

## **GUIDE TO SELF-EVALUATION FOR ACCREDITATION**

Self-evaluation charges the school with the responsibility of judging itself through frank and objective self-analysis and appraisal. When a school submits its self-evaluation report, it is stating, in effect, "We have judged ourselves and find that we meet the published standards." Therefore, a self-evaluation report serves two main purposes: (1) the school is given a rationale for conducting a critical self-analysis and (2) it provided an opportunity to assemble in one place all the information the visiting team will need.

The Guide to Self-Evaluation for Accreditation is prepared in the form of questions that the school must answer. The question and answer format insures comprehensive coverage of all the information and data the evaluators will consider in the evaluation of the school for accreditation. A good self-evaluation report should take the form of a formal, factual, well-documented statement of a school, its objectives, and the extent to which it meets its objectives. The report should be complete in all respects, leaving no room for speculation or misinterpretation. It should include compilation of students' records and statistics, self-explanatory and complete financial statements, and full and careful analysis of the school's problem areas.

The responsibility of preparing the report should be delegated to a senior member on the staff with close coordination with the school director. The actual preparation and writing of the report should involve as many school staff members as possible. The school administrator or director should review final drafts of the report before certification. When he/she signs the report, he/she is stating that he/she knows, understands and concurs with the entire report and certifies its accuracy, and he/she believes the school measures up to each of the standards. Since the report serves as the first impression of the school, careful attention should be given to its form and appearance. If changes occur between when the report was written and the time the evaluation is done, supplements to the report should be prepared and submitted. In reality, self-evaluation should be an on-going process and data gathered should be used on daily management decisions to upgrade and improve the operation of the school

## SELF – STUDY REPORT

### Basic General Information

1. When was the school founded? Trace a brief history of the school showing changes in names, creating of new divisions, and major changes in ownership and management.
2. What is the legal form of the school? Is it a proprietorship, partnership or corporation? If the school is a corporation, list names and addresses of any persons or organizations owning 10% or more of the stock.
3. Supply an organizational chart of the school showing the relationships among its component parts. Identify by name the incumbents of supervisory and administration positions, and describe in detail each executive position.
4. What are the names and addresses, terms of office, and occupations of any governing body members? Is there any agency other than the governing body which has power to initiate, review, or reverse actions of the school's management? Explain.
5. Are any other schools affiliated in any way with this school or under the same organizational structure, management, or ownership? Do cooperative training programs or formal affiliations exist with colleges, or career schools? If external centers, enrollment offices or training sites exist, describe in full and give their locations.
6. What is the school's (or parent organization's) purpose as stated in its charter or other enabling instrument? What organizational constraints are imposed on the school by virtue of its charter?

### CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMS

1. Provide data to complete this table from the school's records:
  - (a) First time program started in this school (month, and year).
  - (b) Total active students currently enrolled in the programs.
  - (c) Number of students who have completed all courses enrolled during the last full school academic year.
  - (d) Method of financing student tuition, by percentage and number of students in each case.
    - cash basis
    - school financing
    - third party financing
    - government financing (give breakdown by percentage of each program)
    - other financing (specify)
2. Provide dates on each program (course) offered. Complete this table from the school's records. Indicate by footnotes the programs (courses) eligible for special program financing (veterans training, rehabilitation, etc.).
  - (a) Title of the program (course) and date first student was enrolled.
  - (b) Total clock or credit hours typical enrollee must spend to complete the program (course).
  - (c) Months normally required to complete the program.
  - (d) Maximum number of months students are allowed for completing the program(s).
  - (e) Number of students enrolled in the program during the school's last academic year.
  - (f) Type of completion documents and credits, if any, awarded.

- (g) Total course price (tuition, fees, books, equipment, etc.)
3. What is the history of major changes in the school within the last three-year period with respect to new courses offered, established courses improved, the addition of student services, changes of admission standards, changes of marketing procedures, etc. Why did each change occur?
  4. Attach school's statement of philosophy or indicate where the statement appears in materials submitted. How is this philosophy implemented by its system of learning and by the objective of the school and how are the objectives themselves known to prospective students and to the public?
  5. Describe briefly the policies and procedures of the school in developing or acquiring its programs (courses). Are standard texts used? Are courses prepared "in house?" What is the ownership of the course(s)?
  6. To what extent are the school's diplomas, certificates, or credits, accepted by other schools, licensing bodies, and employers?
  7. Provide evidence of such acceptance.
  8. What relationships are maintained with relevant occupational fields or other schools? Are these relationships for course revision, student transfer, graduate placement, faculty growth, etc. or public relation purposes? Describe the means by which the school keeps its services relevant to its students' needs and to the needs of the public.

