



# ACCJC

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR  
COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES  
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

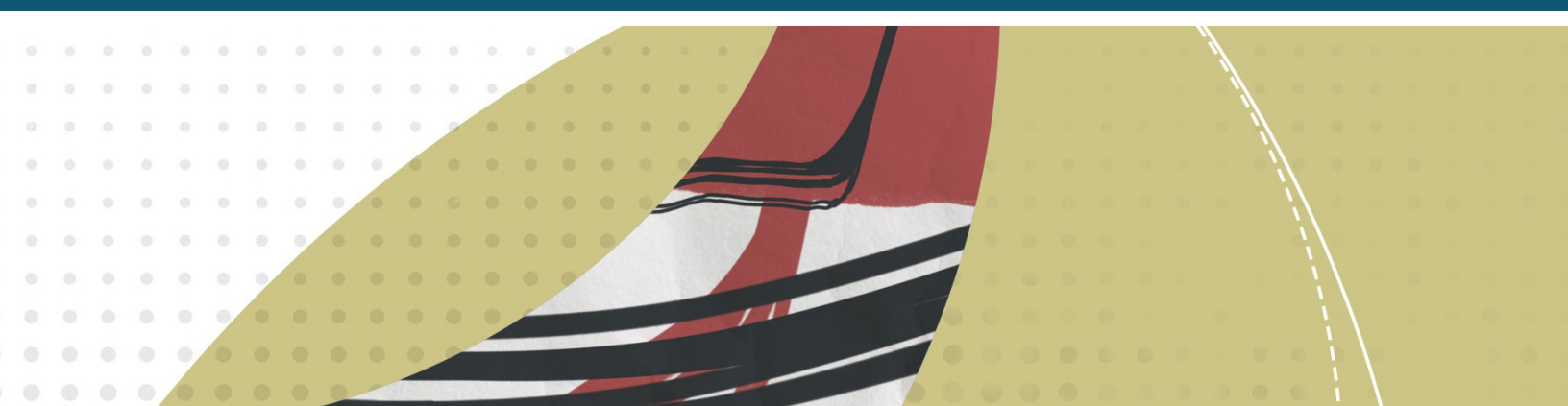
# Guidelines for Preparing Institutional Reports to the Commission

10 Commercial Blvd., Suite 204  
Novato, CA 94949

Tel: 415-506-0234  
Fax: 415-506-0238

[accjc@accjc.org](mailto:accjc@accjc.org)  
[accjc.org](http://accjc.org)

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## 1 Background

ACCJC member institutions must meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies (hereafter called Standards) at all times. To verify and affirm ongoing alignment with Standards, institutions undergo a comprehensive review process and complete an Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) every seven years. In addition, the Commission may require other reports or documentation to verify and affirm resolution of deficiencies and/or sustained alignment with Standards (see Appendix C for a list of related policies):

<b>Institutional Self-Evaluation Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Required for all institutions every seven years as part of the comprehensive review process</li><li>• Provides written analysis and evidence to document the institution's alignment with Standards</li></ul> <hr/>
<b>Midterm Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Required for all institutions in the 4th year of the seven-year review cycle</li><li>• Provides progress update regarding improvement plans, improvement recommendations, quality focus projects, and student learning and achievement outcomes</li></ul> <hr/>
<b>Follow-Up Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides evidence of how the institution has addressed specific compliance requirements identified in a Commission Action Letter in order to resolve deficiencies and come into compliance with Standards</li></ul> <hr/>
<b>Special Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May be required when the Commission receives information that indicates noncompliance with Standards, Commission policies, federal regulations, federal student aid, or other programmatic or specialized accreditors</li><li>• Provides information and evidence to the Commission in response to specific requirements, detailed in a letter from the Commission to the institution</li></ul> <hr/>
<b>Teach-Out Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Required during preaccreditation process; may be required upon the occurrence of certain events or circumstances which might lead to voluntary or involuntary closure</li><li>• Provides plans to ensure equitable treatment of students in the event of a closure of an institution or an institutional location that provides 100% of at least one program</li></ul> <hr/>
<b>Teach-Out Agreement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May be required as part of a Teach-Out Plan upon the occurrence of certain events or circumstances which might lead to voluntary or involuntary closure</li><li>• Documents written agreement(s) between institutions that ensure equitable treatment of students in the event of a closure of an institution or institutional location that provides 100% of at least one program</li></ul> <hr/>
<b>Closure Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Required when a decision to close an institution has been made, or when involuntary closure of the institution is imminent</li></ul> <hr/>

