

Guidelines for Evaluation Committee Reports

ATS Commission on Accrediting

Thank you for participating in this evaluation visit for the ATS Commission on Accrediting. The guidelines below will help you contribute to a more effective committee evaluation report.

1. The evaluation committee report is typically 20-25 pages (Times New Roman, 11 point, single-spaced) and includes five parts. Part I provides the Introduction; Parts II-IV provide a narrative description of how well the school meets the General Institutional Standards (II), the Educational Standard (III), and the Degree Program Standards (IV); and Part V provides the overall recommendations to the ATS Board of Commissioners, who make the final decisions. Part I is often written by the chair and Part V is typically written by the evaluation committee together during the last full day of the visit. Each committee member is typically responsible for evaluating 3-5 standards (Parts II-IV) and for writing 1-2 pages on each of these, describing how well the school meets those standards.
2. All recommendations in sections 6-8 of Part V of the report must be linked to a specific standard and repeated, word-for-word, in the narrative (Parts II-IV) of the committee report. Observations in section 6 should be included in *italic font*; recommendations in sections 7 and 8 must be copied **in bold font**. The narrative preceding the specific recommendation should provide a context/rationale for it, so that the Board and the school understand why this action is being recommended. After the context or rationale, the specific recommendations are typically introduced with the phrase: “Therefore, the committee recommends...” [in italic or bold font]. Each recommendation must conclude by citing one or more specific standards tied to that recommendation. If a specific standard cannot be cited, the recommendation should not be made, though a suggestion may be.
3. The chair usually asks committee members to submit all of their sections within a few days of the end of the visit. The chair will edit all sections for consistency and clarity and email a draft copy to the committee and to the Commission staff liaison for a final review. The chair will make any final changes before sending it to the school and staff liaison, which should be done within two weeks of the end of the visit. The school has two weeks to notify the chair of any factual errors. The chair will make any necessary corrections before sending a final copy to the staff liaison. The final copy of the report sent to the school comes from the ATS Commission office. The school then has the opportunity to write a response to the final report, agreeing or disagreeing with the findings.
4. As stated in *Chapter Four of the Self-Study Handbook: Guidelines for Evaluation Committee Members* (pp. 10-11): “The report should draw attention to issues, problems, and strengths without implying doubts about the institution’s wisdom or the competence of its staff or faculty.” That means the report should not “name names” or call attention to any person(s), but rather identify concerns and refer to issues that need to be addressed. Inclusive language should be used.
5. As also noted in *Chapter Four* (referenced above, p. 11): “Effective reports are characterized by a distinctive tone and style. The tone should be descriptive, not prescriptive. In other words, the report should identify those facts about an institution that have led to a committee’s judgments and should *not* indicate what the institution should do.” The report should be written in the third person, emphasizing the consensus of the committee (e.g., “the committee observed...,” not “I heard...” or “I believe...”). The report should use the term “evaluation committee” or “committee,” not “visiting team” or “team.”
6. The committee is also responsible for completing and reviewing the Targeted Issues Checklist (TIC) (provided by the school as part of the visit materials, typically in the appendix to the self-study report). The practitioner and/or the person reviewing the standards on integrity and on students often take the lead in this (with assistance from the Commission staff liaison). The completed TIC must be appended to the evaluation committee report.

NOTE: If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the ATS Commission staff liaison.

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