

# Preparing a Fifth-Year Interim Report



Dr. Crystal A. Baird  
Vice President  
2024 Annual Meeting

Where  
is  
Shelia?



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**Shelia Luke**

Vice President - Institutional  
Compliance

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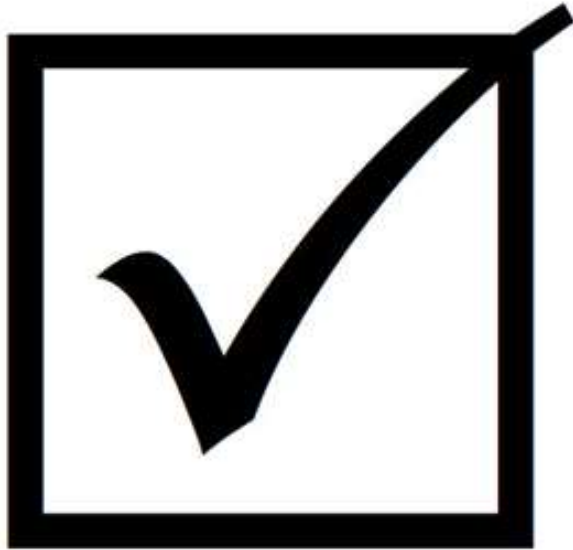


*“When we strive to become better,  
everything around us becomes better too.”*

*-Paulo Coelho*

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## Session Outline



1. Fifth-Year Review Process
2. Components of the Fifth-Year Interim Report
3. Strategies to Overcome Common Issues
4. Helpful Tips to Create Successful Reports

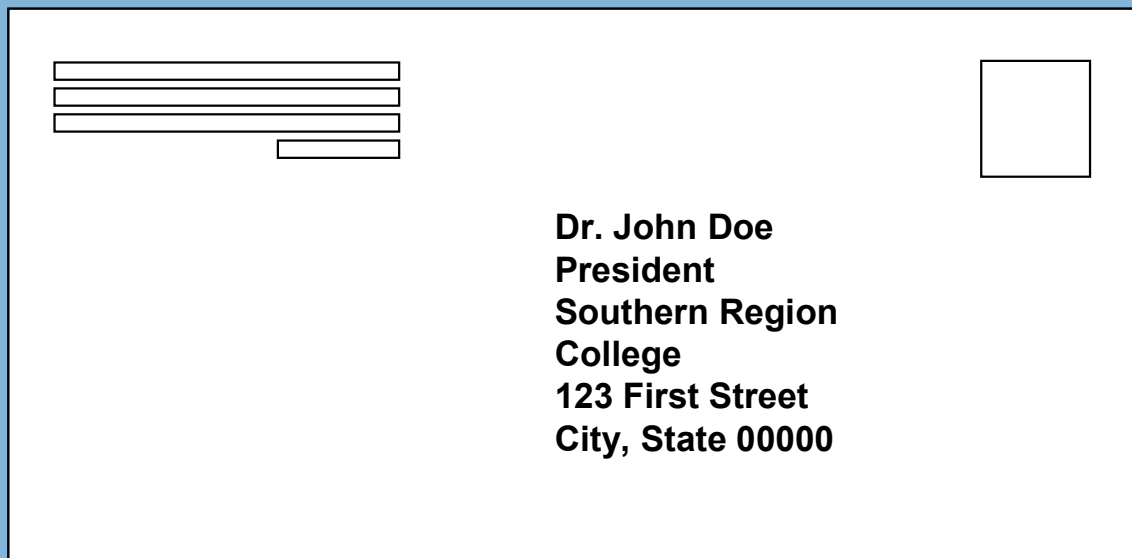
# The Fifth-Year Interim Review: The Process



# The Process: Notification

**NOTIFICATION**

**Sent 11 months in advance**



**Track A Institutions**  
**By: October 15**

**Track B Institutions**  
**By: April 25**

# The Process: Submission of Report

NOTIFICATION

SUBMISSION

**New Report  
Due Dates!**

**Track A Institutions Report  
Due: **September 8****

**Track B Institutions  
Report Due: **March 1****



## THE FIFTH-YEAR INTERIM REPORT

Name of Institution:

Address of the Institution:

