

13. Policy on Five-Year Review

Once an institution is accredited, it must be reaccredited at least every five years. When an institution is first accredited, it receives a letter stating when its accreditation expires. An institution must renew its accreditation *before* it expires. This means having an on-site visit and course reviews prior to the Commission’s January or June meeting. An institution will be advised at least one year before its review will be conducted. Beginning June 2009, an expiration date will also be printed on the “Certificate of Accreditation.”

For institutions applying for five-year renewal of accreditation, self-evaluation will be somewhat simpler than for the first-time applicant. Institutions undergoing their 5-year review should use the “Guide Self-Evaluation Report for 5-Year Review” in B.2. of the *DETC Accreditation Handbook*. The SER for renewal concentrates on the progress made and changes undertaken in the last five years. It should devote emphasis to those issues where it has in the past been vulnerable to weakness, as well as initiatives launched to correct previously cited deficiencies.

On the other hand, since the SER is intended to assist examiners who will visit the school as well as to facilitate the institution’s self-evaluation, **all** sections of the “Guide to Self-Evaluation Report for 5-Year Review” (in Appendix B.2.) must be addressed. Particularly in those areas in which the SER calls for current data, the institution will need to present a current picture of itself, such as up-to-date financial data, staff resumes, and new advertising materials. Certainly in the case of significant changes in curriculum, sales approach, administration, etc., since the last visit, the institution will wish to be especially thorough in its SER.

The initial SER should demonstrate how the institution plans to comply with standards for marketing, advertising, student enrollment contracts, and refunds. For the five-year review, the institution’s SER should concentrate on demonstrating how the institution **is and has been** in compliance with these standards. In writing an SER for re-accreditation, there should be a strong emphasis throughout the SER documenting how the institution has *improved* since the last review.

Action

If an institution is to be considered at the June Commission meeting (Spring), its application is due November 1st the year before. If an institution is to be considered at the January Commission meeting (Fall), its application is due March 1st of the preceding year.

A key person at the institution undergoing its five-year review must complete the *DETC Course on Preparing for Accreditation* before he/she begins writing the institution’s SER.

Instructions on how to enroll in the course may be found on DETC’s web site at www.detc.org, select “Member Services” and “Publications” – you’ll have to sign in using the word “guest” for your user name and password. You may take the course online or paper-based for no charge.

Additional training may be required. Please check with the DETC staff.

Institutions must submit the appropriate number of courses/programs for review (see C.5. Policy on Course/Program Approval).

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