

Focusing on the Focused Report:

A 'Giant Leap' toward Reaffirmation

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Objectives

Participants will

- ✓ Understand the purpose of the Focused Report and the advantages of submitting one
- ✓ Understand reasons for non compliance ratings given by Off-Site Committees
- ✓ Know how to develop well-written, appropriately-documented, and FOCUSED responses that satisfactorily address ratings of non compliance

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Attendees: Where are you in the Reaffirmation process?

- ❖ Between Off Site Review and On Site Review—writing or preparing to write a Focused Report
- ❖ Drafting/Writing Compliance Certification
- ❖ Planning/organizing for upcoming Reaffirmation process

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Purpose of the Focused Report

- ❖ Optional report written after the Off Site Review & before the On Site Review
- ❖ The Focused Report gives an institution a second opportunity to make its case for compliance
- ❖ The Focused Report should *focus* only on those standards that are marked as non compliant

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Principles Most Frequently Marked as Non Compliant

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Most Frequently Cited Principles

- 6.2.a Faculty Qualifications
- 8.2.a Student Outcomes - Educational Programs
- 8.2.b Student Outcomes - Gen Ed
- 8.2.c Student Outcomes - Academic and Student Services
- 13.2* Financial Documents
- 6.1* Full-time Faculty

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Responsibilities of the On Site Reaffirmation Committee

- Confirm, in person, compliance with designated principles (marked with an asterisk)
- Determine compliance for principles deemed not in compliance by the Off Site Reaffirmation Committee
- Evaluate the acceptability of the QEP

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Audience for the Focused Report

On Site Reaffirmation Committee Members are committed to

- Open-mindedness
- Objectivity

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The On Site Reaffirmation Committee will judge compliance based on the

- Institution's Compliance Certification
- Off Site Committee's Report
- Institution's Focused Report
- Institution's QEP
- Interviews conducted & documents examined during the On Site visit

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The Focused Report: A 'New Opportunity' to Demonstrate Compliance

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Focused Report: Ineffective Responses

- ❖ Repeating or quoting text from the original Compliance Certification
- ❖ Arguing with the Off Site Reaffirmation Committee's findings

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Focused Report: Effective Responses

- ❖ Providing clearer, more detailed explanations
- ❖ Supplying additional, updated, or new information and/or documentation
- ❖ Elaborating

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Preparing to Write

- ❖ Be certain you understand the reason for each negative rating from the Off Site Review Team
- ❖ Be objective; reread the pertinent section from your original report from the standpoint of someone who knows nothing about your institution

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Reasons for Non-Compliance Ratings

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Common Reasons for Noncompliance

1. Failure to adhere to the standard or requirement
2. No evidence of clear policy and/or procedure
3. Confusing or contradictory information submitted
4. Failure to address all components of a standard
5. Insufficient or unconvincing documentation of compliance

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Failure to Adhere to a Standard or Requirement

Example of an Off Site Committee Finding:

❖ University policy does not ensure that students complete 25% of the required credit hours for the undergraduate degree at the institution (9.4)

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No Evidence of Clear Policy or Procedure

Example:

6.3 Faculty Evaluation

Applies to Full-time and Part-Time, Permanent as well as Temporary, Faculty

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Confusing or Contradictory Information Presented

Examples:

- Degree Programs
- Information on Facilities (Number of Residence Halls, Off-Site Locations, etc.)
- Organizational Chart

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Failure to Address All Components of a Standard

Example:

13.2 The member institution provides the following financial statements: (a) an institutional audit for the most recent fiscal year . . . (b) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets . . . and (c) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal proceedings, and is approved by the governing board.

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Insufficient or Unconvincing Documentation

Example:

4.2.c The governing board selects and regularly evaluates the institution's chief executive officer.

Documentation that might be provided:

- * Board By-laws showing Board's authority to select CEO
- * Board minutes showing selection of current CEO
- * Summary of process for and frequency of CEO evaluation
- * Copy of most recent evaluations or Board minutes documenting evaluations

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Insufficient or Unconvincing Documentation

Example:

Off-Site Team Comment on Comprehensive Standard 5.2.c:
The University has not presented convincing evidence that the President has ultimate responsibility for and exercises appropriate control over intercollegiate athletics.

Documentation that might be presented:

- ✓ Organizational Chart
- ✓ Entries from President's Calendar showing meetings with Athletics Director, FAR, etc.
- ✓ Minutes from meetings with Athletics Director, FAR, Coaches

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Insufficient or Unconvincing Documentation

- 7.3 Administrative Effectiveness
- 8.2.a Student Outcomes: Educational Programs
- 8.2.b Student Outcomes: General Education
- 8.2.c Student Outcomes: Academic & Student Services

Typical Problems:

- Institution provides samples but does not explain how they present a valid cross section of programs
- Institution describes assessment measures and results but does not identify goals/targets or changes made to effect improvement
- Institution provides dated data

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Insufficient or Unconvincing Documentation

6.2.a Qualifications of faculty members

6.2.b Sufficient number of full-time faculty to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review

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Insufficient or Unconvincing Documentation

6.2.b Sufficient Number of FT Faculty

Problems:

- Percentage of credit hours taught by FT faculty is not disaggregated by program
- Inadequate description of faculty responsibilities (i.e., include expectations for advising, scholarship & service as well as teaching load)
- Inadequate evidence that FT faculty are able to meet scholarship & service expectations

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Summary

- ❖ Keep the report FOCUSED. Address only those standards identified by the Off Site Committee as non-compliant and only those parts of the standard that were not satisfactorily addressed in the original Compliance Report.
- ❖ Consult the *Resource Manual* for suggested documentation.
- ❖ Be concise, but detailed. The response to each non-compliant principle should be no more than 3 pages.
- ❖ REMEMBER YOUR AUDIENCE.

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Questions? Comments?

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