources

The best information source is the sascoc.org website

Tips and Guidelines
2. Be organized (1/4)

- Ensure the report is
  - coherent,
  - well organized,
  - with an organized table of contents,
  - working links with clear tables and visuals,
  - sequentially rational flow of narrative,
  - accurate sequencing, etc.

- Being organized reduces possible requests for further clarifications,
  - which ultimately reduces the chances of being cited.

EXAMPLES
- The next slide contains samples from AUD’s 5th year interim report

Tips and Guidelines
2. Be organized - Sample Table of Contents (2/4)
Tips and Guidelines

2. Be organized – Sample Table with Clear & explanatory titles (3/4)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department of Pharmacy &amp; Pharmaceutical Sciences</th>
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<td>Table 1: Example of Clear &amp; Explanatory Titles</td>
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<td>(44/45)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Tips and Guidelines

2. Be organized – Sample Table with Clear & explanatory titles (4/4)

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<td>Table 2: Example of Clear &amp; Explanatory Titles</td>
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<tr>
<td>(46/46)</td>
<td>(46/46)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Tips and Guidelines

3. Include links to all data submitted in the narratives (1/2)

- Provide links to referenced items, policies, websites, etc.
- Include the page #s if applicable
- If referencing external links, ensure they are active
- Beware of inactive links and try these links while off site as well

**EXAMPLE 1:**
- The Student Handbook contains the university policy and process regarding violation of academic integrity

The process is outlined in details in the "Student Handbook"
3. Include links to all data submitted in the narratives (2/2)

EXAMPLE 2:
- The university publishes student achievement data on its website on regular basis
  - See the Fact Sheet for the most current information on student achievement

This data includes:
Retention
- Base-line (2014): 71%
- Goal: Increase
- Currently at 79%.
- Goal (within 6-8 years of base-line year): 75%.

Undergraduate Course Completion
- Base-line (2014): 85%
- Goal: Maintenance
- Currently at 90%.
- Goal (within 6-8 years of base-line year): 88%.

Degree Completion (Graduation Rate)
- Base-line (2014): 58%
- Goal: Increase
- Currently at 60%.
- Goal (within 6-8 years of base-line year): 66%.

Tips and Guidelines
4. Explain graphs and charts

EXAMPLE:
- The data shown in Bar Graph 1 titled “Job Placement” represents the percentage of graduates who reported securing a job placement within 12 months after graduation based on data from the AUD Career Services Office.

Tips and Guidelines
5. Explain data samples

- Explain the data sampling selection process to ensure reliability of your methods
- The following examples are extracted from AUD’s 5th Year Interim Report Narrative

EXAMPLE 1:
“Assessment of student learning outcomes for programs accounting for 90% of AUD’s enrollment are represented in this narrative. All schools are included. All graduate programs appear. The only undergraduate program certificate is included. Duplication of architecture and interior design and the adequacy of including two out of four undergraduate engineering programs have driven the sampling.”

EXAMPLE 2:
The following provides six examples (three from each of AY’s 2015-2016 and 2016-2017) of the interaction of course and program student learning outcome assessment.”
1. Review samples of Compliance Certification Reports during SACSCOC Annual Meetings (e.g., Work Room at the SACSCOC Annual Conference)

2. Attend the SACSCOC Summer Institutes, Annual Meetings, and relevant workshops

3. Search the internet for 5th Year Interim Reports (focusing on institutions that achieved Compliance) – e.g., Example 1, Example 2

4. Seek support from assigned SACSCOC Vice President who has always been there to provide essential guidance - in the case of AUD, this was Dr. Charles Taylor

6. Seek and solicit appropriate external resources and support

Tips and Guidelines

7. Engage Stakeholders in Internal Deliberations & Reviews – OARP Breakdown (1/8)

• Reach a clear understanding of the various intricacies that work into:
  o creating a streamlined academic review process, and
  o providing the details/documentation of that process such as:
    ▪ the Outcome Assessment Report and Plan (OARP) and
    ▪ the Course Effectiveness Report (CER) - (Sample templates are available)

EXAMPLE

• AUD’s OARP, critical to Standard 8.2a, went through a minimum of 3 internal reviews and edits in order to provide better assessment
• Engagement in the internal review process was overseen by IE Office, supported by
  ▪ The executive level: President, and Provost & CAO
  ▪ The program level: Faculty, Chairs, and Deans
• Templates and forms were revised as the needs required to ensure good practice and alignment to the expectations set by the Standards

BOTTOM LINE

Getting it right by everyone involved is non-negotiable, and buy-in, persistence, accuracy, accountability, specificity and patience were key to successful completion of the 5th Year Interim Report
Tips and Guidelines

8.2 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

a. Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.

