ACICS REPORT WRITING GUIDELINES 2021

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FORMATTING AND GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Use Calibri, 11-point font.
2. Set language to English (United States).
3. Justify margins left.
4. Use complete sentences throughout the team report.
5. Write text immediately below question (no space).
6. Single space text lines.
7. Double space between paragraphs.
8. Use only one space after a period or colon.

COPYING AND PASTING

1. In instances where text is copied and pasted into the template (e.g., an institution’s mission statement), right click and select the “merge formatting” option.
2. Where text is copied and pasted in different parts of the template, ensure that it is correctly written the first time to avoid the need to correct the same mistakes at each iteration.

ACRONYMS AND INITIALISM

1. The entire name should be spelled out the first time used and followed by the acronym or initialism in parentheses {Campus Accountability Report (CAR)}. Thereafter, the acronym or initialism should be used throughout the report {The CAR...}.
2. Licensure, certification, registration title, and professional organizations should be capitalized if they are followed by the acronym {Ms. Jude is a Registered Cardiovascular Sonographer (RCS) as well as a Registered Nurse (RN)}.
3. There is no need to include an acronym if it will not be used again later in the report.
4. Be mindful of the meaning of the acronym or initialism to avoid redundancy {CAR report, CEP plan, satisfactory SAP}.
5. Use the following commonly recognized acronyms without first spelling them out:
   - CEO (chief executive officer)
   - CPA (certified public accountant)
   - GPA (grade point average)

PROPER NOUNS

1. Make certain that you have the correct spelling of a person’s name, and that you use that spelling consistently throughout the report.
2. In introducing the name, background, and credentials of a member of the institution, use the entire name first (with prefix), then the prefix and last name. Thereafter, use the pronoun or the prefix and last name. {Ms. Brenda Lee, academic director, oversees the educational activities of all programs for the campus. Ms. Lee holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of Wisconsin. She is a New York CPA and holds licenses as a New York career school director and full teacher of accounting}. 
**NUMBERS**

1. Single numbers from zero through nine are spelled out (Students must successfully complete two of three modules).
2. Numbers at the beginning of a sentence are spelled out; however, it is preferable to avoid starting a sentence with a number (Twenty faculty members attended the meeting. *OR* Of the 40 faculty members on staff, 20 attended the meeting).
3. Percentages are expressed in numerals. The word *percent* is used in nontechnical contexts (To meet its retention goal of 75 percent, the institution is focusing on activities that will assist in increasing its graduation rate by at least 7 percent).
4. If one number in a sentence must use numerals (number 10 and over) then use them for all numbers in the same category (There are 12 part-time faculty members, 8 of whom have been with the institution for over 15 years).

**PREFIXES**

Always use appropriate prefixes (Ms., Mrs., Mr., Dr., or Chef) before the names of persons mentioned in the team report. Never use first names only (Ms. Barbara Adams is the librarian. Ms. Adams holds an MLS from Boston College).

**PUNCTUATION**

**The Serial (Oxford) Comma**

When a conjunction joins the last two elements in a series of three or more, a comma—known as the serial or series comma or the Oxford comma—should appear before the conjunction (The team chair is required to write clear, cohesive, and comprehensive team observations). Chicago strongly recommends this usage since it prevents such (humorous) ambiguity as in the following example: (The country-and-western singer was joined by his two ex-wives, Kris Kristofferson and Waylon Jennings).

**Semicolons**

1. A semicolon is most commonly used to link (in a single sentence) two independent clauses that are closely related in thought. When a semicolon is used to join two or more ideas (parts) in a sentence, those ideas are then given equal position or rank (Some people write with a laptop computer; others write with a pen or pencil).
2. Use a semicolon between two independent clauses that are connected by conjunctive adverbs or transitional phrases (However they choose to write, people are allowed to make their own decisions; as a result, many people swear by their writing methods).
3. Use a semicolon between items in a list or series *if any of the items contain commas* (There are basically two ways to write: with a pen or pencil, which is inexpensive and easily accessible; or by computer and printer, which is more expensive but quick and neat).
4. Use a semicolon between independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction if the clauses are already punctuated with commas or if the clauses are lengthy (Some people write with a word processor, tablet, or even a phone; but others, for different reasons, choose to write with a pen or pencil).

**Hyphenation**

1. Use a hyphen to connect compound words (clock-to-credit-hour courses).
2. Use a hyphen to connect grouped numbers (555-860-5086).
A phrasal adjective modifies a noun and follows these basic rules:

3. Generally, if placed before a noun, the phrase should be hyphenated to avoid misdirecting the reader (dog-eat-dog competition). There may be a considerable difference between the hyphenated and the unhyphenated forms: compare small animal hospital with small-animal hospital.

