

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
Statements Related to Assessment from the
Interim Principles of Accreditation:
Foundations for Quality Improvement
(January 2008)

Accreditation requires institutional commitment to the concept of quality enhancement through **continuous assessment and improvement.**

At the heart of the Commission's philosophy of accreditation, the concept of quality enhancement **presumes each member institution to be engaged in an ongoing program of improvement and be able to demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated mission.** Although evaluation of an institution's educational quality and its effectiveness in achieving its mission is a difficult task requiring careful analysis and professional judgment, **an institution is expected to document the quality and effectiveness of all its programs and services.**

As part of the reaffirmation process, the institution will provide two separate documents.

1. *Compliance Certification*

The Compliance Certification, submitted approximately fifteen months in advance of an institution's scheduled reaffirmation, is a document completed by the institution that demonstrates its judgment of the extent of its compliance with each of the Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Requirements. Signatures by the institution's chief executive officer and accreditation liaison are required to certify compliance. By signing the document, the individuals certify that **the process of institutional self-assessment** has been thorough, honest, and

forthright, and that the information contained in the document is truthful, accurate, and complete.

2. *Quality Enhancement Plan*

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), submitted four to six weeks in advance of the on-site review by the Commission, is a document developed by the institution that (1) includes a broad-based institutional process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution, (3) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP, (4) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. The QEP should be focused and succinct (no more than seventy-five pages of narrative text and no more than twenty-five pages of supporting documentation or charts, graphs, and tables).

Core Requirement 2.5 The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. **(Institutional Effectiveness)**

Comprehensive Standard 3.3 Institutional Effectiveness

3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of

improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas **(Institutional Effectiveness)**:

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

3.3.1.2 administrative support services

3.3.1.3 educational support services

3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate

3.3.1.5 community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate

Comprehensive Standard 3.4.10 The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty. **(Responsibility for curriculum)**

Comprehensive Standard 3.5 Educational Programs: Undergraduate Programs

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which graduates have attained them. **(College-level competencies)**

Federal Requirement 4.1 The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates. **(Student achievement)**