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Accreditation Update

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ACCREDITATION UPDATE

Your Roadmap to Successfully Navigating SACSCOC Reaffirmation of Accreditation

As part of our university-wide process to prepare for reaffirmation of accreditation with SACSCOC, we will share our milestones and next steps through this newsletter. The current edition provides a snapshot of where we are in the reaffirmation process, including details of our Leadership Team meeting with SACSCOC, advice from SACSCOC peer evaluators for the Compliance Certification, and a recap of our Writers' and Reviewers' Retreats.

Scroll to the bottom and click "Enter to Win" for your chance to win a prize for completing a short survey!

READY

To engage. To assess. To shine. To achieve Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

SACSCOC Reaffirmation of Accreditation



[Max.icons](#)

Charging Towards Reaffirmation

Individuals from administration, staff, and faculty attended SACSCOC's annual meeting held December 3rd - 6th in Atlanta, Georgia. During the Orientation meeting for the Reaffirmation Class of 2025, our Institutional Leadership Team received its official charge from Dr. Patricia L. Donat, Senior Vice President, SACSCOC. The goals of the session were to detail the responsibilities of institutional personnel, discuss key events in the reaffirmation timeline, review required documents,

spotlight the most frequently cited non-compliance issues, describe changes occurring since the last reaffirmation cycle, and clarify requirements for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

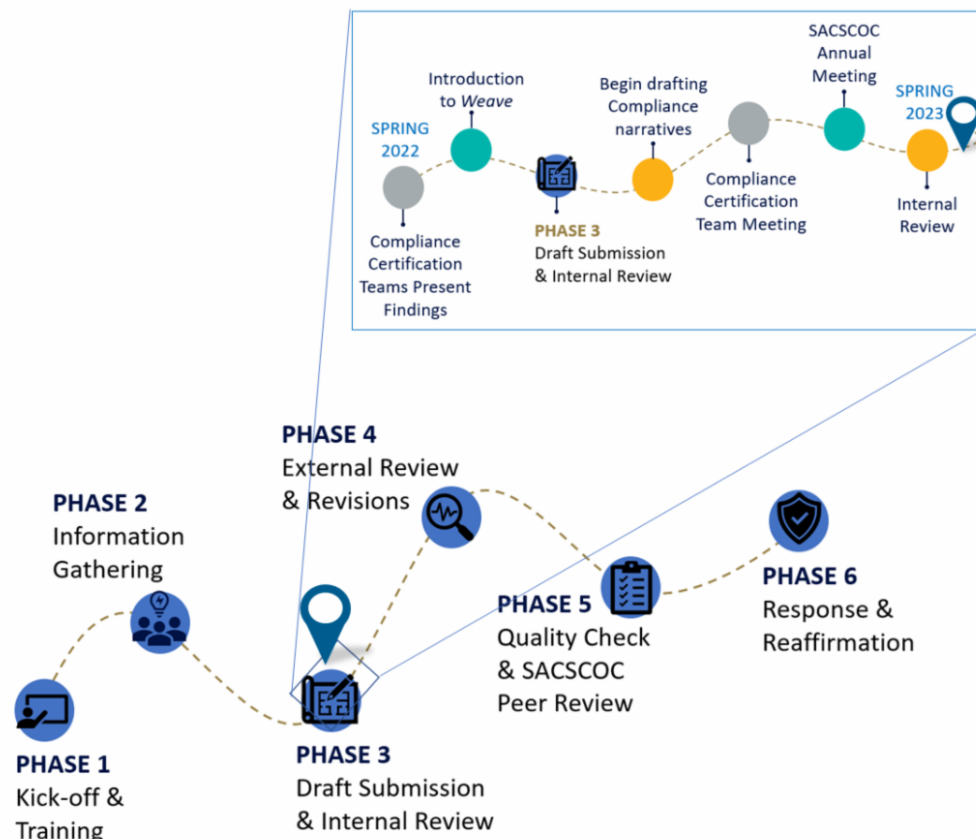
The presentation highlighted strategies for beginning the reaffirmation process. Recommendations closely mirrored those already adopted by Georgia Southern. For example, last year, we organized individuals with both broad and deep institutional knowledge into Compliance Certification teams responsible for audits of particular standards. This year, as we work on initial drafts of our Compliance Certification narratives, we can take comfort in knowing we are headed in the right direction, while taking heed that much exciting work remains.

QEP preparations are another example of Georgia Southern being on the right track for reaffirmation. Recently, a QEP survey was conducted to receive campus input. The orientation session stressed that the QEP should be a natural part of the work we do, an initiative with broad-based support that emerges from conversations about student success and how the institution can support educational quality and effective practices as we look toward the future and grow ourselves to grow others.

At the end of the presentation, it was noted that it was natural to be overwhelmed. Due to our pre-planning, rather than being overwhelmed, the Georgia Southern team was able to leave confident in our path and ready to "CHARGE!" ahead toward reaffirmation.

Status Update: We are in Phase 3

Compliance Certification teams have identified their evidence and are drafting their narratives.



