



Guide to Writing Evaluative Reports

Preface

This Guide has been prepared by the Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC) to assist educational providers in the preparation of the self-evaluation report for the accreditation, registration, and programme approval processes. It provides educational providers with information related to the process of preparing evaluative reports.

Policy related questions should be directed to the BAC. This document will be reviewed regularly and amended, where necessary.

The Barbados Accreditation Council

The Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC) was established by an Act of parliament, the Barbados Accreditation Council Act, 2004. It is a statutory body currently under the portfolio of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.

Vision Statement

A coherent system of post-secondary and tertiary education and training which assures excellence and integrity to all its stakeholders.

Mission Statement

To be a high quality provider of registration, accreditation and related services in post-secondary or tertiary education and training in Barbados and beyond.

Core Values

Quality

The Barbados Accreditation Council will have a positive impact on the quality of post-secondary or tertiary education and training by its commitment to high standards that will sustain and advance excellence, efficiency, reliability and competence in higher learning. It will be forward thinking and proactive, responding to trends and changes in the national, regional and international environment.

Integrity

The Barbados Accreditation Council will place fairness, honesty, objectivity, accountability and transparency at the forefront both with regard to its own policies and practices, as well as in the implementation of registration, accreditation and related processes in order to establish integrity as central to educational quality.

Inclusiveness

The Barbados Accreditation Council will be an autonomous regulatory advisory body that will commit to inclusiveness by developing structures and processes that enable participation by a wide range of stakeholders. It will recognise and be responsive to the needs of its clients.

Customer Service

The Barbados Accreditation Council will be a customer friendly service-oriented organisation. Its staff will be dynamic, flexible, team-oriented, technology-oriented, communicative and people-centred.

Learning

The Barbados Accreditation Council will seek continuous feedback and insight from its stakeholders and use the collected information to improve its operations and support teamwork, and to provide learning opportunities for its staff and other stakeholders. At the same time, the Council will work with its stakeholders to foster an environment that promotes shared learning.

Quality Statements

Quality for the BAC is the provision of effective and efficient services that are:

- ❖ geared towards the enhancement of post-secondary/tertiary education and training;
- ❖ fit for purpose, add value and exceed stakeholders' expectations;
- ❖ benchmarked against regional and international standards.

Quality for the BAC is guided by:

- ❖ a developmental approach;
- ❖ accountability to stakeholders;
- ❖ integrity of practise;
- ❖ excellence in service; and
- ❖ a commitment to national and regional development.

Quality for the BAC is demonstrated by:

- ❖ demand for non-mandatory services by its clients;
- ❖ respect of peers through mutual recognition;
- ❖ positive feedback from internal and external stakeholders;
- ❖ efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness.

The BAC perceives quality in educational providers as:

- ❖ effective governance
- ❖ clearly stated and appropriate mission
- ❖ efficient and effective administration
- ❖ qualified, competent and engaged faculty and staff
- ❖ timely and customer-friendly services
- ❖ relevant, current, well-documented and appropriately assessed programmes
- ❖ established, documented, functional and well-managed quality assurance system
- ❖ responsiveness to change
- ❖ system for formative and summative evaluation and reform
- ❖ a culture which embraces integrity and ethical conduct
- ❖ prudent financial management
- ❖ effective and diversified learning and teaching experiences
- ❖ adequate and appropriate student services and support
- ❖ committed and motivated students

Guide to Writing Evaluative Reports

Introduction

This Guide provides information on how to conduct the self-evaluation process and the suggested writing style for the Self-Evaluation Report (SER). Please bear in mind that this is just a guide - it may be necessary to provide additional information to explain how your institution meets and/or exceeds the criteria/standards of the Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC). The SER relates the provider's findings to the BAC. This is based on an evaluation of the educational provider's operations against the General Registration Criteria or Accreditation Standards established by the BAC.

Self-evaluation (internal audit) should be part of any training or education provider's quality management system. Such evaluation helps to build ongoing awareness within an organisation of how well it is doing and how prepared it is to keep pace with change.

The Barbados Accreditation Council is targeting "effectiveness" in its review of providers. The Barbados Accreditation Council is encouraging providers to evaluate their own effectiveness before the registration or accreditation review takes place. The effectiveness focus takes the evaluation process further than just checking that requirements are met.