The Commission reviews and takes action on an institutional report at the next regularly scheduled meeting after the report is submitted. The Commission will notify the college of its decision in an action letter. The action letter will include information about any next steps the institution must take as a result of the Commission's decision.

## 2 Submitting Reports and Evidence to the Commission

### Instructions for Submission

Unless otherwise instructed by an ACCJC staff liaison, institutions must submit electronic copies of reports and supporting evidence to the Commission on a USB drive. Reports should be saved in a digital format such as Word or PDF. The USB drive must contain one copy of the report and one or more folders housing digital copies of the evidence cited in the report. The Commission expects that the report will contain links to evidence files on the USB, rather than to a repository or page on the institution's website.

#### Send the USB drive to:

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)  
P.O. Box 147  
Novato, CA 94948  
Contact telephone number: 415-506-0234

**Note: Please do not require a signature for delivery. ACCJC staff liaisons will confirm receipt of materials once they have arrived.**

### Evidence Format

The best evidence is consistent with the institution's mission, meaningful to the institution's constituents, and used in the institution's ongoing assessment, planning, decision-making, and improvement practices. The *Guide to Institutional Self-Evaluation, Improvement, and Peer Review* provides additional guidance regarding the selection and presentation of evidence associated with Standards and areas of institutional practice.

When citing an institutional webpage as evidence, institutions are asked to "freeze" the page as a PDF or screenshot rather than provide a hyperlink to a live website, as website content changes frequently. As stated above, the Commission expects that the report will contain links to evidence files submitted with the report, rather than to a repository or live page on the institution's website.

### 3 Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)

The Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) is the foundation for the accreditation process. Institutions begin the seven-year evaluation cycle by conducting a thorough self-evaluation against the Standards, in order to assess sustained alignment with Standards; the quality and effectiveness of its programs, services, and practices; and the degree to which it is meeting its stated institutional mission and goals for student learning and achievement. (For more information regarding the self-evaluation process, consult the *Guide to Institutional Self-Evaluation, Improvement, and Peer Review*.) Institutions document the results of this self-evaluation in the ISER. The ISER should include:

- honest, thoughtful analysis of the effectiveness of institutional programs, services, practices, and policies;
- relevant data and evidence demonstrating supporting the institution's analysis and findings;
- institutional plans to improve and/or sustain alignment with Standards, Commission policies, and federal regulations; and
- a Quality Focus Essay, identifying two to three quality focus projects that the institution will implement with the goal of innovating to improve student learning and achievement.

During the comprehensive review, peer review teams use the ISER to validate and affirm the institution's findings and as a basis for identifying additional areas of weakness or strength with respect to the Standards. The Commission reviews the ISER alongside the peer review team's report as it makes a decision on the institution's accredited status.<sup>1</sup>

#### Requirements and Format for the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER)

The Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) must address the elements detailed in the *Guide to Institutional Self-Evaluation, Improvement, and Peer Review*. Institutions should review the *Guide* carefully and contact their ACCJC staff liaison for additional guidance.

When preparing and formatting the ISER, institutions should use the ISER Template provided by ACCJC staff to ensure that all required elements are included in the document.

Both the *Guide to Institutional Self-Evaluation, Improvement, and Peer Review* and the ISER Template can be downloaded from the ACCJC website at: <https://accjc.org/guides-and-manuals/>.

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<sup>1</sup> See [Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions](#); [Policy on Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions](#).

