Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics

the accrediting agency for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

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Directions for Using Self-Study Templates

and

Preparing for ACEND Reviews to Meet the 2012 Accreditation Standards

Didactic Programs in Dietetics International Coordinated Programs Coordinated Programs Dietetic Technician Programs Dietetic internships

The Self-Study Templates are a framework for programs writing selfstudy reports under ACEND's 2012 Accreditation Standards.

Use of these templates is voluntary.

VERSION 2.0 REVISED MAY 2012

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Directions for Using Self-Study Templates and Preparing for ACEND Reviews to Meet the 2012 Accreditation Standards

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS Overview of ACEND Self-Study Reports	Page 1
Alignment between the Program Assessment Report and Self-Study Reports	2
Requirements for Writing ACEND Self-Study Reports	3
Suggested Structure for Self-Study Reports	4
Evidence of Compliance	6
Recommendations for Preparing for ACEND On-site Reviews	7

Overview of ACEND Self-Study Reports

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) has developed this Self-Study Template to assist nutrition and dietetics programs in documenting how they are meeting ACEND's Accreditation Standards. Self-study reports can be comprehensive (covering all standards) or focused (covering a limited number of criteria):

- 1. **Comprehensive Self-Study Report (SSR) for New Programs**: Organizations applying to become accredited by ACEND must go through a two-step, <u>comprehensive</u> evaluation process
 - a. **Application for Precandidate Status**: A new program that has no students enrolled applies for Precandidate status by first submitting a report showing that it meets ACEND's eligibility standards for accreditation. If all eligibility standards are met, it must submit a second report showing sufficient planning on ACEND's standards to provide reasonable evidence of moving to Candidate status. The program is granted Precandidate Status only when it can fully document its plans in the self-study report. Granting of Precandidate status brings no rights or privileges of accreditation. Full public disclosure by the dietetics program of the terms and conditions of precandidate status is required.
 - b. **Application for Candidate Status**: A new program that wishes to enroll students and has met all the requirements of Precandidate status may apply for Candidate accreditation status. The granting of Candidate status denotes a developmental program that is expected to mature according to stated plans and within a defined time period. Reasonable evidence is provided that the program will become accredited as programmatic experiences are gained, generally, by the time the first class has graduated. A comprehensive, onsite evaluation is required in order to validate the Application for Candidate Status. Graduates of a class designated as having Candidate status have the same rights and privileges as graduates of a fully-accredited program.
- 2. **Comprehensive Self-Study Report (SSR) for Existing Programs**: ACEND-accredited programs that are applying to continue their accreditation go through a <u>comprehensive</u> evaluation process covering all accreditation standards. An on-site evaluation is required in order to validate the Self-Study Report.
- 3. **Interim Report (IR)**: A program that has been evaluated and needs <u>focused</u> monitoring on specific criteria may be asked to provide an Interim Report in order for the ACEND board to assess the program's development or improvement on those criteria. The ACEND board may ask the program to undergo a focused, on-site evaluation to validate the Interim Report.
- 4. **Program Assessment Report (PAR)**: A Program Assessment Report is a <u>focused</u> report, typically requested five years following a comprehensive evaluation as part of ACEND's routine monitoring. The ACEND board may ask the program to undergo a focused, on-site evaluation in order to validate the Program Assessment Report.

Alignment between the Program Assessment Report and Self-Study Reports

Programs are encouraged to use ACEND's four-step, C.A.P.E., quality-improvement process. Assessment plans and reports will fall into one of the four steps below:

Collect Data define objectives (expected outcomes) and record the actual outcomes Assess Data compare objectives (expected outcomes) to the actual outcomes

define actions that will positively change outcomes **Plan Changes**

Enact Changes implement the planned improvements

Assessment plans and the assessment reports are companions in ACEND's review process. An assessment plan is used to specify the data that is being reviewed or collected over a 5-year period to demonstrate whether the program is achieving its outcomes and goals. The assessment report presents the data collected over the past five-years along with a discussion of whether the program's goals and outcomes have been accomplished, an updated assessment plan for the next five years, and action steps for changing the program to maintain or improve its quality.

ACEND's Self-Study Reports (SSR) and Program Assessment Reports (PAR) are simply assessment reports occurring at alternate, five-year intervals, with the primary difference being that SSRs are comprehensive evaluations of all accreditation standards, whereas PARs focus on specific areas such as program resources and curriculum. When preparing an SSR or PAR, include the results from data collected over the past five years, a discussion of the results, plans for gathering data in the <u>next</u> five years, and plans for making changes to the program that will result in program improvements:

Results from data collected over the past five years

Include your completed data collected over the last 5 years within the narrative of your report or in the appendices along with the last assessment plan for context. Obviously, a brand new dietetics program that has never been accredited by ACEND will not be expected to provide five years of data.