Name, title, contact numbers of person(s) preparing the report:

The Fifth-Year Interim Report is comprised of the following:

- **Signatures Attesting to Integrity** (*applicable to all institutions*). Requests that the chief executive officer and accreditation liaison attest to the accuracy of institutional assessment and documentation supporting that assessment.
- **Institutional Summary Form Prepared for SACSCOC Reviews** (*applicable to all institutions*). Requests that the institution complete the 'Institutional Summary Form Prepared for SACSCOC Reviews.'
- **Fifth-Year Compliance Certification** (*applicable to all institutions*). Monitors continued compliance with identified Core Requirements and Standards.
- **Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan** (*applicable to all institutions*). Demonstrates the extent to which the QEP has affected outcomes related to student learning and/or student success.

An institution may also be requested to host an off-campus committee charged to review new, but unvisited, off-campus sites initiated since the institution's previous reaffirmation. An institution will be notified of this at the time it receives its notification letter from the SACSCOC President regarding the Fifth-Year Interim Report.

# Policy: Revised June 2024



Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
Commission on Colleges  
1866 Southern Lane  
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097

## THE FIFTH-YEAR INTERIM REVIEW

### Policy Statement

SACSCOC member institutions are required to submit a Fifth-Year Interim Report as a part of their Reaffirmation cycle. This report addresses selected standards of the *Principles of Accreditation*, as well as the impact of the institution's most recent Quality Enhancement Plan. The institution's Impact Report will be evaluated as acceptable or unacceptable, based upon the criteria of whether the institution has adequately

- (a) provided the initial goals and intended outcomes of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP),
- (b) discussed changes made to the QEP and the reasons for those changes,
- (c) described the QEP's impact on student learning and/or student success, as appropriate to the design of the QEP, and
- (d) reflected upon what the institution has learned as a result of the QEP.

The Fifth-Year Interim Report is due approximately four and one-half years prior to the institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation, allowing the institution to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the selected standards following the mid-point of its reaffirmation cycle. Institutions which have implemented off-campus instructional sites since their last reaffirmation may also be asked to host an Interim Off-Campus Instructional Sites Committee's visit to a representative sample of those new sites as part of the Fifth-Year Interim Report process. If an institution is on Sanction at the time of its scheduled Fifth-Year Interim Review, the President of SACSCOC may act to defer the submission of the institution's Fifth-Year Interim Report pending resolution of the institution's probationary status. If the Fifth-Year Interim Review Committee determines that an institution is non-compliant with one or more standards, or has submitted an unacceptable QEP Impact Report, the institution will be required to submit a Referral Report for review by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

### Procedures

Current report forms and important documents related to the [Fifth-Year Interim Review](#) process may be found on the SACSCOC website as a link from the Institutional Resources page. Fifth-Year Interim Reports are reviewed by the Fifth-Year Interim Review Committee concurrently with the review of the Compliance Certification by the SACSCOC Off-Site Reaffirmation Committees. Should the Fifth-Year Interim Review Committee determine that an institution had failed to demonstrate compliance with one or more of the selected standards, the Committee will refer the institution for review by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. That Referral Report and corresponding Report of the Fifth-Year Interim Review Committee will be reviewed by one of the Board's Committees on Compliance and Reports at its meetings in June or December. Should the Board of Trustees determine that the institution had failed to demonstrate compliance with one or more of the referred standards, the Board will request a Monitoring Report and the institution's two-year monitoring period will begin at that time. (See SACSCOC Policy [Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports](#).)