4. If a compound noun is an element of a phrasal adjective, the entire compound noun must be hyphenated to clarify the relationship among the words (time-clock-punching employees).

5. If more than one phrasal adjective modifies a single noun, hyphenation becomes especially important (state-inspected assisted-living facility).

6. If two phrasal adjectives end in a common element, the ending element should appear only with the second phrase, and a suspended hyphen should follow the unattached words to show that they are related to the ending element (mid- and upper-level courses).

7. If the phrasal adjective denotes an amount or a duration, the plural should be dropped. For instance, pregnancy lasts nine months but is a nine-month pregnancy, and a shop open 24 hours a day has a 24-hour-a-day schedule. The plural is retained only for fractions (a two-thirds majority).

Apostrophes

1. The possessive of most singular nouns is formed by adding an apostrophe and an s (director’s office) (campus’s email address).

2. The possessive of plural nouns (except for a few irregular plurals, like children, that do not end in s) is formed by adding an apostrophe only (babies’ behinds) (men’s bathroom).

3. The possessive of a compound noun is formed by adding the appropriate ending to the last word in the compound (parents-in-law’s message).

4. Campuses’ = plural possessive; campus’s = singular possessive

CAPITALIZATION

1. Capitalize “Council” and the “Accreditation Criteria”; the latter is italicized and should not be shortened to “Criteria” alone.

2. Capitalize educational institutions and proper names of schools (Ms. Porter received her bachelor’s degree from Central Michigan University).

3. Capitalize fields of study in the languages (Mr. Ramsey received his bachelor’s in English from the University of Central Florida).

4. Lowercase degrees (including the field of study, except those in the languages) in running text and whenever they are used generically, including within the narrative of the report (Ms. Singer was appointed lead instructor of the criminal justice program on November 11, 2013. She holds bachelor’s degrees in political science and English from Illinois State University and a master’s degree in criminal justice from Chicago State University).

5. Lowercase job titles (The management team meets weekly to evaluate and monitor the activities of the institution. In attendance at these meetings are the dean of education, director of admissions, director of financial aid, registrar, director of career services and business manager. The campus director is in charge of the meetings).

6. Capitalize the name of a degree anywhere it is used as a title rather than a description. This includes the titles listed on the first page of reports and the title section of full-team program reports:
DEGREES

1. Degrees offered by the institution should be written in accordance with ACICS degree level designation and approved program name. This may not be the same name listed in the catalog. Write degree levels thus: nondegree credentials, occupational associate’s degree, academic associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree, and master’s degree {Academic Associate’s degree in Business Administration in Accounting; Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration in Accounting}.

2. Credentials earned by administrators, faculty, and staff should be written in the following manner and order (from lowest to highest): associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree; master’s degree; juris doctorate; and doctoral degree {Mr. Mann holds associate’s and bachelor’s degrees in computer science from Ball State University and a master’s degree in psychology from Nova University; Ms. Quinn holds a bachelor’s degree in communications studies from the University of Virginia, an MBA from American University, and a JD from the California Law School; The librarian, Ms. Tania Jay, holds an MLS from the University of Notre Dame}.

3. Use the following widely familiar abbreviations (omit periods) in lieu of spelling out the degree earned by administrators, faculty, and staff. The article preceding the abbreviation is determined by the sound of its initial letter: a PhD, an MBA.

- BFA bachelor of fine arts
- BSN bachelor of science in nursing
- EdD doctorate in education
- JD juris doctorate
- LPN licensed practical nurse
- MBA master of business administration
- MD medicineae doctor (doctor of medicine)
- MFA master of fine arts
- MLIS master of library and information studies
- MLS master of library science
- MSN master of science in nursing
- MSW master of social work
- PhD philosophiae doctor (doctor of philosophy)
- RN registered nurse

THE REPORT

Email Address for On-site Director/Campus and Campus Website

Two email addresses must be included on the report cover page: the on-site administrator (with name and title) and the campus. The staff coordinator will provide the chair with the second address, which should be verified on-site. Include the campus website address under the campus email address:
Findings
The purpose of the visit is to confirm the information submitted in the school’s application or Self-Study. Nothing should “seem” or “appear” to be anything, especially in a finding.

