Preparing the Self-Study Report for Computing

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Session Deliverables

• Goal
  • To facilitate preparation of the self-study by computing programs preparing for an ABET Readiness Review or an ABET evaluation visit.

• Expected Outcomes
  • Participants will understand:
    • Structure and content of the self-study
    • Types of responses expected
Quick Check of Who Is In the Audience

• Where are you in the process of putting together a self-study
  • Almost done, being visited in 2015, just doing final edits
  • Fixin’ to start (we are in Atlanta after all) for a 2016 visit
  • We got visited last year, I just wanted to gloat

• Which commission accredits your program?
  • CAC
  • EAC
  • Other
Quick Check on Questions You May Have

• Talk to 2-3 people around you about why you are at this session and what questions you have
• We’ll give you two minutes then ask for some questions that you have in common
SELF-STUDY FUNDAMENTALS
Why Generate a Self-Study?

• To improve your program
• Allows you to:
  • Critically assess your practices & operations
    • What are you doing well?
    • What needs improvement?
  • Measure your program against the internationally recognized ABET criteria
    • Exactly what the review team will be doing!
No, Really, Why Generate a Good Self-Study?

• Presents your program to visiting team
  • Who you are, what you do, why you do it

• Provides visiting team a solid understanding of your program prior to arrival on campus
  • On-site team has very limited time on campus
  • Understanding your program prior to the actual visit is critical. The visiting team will have thoroughly reviewed your self-study before arriving on campus.

“the better the self study, the smoother the visit”
Quick Check for Understanding

T/F  A program can submit supplementary information after the self-study is submitted but prior to the campus visit.

T/F  If your program is delivered at multiple sites you need to inform the team chair when she arrives on campus.
Quick Check for Preconceptions

• What is the audience for the self-study?
  • The staff at ABET headquarters
  • The PEV visiting the program
  • The faculty in the program that is being visited
  • The team chair of the visiting program
  • The administration at the school being visited
  • Some combination of a-e
Who Reads the Self-Study?

- **Team Chair – TC**
  - Overall manager for your accreditation process
  - Responsible for program report and presentation to commission
  - Focuses on higher-level, institutional aspects

- **Program Evaluator(s) – PEVs**
  - Have expertise in specific discipline
  - Focus on program-specific details

"yes, they read it all, usually several times"
What Goes In a Self-Study?

• Background Information
  • Program history
  • Degree options and tracks and concentrations
  • Locations/delivery modes
  • Previous shortcomings
• The Eight criteria (plus applicable program criteria)
• Appendices
  • Course syllabi
  • Faculty vitae
  • Equipment
  • Institutional information
What Timeframe Is Used?

• Responses generally are for the year in which self-study is prepared
  • The “academic year” prior to the on-site visit.
• If you are being visited in Fall 2015
  • Self-Study is due July 1 of year of visit (July 1, 2015)
  • Self-Study is written based on your program during the 2014-2015 academic year
• Remember
  • Assessment info probably contains multiple years of data
  • Some tables request two years of information
  • Updates can be provided on site
  • Planned (upcoming) changes should be highlighted
Is The Self-Study The Same for All Programs?

• Eight criteria
  • Students
  • Program Educational Objectives
  • **Student Outcomes**
  • Continuous Improvement
  • **Curriculum**
  • Faculty
  • Facilities
  • Support
  • Program Specific

• Four ABET commissions
  • EAC, CAC, ETAC, ASAC
  • Many institutions have multiple programs accredited by ABET
  • All but three criteria (in green) are identical across all commissions
  • See the ABET web site before preparing a self-study for a multiple commission review (joint review)
Quick Check for Preconceptions

• Who typically writes the self-study document?
  • The university’s assessment office personnel
  • The associate dean for the college
  • The department chair for the program being visited
  • The faculty in the program being visited
  • The faculty member who is lowest on the totem pole in the department
Writing a Self-Study
How Do I Start?

