



*The Association for*  
**Biblical Higher Education**  
*Commission on Accreditation*

# **Understanding the Purpose & Essential Nature of an Institutional Self-Study Document**

**February 2021**

# Self-Study Documents

Institutions submit one electronic copy of self-study documents (must be able to be retained for up to 20 years)

- \* Statistical Abstract
- \* Compliance Document (with Regulatory Requirements Evaluation)
- \* Institutional Assessment Plan
- \* Institutional Improvement Plan
- \* Exhibits (numbered)

# Components of the Self-Study

- \* **Statistical Abstract** – Overall summary of the institution, programs offered, enrollment, salary, library, finance, and ministry formation data (provides a multi-year snapshot of information used by evaluators)
- \* **Institutional Assessment Plan** – Provides a written plan describing the process and the timeline/cycle for gathering assessment data and evidence that demonstrate achievement of goals/objectives/standards/etc. Plan should provide for the collection, organization, storage, and analysis of data (See as Step 1 of the Self-Study process—what information is to be collected, who will do it, when will it be collected, why is it collected)

# Components of the Self-Study

- \* **Compliance Document – Record of the institution’s success in achieving its mission and the standards for accreditation. (See as Step 2 in the Self-Study process—compares the data collected and analyzed at the behest of the Institutional Assessment Plan and details the institution’s findings about itself)**
  - \* **Compose in Eleven Sections (one for each overall standard)**
  - \* **An institution could have each Essential Element comprise a paragraph in each section. Have each paragraph discuss how the institution is or is not meeting the Essential Element and provide the rationale and/or reference/link to the exhibit that demonstrates with evidence the reason for the conclusion of the institution.**
  - \* **Regulatory Requirement Evaluation at the end of the overall compliance document – tied to the USDE regulations... provide rationale for the conclusion**

# Components of the Self-Study

- \* Institutional Improvement Plan – outlines the action steps an institution will take to deal with concerns raised from the assessing findings and discussed in the Compliance Document (See as Step 3 in the Self-Study process—closes the feedback loop and provides a roadmap for dealing with concerns)
- \* Implementation of this Plan will naturally lead to a re-populating of the Assessment Plan (whereby the institution begins to assess whether the Action Steps from the Institutional Improvement Plan actually worked and whether further adjustments are needed)
  - \* This is the spirit of the continuous improvement process as it pertains to assessing the achievement of student learning objectives and institutional effectiveness objectives

# Exhibits

- \* The Exhibit section should include information that demonstrates the institution has collected and analyzed the most recent cycle of assessment data
  - \* Raw data is not sufficient
  - \* This will not be a problem for institutions that are collecting and analyzing data in an ongoing manner
  - \* Three years of data (collected and analyzed) should be the goal
- \* Formatting for Evaluation Teams
  - \* Kim Latsa and Sarah Starks are the key personnel for assistance in this regard