> Last 5-year plan with objectives (expected outcomes)

Actual outcomes &

documented over 5 years Explain in the narrative what the results mean. State

Plans for collecting data in the next five years

whether or not the objectives (expected outcomes) were achieved over the past 5 years and explain why. Update the previous assessment plan or if necessary, create a

completely new plan for the next 5 years and include it within the narrative or in the appendices.

New plan with objectives (expected outcomes) for the next 5 years.

TBD-outcomes due over the next 5 years

Plans for improving the program

Discussion of the results

Using information identified through the data-collection and assessment process, formulate actions to maintain or improve the program and document the resulting outcomes.

Sample planning forms have been provided for your convenience; however, it is more important to demonstrate that the program is performing on-going self assessment and is making changes to improve the program using whatever format presents the information most clearly.



The PAR-SSR-5 symbol indicates information that is used in both Program Assessment Reports and Self-Study Reports.

Requirements for Writing ACEND Self-Study Reports

The requirements, below, must be followed when preparing an ACEND self-study report:

- The report must be typed in English.
- The document should include a table of contents and a list of appendices.
- All pages, including those in the appendix, must be numbered sequentially. Pages may be duplicated back-to-back.
- The report must be inserted in a 3-ring binder so that pages can be turned and read easily.
- The program should send one paper copy and one CD-ROM or flash-drive copy to each reviewer and to ACEND:

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• Documents should be sent via first class mail, express delivery, international airmail or equivalent. Proof of transmittal is the responsibility of the sender.

Suggested Structure for Self-Study Reports

Although the criteria evaluated in comprehensive and focused reports may differ, the structure of the reports remains the same. Each type of report should include the information specified in sections below.

- 1. **Title Page:** Identify the cover page of the report using (at minimum) the following information:
 - a. Institution Name
 - b. Type of Program
 - Didactic Program in Dietetics Using the DP Standards
 - Dietetic Internship Using the IP Standards
 - Coordinated Program Using the DE Standards
 - International Program Using the ICP Standards
 - Dietetic Technician Program Using the TE Standards
 - c. Type of Report
 - Self-Study Report for New Program Application
 - Eligibility Standards (1-3)
 - All Accreditation Standards (1-23)
 - Interim Report for New Program Accreditation
 - Self-Study Report for Continued Accreditation
 - Interim Report for Continued Accreditation
 - Progress Report for Continued Accreditation
 - Program Assessment Report for Continued Accreditation
 - d. Date Submitted
- **2. Application for Accreditation Cover Page:** Self-Study Application for Accreditation cover page with signatures of all institution and program officials. One form must be submitted with original signatures; copies of the form must be included in the self-study documents sent to ACEND reviewers.
- 3. Table of Contents: Include appendices and page numbers.
- 4. Summary Information
 - a. **Executive Summary of the Program:** Provide a one-page history or overview of the program along with a description of the educational philosophy or primary methods used to teach the curriculum (problem based, blocks, lecture-discussion, etc.) and a summary of the program's strengths, challenges and weaknesses. You should also briefly summarize any changes that have occurred in your sponsoring institution/organization over the last 5 years and how they have affected your program
 - b. **Summary of the Self-Study Process:** Briefly describe the process used to create the self-study report.
 - c. **Mission, Goals, and Objectives:** List the mission, goals, and objectives of the program.
 - d. Required Program Timeframes: Complete the form by filling in the length of program components.
 - e. Pass Rate Monitoring and Improvement: Provide information for improving the program's pass rate.
 - f. **Overall Organization and Clarity of the Self-Study Report:** Evaluate the completed Self-Study Report using the attached rubric.
 - g. **Summary of the Evaluation of All Accreditation Standards:** Complete the summary form based on the findings from your self-study process.

- 5. Evaluation of the Accreditation Standards: For each standard, please do the following
 - a. Write a narrative to describe how your program currently meets or plans to meet the criteria, using the **Narrative Discussion Points to Support Achievement of the Standard** listed in the Accreditation Standards document. The following points may also assist you in developing well-structured responses:
 - Describe areas of actual or potential strength. For example, describe how your program demonstrates an
 exemplary commitment to students, the dietetics profession, or patient/client care and where it is making a
 documented effort to cultivate an environment of professionalism, teaching-and-learning, research,
 information sharing, and innovation. Be sure that you provide solid evidence to document your statements.
 - Describe areas of actual or potential non-compliance or weakness including the immediate impact on the
 program and the long-term consequences if the areas are not addressed. Provide any additional
 background information to help the reviewers to fully understand the conditions at your program.
 - Describe plans and timelines to resolve an area needing improvement, when an existing program is not currently meeting the criteria, or when a new program is applying for Precandidate or Candidate Status. Be sure to specify what steps are currently underway and whether or not they are having an impact.
 - Describe any plans and timelines to improve the program over and above what is specified in the criteria.
 - Refer to the complete 2012 Standards document developed for your specific program type and address relevant tips and support to assist you in preparing your responses.
 - If information in support of a standard is missing, please explain.
 - b. Supporting data and/or forms developed by the program relevant to a particular requirement may be inserted in an appendix and referenced by page number in the narrative of the report.
 - c. Use the checklist provided to evaluate how well the program meets the overall standard and guidelines.

