

Site Visitor Preparation for Fall 2012 Visits

Conference calls with the following presentation held September 20, 2012 to brief site visitors on changes needed to site visit procedure and changes needed in content of the site visitor report.

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U.S. Department of Education

(USDE) Review of ACME

- Petition submitted in January, 2012.
- Feedback received from the analyst in late April.
- Revised petition submitted in May.
- Feedback received in mid-June: 34 not-mets reduced to 10, continued recognition recommended with progress report due in one year.
- NACIQI agreed with analyst's recommendation at June 25, 2012 meeting.

U.S. Department of Education (USDE)

- ACME's response is due in August 2013
- The Fall 2012 site visits are the **only** opportunity to collect data demonstrating that we meet the “not met” criteria.

The “not met” USDE Criteria: Training of Site Visitors

- The agency must provide additional information and documentation regarding the training/orientation of its SVP members...including in the area of distance education [602.15(a)(2)].
- Conducting these training sessions to prepare for the Fall 2012 visits is part of meeting this USDE criterion.

The “not met” USDE Criteria: Compliance w/ACME Student Achievement Standard

- The agency must demonstrate that the BOR assesses the compliance of programs with the agency’s student achievement standard [602.16(a)(1)(i)].
- The agency must demonstrate that it has an effective mechanism for providing a program with a detailed written report that assesses a program’s performance with respect to student achievement [602.17(f)].

The “not met” USDE Criteria: Records of Student Complaints

- The agency must demonstrate that the BOR considers a record of student complaints received by, or available to, the agency in making its accreditation decision [602.16(a)(1)(ix)].

What It All Means, in a Nutshell, for SVs

- SVs must provide narrative description of the evidence they see and hear that leads to the conclusion a criterion is verified or not verified.
- In other words, SVs must provide the data base (subjective and objective information/ description of the evidence) for the diagnosis (assessment/conclusion) that a criterion is verified or not verified, i.e., the S, the O, and the A of a SOAP note.

What It All Means, in a Nutshell, for the BOR

- The BOR will write its own S, O, and A, using the SVs' evidence and conclusions, as well as their own global review of the program, to conclude whether criteria are verified or not verified.
- The BOR will then create a plan for the program to address any not verified criteria.

USDE and Distance Education

- USDE emphasizes oversight of distance education.
- ACME criteria require students to have equal access to their education programs, regardless of method of delivery.
- The BOC will look at strengthening these criteria and/or the documentation needed. SVs will need to provide more detail about findings about equal access to the education program.
- Stay tuned for more guidance about equity in access to the education program.
- SVs familiar with distance education modalities will be needed for visits to programs that significantly rely on distance education modalities.

The Particulars: Distance Education

- Criterion V. Resources: C. Learning resources are current, available, accessible, and adequate.
- SER instructions: Describe how the program determines currency, availability, accessibility, and adequacy of learning resources, e.g., laboratory, clinical simulation, audiovisual, computer, and library resources. Explain how all students and faculty, including those at a distance, can access learning resources. If the program determines that the learning resources are deficient, describe plans to address this problem.

Distance Education

If a program has students who use different routes (i.e., face-to-face in class, online asynchronous, online synchronous, etc.) to access the education program, then the program must provide and the SVs must examine evidence that the program provides equity in:

- availability,
- accessibility, and
- adequacy of learning resources.

Distance Education: A Suggested Approach to Presenting the Evidence

	Face to Face Availability	Face to Face Accessibility	Online Availability	Online Accessibility
Laboratory				
Clinical simulation				
Audio-visual				
Computer				
Library				

Distance Education: A Suggested Approach to Presenting the Evidence

- SVs will make a determination about equity in accessibility and availability after reviewing the information compiled in the chart.

Student Complaints

Criterion III: Students, E. 3.: Clearly defined mechanisms for consideration of grievances, complaints or appeals.

