

How to Write Self-Study Reports for Academic Departments
New England Association of School and Colleges
Committee on Technical and Career Institutions
Revised May 2019

Introduction

This document was developed to assist teachers and administrators in drafting reports for Academic Departments to be evaluated by Visiting Teams from the New England Association of Schools & Colleges. Use it as a guideline.

Remember that the report you are being asked to write is designed to provide the NEASC Visiting Team with solid, impartial information about your School/Center. Your report must fairly and objectively state what is happening in the Academic Department, highlight program strengths, and include recommendations for program improvement.

If you follow these guidelines, we are confident that your report will be one which provides the Visiting Team with the information it needs to make informed judgments about your Department or Program.

Format of the Report

Your report will consist of four components: (1) a Program Narrative, (2) Strengths, (3) Focus Areas for Improvement, (4) list of committee members.

Upload evidence that supports the judgement statements in the narrative. Examples include: curriculum documents, lesson plans, assessment rubrics, student project designs, student work.

Length of the Report

NEASC does not require you to write a report of a specific length. However, as a general rule, reports for Academic Departments tend to be 3-6 pages in length.

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Program Narrative

Make your report clear, concise, honest, and well written. The purpose of your narrative is to reflect (dig deep) on your practice...make critical judgements about what works and what needs to be improved so all students can be successful at increasingly higher levels of achievement.

Write short sentences. Support your judgments with facts and evidence.

To the best of your ability, follow the outline below. Do so in the order indicated, if possible. Respond to each of the questions. Where a question does not apply, indicate that.

In drafting your Self-Study Report, include evidence that relates to the Indicators in Standards 2 (Curriculum), Standard 3 (Instruction), and Standard 4 (Assessment).

While we defer to the professional judgment of the individual School/Center regarding the exact composition of the Self-Study, we expect that every School/Center will respond to ***each*** of the questions posed below:

1. Department Basics. Where is the Department/Program located? What is the physical layout? How many classrooms are there? What equipment or technology is present? Is the classroom conducive to flexible grouping of students? Are there any obvious safety or health issues? Does the area appear to be clean? Is there proper signage? Is there a clear evacuation route? What's the overall appearance to visitors?
2. Curriculum (Standard 2).

Indicators 1 – 10

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3. Instruction (Standard 3).

Indicators 1 – 6
4. Assessment (Standard 4).

Indicators 1 – 8
5. Student Clubs and Awards. What is the level of student involvement in co-curricular activities such as Math Club or Rho Kappa? If students take part in subject matter competitions, to what extent have they been successful?
[Standard 4, Indicator 7]
6. Faculty. How do instructors keep up-to-date in their field? Do they receive adequate professional development? How do they demonstrate professional leadership and other teacher responsibilities? [Standard 3, Indicator 5]
7. Adequacy of Department/Program Resources. In your professional judgment, does the department appear to have sufficient resources? Is there an adequate number of staff? Is the equipment and technology consistent with current practice? If not, what is missing? Is all the equipment working properly? To what extent is the budget sufficient to implement the curriculum? [Standard 2, Indicator 6]
8. Climate in the Department/Program. What is the culture/climate/atmosphere in the department? Is there a welcoming, all-inclusive atmosphere? Is it collaborative? Is there any evidence of harassing language or behavior? Is the climate gender-neutral? Identify strategies used to create and maintain a positive, inclusive climate in the department's classrooms. [Standard 1, Indicators 1; Standard 1, Indicator 3; and Standard 3, Indicator 1; Standard 5, Indicator 1; Standard 5, Indicator 2]
9. Identify and discuss any initiatives that the department is considering for program improvements in curriculum, instruction, or assessment.

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Strengths

Part of your work in writing the report is to identify the department's "Strengths".

Here are a few examples of Strengths:

1. Common final exams for all courses
2. Placement test for incoming freshmen
3. Fully integrated digital classrooms
4. Faculty wrote and received a grant for \$10,000 for equipment to support implementation of biotechnology in science courses

Focus Areas of Improvement

Your "Focus Areas of Improvement" must be clear and concise. They must be supported by facts.

Here are examples "Focus Areas of Improvement":

1. Need to address the lack of adequate storage for lab chemicals in the Science Department to eliminate a potential safety issue.
2. Establish a system to better communicate grading expectations and practices to parents so they can be better informed about their student's progress.
3. Seek additional resources to update technology in Math Department classrooms to provide students with a stronger curriculum.
4. Upgrade textbooks or digital texts to support curriculum.
5. Investigate examples of effective co-teaching models to support cross-curricula teaching.

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