

## DATA FIRST INITIATIVE

**Institutions submitting fifth-year reports and comprehensive self-studies in Spring 2010 and beyond are asked to complete the new Data First forms**, a set of spreadsheets, at least one for each of the 11 *Standards for Accreditation*.

Accreditation, like the institutions it serves, increasingly relies on data and evidence as the basis of its work. The Data First forms have two purposes:

- To provide institutions with a logical starting place for their reports. By gathering data first, institutions can proceed from evidence. Having key information in one place can help the institution use the report for analysis and reflection.
- To give visiting teams and the Commission quick access to summary information about the institution.

In developing the Data First forms, the Commission worked from the following assumptions:

- Institutions can analyze themselves more effectively by beginning with data, rather than searching at the end of the report-writing process to find numbers that support the text.
- Data and evidence in a report should map well to the *Standards for Accreditation*. (Thus, for example, the forms ask institutions to include information on students enrolled at off-campus locations and students studying at a distance, consistent with the “all locations/all modalities” focus of the Standards.)
- Not every portion of every form may apply to every institution, but the forms in general will work well for the variety of institutions in New England.

**For institutions with fifth-year reports or comprehensive evaluations in Spring 2010 and beyond, two sets of forms are required:**

1. The **Data First** forms, each form to be included with the relevant chapter.
2. The **Student Success (E and S series)** forms on assessment and quantitative measures of student success, to be included in the chapter on *The Academic Program*.

In addition, institutions with comprehensive evaluations are asked to include the **Institutional Characteristics Form** at the beginning of the self-study.

All forms are available on the Commission website <http://cihe.neasc.org> via a link on the homepage called “Institutional Reporting Guidelines and Forms.” Commission staff are happy to assist institutions in completing the forms and to receive feedback on how to improve the data collection process.