## INFORMATION RELATED TO STANDARDS

### Educational Objectives

1. **Description of Objectives.** State the educational objectives of each course or program offered by the school (what the educational program can do for reasonably diligent students). Indicate the kind of education or training offered, for whom the instruction is intended, and the expected outcomes for graduates. Provide evidence that these objectives are consistent with advertisements and other publications. Are these objectives achievable by students who meet the minimum admission standards? Describe the occupation for which the course or program prepares students and state the relationship between school objectives and the needs of the public served, i.e., what social services are being performed? Provide evidence that employment opportunities will be available for graduates in each program with occupational objectives.
2. **Appropriate Objectives.** How are the educational objectives determined for the school and for the programs (courses)? By whom? When were they last reviewed? How are they kept up to date? Describe how the school determines the extent to which stated objectives are achieved. How is the information used for quality control and improvement of educational services? Give examples of how surveys of students, outside evaluations, comments from students and employers, and evaluations by school staff are used to assess the success of the school in meeting its stated objectives and to continually upgrade services and courses.

### Educational Materials

**Describe the instructional materials from the following standpoints:**

1. **Comprehensive Instructional Materials.** How does the school know that its courses are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve their stated educational objectives? How have

you determined that the contents have sufficient depth to prepare students to master the subject?

2. **Up-To-Date Instruction Materials.** How are courses kept up to date? Do courses reflect “state of the art” knowledge and practice? Is a current revision of the material in use?
3. **Authorship.** If standard textbooks are used, list titles, authors, publishers, and copyright dates. List the names and qualifications of authors of study guides prepared for use with standard texts. If standard textbooks have been used, explain why they were selected and how they have been adapted to the special requirements of the course or program.
4. **Reading Level.** How does the school ensure that the reading level of instructional material is keyed to the reading competence of the average enrollee? Are students who possess only minimum admission requirements able to comprehend the materials?
5. **Study Instruction.** Are the students instructed in how to proceed, how to study, and how to learn effectively? Are instructions easy to understand? Are relevant illustrations used? Was motivation for learning considered in organizing the texts and other materials?
6. **Organization of Instructional Materials.** Explain how the organization and presentation of the material in the course accommodate logical principles of organization. What about subdivisions in lessons, chapters and instructional units? Explain.
7. **Teaching Devices.** Describe the educational philosophy, system of learning and educational practices used in preparing course materials and in teaching students. How is student motivation and comprehension provided? Describe any equipment, tools, or other audio or visual media used in the courses. How do they enhance instruction? Improve motivation? How are they integrated with texts and lessons.

### **Educational Services**

1. **Examinations:** What types of test items are used (objective, essay, etc.?) Are oral or other non-written evaluations used? In what ways do evaluation tools assess student achievements and attainment of course objectives? How are tests checked for validity and reliability? Explain how the number and length of examinations are determined and how it assures that the number of examination is sufficient to cover the instruction material.
2. **Student Inquiries:** What is the process of handling student inquiries related to course content? What does the school do to encourage student inquiries? Describe the qualifications of those persons who are employed or designated to handle inquiries.
3. **Individual Differences:** What provisions are made to accommodate students with poor comprehensions or learning habits? What efforts do instructors make to provide remedial training to poor learners? How are rapid learners kept motivated? Explain with examples of what records are kept of the personalized service given to these “special” students.
4. **Handling Failures:** What is done when students fail to do satisfactory work? What criteria exists to determine student failure and academic dismissal? Describe the school’s policy on academic dismissal with a written policy to back it up. Provide the number of students dismissed for academic failure in the most recent year and the number of those who were disenrolled for other reasons.
5. **Encouragement of Students:** Explain the school’s program for encouraging students to start, continue, and finish the program in which they have enrolled. If letters or telephone

calls are used, provide samples of each and explain the sequences and scheduling of their use. Is the school sensitive to portions of the course or program which cause trouble for the students? Does it use special help to get students over these areas? Are efforts to encourage academic progress separated from efforts for the collection of delinquent fees?