(Student outcomes: educational programs)

Part I. Closing the Loop:
- Include improvements actions taken (based on last year’s assessment)
  - in areas that were not achieved
  - in areas that were partially achieved
- Address weaknesses, actions and quantifiable improvements.

Part II. Measurement Instruments:
- Include program goals and learning outcomes
- Include elated multiple measures of assessment (direct and indirect measures).
- Ensure alignment between program goals, program learning outcomes & related courses.

Note 1: Section is due to the IE Office NLT 1st day of the Fall, each AY.
Note 2: IE will review and point out any deficiency and required improvements to Part II NLT 1st week of the Fall.

Tips and Guidelines

• Part III: OARP implementation using instruments & measures in Part II:
  - Implement the OARP, and collect and analyze program data during the Fall & Spring semesters of each academic year
  - Identify achievement status, weaknesses, problems and opportunities, and the prescribed action (where further improvement is required)

• Part IV: Leadership Overview and Prescribed Action
  - Is designed to be a holistic narrative of the degree program
  - Sets the major agenda items for teaching and learning for the coming year
  - Summarizes findings, actions and improvements in two parts:
    - Part I (closing the loop)
    - Part III (OARP implementation)

Note 3: End of year report
- Submit completed OARP for each program by 15 June of each year.

Tips and Guidelines

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Tips and Guidelines

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Tips and Guidelines
7. Engage Stakeholders in Internal Deliberations & Reviews – OARP Breakdown (7/8)

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Tips and Guidelines
7. Engage Stakeholders in Internal Deliberations & Reviews – OARP Breakdown (8/8)

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These can be revisited in next year’s OARP.

Tips and Guidelines

### PART I

**PROGRAM GOALS**

| PROGRAM GOALS | Related University Learning Outcome (LO) | Related Program Learning Outcomes (LO) | Measurement: Instruments for Assessing Level (M)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Engage in research activities, both in conductions and conferences to enhance professional practice.</td>
<td>LO1, LO2</td>
<td>LO1, LO2, LO3</td>
<td>Evaluation Board, External Review, Faculty Feedback, Peer Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Sections from the OARP.

Tips and Guidelines
7. Engage Stakeholders in Internal Deliberations & Reviews – OARP Breakdown (7/8)

### PART II

**PROGRAM GOALS**

| PROGRAM GOALS | Related University Learning Outcome (LO) | Related Program Learning Outcomes (LO) | Measurement: Instruments for Assessing Level (M)
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Develop effective communication skills, in Arabic and English, including the ability to communicate and present spoken and written work, whether in a public or private setting.</td>
<td>LO1, LO2</td>
<td>LO1, LO2, LO3</td>
<td>Evaluation Board, External Review, Faculty Feedback, Peer Evaluation</td>
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Sample Sections from the OARP.

Tips and Guidelines
7. Engage Stakeholders in Internal Deliberations & Reviews – OARP Breakdown (8/8)

Sample Section from the Course Effectiveness Report.

Tips and Guidelines
7. Engage Stakeholders in Internal Deliberations & Reviews – OARP Breakdown (9/8)
Tips and Guidelines

8. Be very specific with relevant details

- The narrative should present the details needed in a coherent, clear, relevant and succinct manner

**EXAMPLE**

The OARP is divided into four PARTS and serves three essential purposes:

1. Reporting on the extent of achievement of learning outcome-related objectives set at the end of the previous cycle and for which progress was expected during the current cycle (“Closing the Loop”);
2. Assessing the extent of achievement of course & program student learning outcomes and program goals (“OARP Implementation”)
   - Multiple instruments & measures providing input are used in this assessment process
   - Targeted areas for improvement in student achievement and strategies to reach improved attainment levels are defined; and
3. Providing a summative assessment of the educational program and an action plan
   - for continuous improvement (“Leadership Overview and Prescribed Action”) in student achievement through intervention at various levels (course, program and institution).

- AUD’s 8.2a narrative

Group Work (10 Minutes)

- Consider the question

“What are some other tips that you have identified from either working on your Compliance Certification or the Fifth Year Interim Report?”