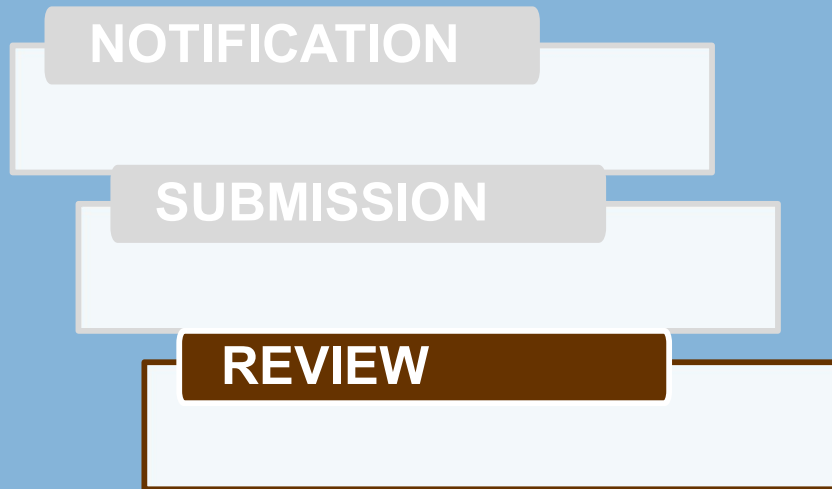


## The Process: Submission of Report



- Reports should be submitted via SACSCOC Institutional Portal
- Refer to *Documents Submitted for SACSCOC Review Policy*
- Upload your submissions prior to the deadline
- Be prepared to submit flash drives (if issues arise with portal submission)

# The Process: Review



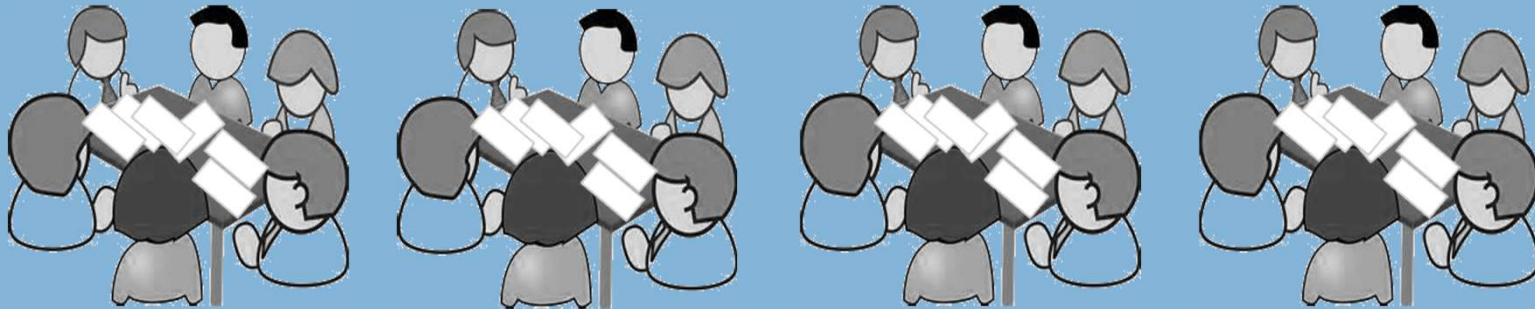
**Track A Institutions**  
Reviewed End of April

**Track B Institutions**  
Reviewed End of  
October/early  
November



# The Fifth-Year Interim Review Committee (Composition)

- ▶ Four clusters
- ▶ One Cluster Chair (per cluster)
- ▶ Two academic evaluators, one IE, and one student services evaluator
- ▶ One or more finance evaluators (per cluster)