1. The section number(s) should be written in **bold**, without using ampersands:
   - (Section 3-1-511):
   - (Section 3-1-513(b)):
   - (Section 3-1-111 and Appendix K):
   - (Sections 2-1-809 and 3-1-111 and Appendices K and L):

2. The first sentence should be a statement of the area requiring an explanatory response, followed by a clear and detailed description of the issue:

   If No for any item, insert the section number in parentheses and explain:
   - (Section 3-1-531 (a)): The instructional equipment available to students is not appropriate to adequately support the nature of the program. The students in the diploma program in Computer Technology need current hardware and software to be successful in the field. The campus is still using Microsoft 97 when the textbooks reference Windows 10. Students have expressed concerns about the inconsistency of learning materials; specifically, in regard to being tested on software that is out of date according to their textbooks.

3. For missing evaluations/credentials, include the institution and type of degree.

   - (Section 3-1-541): Foreign transcripts have not been translated into English and evaluated by AACRAO or a member of NACES or AICE for the following faculty members: Dr. Jamal Avid, bachelor’s degree in biology from the University of Punjab, India and Ms. Caitlin Richards, master’s degree in education administration from Cambridge University, England.

4. Missing faculty development plans, evidence of implementation, or missing professional growth activities should be so stated in the finding:

   **Evidence of implementation and missing plans**
   - (Section 3-1-543): Faculty development plans lack documentation of implementation for the following members: Mr. Jonathan Letand, Ms. Patricia Given, and Dr. Steven Adler. These faculty
members have signed plans on file with sufficient development activities; however, there is no documentation that activities that have already taken place were in fact completed by these persons. In addition, faculty development plans are missing in their entirety for the following faculty members: Ms. Lindsey White, Mr. Ian Jackson, and Ms. Melonie Harris.

Missing professional growth activities

(Section 3-1-543): Faculty development plans for all faculty members lack the inclusion of professional growth activities. While all plans had evidence of in-service training as sponsored by the institution, individualized professional growth activities, as defined in the Glossary of the Accreditation Criteria, were not documented.

List vs. Paragraph

1. Short, simple lists can be run in, especially if the introduction and the items form a complete grammatical sentence. Lists that require typographic prominence, that are relatively long or complex, or that contain items of several levels should be set vertically.

2. If numerals or letters are used to mark the divisions in a run-in list, enclose them in parentheses. If the introductory material forms a grammatically complete sentence, a colon should precede the first parenthesis. The items are separated by commas unless any of the items requires internal commas, in which case all the items will usually need to be separated by semicolons.

Run-In List

The campus is implementing the following strategies to improve placement: (1) adding more members to the advisory board, (2) surveying current placement companies, (3) hiring a career services director, and (4) creating more externships for the business curriculum.

To meet its retention goal of 75 percent, the institution is focusing on activities that will assist in increasing its graduation rate. Activities include using college work study students as tutors, strengthening the counseling office, and enabling a Head Start program to continue.

Vertical List

Several other resources are being used to promote student success:

- general education labs, available to students seven days a week, are used to tutor students who are having difficulties;
- group library assignments are used to enhance critical thinking, research, and interpersonal skills;
- student surveys provide data to analyze student needs; and
- students are recognized for making the dean’s list, outstanding attendance, and other performance achievements.

To Repeat or Not to Repeat

1. Repeat the narrative that provides the credentials of persons that have been previously provided. The section repeated should both summarize and reference the first writing.

Who is responsible for implementing and monitoring the CEP? Describe this person’s qualifications. If a committee is used, please describe the committee. (1.12)

The campus director, Ms. Marines Lopez, is responsible for implementing the CEP. Ms. Lopez
has been in her current position for four months. Prior to coming to John Dewey College, she served as the dean of academic and student affairs at the Puerto Rico School of Fine Arts. Ms. Lopez holds a bachelor’s degree in secondary education and a master’s degree in education administration and supervision from Pontifical Catholic University. She is presently a doctoral candidate at the University of Puerto Rico. Ms. Lopez is assisted by a CEP committee comprising the associate campus director, the evening academic director, the undergraduate program coordinator, the admissions coordinator, and the registrar.

Who is the on-site administrator, and what are this person’s qualifications? (2.01)

As previously noted, Ms. Marines Lopez is the campus director of the institution. Prior to coming to John Dewey College, she served as the dean of academic and student affairs at the Puerto Rico School of Fine Arts. Ms. Lopez has a bachelor’s degree in secondary education and a master’s in education administration and supervision, both from Pontifical Catholic University. She is presently a doctoral candidate at the University of Puerto Rico.

2. When the same area of noncompliance is identified in two different questions within the report, reflect the area of noncompliance in each question of the report with the appropriate section number for that report.