- SER Instructions: Describe the mechanisms for addressing grievances, complaints or appeals and how students are apprised of these mechanisms. Identify the location of the process in formal documents.
- Exhibit Instructions: Document student access to the mechanisms. As applicable, provide examples of grievances, complaints or appeals from the past three years.

Student Complaints: The SV Role

SVs should probe the program's handling of:

- students' suggestions for improvement of the program,
- informal or formal complaints, and
- appeals of grades or progression decisions.

Probing should include questions that cover the past 3 years of students, faculty, administrators. SVs should read all written evidence of a complaint or appeal. SVs will document their questioning and review of any documents provided.

Student Complaints: The BOR Role

The BOR will read the SER, the SVR, and any comments or complaints received by ACME outside of the SER or SVR channels, and come to an assessment of the program's compliance with the criterion. The BOR will demonstrate that it "considers the record of student complaints in order to identify possible problems with a program's compliance with any of its standards (Analyst's Report, p. 11)."

The “not met” USDE Criteria: Compliance w/ACME Student Achievement Standard

- The agency must demonstrate that the BOR assesses the compliance of programs with the agency’s student achievement standard [602.16(a)(1)(i)].
- The agency must demonstrate that it has an effective mechanism for providing a program with a detailed written report that assesses a program’s performance with respect to student achievement [602.17(f)].

Student Achievement Standards

Criterion VI: Assessment and Outcomes

We ask programs to collect:

- Evaluations of the program by students and graduates (A.1.a)
- Evaluations from external constituents, such as employers of graduates and public comment as available (A.1.b)
- Enrollment, graduation, certification, and other relevant outcome data for the past 3 years (or the SER year for initial accreditation applications) (A.1.c)

Student Achievement Standards

Evaluations of the program by students and graduates (VI.A.1.a)

- SVs should read these evaluations and summarize them in the SVR.
- SVs should examine and summarize the evidence of how the evaluations are used to improve the program.

Student Achievement Standards

Evaluations from external constituents, such as employers of graduates and public comment as available (VI.A.1.b)

- SVs should read these evaluations and summarize them in the SVR.
- SVs should examine and summarize the evidence of how the evaluations are used to improve the program.

Student Achievement Standards: Enrollment, Graduation, Other Relevant Outcome Data

Enrollment, graduation, certification, and other relevant outcome data for the past 3 years (or the SER year for initial accreditation applications) (VI.A.1.c)

SVs should read and comment in the SVR on the enrollment data, the graduation rate data, and other outcome data utilized by the program.

Student Achievement Standards: Certification Exam Pass Rates

SVs should read and comment on certification pass rate data, particularly in light of ACME's 85% pass rate benchmark. Any year that the program's pass rate drops below 85%, the program must submit a detailed plan to improve the pass rate to ACME as part of its Annual Monitoring Report. SVs should read all of these plans for the past 3 years and should come to a conclusion about whether the plans have been put into place and whether they have been effective.

USDE

“...that and how...”

- The USDE wants to know how the BOR assesses a program’s compliance with the pre/accreditation criteria.
- The USDE wants to verify that the BOR assesses a program’s compliance with the pre/accreditation criteria.
- So, we have to tell them that ACME assesses compliance and tell them how we do it. SVs and SVRs will be essential to demonstrating “that and how.”

USDE

“...detailed written report to the program...”

USDE criteria require ACME to “provide the program with a detailed written report that assesses:

- (1) The program’s compliance with the agency’s standards, including areas needing improvement; and
- (2) The program’s performance with respect to student achievement.”

We will wait for additional USDE feedback in June and then will proceed to devise a feedback process during the remainder of 2012.

Gleanings

Site visitors amplify, verify, clarify....

...by serving as the eyes and ears of the BOR.

When you decide a criterion is verified by seeing and hearing something that the BOR will not be able to see or hear, briefly describe the sights and sounds that allowed you to verify a criterion.