Conducting an Effective Self-Evaluation

1. Engage in open, honest and thorough discussion and analysis of the area of focus.
2. Involve all stakeholders at some level so that there is ownership of, and active participation in the process.
3. Answer the following self-evaluation questions:
 - What is it that we do?
 - How well are we doing it?
 - What do we have?
 - How well does it work?
 - What can we do to improve it?
4. Produce a written report presenting evidence of your organisation's current capacity and past performance in the area of focus and make recommendations for improvement.
5. The report should outline:
 - the extent of the services you currently offer
 - the structure of your operations (key personnel, roles and responsibilities)
 - assessment of your strengths
 - major achievements over the period of existence
 - areas for improvement (including any improvements currently being made)
 - new developments that have already been approved for implementation

Any performance analysis, survey findings, stakeholder feedback on aspects of your operations or other data supporting the contents of the report should be provided. This will be included in the SER for registration or accreditation.

Role of the Self-Evaluation Report

A self-evaluation report has an important role to play. The written report may be all the information that decision makers have to understand the growth, development and areas of need of the institution. The report must represent the experience and views of the different perspectives involved with the operations of the provider. In other words, it should be a self-analytical, evaluative, factual account or summation of information obtained from analysing your operations.

Preparing the written report may include reviewing and selecting evidence, analysing it, making conclusions, and putting forward these conclusions in statements that evaluate the provider's performance based on the evidence highlighted. When writing your report, you should reference each criterion or standard.

Writing Style: Tone

When writing the SER, a certain degree of formality is required. The tone of a report can convey a message to the reader. Therefore, in order to be convincing, the writer should adopt an impersonal and objective/unbiased stance. The following elements will affect the tone of your written report.

1. Positive vs Negative

Positively report the facts of the situation. Accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative aspects of your writing. Focus on what can be done and not on what cannot be done.

Negative words	Positive words
do not forget	remember
you neglected to send	please send
not honest	dishonest
cannot accept	unacceptable in present form
You neglected to include the data.	The date was not included.
You made a mistake.	There is a mistake.

2. Active vs Passive

Active writing is usually a direct and dynamic method of writing. For example:

Active: John wrote the report.

Passive: The report was written by John.

3. Third person writing

Writing using nouns or pronouns (he, she, him, her, they and them) is usually recommended for report writing. First person writing (I, we, me, my, our, us and them) may make the writing too personalised and readers may think that you are conceited. Third person writing tends to make the report seem more businesslike.

4. Bias free language

The tone of your writing should not reflect a bias such as gender, race, religion, age, disability, etc. Biased writing will send the wrong message and alienate the reader. Avoid stereotyping. Use plural pronouns and pronouns from both genders to avoid stereotyping. For example:

Biased	Unbiased
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ The manager showed his appreciation. ✚ The housekeeper is required to do her best. ✚ He is to report to ✚ policeman ✚ fireman ✚ businessman ✚ airline hostess ✚ foreman ✚ The collectors achieved an outstanding response rate of 50 percent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ The manager showed appreciation. ✚ All housekeepers are required to do their best. ✚ He or she is to report to ✚ police officer ✚ fire fighter ✚ business person ✚ flight attendant ✚ supervisor ✚ The collectors achieved a response rate of 50 percent.

Making Evaluative Statements

When making evaluative statements it is important to focus on what your evidence is being compared against. That is, what are the benchmarks. Effectively written evaluative statements should be straightforward and relevant to the specific criterion/standard, primarily address one area, and contain self-explanatory content.

Examples

General Registration Criterion 1 – Governance and Mission

(a) There should be a structure of governance/management which formulates general policies and exercises authority over the implementation of programmes of study or courses.

Evaluative Statement: The institution has a governing board of five (5) members that has specific authority over the institution. The structure of the governing board is defined in the organisation's Articles of Association. The board draws on the diverse experience and expertise of its members, exerts broad influence over the strategic direction of the institution, provides counsel to the Heads of Division at Monroe College, is the active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for approving the programmes offered by the institution. All members of the governing board are expected to serve the College with integrity. See exhibits 2, 3 and 5.

Institutional Accreditation Standard 3.3 - *The institution values and promotes effective teaching.*

Evaluative Statement: To enable the achievement of our mission, XY University seeks to engage faculty that is diversified, talented and dedicated to teaching, scholarly work and research, and actively involved in the governance of the University and community life. Faculty development is facilitated through the provision of adequate resources. Over the past two years the University has not only expanded the size and diversity of the faculty, but also enhanced its support for faculty teaching, scholarship, and research.

Programme Accreditation Standard 4.2 - *The programmes are carefully designed with mechanisms and procedures for assessment and evaluation of student learning.*

Evaluative Statement: Assessment of student learning is based on close student-faculty interaction, careful grading in courses and course sequences in the programmes. Assessment is built into the structure of the University's education and it is a fundamental responsibility of every teaching faculty member. Teachers get to know their students well, and as such they know best how to gauge student progress. Faculty ability, experience and responsibility are major components of student assessment at XY University. It is also part of our institutional culture that department and programme colleagues meet regularly to update and adjust their curricula. Some teachers make use of faculty retreats to assess their collective effectiveness and each year several faculty undertake extensive self-evaluations in preparation for formal reviews by internal and external committees. A number of University-wide assessment efforts utilise surveys which provide feedback to faculty on students' satisfaction and their perception of academic progress. Looking ahead, we are committed to work to remedy shortcomings.

