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
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