

UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR DEPARTMENT/UNIT SACS SELF-STUDY REPORTS

The Augusta State University's mission statement (statement of purpose) and educational goals serve as the foundation for all institutional operations, programs and activities. Each Department/Unit must demonstrate how its operations, programs and activities flow directly from the institutional mission and educational goals.

Each Department/Unit head should carefully read the "Mission Of The Self-Study" (pages four and five of the **Augusta State University Self-Study Plan and Manual**) and share this material with his or her faculty and staff.

Department/Unit self-study reports must address the following:

1. Compliance with the *Criteria*

The report must clearly and thoroughly reveal the extent to which the Department/Unit is in compliance with all assigned "**must**" and "**should**" statements in the *Criteria*. The report should use the numbering system by which the sections of the *Criteria* are organized. This section of the report is to be organized as follows:

- A. **Must/Should Statement**
- B. **Response to Must/Should Statement:** Clearly and thoroughly reveal the extent to which the Department/Unit is in compliance with the **must/should** statement.
- C. **Evidence of Compliance:** Documentation such as minutes, policy statements, publications, assessment results, etc. Attach the documentation in an appendix identified by the number of the **must** statement if it is less than five pages. If the documentation is five pages or longer, is in a publication, or is electronic, cite the source and page number as well as the location of the documentation when appropriate. For example, you do not need to cite the location of the ASU Catalog but you would say where a writing guide created for senior papers in a capstone course is located in the department.
- D. **Recommendation:** If the department/unit is not in complete compliance with the **must/should** statement, state what the department/unit is doing to get in compliance and provide a time line for completion.

NOTE: It is implicit in every requirement in the *Criteria for Accreditation* mandating a policy or procedure that the policy or procedure be in writing, be approved through appropriate institutional processes, be published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and be implemented and enforced by the institution (*Criteria for Accreditation*, 19-20).

Departments/Units demonstrate compliance with their assigned **must** statements through a process of examination, analysis, documentation, recommendation, and correction. Mere compliance, however, is the Self-Study's minimal objective. The Self-Study process provides an opportunity to fine tune what we already do successfully and change what impedes us from

serving our students.

2. Self-Study Goals

The goal of the Self-Study is to examine the degree to which the institution is keeping its commitment to the success of students, excellence in teaching, accessibility by a diverse student population, enrichment of the Augusta area, and the advancement of knowledge. Where appropriate, the Department/Unit report must address how Department/Unit operations, programs and activities contribute to the five institutional commitments. Certainly, each academic department would address all five commitments with a special emphasis on **student success**. Educational support units and administrative units should address those commitments appropriate to their purpose. Appendix E provides a list of indicators of student success acknowledged in the literature and a selected bibliography of journal articles. This is a place where the department/unit can brag about what it does, even if it is beyond compliance with a **must** statement

3. Summary

The report should conclude with a **summary** of the strengths and weaknesses of the department/unit operations, programs, and activities derived from its evaluation of compliance with the *Criteria* and its contributions to institutional commitments. The summary should include any proposals for improvements.

Department/Unit reports should be characterized by the following qualities:

1. Relevance

The report should directly address central issues of the areas being investigated. Specific issues and questions should be identified and responded to directly and clearly.

2. Thoroughness

The report should investigate each area in depth.

3. Objectivity

The report should maintain objectivity throughout the entire evaluative process, especially when identifying strengths and weaknesses.

4. Accuracy and Documentation

Statements in the report should be checked for accuracy and supported by documentation. The Department/Unit should have on file documents (either hard-copy or on-line) that support and demonstrate the statements in the report.

Format, style and organization of Department/Unit reports:

1. Technical Format

- Word processing software - Corel WordPerfect 7 or 8
- Charts and Graphs - Use WordPerfect Office Suite
- Margins - 1" left and right sides; 1" top/bottom; left justified
- Font - Times New Roman 12 pt.
- Section headings - centered, bold, all caps
- Page numbers - centered, bottom
- Indent paragraphs
- Double spaced
- 20 lb. white paper

2. Style

- a. Narrative
 - Concise
 - Readable
 - Understandable to those unfamiliar with the institution
 - The 1990 Self-Study may be a useful reference resource
- b. Analytical Data
 - Charts and Graphs clearly titled and numbered
 - Describe charts and graphs in narrative
- c. Language and Sentence Structure
 - Gender neutral
 - Use plural nouns and pronouns
 - Avoid passive voice
 - Avoid redundancy
 - Follow terminology used in *Criteria for Accreditation*
- d. Use *Chicago Manual of Style* for citations and questions on style

3. Organization

- Follow format of *Criteria for Accreditation*
- Follow the numbering system of *Criteria for Accreditation*

Submission of Department/Unit draft and final reports:

- Three written copies
- One disk copy