

**GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING THE
PROGRAM SELF-STUDY
(PSS)**

Program self-evaluation of the institution and its educational programs is a fundamental part of the addition of a program process. It allows the institution to examine itself in a number of areas, and is an in-depth qualitative assessment of the program's strengths, and weaknesses measured in relation to stated institutional objectives and NACCAS' standards of accreditation.

The program self-study must involve a representative portion of the institution's administrative staff, faculty, students, graduates, employers and other appropriate constituencies. This is not to say that each of these groups must be involved in every phase of the evaluation process. For example, employers may be able to address student preparation, success and placement, but not portions of the self-study dealing with ownership. Participation of the aforementioned constituencies is a requirement which the U.S. Department of Education has placed on accrediting agencies, and which NACCAS has also established. You should list the names and affiliations of the persons who participated in the program self-study process.

The culmination of the program evaluation process is the completion of the Program Self-Study. This involves the following:

1. An Examination of the Institution's Education Goals and Objectives

An institution must determine whether its objectives or purposes are realistic in relation to its location, facilities and equipment, size of its student population, ability levels of students, the availability of instructional media and staff, and constraints which may be imposed by applicable regulatory agencies and how the addition of a program or the expansion/reduction of a program relates to the school's goals and objectives. In short, what is the institution attempting to achieve (Objectives)? Do established policies and procedures and existing physical plant enable the institution to achieve these objectives?

2. Assessment of the Institution's Compliance with NACCAS' Standards

The self-study consists of a series of questions and supporting exhibits. The self-study questions must be answered in conjunction with the Standards and Criteria. The questions in the PSS are based, for the most part, on the Standards and Criteria. **Be sure to cross reference the questions with the specific criteria.** The questions are designed to elicit a thorough analysis of the institution's compliance with the stated criteria. School's may provide information in addition to what is specifically asked for. (Note: Not all of the Criteria have a question to be answered).

3. Compiling the Program Self-Study (PSS)

The PSS forms the basis of the institution's evaluation and is reviewed thoroughly by a practitioner in the field, an academic evaluator, and NACCAS staff. Presentation and organization are important. Review the following guidelines carefully prior to compiling the PSS.

- a. The PSS, application, and exhibits are due in the NACCAS office prior to the scheduled beginning of the first class. Three copies of the completed documents are required.
- b. The self-study must be typed and written in clear and concise language.
- c. The responses/narratives must be tabbed by Standards.
- d. Any supporting documentation required should be placed with and directly behind the appropriate standard.
- e. Each exhibit should be labeled and referred to appropriately in the narratives.
- f. DO NOT insert each page or group of pages in plastic sleeves. These should be used only to secure odd-shaped documents such as a 4" x 6" advertising brochure.
- g. The PSS and exhibits should be sent to NACCAS via certified mail or some other means by which shipment could be traced, if necessary.
- h. You should retain the original copy of the PSS at the school for your permanent record and further reference.

Note: Incomplete or poorly organized Program Self-Studies may be returned to you and will cause a delay in the reviewing process.

4. NACCAS Staff Review of the Program Self-Study

Once the application and materials are received by NACCAS, the PSS will be reviewed by an Accreditation Specialist. The Accreditation Specialist will notify you if there is any information missing or if there are any problems associated with the PSS. If the documents are complete you will receive conditional approval for the first graduating class. The completed PSS and exhibits will then be sent to two outside reviewers for their analysis. Once the outside reviewers complete their analysis you will receive notification of the Commission's final action on the new program.