

Preparation of the Self-Study and Documentation

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Moving from Applicant to Candidate Status

Candidacy Process

1. Submission of Self-Study proposal and timeline
 - a. TRACS approval of Self-Study Proposal and timeline.
 - b. TRACS staff visit to the institution to finalize timeline.
 - c. Staff forms the on-site evaluation team.
 - d. Travel Expense Advance for on-site team.
 - e. Change of Status Review Fee to be submitted.

Moving from Applicant to Candidate Status

2. Self-Study Report sent to TRACS (minimum 6 weeks prior to visit)
 - a. Audit received.
 - b. All supporting documentation received.
 - c. TRACS review and approval of Self-Study.
3. Self-Study with documentation sent to team members by the institution.

Moving from Applicant to Candidate Status

4. Team visit (suggested at least 3 months prior to the Commission meeting).

5. Team report
 - a. Draft is submitted to TRACS via staff
 - b. Draft is left with the institution for findings of Errors of Fact
 - c. Report goes through final editing
 - d. Final report along with a matrix is sent to the institution

Moving from Applicant to Candidate Status

6. Billing for team expenses.
7. Institutional response received (no later than 60 days prior to the Commission meeting.
Two dates that TRACS receives Institutional Responses – February 15 and August 15 of every year)

Moving from Applicant to Candidate Status

8. Institution scheduled for Commission appearance (April or November)
 - a. Grant candidate status without conditions
 - b. Grant candidate status with conditions
 - c. Defer candidate status to correct serious weaknesses
 - d. Deny candidate status

Steps in the Accreditation Process

1. Self-Study Proposal
2. Organization of the Self-Study Team
3. Timeline, Budget, and other Administrative Tasks
4. Committee Work
5. Self-Study Draft
6. Approval of Self-Study Report by President and Board
7. TRACS Review of the Self-Study
8. TRACS Evaluation Team Visit
9. Candidate Status, Accreditation or Reaffirmation

Self-Study Proposal

A Self-Study Proposal must be completed and submitted to the TRACS office for review and approval before initiating the formal self-study process.

Self-Study Proposal Format

- Introduction and brief history of the institution
- Purpose of the Self-Study
- Goals of the Self-Study
- Self-Study Timeline or Schedule
- Organization for the Self-Study
 - Role and scope of the committee
 - Names of the committees
 - Membership of the committees
 - Role and scope of the chairs of the committee

Self-Study Proposal Format

- Materials and Resources
- Budget for the Self-Study
- Response to any/all previous Recommendations/Suggestions not completed
- Copy of the Institutional Plan and Assessment Mechanism as currently implemented

The Organization of the Self-Study Team

Self-Study Participants

President

Self-Study Director

Editor

Steering Committee

Sub-Committees

Timeline, Budget, and other Administrative Tasks

Sample Self-Study Timelines

Example One:

12-18 Months	Oct - January	January-June	October
Initiate the Self-Study at least 12-18 months prior to the desired completion of the Self-Study.	Complete the Self-Study and send to TRACS at least six weeks prior to the Team Visit.	TRACS team visit must be scheduled no later than June.	TRACS Accreditation Commission action.

Agenda	Date
Steering Committee to meet to agree on the self-study process.	
Appointment of the Self-Study Director.	
Appointment of Steering Committee and Sub-Committees	
First Draft-Committees investigate, interview, analyze, and develop preliminary reports.	
Steering Committee reviews the first draft and gives feedback to the sub-committees.	
Second Draft-Committees incorporate input from the Steering Committee and submit Final Self-Study Report.	
Steering Committee compiles First Draft of Final Self Study Report	
Editor reviews and edits the First Draft of Final Self-Study Report	
President receives and reviews copy of the First Draft of Final Self-Study Report	
Steering Committee compiles Final Self-Study Report.	
Editor prepares the Final Self-Study Report for publication.	
President submits Final Self-Study Report to Board for approval	
President sends copies of Self-Study Report to TRACS & others.	

Committee Work

Development of the Self-Study Report

Two major categories:

1. Foundational Standards
2. Operational Standards

Use of Assessment Data

Self-Study Drafts

The first draft of the Self-Study Report is compiled by the sub-committees.

Upon review of the first draft of the Self-Study Report, the Steering Committee gives feedback to the sub-committees.

The second draft of the report incorporates the additional input from the sub-committees and the steering committee.

The steering committee will compile the Final Self-Study Report.

Self-Study Drafts

Self-Study Report Format

Most of the information can be provided in brief, narrative statements supported by charts, tables, and other primary documentation.

The Self-Study Report should reflect the current status of the institution and long-term plans.

A copy of the current Strategic Plan must be included.

Every statement in the Self-Study Report must be documented and supported by analyzed assessment data.

Self-Study Drafts

Self-Study Report Format

Materials to include with the Self-Study Report

- Self-Study Report narrative with attachments and documentation
- Board Manual
- Policies Manual
- Catalog
- Faculty Handbook
- Student Handbook

Self-Study Drafts

Self-Study Report Format

Materials to include with the Self-Study Report

- Job Descriptions
- Strategic Planning Document
- Assessment Plan
- Audit Reports

Approval of Self-Study Report by President and Board

The President and Governing Board must review and approve the Self-Study Report prior to submission to the TRACS office.

Minutes indicating the approval of the Self-Study Report by the Board need to be included with the documentation.

TRACS Review of the Self-Study Report

The final Self-Study Report and all additional materials should be mailed to the TRACS office no later than six weeks prior to the desired team visit.

Upon receipt of the documents the TRACS office will review the package of materials for completeness.

The final date for the accreditation visit, selection of team members, and travel details will be completed.

TRACS Accreditation Visit

Information concerning the details of a TRACS Evaluation Team visit will be sent to the President prior to the visit.

The visit brings the beginnings of closure to the Steering Committee.

This is the opportunity for each of those who have worked carefully to develop a thorough and comprehensive document to affirm the contents of the report.

Candidate (Pre-accredited) Status, Accreditation or Reaffirmation

The Accreditation Commission meets twice a year (in spring and fall) to review the recommendations of the on-site evaluation team and the documents that have been submitted by the institution.

The items that the Commission reviews in determining whether an institution should be granted candidate , accredited or reaffirmed status include:

Candidate (Pre-accredited) Status, Accreditation or Reaffirmation

- The Institution's Self-Study Report
- The On-Site Evaluation Team Report
- The Institution's Response to the Team Report
- The Team's Recommendation to the Commission
- The Staff Recommendation
- The Commission Readers' Recommendation

The institutions are required to send at least one representative to the Accreditation Commission meeting when action is being taken on that institution.