Phase 3 Segments & Batches: Draft Submission & Internal Review



BUILD & COMPOSE



ANALYZE & RESOLVE



REVISE & REWRITE

	Build & Compose			Analyze & Resolve			Revise & Rewrite	
		Writers' Retreats	Due Date		Reviewers' Retreats	Due Date		Due Date
Batch 1	Sept - Nov 2022	10/18/2022 10/19/2022	11/30/2022	Dec - Feb 2023	1/25/2023 1/26/2023	2/28/2023	March - May 2023	5/31/2023
Batch 2	Dec - Feb 2023	1/25/2023 1/26/2023	2/28/2023	March - May 2023	4/11/2023 4/12/2023	5/31/2023	June - Aug 2023	8/31/2023
Batch 3	March - May 2023	4/11/2023 4/12/2023	5/31/2023	June - Aug 2023	7/2023	8/31/2023	Sept - Nov 2023	11/30/2023

Offsite - Insight: The Off-site Review from an Insider's Perspective

In Fall 2022, Georgia Southern University had individuals from across campus serve as SACSCOC peer evaluators for off-site reviews. We asked for their advice on preparing our Compliance Certification narratives. Here's what they shared:

Question 1: What should narrative writers keep in mind?

Evaluators should be able to easily determine compliance without needing to read a different narrative. Peer evaluators are faculty, administrators, and even university presidents at other SACSCOC institutions that are outside of the state. Evaluators have an entire stack of narratives to read and determine compliance. The narrative, the strong examples discussed in the narrative, and the way it is formatted should allow an evaluator to easily determine compliance without needing to look at evidence linked or refer to a different narrative.

Question 2: What is one thing you wish you could tell Compliance Certification writers?

I'm hard pressed to narrow it to one. How about two? 1. Show what you tell. **Provide appropriate and ample evidence for statements of fact.** 2. Evidence can take many forms. Meeting minutes, screenshots, bylaws, presentations, agendas, emails, even newsletters.

Question 3: What is the off-site SACSCOC peer evaluation process like?

Peer evaluators are given two weeks to read their narratives and determine compliance for each institution they are reviewing. Often, they are assigned multiple institutions to review in a row. Reading narratives can require several hours of additional work per day, and some evaluators may be reading narratives outside of their typical working hours. After two weeks, the evaluators convene as a committee for half a day to collectively determine compliance for each narrative. **The process may span more than six weeks**, depending on the number of institutions an evaluator is reviewing. The evaluation process concludes with an additional two-day meeting to revisit each narrative for each institution.

Serving as a SACSCOC peer evaluator is a labor-intensive and time consuming process. However, a peer review process allows institutions to uphold the highest educational quality and ensure SACSCOC member institutions are effectively accomplishing their mission. A special thanks to these individuals for serving the region and providing insight into the off-site peer review process!

Did You Know?

Wondering if you are involved with our SACSCOC accreditation efforts? The answer is yes!

Many of our daily processes and procedures exist to meet the requirements of the Department of Education, University System of Georgia, and our institutional accreditation requirements. SACSCOC standards relate to every department and unit on campus from Finance to Student Affairs and Academic Programs. While our list of Compliance Certification teams is available on our [website](#), you may be asked for information or data to support a standard now that narratives are being constructed.

Writing into Reaffirmation

With the submission of the first batch of narratives on November 30th, lead reviewers are providing feedback to Batch 1 writers, while Batch 2 lead writers are constructing their narratives. To assist both writers and reviewers, IAA is hosting a series of retreats, the first of which was held for writers in October. In January, retreats were held for both Batch 2 writers and Batch 1 reviewers.



Retreats began with a short presentation to guide writers and reviewers as they engage with their narratives. The introduction reminded participants of the resources available for constructing and reviewing narratives, such as the 2025 SACSCOC Reaffirmation Requirements and Standards reference document, recently updated with exemplary reaffirmation narratives from a peer SACSCOC institution.

Another important part of the retreats was providing a space for the exchange of ideas and the opportunity to ask questions. For both writers and reviewers, this resulted in several robust conversations regarding how to structure and evaluate arguments for compliance. The incorporation of evidence was another major theme of the retreats, namely the balance between providing strong examples in the narrative and what to include as attachments. Reviewers also discussed how evidence must explicitly connect to compliance components to build a strong argument.

By the end of the retreats, some writers had completed their initial draft, while the remaining writers were on track to meet the February 28th deadline. Similarly, reviewers began the process of diving deep into the standard, identifying potential gaps in the argument or evidence, and evaluating the cogency of the arguments. On March 1st, Batch 3 writers will begin the *Build and Compose* segment, while Batch 2 writers transition to the *Analyze & Resolve* segment. Meanwhile, Batch 1 writers will receive feedback from their reviewers and begin revising and rewriting their narratives in preparation for the first round of external review.

Upcoming Events

Compliance Certification Narrative Batch 3 Writers' Retreats & Batch 2 Reviewers' Retreats

Statesboro & Armstrong Campus

April 2023

And our February newsletter winner is...

Natalie Hines

(CBSS Student Advisement Center)

Email assessment@georgiasouthern.edu within 30 days to claim your prize.

SACSCOC Accreditation Resources

As we work together to prepare for our Compliance Certification and on-site review, keep in mind the resources provided by SACSCOC:

[The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement](#)

In addition to providing all the standards and sub-standards for accreditation, this document provides an overview of the philosophy, purpose, and process of accreditation.

[Resource Manual for The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement](#)

This document provides additional guidance regarding requirements and recommendations for each standard and includes a list of guiding questions and possible evidence that could be used to support compliance in the Compliance Certification narrative.



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Enter to win a prize by answering a few quick questions.