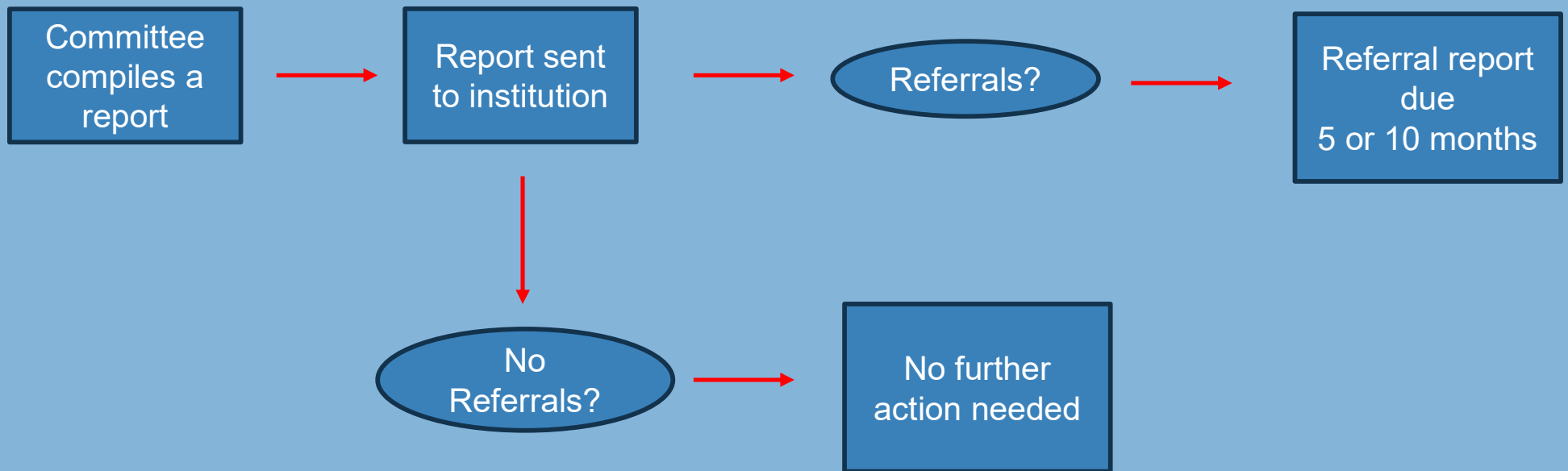


# The Fifth-Year Interim Review (Clusters of Institutions)



- ▶ Institutions grouped (clustered) based on level, governance, size, programs, etc.
- ▶ Evaluators are selected using similar guidelines.
- ▶ Institutional submissions are reviewed within clusters during the weeks prior to meeting.

# The Process: Results and Follow-up *(if necessary)*



# Components of the Fifth- Year Interim Report

Signatures Attesting to Integrity

Institutional Summary Form

Fifth-Year Compliance Certification

QEP Impact Report

# Components of the Fifth- Year Interim Report

## Signatures Attesting to Integrity (applicable to all institutions)

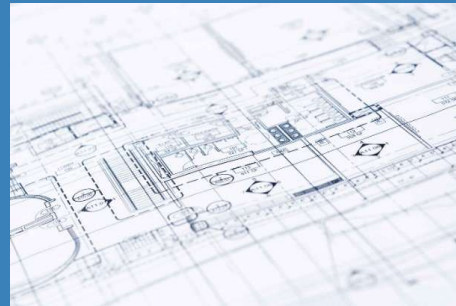


Signatures of CEO and Accreditation Liaison

# Components of the Fifth- Year Interim Report

## 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

## Fifth-Year Compliance Certification (applicable to all institutions)



Institution determines compliance with standards, explains findings, and *provides documentation* in support of its determination.

# Components of the Fifth- Year Interim Report

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



The QEP Impact Report is a report demonstrating the extent to which the QEP has affected outcomes related to student learning.

# Follow-up Reports

(applicable to select institutions)

## Follow-up Report

(applicable to select institutions and reviewed by C&R)



A Follow-Up Report addresses an institution's continued compliance with select standards identified at the time of an institution's last review.

# The Fifth-Year Interim Review:

Strategies to  
Overcome Common  
Issues



## 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 ACADEMIC/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

Be sure to:

- Include ALL administrative AND Academic Officers? [except CEO]
- Address vacant positions
- Include a rationale for the group of persons addressed
- Include job descriptions and CVs for EACH officer
- Check for alignment between academic and other qualifications of each with the job description
- Provide a justification/supplemental evidence if necessary
- Include policies and procedures for the regular evaluation of administrators
- Include sample evaluations—and for more than one cycle

## 6.2.C. PROGRAM COORDINATION

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



## 6.2.C PROGRAM COORDINATION

Be sure to...

- **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 that 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

Be sure to...

- Review the interpretation document
- Report the data using the same metric that your institution chose as it's indicator with SACSCOC
- Disaggregate the data (gender, ethnic, socioeconomic, and/or other student population characteristics) as required
- Report the metric and the threshold (benchmark)
- Report on multiple measures
- Discuss ongoing strategies to improve success



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## **INTERPRETATIONS TO THE *PRINCIPLES OF ACCREDITATION***

### **Interpretation of Core Requirement 8.1 (*Student achievement*)**

Core Requirement 8.1 reads:

**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.**

*(Student achievement)* [CR]

#### ***Interpretation:***

Member institutions are expected to demonstrate their success with respect to student achievement and indicate the criteria and thresholds of acceptability used to determine that success. The criteria are the items to be measured (and published); the thresholds of acceptability are the minimal expectations set by the institution to define its own acceptable level of achievement (i.e., a minimum target). The institution is responsible for justifying both the criteria it utilizes and the thresholds of acceptability it sets. The items measured and the thresholds of acceptability should be consistent with the institution's mission and the students it serves.