## 4 Midterm Report

Institutions are required to submit a Midterm Report in the 4th year of their comprehensive review cycle.<sup>2</sup> In the Midterm Report, the institution:

- provides an update on how it has integrated improvement plans arising from the self-evaluation into its ongoing planning and implementation processes;
- addresses work accomplished in response to the improvement recommendations affirmed by the Commission in its Action Letter
- reflects on actions it has taken to improve institutional performance related to student learning outcomes and institution-set standards;
- reflects on fiscal health and indicates actions taken to improve conditions (if applicable); and
- reports on the progress and outcomes from the action projects identified in its most recent Quality Focus Essay (described in the ISER).

Note that Midterm Reports should **not** address compliance requirements (if identified by the Commission). The college will have already addressed any compliance requirements through a Follow-Up Report.

### Requirements and Format for Midterm Reports

Midterm Reports must include the following required elements:

#### 1. Cover Sheet (See Appendix A)

The Cover Sheet identifies the report as a Midterm Report and includes the name and address of the institution and the date of submission.

#### 2. Certification Page (See Appendix B)

The Certification Page certifies there was broad participation in the preparation of the report and the report is an accurate reflection of the nature and substance of the institution. The college chief executive officer (CEO), chair of the Governing Board, and other college personnel as appropriate, sign this certification attesting to the preparation and review of the report.

#### 3. Table of Contents

The Table of Contents is a listing of the contents of the report, including appendices.

#### 4. Report Preparation

This section describes the process used to prepare the report and identifies those who were involved in its preparation.

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<sup>2</sup> See [Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions](#); [Policy on Monitoring Institutional Performance](#).

## 5. Plans Arising from the Self-Evaluation Process

This section provides an update the self-identified plans to strengthen alignment with Standards outlined by the college in its most recent Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER). Colleges should describe their progress on these plans and resulting outcomes. A chart format can be used for this section of the report if appropriate. Any plans that have not yet been fully implemented should be clearly identified, and an update of the specific timelines and responsible parties in place to support completion should be provided.

## 6. Institutional Reporting on Quality Improvements

### 6.A. Response to Recommendations for Improvement

This section of the report addresses any recommendations for improvement to increase institutional effectiveness noted in the Commission Action Letter following the most recent comprehensive review. (If no improvement recommendations were noted in the Action Letter, this section is not required.) The college should refer to the Peer Review Team Report for further information and context for each improvement recommendation. The narrative for this section should explain the manner in which each recommendation to improve was considered, and what, if anything, the college did as a result. The narrative should also note any outcomes or increases in effectiveness resulting from these improvements.

### 6.B. Reflection on Improving Institutional Performance: Student Learning Outcomes and Institution Set Standards

This section of the report provides an institutional reflection on institutional performance in two areas: 1) student learning outcomes, and 2) institution-set standards. Colleges should respond to the specific prompts listed below and provide evidence to support the information and narrative.

#### 1. Student Learning Outcomes (Standard I.B.2)

ACCJC Standard I.B.2 states: “The institution defines and assesses student learning outcomes for all instructional programs and student and learning support services.”

Reflect on assessment processes since the last comprehensive review:

- What are the strengths of the process that help the college to improve teaching and learning?
- What growth opportunities in the assessment process has the college identified to further refine its authentic culture of assessment?
- Provide examples where course, program, or service improvements have occurred based on outcomes assessment data.

- In those areas where assessment may be falling behind, what is the college doing to complete the assessments per the college’s schedule?

Evidence: Provide evidence to support the information and narrative described above.

## 2. Institution Set Standards (Standard I.B.3)

ACCJC Standard I.B.3 states: “The institution establishes institution-set standards for student achievement, appropriate to its mission, assesses how well it is achieving them in pursuit of continuous improvement, and publishes this information.”

Using the most recent Annual Report, reflect on trends in data for institution-set standards on course completion, certificate completion, degrees awarded, transfer, licensure examination pass rates, and employment rates for career and technical education (CTE) students:

- Has the college met its floor standards?
- Has the college achieved its stretch (aspirational) goals?
- What initiative(s) is the college undertaking to improve its outcomes?
- How does the college inform its constituents of this information?

