



**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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Procedures for Fifth-Year Reports

Between comprehensive evaluations, the Commission requires that member institutions complete an interim report, typically at the fifth year of a ten-year review cycle. The following procedures provide assistance to institutions with the process of completing fifth-year reports.

Fifth-year reports require institutions to reflect upon progress made since the last comprehensive review and to project areas of focus for the next five years leading up to the next comprehensive review. The fifth-year report process serves as a vehicle for stimulating improvements within the institution, and for supporting the Commission in its role of assuring the public of the quality of the institution and higher education as an enterprise. The Commission's "Policy on the Periodic Review of Accredited Institutions" provides the expectations for periodic reviews:

"At its best, the periodic review of accredited institutions is a creative means of assisting them in the continuous assessment of their educational objectives and their success in fulfilling institutional goals. The more self-study and evaluation are seen as directly related to institutional viability and quality, the more productive the self-study and evaluation process will be."

The procedures below provide an outline of what is expected for the process of developing and completing the fifth-year report.

Notification to the Institution

Approximately a year in advance of the Commission's consideration of the fifth-year report, the institution is reminded of the requirement and provided a copy of the "Procedures for Fifth-Year Reports" and the "Policy on the Periodic Review of Accredited Institutions." These documents may be found on the Commission website <http://cihe.neasc.org> via a link on the homepage called "Institutional Reporting Guidelines and Forms."

Orientation

One year before the fifth-year report is due, Commission staff will offer an orientation session for institutions completing a report.

Staff Visit

In addition, at the institution's request, a member of the Commission staff will visit the institution, meeting with those responsible for the preparation of the report, to discuss its preparation in light of Commission expectations.

Review of Electronically Offered Degree Programs, Off-campus Programming, and Contractual Relationships

Institutions that have electronically offered degree programs (in which students can complete 50% or more of the courses on-line) and off-campus programming (branch campuses or other instructional locations where students can complete 50% or more of their degree), or contractual relationships involving courses and programs must specifically address these programs at appropriate points within their presentation of the institution as a whole. Institutions that offer such programs and those contemplating offering a higher degree but that have not yet completed the “substantive change” process to include these elements in the institution’s accreditation should contact the Commission offices.

Preparation of the Report

Institutions are encouraged to use this occasion as an opportunity to undertake an assessment of their educational planning and effectiveness both for their own purposes and in reference to their fulfillment of the Commission's *Standards*. Where ongoing systems of self-evaluation exist, institutions should use the results of those efforts in the preparation of their reports. The fifth-year report should be no longer than 50 pages, not including appendices and data forms.

The Commission asks that the following guidelines be used for the format and content of the report.

1. Cover Page. Include the name and location of the institution, the date of the report's submission, and a notation that this is a fifth-year report.
2. Introduction. Describe briefly the process by which the report was prepared and indicate the names of those involved in its preparation.
3. Institutional Overview. Provide an overview of the institution, including its purpose, setting, and any special circumstances that would help the reader understand its nature and scope.
4. Response to Areas Identified for Special Emphasis. Frequently, in its actions specifying fifth-year interim reports, the Commission identifies areas that should be given particular emphasis in the report. Institutions should give special consideration to these matters, providing sufficient information so that the Commission will be adequately apprised of the current state of development in the areas indicated. Please make reference to the *Standards* in addressing each of these areas of special emphasis.
5. Narrative. The narrative section gives the institution the opportunity to conduct a mid-course review and discuss how and how well it meets each of the *Standards for Accreditation*. The Commission encourages institutions to address each standard in terms of progress made since the last comprehensive review, projected areas of focus for the next five years leading up to the next comprehensive review, including identification of high priority issues and initiatives for particular emphasis due to their relevance to the institution at this point in time. The narrative consists of description, appraisal, projection, statements regarding institutional effectiveness as well as references to the Data First and Student Achievement and Success (E and S series) forms in relation to each standard. The description component of the narrative need not repeat what was included in the institution’s last self-study or other reports provided to the Commission since the

last comprehensive evaluation. Information included in the ‘Response to Areas Identified for Special Emphasis’ need not be repeated.

6. Plans. Conclude with a summary of what the institution anticipates as its most significant issues and initiatives for the next five years, including those that may represent a substantive change.
7. Appendix. Three items comprise the appendix:
 - a. Most recent audited financial statement.
 - b. The auditor’s management letter. The management letter is any communication containing the auditor’s specific recommendations to the institution on its financial controls and practices. Please indicate if no management letter was provided.
 - c. “Data First” and Student Achievement and Success (E & S) Forms.

The Data First forms provide institutions with a logical starting place for the interim report so that the institution can proceed from data and evidence through Description, Appraisal, and Projection. Having key information in one place can provide the institution with a greater ability to use the text for analysis and reflection, not simply description, and can provide the Commission with quick access to summary information about the institution.

The Student Achievement and Success forms consist of two parts: the first (the E series) addresses how the institution undertakes assessment of student learning and how it uses the findings; the second (the S series) reports on indicators of student success including retention and graduation rates along with post-graduation activities.

All forms are available on the Commission website (<http://cihe.neasc.org>) via a link called “Institutional Reporting Guidelines and Forms.”

Submission of the Report

The institution should send an electronic (pdf) version of the entire report, four (4) paper copies, and four (4) institutional catalogs to the office of the Commission by the required date. The report should be single-spaced, printed on both sides of the paper, and neither stapled nor bound. After reviewing the report, the Commission will notify the institution of its action.

August 1997
October 2003
February 2004
January 2005
August 2007
February 2009
June 2009