In their reviews, SACSCOC committees will examine and analyze (1) documentation demonstrating success with respect to student achievement, (2) the appropriateness of criteria and thresholds of

## 10.6 DISTANCE AND CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION

- **An institution that offers distance or correspondence education**

- a. ensures that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives credit.

- b. has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs.**

- c. ensures that students are notified in writing at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity. (Distance and correspondence education)

## 14.1 PUBLICATION OF ACCREDITATION STATUS

- The institution (a) accurately represents its accreditation status and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of SACSCOC in accordance with SACSCOC's requirements and federal policy; and (b) ensures all its branch campuses include the name of that institution and make it clear that their accreditation depends on the continued accreditation of the parent campus. (Publication of accreditation status)



See the Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure policy



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## **INSTITUTIONAL OBLIGATIONS FOR PUBLIC DISCLOSURE**

### **Policy Statement**

A candidate or accredited SACSCOC institution is obligated to provide information to its students, constituents, and the public about itself that is complete, accurate, timely, accessible, clear, and sufficient. Information provided to the public includes the following:

- The institution's current catalog describes the institution consistent with its mission statement and sets forth the obligations and responsibilities of both students and the institution. Institutions relying on electronic catalogs ensure the availability of archival editions sufficient to serve the needs of alumni and former and returning students.
- All forms of print and electronic communications officially representing the institution are consistent with catalog content and accurately portray the conditions and opportunities available at the institution. (See also SACSCOC's policy [\*Advertising and Student Recruitment\*](#).)
- The institution publishes the locations and programs available at branch campuses, and other off-campus instructional locations, including those overseas operations at which students can enroll for a degree, along with a description of the programs and services available at each location.
- The institution publishes statements of its goals for student achievement and the success of students in achieving those goals. Information on student success may include reliable information in retention, graduation, course completion, licensure examinations, and job placement rates and other measures of student success appropriate to institutional mission.
- The institution has readily available valid documentation for any statements and promises regarding such matters as program excellence, learning outcomes, success in placement, and achievements of graduates or faculty.

### **Representation of status with SACSCOC**

## Statement for Accredited Institutions:

(Name of member institution) is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award (name specific degree levels, such as associate, baccalaureate, masters, educational specialist, and doctorate). (Name of institution) also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels.

Questions about the accreditation of (name of member institution) may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website ([www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org)).

## 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. (See SACSCOC policy [Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies](#).)

*(Representation to other agencies)*





# Tips from Evaluators of the Fifth- Year Interim Report



## Writing the Narrative

- **Organize narrative to align with the wording of the standard.**



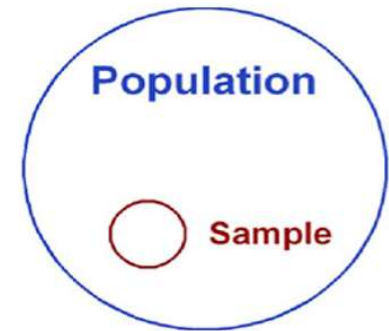
- Address all parts of the standard
- Use evidence of implementation of policies and processes at every opportunity
- Excerpt when it makes sense
- Link directly to documents and pages referenced

## 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 and include a **valid cross-section of programs** from every division and level represented
  - Make a compelling case as to why the sampling and assessment findings are an appropriate representation of the institution's programs and academic and student services.
  - Be prepared to report on the effectiveness of all educational programs and academic and student services

## 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 **(make sure they're not broken)**
- When in doubt, ask your SACSCOC staff representative for advice.

## Tips for Success

- Be sure to review the notification letter that is sent to the institution
- Always check for updates and revisions to standards (particularly in Section 14) when compiling the report
- Provide the information and documentation that is *necessary...nothing more, nothing less!*
- Clearly label the parts of the report
- Check the final submission using multiple systems (Mac, PC, tablet, etc.)