Evidence: Provide the most recent Annual Report used for this reflection.

### **6.C. Report on the outcomes of the Quality Focus Projects**

The Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) includes a Quality Focus Essay in which colleges identify two to three quality focus projects they will implement to improve student learning and achievement. This section of the Midterm Report provides a progress update on the goals, outcomes, and data identified for each quality focus project and details any changes in student learning and student achievement that resulted from the projects. If appropriate, the narrative should also comment on any next steps, such as further expansion or replication of projects. In the event that a project did not achieve the desired results, the college should provide information about factors that contributed to that outcome and reflect on what was learned during the process.

### **6.D. Fiscal Reporting**

This section of the Midterm Report provides an update on fiscal conditions at the college. Colleges must provide a copy of their most recent ACCJC Annual Fiscal Report (AFR) as evidence. In addition,



colleges must provide narrative responses in response to the following conditions:

- If any of the areas of the most recent Annual Fiscal Report indicate that the college is not meeting its goals (e.g., high loan default rates, unmet liabilities, and/or projected deficits), please describe any plans for improvement.
- If the institution is on enhanced fiscal monitoring, please provide narrative describing progress on the institution’s improvement plans.

If the conditions above do not apply, a narrative response is not required to supplement the copy of the Annual Fiscal Report.

## 7. Appendices

All Midterm Reports should include appropriate evidence to support the information and narrative in the report. Colleges should provide a list of all evidence cited as an appendix to the Midterm Report, as well as providing appropriate links throughout the report. (See “Evidence Format” above.)

## 5 Follow-Up Report

The Commission may require a Follow-Up Report when it identifies continued noncompliance with Standards.<sup>3</sup> In a Follow-Up Report, the institution:

- provides narrative analysis and evidence that describes the resolution of deficiencies identified in the Commission action letter;
- verifies that the Standards are met; and
- affirms that the institution will sustain the changes/improvements.

### Requirements and Format for Follow-Up Reports

Follow-Up Reports must include the following required elements:

#### 1. Cover Sheet (See Appendix A)

The Cover Sheet identifies the report as a Follow-Up Report and includes the name and address of the institution and the date of submission.

#### 2. Certification Page (See Appendix B)

The Certification Page certifies there was broad participation in the preparation of the report and the report is an accurate reflection of the nature and substance of the institution. The college chief executive officer (CEO),

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<sup>3</sup> See [Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions](#); [Policy on Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions](#).

chair of the Governing Board, and other college personnel as appropriate, sign this certification attesting to the preparation and review of the report.

### 3. Table of Contents

The Table of Contents is a listing of the contents of the report, including appendices.

### 4. Report Preparation

This section describes the process of report preparation and identifies those who were involved in its preparation.

### 5. Response to the Commission Action Letter

This section of the report illustrates what the college has done to resolve each deficiency identified by the Commission in its action letter. The college must provide a narrative analysis and evidence for each compliance requirement outlining the institution's response and resolution of associated deficiencies. The narrative and evidence must also demonstrate that the Standards are met and affirm that the institution will sustain the changes and improvements.

### 6. Appendices

All Follow-Up Reports must include appropriate evidence to support the information provided in the report. Colleges should provide a list of all evidence cited as an appendix to the Follow-Up Report, as well as providing appropriate links throughout the report. (See "Evidence Format" above.)

## 6 Special Report

The Commission may require a Special Report when it receives information that indicates noncompliance with Standards, Commission policies, federal regulations, federal student aid requirements, or other programmatic or specialized accreditors.<sup>4</sup> The specific requirements of a Special Report will be contained in an Action Letter from the Commission to the institution.

### Requirements and Format for Special Reports

Special Reports must contain the following required elements:

#### 1. Cover Sheet (See Appendix A)

The Cover Sheet identifies it is a Special Report and includes the name and address of the institution and the date of submission.

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<sup>4</sup> See [Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions](#); [Policy on Monitoring Institutional Performance](#); [Policy on Student and Public Complaints against Institutions](#); [Policy on Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions](#).