Based on the team’s observation of the instructional materials used, interviews with students and faculty, and a review of software licenses, is the campus in compliance with applicable licensing and copyright laws? (5.22)

If No, insert the section number in parentheses and explain:

(Section 3-1-531(a)(d)): The institution does not comply with applicable copyright laws in the use of instructional materials. During the faculty interview and in the Call for Comment, instructors stated that course materials (e.g., textbooks) consistently arrive after the start of classes. While students are waiting for textbooks to be supplied, textbook chapters are photocopied and distributed to the students.

Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Summary Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3-1-531(a) and 3-2-200</td>
<td>Instructional resources are not consistently available for students at the beginning of courses. Faculty are violating copyright laws because they do not have instructional resources available when needed (pages 25 and 36).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments

1. Comments that are general in nature would be appropriate at the end of the report.
2. Comments specific to a question should be included directly below the question and not at the end of the report. The chair will remove the “If No…” statement from the report under such circumstances. Comments specific to a question should appear only in situations where additional explanation is necessary:

Does the campus publish a catalog that is appropriately printed and provided to all enrolled students? (6.02)
☑ Yes  ☐ No

If No, insert the section number in parentheses and explain:

The campus uses an electronic catalog and provides a hard copy to students upon request.

General Comments
Commendations and general comments will be left at the end of each section.

The team wishes to commend this campus on its incredibly positive staff, clean and inviting work environment, and dedication and investment into their students.

Description of Qualifications
1. State the name of the program administrator at the beginning of the narrative.
2. Do not include the date or year when credentials were received.
3. Combine credential information if received from the same institution.

Ms. Jane Eyre is the program administrator. Ms. Eyre holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration and a master’s degree in accounting from Strayer University. She was hired by the institution as part-time faculty in 2011, and she was promoted to program director in 2014.

Course Listings
When listing course codes, write the course code, followed by the course title {The general education course BIO132, Anatomy and Physiology, has three separate sections.}

Recommendations
1. This page will be a compilation of recommendations from the entire team on a separate sheet following the summary page and before the student survey results.
2. Use full and complete sentences for recommendations and ensure that the recommendation is clear and understandable to an outside reader.
3. If there are multiple recommendations, include headings for grouping the recommendations.

Student Relations
The team offers the following recommendations:
1. Develop a bulletin board specifically for career services placements. This would serve as a motivating factor on the campus. Highlighting “congratulations” to students placed would be a great way to spotlight student success; and
2. When establishing procedures and preparing for future ACICS visits, follow the report templates on the ACICS website as each person prepares his or her department for those evaluations. When an institution already runs this efficiently, it is difficult to make any recommendations for improvement, but this one should serve them well.

Educational Facilities
The team suggests that better signage be used to indicate the entrance to the campus. While the entrance can be seen from close up, it is not clearly visible from a distance. The address is 215 First Street; however, the entrance is not on First Street. 215 First Street is a locked door.
Student-Teacher Ratio
The student-teacher ratio is required only for non-degree and occupational associate’s degree programs.
1. For a single program {The student-teacher ratio is 16:1.}
2. For one program that is part of a multiple-program evaluation (report includes non-degree and degree programs), the program name must be specified {The student-teacher ratio in the certificate in childcare program is 5:1.}
3. For programs with laboratory components, distinction is important since there are industry standards managing lab sizes {In the theory courses, the student-teacher ratio is 21:1, while in the laboratory courses, the ratio is 10:1.}
4. For multiple programs {The student-teacher ratio is 12:1 in the diploma program in medical office assistant and 15:1 in the diploma program in medical billing and coding.}

THAT VS. WHICH
1. “That” is used to identify an item being discussed. {The institution added a section to the catalog that explains its articulation agreement with Central University.} {On March 2, 2017, ACICS received a detailed complaint from a former faculty member alleging a number of issues that may violate standards of the Accreditation Criteria.}
2. “Which” adds information to an item already identified, and the information is usually set off with a comma or commas. {The team reviewed a printout detailing graded out-of-class work, which included graded homework, grading rubrics for projects, and individual and group work assignments.} {The catalog includes the diploma program in medical office assistant, which is being taught out, as well as the new academic associate’s degree program in marketing.}
3. Compare: The catalog includes the diploma program in medical office assistant, which is being taught out. The catalog includes the diploma program in medical office assistant that is being taught out. Both sentences are grammatically correct. The first, however, indicates that there is only one medical office assistant program; the second that there is more than one.