- Think: On your own, write three tips that you have identified
- Pair: Discuss your tips with a partner. Put a check by any tips, above, that your partner also wrote down. Then, write down tips your partner had that you did not have.
- Share: Review all of your tips and circle the one you think is most important. One of you will share this tip with the whole group. As you listen to the whole group, write down three more tips you liked.

Most Cited Standards for Fifth-Year Interim Reports Over a 5-Year Period

- Imad Y. Hoballah – American University in Dubai (AUD)
Most Cited Standards for Fifth-Year Interim Reports Over a 5-Year Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Student achievement; 8.2.a Student outcomes: educational programs (Reference to 2012 Principles CS 3.3.1.1 Institutional Effectiveness: Educational Programs, to include Student Learning Outcomes)</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.b Program Faculty (Reference to 2012 Principles CR 2.8 Number of Full-time Faculty)</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.c Program Coordination (Reference to 2012 Principles CS 3.4.11 Qualified Academic Coordinators)</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.4 Student Complaints (Reference to 2012 Principles FR 4.5 Student Complaints)</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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- CS: Comprehensive Standard  CR: Core Requirement  FR: Federal Requirements
- Source: SACSCOC Fifth-Year Audit Presentation

8.1 Student Achievement:

8.2.a Student Outcomes: Educational Programs

- Ensure focus on program & student learning outcomes & provide links to those outcomes
- Discuss relevant deliberations regarding outcomes development & approvals
- Your chosen sample should be most comprehensive, representative, and inclusive of at least 3 years of data sampling. Justify the sampling
- Focus also on the degree of achievement of program and student learning outcomes
- Discuss how the results were used to inform of new practices and improvements
- The more you review the narrative the better

(This standard was reviewed and rewritten several times)

6.2.b. Program Faculty

- Provide sample faculty contracts that detail expectations of full-time faculty
  - in addition to teaching, e.g., research, serving on committees, advising, etc.
- Demonstrate that the number of faculty (per degree program) is adequate
  - to meet the needs of all your programs.
- Leave out irrelevant detail
  - as with any standard, just discard irrelevant details
- Discuss faculty-student ratio and benchmark to other similar SACSCOC-accredited institutions
- Discuss how you sustain the program and curriculum quality, review & integrity
### 6.2.C. Program Coordination

**6.2.c Program Coordination** *(Reference to 2012 Principles CS 3.4.11 Qualified Academic Coordinators)*

- Include program coordinator’s profiles with specific reference to the program academic requirement
- Make the necessary personnel changes if you find that the profile does not fit the position *(This to keep adherence to standards)*
- Include a table listing of your programs to help create an understanding of the coordinator assignments
- List program coordinators’ degree and major field and discuss the coordinator’s academic qualifications and detailing their experiential background as well.
- Be very specific.

*Imad Y. Hoballah - American University in Dubai (AUD)*

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### 12.4 Student Complaints

**12.4 Student Complaints** *(Reference to 2012 Principles FR 4.5 Student Complaints)*

- Provide a copy of student complaints policy
- Provide evidence that the university has a published policy on student complaints
- Provide evidence that the university has demonstrated enforcement of its policy
- Provide actual and relevant cases that demonstrate complaint resolution per university policy*
- Describe your student complaints system/process & how complaints are handled
- Ensure that student complaints policies provide due process to your students all the way through the appeals process

*Redact student names to protect their privacy

*Imad Y. Hoballah - American University in Dubai (AUD)*

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### Group Work & Discussion (20 Minutes Discussion & Reporting)

**Directions:**

Read the sample narrative from AUD’s 5th Year Interim Report (as assigned by group).

1. Identify and discuss the elements that are clearly included and detailed
2. How does the assigned narrative compare to your institution’s most recent 5th year interim report
3. Think of three ways that strengthen the narrative (keep in mind the expressed intent of the Standard)

*Imad Y. Hoballah - American University in Dubai (AUD)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Work &amp; Discussion (20 Minutes Discussion &amp; Reporting)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GROUP 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 8.1 Student achievement; 8.2.a Student outcomes: Educational Programs</td>
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<td>(Reference to CS 3.3.1.1 Institutional Effectiveness: Educational Programs, to include Student Learning Outcomes in the 2012 Principles)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GROUP 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 6.2.b Program Faculty</td>
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<td>(Reference to CR 2.8 Number of Full-time Faculty in the 2012 Principles)</td>
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<td><strong>GROUP 4</strong></td>
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