## 2. Certification Page (See Appendix B)

The Certification Page certifies that the report is an accurate reflection of the nature and substance of the institution. The college chief executive officer (CEO) and the chair of the Governing Board, and other college personnel as appropriate sign this certification attesting to the preparation and review of the report.

## 3. Table of Contents

The Table of Contents is a listing of the contents of the report, including appendices.

## 4. Report Preparation

This section describes the process of report preparation and identifies those who were involved in its preparation.

## 5. Response to the Commission Letter

This section of the Special Report must address each deficiency and the conditions identified by the Commission in its letter to the institution.

## 6. Appendices

All Special Reports must include appropriate evidence to support the information provided in the report. Colleges should provide a list of all evidence cited as an appendix to the Follow-Up Report, as well as providing appropriate links throughout the report. (See “Evidence Format” above.)

# 7 Teach-Out Plans and Agreements

Under certain circumstances, the Commission may require a Teach-Out Plan and/or Teach-Out Agreement.<sup>5</sup> The Commission will specify that a Teach-Out Plan and/or Teach-Out Agreement is required in a letter to the institution.

## Requirements and Format for Teach-Out Plans

Teach-Out Plans must contain the following required elements:

### 1. Cover Sheet (See Appendix A)

The Cover Sheet identifies the document as a Teach-Out Plan and includes the name and address of the institution and the date of submission.

### 2. Teach-Out Plan Requirements

The Teach-Out Plan should provide the following information:

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<sup>5</sup> See [Policy on Teach-Out Plans and Agreements](#).

- a. Brief narrative describing the circumstances requiring the need for a Teach-Out Plan.
- b. The number of students currently enrolled in all associate degrees, associate degrees for transfer (California Community Colleges), certificates, and any other degrees (e.g. baccalaureate). Attach the college catalog listing all degrees.
- c. A list of other colleges with similar degrees where students could reasonably complete their programs of study should the institution need to close.
- d. Description of how comparable program content, structure, scheduling, accreditation, and stability at the receiving institution(s) would be verified.
- e. Plans for how access to necessary records (e.g. transcripts) will be provided to students, and how students will be notified of their options.
- f. Plans for making available personnel and/or resources to assist students with completing their programs of study and in obtaining necessary records.

### **3. Evidence**

If needed, the Teach-Out Plan shall include appropriate evidence to support the information provided in the narrative sections. (See “Evidence Format” above.)

## **Requirements and Format for Teach-Out Agreements**

The following elements are required to be included in a Teach-Out Agreement:

### **1. Cover Sheet**

The Cover Sheet identifies the document as a Teach-Out Agreement and includes the name and address of the institution and the date of submission. (See example in Appendix A.)

### **2. Teach-Out Agreement Requirements**

#### **2.A. Information Required in All Teach-Out Agreements**

The Teach-Out Agreement should provide the following information:

- a. A brief narrative describing the circumstances requiring the need for a Teach-Out Agreement.
- b. A list of all institutions with similar programs where Teach-Out Agreements have been established, indicating for which programs

teach-out is needed. Attach sample Teach-Out Agreements with the receiving institutions. (*Refer to Policy on Teach-Out Plans and Agreements for conditions preventing an institution to serve as a teach-out institution by the Commission.*)

- c. A list of any degrees/certificates that are accredited by another recognized accrediting agency and the associated accrediting agency.
- d. A description of the institution's plans for promptly notifying students of their options for completing degrees/certificates with minimal disruption. Provide sample communications that will be sent to students to explain their options.
- e. For each institution where Teach-Out Agreements have been established, a description of:
  - i. How the institution has the necessary experience, resources, and support services to provide an educational program that is of acceptable quality and is reasonably similar in content, delivery modality, and scheduling (*alternative methods of delivery may be made available to students, as long as the same method of delivery as the original educational program is also provided*).
  - ii. How the institution has the capacity to carry out its mission and meet all obligations to students.
  - iii. How the institution demonstrates that it can provide students with access to the program and services without requiring them to move or travel for substantial distances or durations.
  - iv. How the institution demonstrates that it will provide students with information about additional charges, if any.