INSTITUTION VS. CAMPUS
1. The institution refers to the main and its branch campus locations.
2. The campus refers specifically to the main or the branch campuses. {The institution uses the CampusVue system to manage its registration processes, but the Fayetteville campus has been slow to transition to this system.}

GOOD USAGE VS. COMMON USAGE
The following are taken verbatim from the Chicago Manual of Style, 17th.
actual fact, in. Redundant. Try actually instead, or simply omit.
area. Often a nearly meaningless filler word, as in the area of partnering skills. Try deleting the area of.
as far as. Almost always wordy. Avoid the nonstandard phrasing that uses as far as in place of as for—that is, avoid using as far as without the completing verb is concerned or goes. Even with the verb, though, this is usually a wordy construction. Compare as far as change is concerned, it’s welcome with as for change, it’s welcome.
as yet; as of yet. Stilted and redundant. Use yet, still, so far, or some other equivalent.
at the present time; at this time; at present. These are turgid substitutes for now, today, currently, or even nowadays (a word of perfectly good literary standing). Of the three phrases, at present is least suggestive of bureaucratese.

basis. Much overworked, this word most properly means “foundation; the facts, things, or ideas from which something can be developed.” It often appears in the phrase on a . . . basis or some similar construction. When possible, substitute adverbs (personally, not on a personal basis) or simply state the time (daily, not on a daily basis)).

both—and. These correlative conjunctions should frame matching syntactic parts. Hence don’t write She is both a writer and she skis professionally, but instead She is both a writer and a professional skier.

chair; chairman; chairwoman; chairperson. Chair is widely regarded as the best gender-neutral choice. Since the mid-seventeenth century, chair has referred to an office of authority.

close proximity. Redundant. Write either close or in proximity.

compliment; complement. A compliment is a flattering or praising remark (a compliment on your skill). A complement is something that completes or brings to perfection (the lace tablecloth was a complement to the antique silver). The words are also verbs: to compliment is to praise, while to complement is to supplement adequately or to complete.

comprise; compose. Use with care. To comprise is “to consist of, to include” (the whole comprises the parts). To compose is “to make up, to form the substance of something” (the parts compose the whole). The phrase is comprised of, though increasingly common, remains nonstandard. Instead, try is composed of or consists of.

criteria. This is the plural form of criterion (= a standard for judging): one criterion, two criteria.

data. Though originally this word was a plural of datum, it is now commonly treated as a mass noun and coupled with a singular verb. In formal writing (and always in the sciences), use data as a plural.

due to the fact that. Use because instead.

ensure; insure; assure. Ensure is the general term meaning “to make sure that something will (or won’t) happen.” In best usage, insure is reserved for underwriting financial risk. So we ensure that we can get time off for a vacation, and we insure our car against an accident on the trip. We ensure events and insure things. But we assure people of things by telling them what’s what, so that they won’t worry. The important thing to remember is that we ensure occurrences and assure people.

et al. This is the abbreviated form of et alii (“and others”)—the others being people, not things. Since al. is an abbreviation, the period is required—but note that no period follows the et (Latin for “and”).

etc. This is the abbreviated form of et cetera (“and other things”); it should never be used in reference to people. Etc. implies that a list of things is too extensive to recite. But often writers seem to run out of thoughts and tack on etc. for no real purpose. Also, two redundancies often appear with this abbreviation: (1) and etc., which is poor style because et means “and,” and (2) etc. at the end of a list that begins with for example, such as, e.g., and the like. Those terms properly introduce a short list of examples.

i.e.; e.g. The first is the abbreviation for id est (“that is”); the second is the abbreviation for exempli gratia (“for example”). The English equivalents are preferable in formal prose, though sometimes the compactness of these two-character abbreviations makes them desirable. Always put a comma after either one.
**imply; infer.** The writer or speaker *implies* (hints, suggests); the reader or listener *infers* (deduces). Writers and speakers often use *infer* as if it were synonymous with *imply*, but careful writers always distinguish between the two words.

**individual.** Use this word to distinguish a single person from a group. When possible, use a more specific term, such as *person, adult, child, man, or woman.*

**in regard to.** This is the phrase, not the nonstandard *in regards to.* But try a single-word substitute instead: *about, regarding, concerning,* etc.

**less; fewer.** Reserve *less* for singular mass nouns or amounts {less salt} {less soil} {less water}. Reserve *fewer* for plural count nouns {fewer calories} {fewer people} {fewer suggestions}.

**phenomenon.** This is the singular {the phenomenon of texting}, the plural being *phenomena* {cultural phenomena}.

**use; utilize.** *Use* is usually the best choice for simplicity. *Utilize* is most often an overblown alternative of *use,* but it is occasionally the better choice when the distinct sense is “to use to best effect” {how to utilize our staff most effectively}. 