Fifth-Year  
Interim Review:  
More  
Information

SACSCOC website

<http://www.sacscoc.org>

From the home page, access the  
**ACCREDITATION TAB**, click **INSTITUTIONAL  
RESOURCES**

Scroll to the bottom link **THE FIFTH-YEAR  
INTERIM REPORT: INFORMATION, FORMS,  
AND TIMELINES**

# Fifth-Year Interim Review: More Information



[About](#) +

[SACSCOC Presidential Search Process](#) +

[Institutions](#) +

[Accreditation](#) +

## The Fifth Year Interim Report

### Information, Forms, and Timelines

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is one of only a few accrediting commissions that conducts a comprehensive review of its institutions every ten years. Most accrediting agencies conduct such reviews every 5 to 7 years. The U.S. Department of Education requires accrediting agencies that it recognizes to monitor its institutions more often to ensure that institutions having access to federal funds continue to meet accreditation standards. To that end, the Commission has developed a Fifth-Year Interim Report.

### Fifth-Year Interim Report Documents

The Fifth-Year Interim Report is divided into five parts:

**Part I.** Signatures Attesting to Integrity *(applicable to all institutions)*

**Part II.** Institutional Summary Form Prepared for Commission Reviews *(applicable to all institutions)*

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

**Part IV.** Fifth-Year Follow-Up *(applicable to select institutions)*

**Part V.** Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan *(applicable to all institutions)*

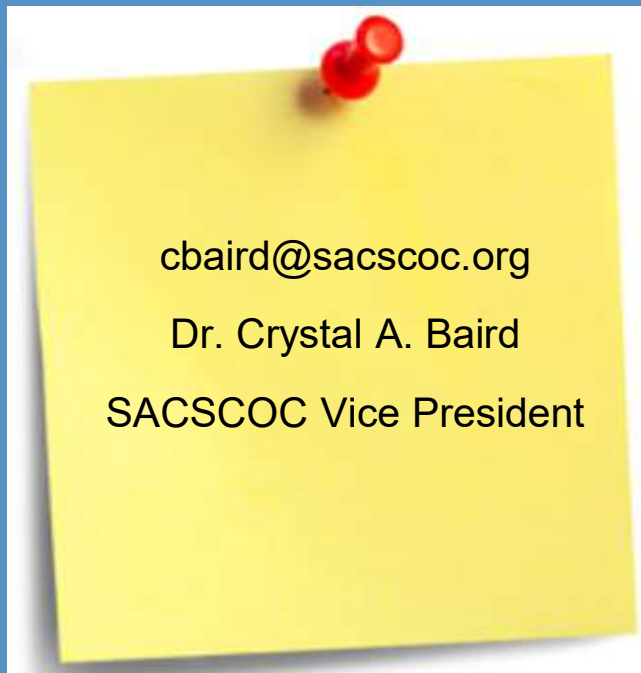
Please refer to the links below to access the following Fifth-Year Interim Report Documents:

- [Template \(Fifth-Year Interim Report\) \[Word\]](#)
- [Process for the Review of the QEP Impact Report \[PDF\]](#)  
*(Document describing Part V of the Report)*
- [Directions and Guidelines for the Completion of Part III of the Fifth-Year Interim Report \[PDF\]](#)  
*(Document providing guidance to institutions in the completion of Part III, the Fifth-Year Compliance Certification. The institution should also refer to the Resource Manual.)*
- [Documentation for the Interim Off-Campus Instructional Sites Committee \[Word\]](#)  
*(Document completed by an institution required to host a committee to review off-campus sites initiated, but not visited, since the institution's previous reaffirmation.) (Jan 2024)*
- [Report of the Interim Off-Campus Instructional Sites Committee. – Reviewing New Sites Added since Last Reaffirmation \(Jan 2024\) \[Word\]](#)
- [Fifth-Year Interim Report \(Policy\) \[PDF\]](#)
- [Documents Submitted for SACSCOC Review \[PDF\]](#)

**Institutions with their next schedules reaffirmations in 2029 thru 2036**



Thank you very much  
for your time!



Don't forget to fill out the session evaluation!