Gleanings from SVRs & BOR Questions

General Rules of Thumb

- Most verified criteria should fall into the "verified with additional evidence" category, and the BOR needs details of that additional evidence.
- On the other hand, something that is very straightforward for both the SVs and the BOR to determine, e.g. a policy for tuition refund that's online and accessible to anyone, or the ACME contact details on the website, could get a "verified with the SER."

Gleanings

- Neither the SER nor the writer of the SER, usually the PD, can be the source for verification of assertions made in the SER.
- There is always someone or something else for verification. For O&A, it's often the Dean or Provost. For faculty and students, it's faculty and students.
- The BOR needs to know which appropriate people/exhibits/documents the SVs used for verification.
- Two additional sources verifying the SER are ideal whenever possible. It is very helpful to state what those sources are under "Comments", e.g. review of Exhibit ____, interview with students, etc.

Gleanings

- If you had a question, especially about an apparent contradiction seen in the material submitted prior to the visit, then the BOR will have the same question. Please briefly describe the information that resolved the question and allowed the relevant criterion to be verified.

Gleanings

- Double check that all required pieces are present, e.g.
 - Table of Contents
 - List of abbreviations
 - All required tables
 - All required information on each table
 - State whether a table was verified via 100% review or by sampling

Gleanings

“What if” questions: if a program’s future includes changes anticipated on the basis of receiving a grant, changing technology, significantly expanding the enrollment, etc., ask “What will happen to the program if _____ doesn’t come to pass?”

Gleanings, continued

- The BOR asks that if you expect there to be an addendum submitted for a criterion, please indicate that in the SVR.

Gleanings

- Criteria that look and read like they don't need narrative but in fact do, are frequently not addressed in the writing of SERs. SVs have to be vigilant about reading the SER against a worksheet that clearly shows what is and isn't a stem, and bring omissions to the PD's attention so they can be rectified straightaway.

Gleanings

- There are a lot of criteria that deal with evaluations of all types: faculty, student, curriculum etc.
- The BOR needs to know both that there are evaluation processes in place, and that these are carried out.
- So, the SVs need to document that completed evaluation documents were seen, not just blank ones.

Gleanings

- If a table confuses you, the SVs, you should assume it will confuse the BOR. The SVs should either resolve the confusions during the visit and include the resolution of the discrepant data in their report, or should point out the contradictory information to the PD and suggest that he/she send in a revised table.

Gleanings

- PDs should be advised that if they describe a potentially harmful recent or impending change in the staff or support structures for the program, they should also describe the actions planned or already underway to deal with the changes.

Gleanings

- Ideally, PDs should use the terms ACME uses in its criteria to describe their programs, even if they use different terms at their universities.
- For example, an SER described "continuation and curriculum patterns" in response to the criterion that asks for information about "progression and graduation requirements."
- A question from the BOR could have been avoided if the SER had said something like, "At this university, policies that govern progression are detailed in the "Continuation" section of the student handbook."
- If the PDs don't translate between their university's lingo and ACME's, then the SVs should provide the translation in their comments about the criteria in question.

Gleanings

- The ACME criteria have specific definitions for types of faculty. Schools also have different designations for different types of faculty.
- PDs must address all of their categories of faculty when they respond to criteria about "faculty." For example, professional development benefits may only be available to full time, tenured faculty.
- SVs need to be alert to differences among faculty types.

Gleanings

- The criteria require the SERs to include the full text of the philosophies, mission statements, objectives, etc.
- PDs easily but incorrectly assume that the information in the comparison table is a sufficient rendition of the statements, but it's not.
- If those statements, in their entirety, are not in the PAR/SER, the SVs should catch that omission and suggest including them in the additional information that the PDs will send in asap after the visit.

Gleanings

Don'ts and Do's

- SVs may suggest the types of additional information that a program can send to the BOR immediately after the visit.
- SVs may not suggest or require changes to the self-study.
- Be thoroughly prepared: SER and other materials read and questions prepared before the SV.

Questions?

- Suggestions?
- Insights?

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO FOR
MIDWIFERY EDUCATION!