Putting It All Together

The self-evaluation report is a provider's view of itself, its mission, objectives, philosophy, practices, policies, procedures and outcomes. When writing effective evaluative statements:

1. Choose data that makes the best case for meeting a criterion or standard.
2. Write evidence-based evaluative statements in one or more categories of evidence that are salient and relevant to a particular criterion or standard. Use a single complete thought to clearly specify the evidence, balancing content and detail.
3. Ensure that each statement contains context/background, evidence, and judgement elements. Some statements may contain a 'so what' element, that is, impact.
4. Include *only* evidence-based evaluative statements that deal with the registration or accreditation issues directly related to the criteria or standards; that are relevant and important to the organization; and that support your evaluation and judgment.
5. Provide information relevant to the organisation's mission, context, and priorities.
6. Limit the number of evidence-based evaluative statements in each category of evidence. A criterion/standard may require only three or four evidence-based evaluative statements for substantiation, while another many require more. It is good

practice to provide a sufficient number of evidence in support of a criterion/standard. Each criterion must have evidence-based evaluative statements, but not every criterion needs to have evidence-based evaluative statements for all indicators.

7. Use a consistent format to identify each evidence-based evaluative statement within a category of evidence and any sub-statements.
8. Provide information that is relevant and useful to the improvement of the organisation, or to enhancing or reinforcing organisational strengths and accomplishments. That is, focus on actual accomplishments, impact, or results rather than on activities.
9. Do not contradict other statements found elsewhere in the report.
10. Avoid descriptive narratives or other elaboration. Provide a succinct evaluation, not a description. Evidence-based evaluative content should be based on objective observations and sound rationale.
11. Ensure that the evaluative statements are self-explanatory, that is, the reader should not need to interpret the meaning/intent of the statement.

Self-evaluation charges the provider with the responsibility of judging itself through frank and objective self-analysis and appraisal. Through its evaluative report the provider is saying that “We have judged ourselves and find that we have met the published criteria/standards.”

Structure of the Self- Evaluation Report

1. Registration

- a. Cover page – see Appendix I
- b. Table of contents
- c. Chapter I
 - i. Introduction
 1. Self-evaluation Process
 2. Organisational Background
 3. Registration History
 4. Progress on concerns from last Registration Institutional Report
- d. Chapter II
 - i. Findings - this section presents a clear and explicit evaluation of the extent to which and how the organisation has met the criteria for registration
- e. Chapter III - Summary of Plans for Next Registration Year (including an identification of the major strengths, opportunities and/or plans for improvement)

2. Accreditation

- a. Cover page – See Appendix II
- b. Table of Contents
- c. Table/List of Exhibits
- d. Institutional Profile Form
- e. Chapter I
 - i. Introduction
 1. Self-evaluation process
 2. Organisational background
 3. Registration history
 4. Progress on concerns from last accreditation period (if applicable)
- f. Chapter II - Standards for Accreditation – this section presents a self-analytical, evaluative, factual account or summation of information obtained from analysing your operations against the relevant accreditation standards.

Additional details will be provided in the Self-Evaluation Guide and Workbook document for the accreditation process.

APPENDIX I

Cover page for the Self-Evaluation Report – Registration

Name of Provider

Self-Evaluation Report – January 2010

Self-Evaluation Report
For
Name of Provider

123 Mango Walk
St. George
(246) 123-4567
www.tep.edu

The information submitted herewith is certified correct
to the best of my knowledge and belief:

Mr. John Doe, Principal

Prepared

June 7, 2010

APPENDIX II

Cover page for the Self-Evaluation Report - Accreditation

Name of Provider

Self-Evaluation Report – January 2010

Self-Evaluation Report
For
Name of Provider

123 Mango Walk
St. George
(246) 123-4567
www.tep.edu

The information submitted herewith is certified correct
to the best of my knowledge and belief:

Mr. Jack Robin, Principal

Prepared

June 7, 2010

For further information contact:

**The Barbados Accreditation Council
123 A & B Plaza Centrale
Roebuck Street
St. Michael, BB 11080
Barbados, W.I.
Tel: (246) 436-9094
Fax: (246) 429-9233**

**Email: info@bac.gov.bb
Website: www.bac.gov.bb**