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	1. No compliance problems are present.
	2. Compliance problems exist, but all are being resolved successfully:
	One or more problems with a standard have been identified in the self-study report (SSR); the SSR describes viable plans to address them within the timeframe specified by the U.S. Department of Education, and includes evidence that the plan is being implemented successfully.
Partiall	y Meets
	Viable plans have been developed to address compliance issues:
	One or more problems with a standard have been identified in the self-study report (SSR); and, the SSR describes viable plans to address them within the U.S. Department of Education timeframe; but the plan has not yet been implemented or insufficient time has passed for the plan to show results.
Does N	ot Meet
	Plans to address compliance problems are not viable or have not been developed:
	One or more compliance problems are present and plans to address them are either not viable or have not been developed.

- **6. Appendices:** Attach relevant selections from documents that support the narrative as appendices, including documents listed as *Exhibits to Demonstrate Achievement of the Standard* in the Accreditation Standards document. Be sure to number all pages in the document contiguously, including the appendices, and include the name of your program in the footers.
- On-site Documents: Provide documents for the review team's on-site evaluation, including documents listed as On-site Exhibits to Demonstrate Achievement of the Standard in the Accreditation Standards document.

Evidence of Compliance

Evidence in the narrative and appendices of the self-study report and at the on-site review must document your program's compliance with the standards. Evidence is reviewed by the team prior to the site visit, used when drafting the team's report, and made available to ACEND board members if they have questions. Evidence of compliance should include information that exemplifies the unique qualities of your program. Suggested evidence of compliance is listed in the Accreditation Standards document under three categories:

- 1. Narrative discussion points to support achievement of the standard
- 2. Exhibits to demonstrate achievement of the standard
- 3. On-site exhibits to demonstrate achievement of the standard

Your program is free to select where and how to present the three types of information. For example, numeric data may be shown in tabular or graphic form within the narrative, as an appendix or provided on site for reviewers or data for on-site exhibit can be provided in electronic format on a CD ROM of flash drive along with the self-study report. The deciding factor should be whether the information is clear, relevant, useful and readily accessible to the reviewers. It is not necessary to include the same material in more than one location; in fact, it will be easier to assure that information is consistent throughout the report by including it in just one place and making reference to it throughout the narrative by page number, appendix, section, or table.

Recommendations for Preparing for ACEND On-site Reviews

During the on-site evaluation, the ACEND team will tour your facilities and meet with individuals and groups who will provide information about your program. The primary purpose of these meetings is to engage in an open, collegial dialogue that will help the team to verify statements and impressions presented in the self-study report and to corroborate information from other meetings during the visit. Team members will do their best to assist you and individuals representing your program to feel at ease, nevertheless, it is normal to feel anxiety about the site visit. Always keep in mind that the team is there to enable your program to succeed. Everyone meeting with the team should be encouraged to be open, honest and cordial with the team and to project self-assurance. The following suggestions are "best practices" for hosting on-site visitors:

Prepare your program and its stakeholders:

- Notify everyone of the purpose of ACEND's upcoming on-site evaluation.
- Inform all participants of the dates and times when they are scheduled to meet with the team.
- Encourage honest, positive feedback and constructive criticism.
- Distribute ACEND's contact information for receiving program comments.
- Ask unbiased individuals to meet with the team.
- Arrange for individuals who cannot attend in person to participate via audio or video teleconference.
- Set up a separate waiting area with light refreshments to relax individuals prior to meeting with the team.

Prepare on-site resources for the team:

- Include a copy of your reports to ACEND.
- Organize all on-site documents and evidence logically.
- Provide access to a computer and printer.
- Provide additional note pads and pens.

Be a gracious host:

- Take steps to ensure that all participants will be on time for all meetings.
- Provide light refreshments for the team.
- Be willing to assist with transportation to and from the airport and local transportation.
- Provide information about restaurants near the team's hotel. (Note: Team will be discussing program issues at dinner, so please do not plan to dine with team members or plan evening activities for them.)

Be prepared for meetings:

- Reread your reports for the visit thoroughly.
- Remind yourselves of your program's unique qualities and strengths.
- Be conversant with the factors behind any program weaknesses and the plans to address them.
- Learn your responsibilities for the visit, and rehearse them with your stakeholders.
- Ask for advice from ACEND staff and the reviewers in the team if you have any questions or concerns.