• Get a copy of the Self-Study Questionnaire from ABET’s web site
  • MS-Word document

• Build your Self-Study from this template
  • Some parts are long (e.g. course syllabi)
  • Need to address all the items in template

*The latest template is posted by August of the year prior to your visit*
Must I Follow This Format?

• This is what the TC & PEVs know best
  • They are comfortable with this format
  • If you deviate, make it clear what you are doing (and why)
  • A good Self-Study enables the reader to find materials easily

• Regardless of your approach
  • Make sure to include all items that appear in the Self-Study’s Table of Contents
Can I Delegate? Yes!

- Appoint a leader for process
  - Early in fall prior to year of visit
  - Consider release time (if appropriate)
- Assign tasks to people
  - Course materials (sample work)
  - Coherent presentation of assessment materials
  - Course syllabi
  - Faculty CVs
- Merge into coherent (standardized) whole
- Leave time for review before submission
  - Review by someone not involved in Self-Study creation

*The more people involved, the better the study reflects reality*
What About Tables and Figures?

• We only require five (for CAC programs):
  • One table in Criterion 5, Curriculum
  • Two tables in Criterion 6, Faculty
  • Two tables in Appendix D, Institutional Summary

• However
  • Feel free to add tables and/or figures
  • Helps explain relevant points about program

• The objective is clear communication of your program (processes, facts, and trends)
  • Use whatever works best for you

_A picture is worth a thousand words_
Any Style Recommendations?

• Make it easy to find information required
  • Good Table of Contents
  • To-the-point responses
  • Reference other documents or sections as appropriate
  • Footnote if not sure what response is expected, to explain your interpretation

• Explain institution/program-specific jargon
  • Disciplinary jargon is OK
  • The readers do not know your institution/program (yet)
    • Your course numbers and titles
    • Building names and abbreviations
    • Your curriculum structure (pre-requisites, etc.)
    • Who teaches which courses
A few (more) recommendations

- Consider color, font, and/or tables to distinguish questions from your responses
  - Self-study question in one color
  - **Response in a different color (or font)**
- Consider tables, figures, diagrams, and pictures (illustrations)
  - Example: high-level diagram illustrating your overall continuous improvement process
- Tabs (pdf bookmarks) or other aids to easily find sections
What Does the Visiting Team Really Want?

• When the TC and PEVs finish reading the Self Study, they want to:
  • Understand how your program works
  • Understand how your program meets the Criteria
How to Submit the Self-Study

• Self-Study documents are now submitted electronically
  • On CD/DVD or other digital medium but without hyperlinks
  • Some TCs & PEVs may request a hardcopy
  • Catalog should be submitted as a PDF file
• Visiting team will request anonymous transcripts for some recent graduates
  • Either paper or digital format (work with TC)
  • Six transcripts is a typical number but not an absolute
  • Include degree check-sheets
Quick Check for Preconceptions

• Which of the following would you not expect to see in the self-study?
  • Information on shortcomings from the previous visit
  • All assessment data collected since the last visit
  • Information on the adjunct faculty in the program being visited
  • Course syllabi
Self-Study Components
Background Information

• Fundamental Information
• Things that are important to ABET/CAC
  • Delivery modes
  • Program locations
  • Previous shortcomings
  • Joint Accreditation
Students

• TC & PEVs don’t know your processes
  • Admitting students
  • Advising students
  • Verifying graduation requirements
• Be sure to explain
  • Forms used
  • Institutional processes and checks
  • How exceptions are initiated, processed, approved, and documented
Program Educational Objectives

• Identify program objectives
• Identify your constituencies
• Describe processes for their review and revision (including how the constituencies are involved)

*Remember – you no longer have to assess achievement of program educational objectives*
Student Outcomes

- Identify your Student Outcomes
- Describe the process for their review and revision
- Show how all of (a) to (i) plus any program specific characteristics are enabled
Continuous Improvement

