Guidelines for Preparing SACS Compliance Reports

Format

*We want you to concentrate on content rather than formatting.*

However, by using these guidelines you can help us create a consistent look and feel when we combine all 92 compliance reports. Below are useful shortcuts in Word, instructions for documentation and references, information about storing your draft report and evidence, and a style sheet.

Shortcuts in Microsoft Word

If you use the following shortcuts you will help us integrate the compliance reports into a professional looking compliance certification. Just use the standard offerings available on the Word toolbar under the Home tab.

1. **PASTING COPY:** To paste copy in from another source, use the "Paste" feature on the "Clipboard" option. Highlight and copy the text in the source document, BUT paste it into your narrative this way: Pull down the "Paste" menu and select "Paste special." Several options will pop up. Choose "unicode Unformatted text." The copy will paste into your narrative seamlessly—and without the source formatting.

2. **LIST FORMAT:** To create a bulleted or numbered list, type the list, highlight it, and then select the bullets or numbers icon from the "Paragraph" options.

3. **QUOTED EXTRACTS:** To indent a quoted extract, use the Indent icon in the "Paragraph" option. Don't tab manually.

4. **DISPLAY HEADINGS:** To organize your narrative with display text, type the text that you want to be a heading, highlight it, and select Heading 3, Heading 4, or Heading 5 from the "Styles" menu options (you may have to click the arrow to see all the options). Don't go lower than Heading 5.

**NORMAL TEXT:** Leave most of the text defined as Normal. Leave an extra line space between paragraphs.
Documenting the Evidence with Citations and Links

SACS’ *Handbook for Institutions Seeking Reaffirmation* (p. 27) emphasizes the importance of documentation.

Because the Compliance Certification requires that the institution demonstrate that it has based its compliance decisions on compelling and appropriately documented evidence, the institution needs to evaluate the evidence it has assembled to support a claim of compliance with a requirement or standard. This evaluation should be based on a careful interpretation of the Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Requirements and on the cogency of the evidence... Evidence should not be viewed simply as a mass of facts, data, or exhibits. Instead, it should be viewed as a coherent and focused body of information supporting a judgment of compliance.

Every direct quotation and every statement of fact in the narrative should be documented. It is especially important to document claims that have a direct bearing on the Principle you are covering.

Wherever possible, draft your reports so that call-outs to documentation are words or phrases in the text, rather than a parenthetical reference or footnote.

- For references to a web page, set the link from the word or phrase in the text to the web page. If the reference is to a passage within a larger document, direct the reviewer’s attention by anchoring the link to the relevant section.

- For references to a separate document not on the web, tell us where the link should be placed by underlining the word or phrase where the link should be placed. At the end of the sentence, in brackets, give us the page number and specific paragraph heading you are citing. Later, we will create a pdf of the document and link it to the word or phrase you have indicated.

References

Each compliance report concludes with a list of evidence documents referred to in the text. Please include the following information for each document.

1. Sponsoring agency or author (if relevant). Invert the NC State.
   
   Example: *University Planning and Analysis, NC State.*

2. Title as it appears on the top of the document.

3. Description if needed (e.g., portal).
   
   Example: *Policy List (all) portal. NC State Policies, Regulations and Rules website.*

4. Date if available.

5. Repository or location

   Web: *NC State University Planning and Analysis website.*  
   
   Physical: *Raleigh: NC State Office of University Planning and Analysis.*

6. URL for retrievability.
Naming and Storing Your Document and Related Evidence

A shared directory called “SACS Compliance_Reports” has been created. Within that directory is a folder for each compliance team. Access to the folders and materials stored in the shared directory is limited to the compliance authors. To extend access to someone else working with you, send an email message to Karen.

By using the shared directory, you will not need to send your material via email. You’ll need only to alert others that the report and evidence are in the folder.

Some of you may already use shared directories and already have an S drive map. If you do, you should see the new directory. If you do not already use shared directory, you will need to map a drive to the location using the following directions.

Open the Windows Explorer (or comparable)
Tools -> Map Network Drive
Select S (or other desired letter)
Folder = \wolftech.ad.ncsu.edu\oit\shares\UNIVPLAN\DeptShared\SACS Compliance_Reports

When you are ready to share or submit your report, save it with a standard name (as below) and save it in the shared directory folder. Use the next highest version number than is already stored in the folder:

[standard number]_author_[your initials]_v1
Example: 3.4.5_author_LDH_v1

Save your evidence as below. Use the

[standard number]_evidence_[word or phrase from text]
Example: 3.4.5_evidence_Student Handbook

Work flow

Drafting, editing, reviewing, and finalizing the reports will be handled in four phases as described below. The schedule is posted on the accreditation website at http://accreditation.ncsu.edu/assigndead.html . For the first phase, the draft is in control of the author. In the remaining phases, the draft is in control of the SACS staff team. The SACS staff team includes Karen Helm, Pat Spakes, Ambica Pilli (webmaster), a copy editor, and Nancy Margolis (managing editor).

Phase I: AUTHOR’S DRAFT
Draft (author)
Review (Team + SACS advisor)
Revise (author)

Phase 2: FIRST EDIT
Copy edit (copy editor + Karen, with author’s assistance on substantive matters)
Review by appropriate Executive Officer
Revise (copy editor+ Karen, with author’s assistance on substantive matters)
Phase 3: REVIEW AND APPROVAL
- Post on web for campus information and comment (Ambica)
- Revise (Karen or Pat and copy editor, with author’s assistance on substantive matters)
- Final review by EO
- Approval (Leadership Team + Chancellor)
- Final revision (Karen + copy editor, with author’s assistance on substantive matters)

Phase 5: FINAL
- Merge and format for pdf (Nancy)
- Final copy edit and proofreading (copy editor)
- Complete website and create CD (Ambica)

Style Sheet

We want you to concentrate on content, not on linguistic style.

However, for those of you who want a style sheet, here’s one using a basic style following Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition.

- Acronyms: CS 15.2 Spell out on first use. If there is no second use, do not establish the acronym. If there is a second use, the acronym usually follow immediately in parentheses, but it may be introduced in other ways, for example: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration was founded in 1958. Since its inception, NASA has ...

- advisor, not adviser

- Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina system, Board of Governors, board, BOG

- Board of Trustees of North Carolina State University, Board of Trustees, board, BOT

- Constitution of the State of North Carolina

- Courses: Official names of academic courses are capitalized.

- Credit hours: Always use arabic numerals

- Cross-references: Use italics, e.g., Comprehensive Standard 3.2.9

- Degrees: master’s degree; a doctorate; a fellowship; master of business administration (MBA), but Ph.D. Except for Ph.D., academic degrees do not have periods.

- Departments: Capitalized only when part of a full formal name. Department of History, but the department.
• Disciplines: Names of academic disciplines are not capitalized unless they form part of a
department name or an official course name or are themselves proper nouns (e.g.,
English).

• Inclusive years: Although Chicago 9.67 would generate 2000-2001, but 2001-2, there
are entirely too many recent dates in this document to support this system. Retain the
last two digits in the latter number. Thus, 2000-01, and 2012-13.

• laptop, not lap top.
• Number style: Spell out to 100; arabic100 and over. However, when numbers cluster
closely, use same style for similar items. See also "credit hours," "percent."

• online, not on-line

• Percent: spell out "percent" except in tables. Numbers before the word "percent are
always in arabic.

• Titles of people: Lowercase in isolation; capitalize with a surname. Chancellor Randy
Woodson, but the chancellor.

• University of North Carolina system

• university-wide, but systemwide, campuswide

• Web, but website, webinar