6. **Student Evaluation of Courses:** Describe how students are surveyed to evaluate their experiences with the courses. Are they asked about the strengths and weaknesses, level of difficulty, the pace of the course? If end-of-course critiques are used, describe how they differ from regular periodic assessments. How are the reactions of students used to effect changes in educational materials and services?

### **Student Services**

1. **Student Records and Materials.** What records are kept on students? What graduate records are kept and for how long? Submit sample blank educational record forms. What are the procedures used for the maintenance and protection of student records? How are records protected from theft, damage or fire. Describe Transcript services and attach a sample transcript services and attach a sample transcript (with student name deleted).
2. **Counseling and Employment Assistance.** Is employment or placement assistance offered? Does promotional material or advertising copy lead prospective students to the conclusion that job opportunities are available to them because of the completion of the courses? What proportion of students or graduates get advancement or new jobs as a result of the instruction and services? Describe follow-up of graduates and students. Attach a summary of results of follow-up-studies made recently. If placement assistance is offered, complete a table using the headings below for each of your course (program) offerings.
  1. Courses (Program) Title
  2. Total number of Graduates for most recent two years.
  3. Previously working in field for which course trained (prior to or during enrollment).
  4. Placed by school in field for which course trained.
  5. Working or placed by school in other related fields.
  6. Unavailable for placement.
  7. Found job without school's help.
  8. Could not find job.
  9. Unknown

### **Student Success and Satisfaction**

What efforts are made to determine student satisfaction? Can the school demonstrate that students are satisfied with course materials as well as educational services? Does the school keep a complaint file and are complaints routinely investigated and resolved happily? Do complaints ever result in changes in courses or procedures? Describe any pending serious complaints or law suits. Attach summaries of students' letters, surveys and testimonials which indicate overall satisfaction with the school.

### **Qualifications of Faculty and Staff**

1. **Executive Staff.** Give the name, position and qualifications of the executive officers. Explain how the executive officers possess the background and demonstrate the ability to direct the school operations. What is the administrative experience?
2. **Educational Director.** What are the educational qualifications of the educational director? What type of experience does he/she have? What is he/she responsible for in

the educational program. Is he/she involved in policy development and advertising, sales and collections activities?

3. **Department Heads.** Describe the major functions of the department heads, if any. If the educational director functions in place of a department head, list his/her qualifications. For each, indicate the (a) amount of weekly services rendered, (b) extent of formal education, (c) special training, (d) experience qualifying him/her for the position, (e) professional education courses or degrees completed, (f) activities in trade, and professional associations, and professional writing. Are department heads involved in upgrading and updating educational materials? Attach job descriptions.
4. **Instructors.** Give names, positions, qualifications and resumes of academic/instructional staff and faculty. Submit copies of policy manuals that have been prepared for the guidance of instructional staff. Describe any staff development and tuition assistance programs. Describe any use made of outside faculty, technical advisors, researchers, subject matter specialists, or other such individuals retained by the school. Describe the contractual arrangements with these individuals or groups, amount and type of services rendered, and the method of compensation given. What are the state policies of employment criteria for staff and faculty?

#### **Admission Practices and Enrollment Agreements**

1. **Admission Practices.** What are the enrollment requirements (by program) for students with respect to age, education, health, occupation, experience, appearance, employability, etc.? If a special education level is required, how is it determined? What exceptions are made to state requirements and how do these requirements observe the rights of students respective to discrimination against an individual because of race, sex, color, or national origin. Who determines acceptance standards and who determines final acceptance in marginal cases? How does the school assure that all applicants have been informed of and have proper educational qualifications to be successful in the course? What about any physical qualifications needed to succeed in the course or in the occupation for which the course purports to train? Explain what controls assure that the admissions policy is consistently and uniformly applied? Explain the policies and procedures for informing prospective students of any requirements for governmental or other licensing procedures which apply directly or indirectly to the particular areas served by the school's programs (courses). Describe any policies and procedures used in evaluating previous academic work of students and describe any policies which permit students to receive credit for previous studies or work experience.
2. **Enrollment Agreements (Contracts).** Supply sample copies of all enrollment agreements (contracts). Describe the procedures for transmitting a copy of an enrollment agreement (contract) to a student and for handling any applications/down payments. Do the school representatives retain or remit down payments?

