

Lehman College, City University of New York
Office of Academic Programs and Educational Effectiveness
Guidelines for Program Accreditation (Spring 2021)

Purpose

These guidelines are for academic programs that are accredited by external programmatic accrediting bodies, only. They are not relevant for academic programs that have no external accreditor or for those that undergo periodic certification rather than accreditation/re-accreditation. These guidelines concern program accreditation, not Lehman College's institutional accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE).

A Self-Study Report is the key element of the program accreditation process, as it is the vehicle by which programs document how they meet the standards of accreditation within the context of the requirements of their accrediting body, the institution's mission, vision, values, and strategic goals. These guidelines were developed to provide key stakeholders sufficient time for review and input into the vital Self-Study process. Review and critical stakeholder input, including that from the Deans, Provost and Associate Provost, enhances report quality and maximizes prospects for a successful accreditation or re-accreditation outcome. Such review can also provide a deeper institutional context for the program's accreditation or re-accreditation and facilitates greater long-term success for the program and the college. The full sequence of activities is aimed at ensuring a successful accreditation outcome and the achievement of any Action items following accreditation or re-accreditation.

Program Re-Accreditation Process

All externally accredited academic programs shall conduct a re-accreditation process that consists of:

1. a self-study (in lieu of the academic program review document);
2. a site visit and team report;
3. a discussion of the review between the program and the administration;
4. development of an action plan to utilize results for continuous improvement.
5. A supplemental report may be required by the College if the Self-Study Report does not include content related to specific requirements that support institutional accreditation. The decision will be made by the Office of Academic Programs and Education Effectiveness.

Self-Study

The self-study encourages faculty and staff to analyze the overall effectiveness and quality of the program. Specifically, the self-study should look back over the past 5 years (or since the most recent program review) and, utilizing qualitative and quantitative data, address:

1. The program's attainment of accreditation standards within the context of the requirements of the accrediting agency, the program's and the College's mission, vision, and goals: addressing such questions as how the program *educates*, *empowers*, and *engages* students and contributes to achieving the College's *Institutional Learning Goals*; how the program advances 90x30; and, how the program integrates the College's *Strategic Plan*. This framework remains in force until it is revised or replaced.
2. The program's curriculum in relation to desired outcomes: addressing such questions as how the program compares to comparable programs and/or norms established by relevant professional organizations; how the program ensures students can achieve program learning goals; how the program assesses student learning; how the program collaborates with/supports other programs within the College; how the program considers and addresses student perceptions and expectations.
3. The faculty's activities in scholarship, teaching and professional service, including faculty development and pedagogical innovations.

4. The program's use of assessment for continuous improvement, including periodic reviews of its assessment practices.

Site Visit

A program will prepare for its site visit by considering what people will be in the best position to discuss evidence and standards with the visiting team, what documentation would allow it to make the strongest case that it meets the requirements of accreditation, and the logistics for a site visit.

Response to the Visiting Team's Findings

Responsibility for findings generally fall within three areas of ownership: (1) Department; (2) School; and, (3) College. After the department has received the site team's findings, it will share those findings with the Associate Provost's Office to determine ownership and resolution to remaining issues. The Associate Provost's Office will schedule a meeting with the Associate Provost, the Dean (and/or Associate Dean) and department chair(s) for a discussion of the report and the department's reaction to it. Following this meeting, the department, in consultation with key stakeholders, will develop and submit a response of the report to the Provost.

Action Plan

Following the re-accreditation decision, the department will develop an action plan for the next five years (or the timeline set forth by the accrediting body). In addition, it will make appropriate changes and document the changes in a follow-up report to the program accreditor, if requested. The action plan's goals and timeline articulated by the department should be as explicit as possible. Two months after the meeting to discuss the report, the department's draft action plan should be submitted to the Associate Provost and Dean. The Associate Provost and Dean may recommend revisions of the draft plan or additional meetings. Once the plan is finalized, the Associate Provost will send the department and Dean a formal written acceptance.

Accreditation Process Timeline

Dates	Activity
March 1 or 1 year before the report submission, whichever comes earlier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for the Self-Study and Visit. • Launch of document/evidence gathering.
Fall or (90-150 days prior to the report submission)	Program writes its Self-Study report.
October or 120 days prior to the report submission, whichever comes earlier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dean selects external reviewer(s) and secures the approval of the Associate Provost by end of October. • Dean then initiates contacts to coordinate site visit dates.
December or 60 days prior to report submission, whichever comes earlier	Self-study due to Dean and Associate Provost for review, along with a one-page executive summary of major conclusions.
6 weeks before site-visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department Chair(s) and Dean coordinates the itinerary for the site visit. • Draft schedule due to the Associate Provost, Provost, and President a month prior to the site visit. • Draft schedule includes CVs of visiting team and a summary of the Self-Study.
3 weeks before site-visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean's Office sends/coordinates the submission of the final Self-Study report to the accrediting agency at the earlier of 3 weeks prior to the site visit or the accreditor's deadline. • Dean's Office sends a copy of the Self-Study report to the Associate Provost and the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness for purposes of documentation. OAAE submits the report to I.T. for placement on the

	College's program accreditation webpage.
Spring or site visit	Site visit.
Spring or just following the site visit	The Team Report is received and shared with the Provost and Associate Provost.
Spring or just following the site visit	A response to the Team Report is developed, reviewed and submitted.
Spring or receipt of reaccreditation decision	Reaccreditation decision is received by the President and shared with the Provost and Associate Provost.
Spring or receipt of reaccreditation decision	Accreditation decision letter/action letter is shared with the Dean, the Department Chair(s), and the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness (OAEE) for purposes of documentation. OAEE submits the report to I.T. for placement on the College's program accreditation webpage.
Spring or receipt of reaccreditation decision	Dean and Department Chair(s) meets with Associate Provost to discuss the decision, any need for follow-up and issues to be addressed in the Action Plan.
2 months post re-accreditation decision	Department Chair(s) and Dean submit Action Plan to the Associate Provost.
2 months post re-accreditation decision	Associate Provost submits Action Plan to Provost.
Date of Assessment Plan submission	The approved Action Plan is incorporated into the Program's continual improvement and assessment activities.