

## AN OVERVIEW:

### THE FIFTH-YEAR INTERIM REPORT REVIEW PROCESS

The Fifth-Year Interim Report consists of several parts: (1) a signature page; (2) an abbreviated summary of institutional characteristics; (3) an abbreviated compliance report that addresses 14 standards of the *Principles of Accreditation*; (4) an additional report on standard(s) identified during an institution's previous monitoring that require an update for ensuring continued compliance (*not applicable to all institutions*); and (5) a QEP Impact Report (*for institutions that were reviewed under the Principles during their previous reaffirmation*). If an institution has expanded its off-campus sites since its last reaffirmation or has experienced rapid growth in its off-site offerings, an institution may also be required to host an off-campus fifth-year committee to conduct a review of a sample of sites.

Originally, Part III of the Fifth-Year Interim Report (Abbreviated Compliance Certification) was to be reviewed by the Commission's standing committees—the Committees on Compliance and Reports. However, that was modified when a review process was created to allow for a preliminary paper review of an institution's documented compliance with standards identified in the abbreviated compliance report prior to its review by the Commission's standing committees. This review, conducted by the Committee to Review Fifth-Year Interim Reports, meets at the same time as the Commission's standing committees, and gives institutions a preliminary reading and an opportunity to submit additional information in support of compliance before being referred to the Commission for action. A description of the review process for each Part of the Fifth-Year Interim Report is presented below.

#### *The Process*

##### A. Review of the Abbreviated Compliance Certification (Part III of the Report)

Using a similar format to that of the off-site reviews at the time of reaffirmation, institutions are divided into four groups organized by types of missions/programs/governance of institutions. The Committee to Review Fifth-Year Interim Reports—the Committee assigned to review the abbreviated compliance certifications and the QEP Impact Report—is divided into four subcommittees and each subcommittee reviews institutional reports referred to its respective cluster group. Each subcommittee is composed of a Coordinator and four committee members with knowledge and experience reviewing the following areas: academic programs (2 evaluators), institutional effectiveness, and support services. All readers must have served as members of Off-Site Review Committees and, therefore, have previous experience in the review of Compliance Certifications. Subcommittee Coordinators are selected based on their experience and leadership performance as off-site chairs.

After reviewing each abbreviated compliance certification and discussing the institution's compliance with the 14 standards, the subcommittee completes a form analyzing the institution's compliance with the standards and then selects one of the following options: (1) no additional monitoring required because the institution documented compliance or (2) additional monitoring required with a request for documentation in support of compliance. Additional monitoring reports are then referred to the Commission for action at one of its next two meetings. When the Commission reviews the Monitoring Report at the designated meeting, that meeting will begin the institution's two-year period for coming into compliance with standards identified.

B. Review of the Report of the Off-Campus Fifth Year Committee

For an institution requested to undergo an on-site review of an off-campus site(s) established since its last reaffirmation, the Report of the Off-Campus Committee and the institution's response to any recommendations are forwarded to the Commission for action. This process parallels that of the Commission's review of substantive change committees.

C. Review of the Additional Report Requested from a Previous Commission Evaluation  
(Part IV of the Report)

For an institution required to submit an additional report requested by the Commission at the time of its last review, that report is forwarded to the Commission for review and action. This process parallels that of the review of monitoring reports.

D. Review of the QEP Impact Report  
(Part V of the Report)

The Impact Report requires that an institution describe the initial goals of its QEP, discuss changes made to the QEP during its implementation, and describe the QEP's direct impact on student learning, including the achievement of goals and outcomes. The Committee on the Review of the Fifth-Year Interim Report reviews these and makes a determination regarding their acceptability. To date, the Commission has not addressed how the QEP Impact Reports will be reviewed. For the few that have been reviewed, the action on the reports included acceptance of the report and some observations on the part Committee.

***Institutional Preparation***

There are a number of steps that institutions can take to prepare for submission of their Fifth-Year Interim Reports: Part III – the Abbreviated Compliance.

1. Maintain an updated version of the Compliance Certification submitted as part of the previous reaffirmation.
2. Provide narrative on the report that supports compliance and explains the use of the documentation chosen.
3. Provide documentation and examples. For instance, Federal Requirement 4.5 requires an institution to have procedures for addressing student complaints and to show that it follows those procedures. Most often, institutions provide a copy of the complaint procedure and attest to its application, but the standard requires that an institution *demonstrate* that it follows the procedures. This can be done by providing examples. Oftentimes, institutions fail to demonstrate the application.

***The Adoption of a Final Review Process***

The December 2008 review of the 2013 Track A institutions' Fifth-Year Interim Reports was based on a pilot procedure. It was a procedure endorsed by the Executive Council of the Commission while the Commission continues to gain information on how to improve the process. Final approval will be by the 77-member Commission during its meeting in December 2009.