**2B. Additional Information Required in Teach-Out Agreements as part of Institutional Closure**

Institutions submitting a Teach-Out Agreement as part of institutional closure must also provide the following additional information:

- a. A complete list of students currently enrolled in each program at the institution and the program requirements each student has completed.
- b. The plan that will be provided to all potentially eligible students with information about how to obtain a closed school discharge and, if applicable, information on State refund policies.

- c. The record retention plan to be provided to all enrolled students that delineates the final disposition of teach-out records (e.g., student transcripts, billing, financial aid records).
- d. Information on the number and types of credits the institutions where Teach-Out Agreements have been established are willing to accept prior to the student's enrollment.
- e. A sample of the communication to students regarding the tuition and fees of the educational program and the number and types of credits that will be accepted by the institutions where Teach-Out Agreements have been established.
- f. A sample of the communication to students related to the closure of the institution.

### 3. Evidence

If needed, the Teach-out Agreement shall include appropriate evidence to support the information provided in the Agreement.

## 8 Closure Plan

When a decision to close an institution has been made, or when involuntary closure of the institution is imminent, the institution must submit a Closure Plan to the Commission for substantive change review.<sup>6</sup> The Closure Plan must include a Teach-Out Plan and Agreement. The Closure Plan must also address the following elements, which are described in further detail in the Commission's *Policy on Closing an Institution*:

- Student completion;
- Disposition of academic records and financial aid transcripts;
- Provisions for faculty and staff;
- Disposition of assets;
- Obligations to creditors;
- Coordination with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges; and
- Key governing board obligations.

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<sup>6</sup> See [Policy on Closing an Institution](#).

**9 Appendix A**  
**Institutional Report - Sample Cover Sheet**

**Name of Institution**

**Name of Report or Plan- Midterm, Follow-Up, Special Report, Teach-Out Plan, etc.**

*Submitted by:*  
(Name of Institution)  
(Address of Institution)

Submitted to:  
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges,  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Date Submitted:

**10 Appendix B**  
**Midterm/Follow-Up/Special Report Sample Certification Page**

(To be inserted in the Midterm/Follow-Up/Special Report  
following the Cover Sheet)

**To:** Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges,  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

**From:**

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*(Name of Chief Executive Officer)*

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(Name of Institution)

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(Address)

I certify there was broad participation/review by the campus community and believe this report accurately reflects the nature and substance of this institution.

**Signatures:**

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(Chief Executive Officer)

(Date)

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(Chairperson, Governing Board)

(Date)

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(Name, Title, Representing)

(Date)

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(Name, Title, Representing)

(Date)

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(Name, Title, Representing)

(Date)

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(Name, Title, Representing)

(Date)

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## 11 Appendix C Policy References at a Glance

Institutions may wish to review the following policies related to each report / document type for reference. All Commission policies can be found on the ACCJC website, at: <https://accjc.org/eligibility-requirements-standards-policies/>.

<b>Institutional Self-Evaluation Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions</li><li>• Policy on Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions</li></ul> <hr/>
<b>Midterm Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions</li><li>• Policy on Monitoring Institutional Performance</li></ul> <hr/>
<b>Follow-Up Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions</li><li>• Policy on Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions</li></ul> <hr/>
<b>Special Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions</li><li>• Policy on Monitoring Institutional Performance</li><li>• Policy on Student and Public Complaints against Institutions</li><li>• Policy on Rights, Responsibilities, and Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions</li></ul> <hr/>
<b>Teach-Out Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy on Teach-Out Plans and Agreements</li><li>• Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions</li></ul> <hr/>
<b>Teach-Out Agreement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy on Teach-Out Plans and Agreements</li><li>• Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions</li></ul> <hr/>
<b>Closure Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy on Closing an Institution</li><li>• Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions</li><li>• Policy on Teach-Out Plans and Agreements</li></ul>