#### **Advertising and Promotional Materials/Control of Field Staff**

1. **Advertising and Promotion.** Who is responsible for the control of advertising programs, and how are advertising copy and educational objectives brought into consonance? Are field-sales-personnel/agents permitted to place advertising which they develop, and if so, what procedures are used to assure compliance with applicable standards and regulations? Supply copies of all printed advertisements, radio, and TV scripts, and mailing pieces used within the last 12 months to invite inquiries from prospective students or inform students about school programs. Are discounts, premiums, or cash awards made to individuals who refer students?

2. **Control of Field Staff.** Are agents employed? If so, state how the school recruits, selects, trains, supervises, and terminates the agents. Describe the compensation basis upon which sales agents are employed and what benefits and incentives are provided. Supply copies of current sales manuals provided sales agents and duplicated letters and bulletins furnished for their guidance. Describe the training programs used by the school for newly-employed field representatives. What policies and procedures are used to control the actions of sales agents? What efforts are made to retrain sales representatives? How are sales representatives informed of and kept up to date on changes in state laws? What titles are used to designate sales representatives? Are any other outside agencies or persons (other than school's agents) used to solicit prospective students? What controls are used to assure the ethical conduct of the sales representatives?

### **Financial Responsibility**

Submit the most recent copies of the school's (or in case of corporate owned schools, the parent's) annual financial statements consisting of balance sheet, income statements, and use and application of funds. Describe how the school has achieved sound and ethical operation. What evidence and documentation exists to support the claims.

### **Tuition Policies, Collection Procedures, and Refunds**

1. **Tuition Policies.** List courses offered and tuition charge per course. Is the course tuition the same for all persons at a given time? Are terms of payment the same for all students at a given time? Does the school use price discounts and if so, do they have a published termination date? Are scholarships, aptitude tests and contests bonafide? If scholarships are offered, what kind? How many? Describe the scholarship program and indicate the source of money. Who makes the selection of recipients?
2. **Tuition Collection Procedures.** Describe in detail the policies and procedures for the school's collection of tuition. Are outside collection agencies used, and if so, provide the forms and collection letters used by each agency. What written ethical standards are furnished outside agencies? How does the school monitor adherence to these standards?
3. **Tuition Refund Policies.** Describe the policies and procedures used in the settlement of student accounts in cases (1) where there are legitimate reasons why the enrolled student may not be able to complete the program (course) with benefit to him/her self, and (2) where the student has changed his/her mind and wants to drop the program (course). Describe the school's procedure for complying with the minimum cancellation and settlement policy rules of the Department. In the most recent fiscal year, what percentage of students canceled before starting their course (program).

### **Facilities and Equipment**

Describe the type of construction, special features and compliance with local fire, building, and occupational health and safety regulations. Provide basic floor plan indicating the activity in each area. Describe any special purpose equipment, first aid equipment, computers, records systems, or other technology used, indicating which equipment is owned and which is leased.

### **Record Protection**

Describe the organization and management of the administrative office. Explain how educational and financial records are maintained, protected, stored, and retained.

### Research and Self Improvement

1. **Research and Self Improvement.** What systematic research, evaluation, and quality controls are carried on for school improvements? What surveys are conducted, or what information is systematically collected? How does the school assess outcomes of its programs? Submit any material or data as evidence of present efforts to extend and/or improve the school. Is the school's library adequate?
2. **Revision Practices.** What procedures are in place to monitor course materials currency and accuracy? How are the quality of instruction, student services, and student satisfaction evaluated? How are the results of the evaluations acted upon to improve course materials and services.
3. **Professional Growth.** To what professional organizations do the staff members belong? What training and self-development efforts are sponsored or are encouraged by school management for the professional development of school staff? Is the tuition and expense for related education and training borne by the individual staff member or by the school? Are there in-house training programs for staff? List names of staff and the relevant professional meetings attended for the past two years.
4. **Self-Study Program.** Does the school have a written plan or program for its short and long range development, improvement or expansion of the curriculum or services to its staff and faculty?

### Problems and Future Plans

What problems has this self study helped the school to identify? What are considered to be the major problems encountered by the school? What plans have been developed for solving these problems? What are viewed as the major challenges facing the school? If this is a reaccreditation evaluation, describe major changes and improvements made since last accreditation evaluation of the school. In what ways is it felt the school has contributed to the overall advancement, and enhancement of proprietary career education in the state? What is considered to be the major strengths of the school? Finally, after going through the self-study process, what suggestions does the school have for the improvement of the process?