• Presentation (organization) is critical
  • High-level overview is extremely helpful
  • Explain the processes clearly
  • Identify all the materials/artifacts involved
  • Do NOT include all the supporting material

• Need supporting material available at visit
  • Properly organized and labeled
  • Consider wall charts and posters that outline the key components of your process
  • Consider wall charts and posters that show linkages between outcomes and potential program changes
CI Supporting Materials

• You need to decide
  • What goes in the Self-Study?
  • What you will have on site as supporting materials

• Try to avoid either extreme
  • Nothing in Self-Study, everything available on site
  • Everything in the Self-Study, nothing new on site

• Recommendation
  • Self-study should clearly
    • Explain the process
    • Identify the data that is collected and examined
    • Present the results of your process and potential program changes
Curriculum

• Definition of “one year of study”
  • 30 semester hours (or 45 quarter hours)

• Critical: you must show how your curriculum enables attainment of all Student Outcomes
  • Consider a presentation format (chart, diagram, etc.) that shows this mapping clearly

• Course material display
  • Can be presented course-by-course
  • Can be organized around student outcomes
    
    Be sure the readers know what to expect

Recommend panel on “Preparing for the On-Site Review”
Comments on Display Materials

- Courses outside of discipline
  - You have no control over these courses
  - Need display materials only if course is integral to your student outcomes or continuous improvement processes or curriculum, otherwise may want to collect syllabi

- “coverage of the fundamentals”
  - Program Criteria specifies the fundamentals
  - Demonstrate how your curriculum covers them

- “math appropriate to the discipline”
  - Justify your position
  - Be proactive!
Curriculum Table (sample)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course (Department, Number, Title)</th>
<th>Indicate whether the course is Required, Elective, or a Selective Elective (R, E, SE)</th>
<th>Category (Credit Hours)</th>
<th>General Education</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Last two terms the course was offered</th>
<th>Average enrollment for the last two terms the course was offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MA 200</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Math &amp; Basic Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 14 Spr 15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS 210</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Computing Topics Mark with an F or A for Fundamental or Advanced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 14 Fall 15</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN 101</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 14 Spr 15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fractions are allowed in the reporting of hours within a category
Faculty

• Focus is on faculty who are involved with the program. Be sure to clarify:
  • Adjunct faculty used by the program
  • Temporary faculty used in service courses
  • Research faculty with no undergrad duties

• Two faculty tables
  • Table 6.1 – qualifications
  • Table 6.2 – workload and activities
Program-specific Criteria

• Extra information required that is specific to your program
• Often easiest to address as part of the discussion covering the basic topic
  • Example: “computer science” programs have additional Curriculum requirements
• Recommendation
  • Be clear and consistent in handling this
  • Note what is “program specific” in response
  • Reference materials discussed elsewhere
Course Syllabi (Appendix A)

**Purpose**
- Support classification of courses as shown in curriculum table
- Show scope of courses; breadth/depth of topics
- Indicate rigor of courses
- Indicate textbooks or other supporting documents

**Format**
- Follow specified outline (specifies minimum required information)
- Common format for all courses
- No more than two pages for each course

This is critical Information

A common format is helpful for all courses listed in the Appendix
Faculty Vitae (Appendix B)

• Shows education, experience, recent and current activities, currency
• Helps team identify whom to interview
• Include faculty with only a partial commitment to the program
• Limit to 2 pages

A common format is also extremely helpful for this Appendix
Institutional Summary (Appendix D)

- Two tables
  - Enrollment & degrees
  - Staffing/Personnel
- Support unit information
  - Used to determine who will be interviewed during on-site visit
True/False

T/F If there are multiple *paths* through your program you need to complete multiple self-studies.

T/F If you have multiple programs under accreditation review you need to complete multiple self-studies.

T/F If your program is undergoing a *joint* review by CAC and EAC you need to complete two self-studies.
QUESTIONS