

STANDARD THREE - PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Documenting ACCURACY of Student Achievement Data

Institutions frequently seek clarification on the types of documentation they should collect to document accuracy of data reported in the completion, placement, and licensure (CPL) form of the annual report. Documentation provides not only the basis for data reported in the CPL form of the annual report, it demonstrates that the institution is performing follow-up activities required in the Standards for accreditation and collecting the information required in each student file.

The following sections ARE NOT a comprehensive listing of all types of documentation that serve this purpose but provide a general guide as to the kinds of documentation that should be present in student files. The more information an institution collects, and the more current the information is, the more likely that data accuracy can be verified and compliance with accreditation requirements can be confirmed.

Visiting teams will look for documentation in student files that indicates the institution's compliance with several accreditation Criteria. It is also the starting point for the verification processes used by visiting teams to confirm accuracy of reported data.

Completion Rate Data

Graduate Completers:

- Query results from institutional databases indicating completion of programs. Names of students, programs of study, grade information that indicates completion of required coursework, dates of completion, and types of credentials issued must be specified.
- Individual student reports generated from institutional databases that demonstrate the meeting of all program requirements and the conferring of credentials for program completion (certificates, diplomas, associate degrees).

Non-Graduate Completers:

- Follow-up questionnaires completed by former students who left their programs before earning a credential, but who secured employment in the field of training/related field of training. Questionnaires must specify dates of hire and positions for which former students were hired.
- Follow-up questionnaires completed by employers of non-graduate completers that confirm dates of hire and positions for which former students were hired.
- Postings on social media sites regarding those who secured employment in the field of training/related field of training.
- Copies of business licenses for those non-graduate completers who formed their own businesses in the field of training/related field of training. Advertisements for those businesses are good supplemental documents to collect, if possible.
- Email confirmation from former students regarding the securing of employment in the field of training/related field of training after having left programs without a credential.
- Rosters of telephone contacts made by employees of the institution with former students. Rosters must specify name of student, telephone number, program of study, date student left program without credential, date employment was secured, relative comments related to employment.

Placement Data for Graduate Completers and Non-Graduate Completers

- Follow-up questionnaires completed by former students (graduate or non-graduate completers) that confirm dates of hire and positions for which former students were hired.
- Follow-up questionnaires completed by employers of graduate and non-graduate completers that confirm dates of hire and positions for which former students were hired.
- Official confirmation letters from employers of students regarding dates of hire and positions in the field of training/related field of training. Letters must specify the name of the business, name of contact person, address of the business, telephone number, and signature of contact person.
- Postings on social media sites regarding employment secured in the field of training/related field of training.
- Copies of business licenses for those non-graduate completers who formed their own businesses in the field of training/related field of training. Advertisements for those businesses are good supplemental documents to collect, if possible.
- Email confirmation from employers or former students regarding the securing of employment in the field of training /related field of training after having left programs without a credential. Student name, positions, dates of hire, and telephone number must be specified.

Licensure Exam Pass Rate Data

- Official state/federal reports detailing licensure exam pass results. Student name and confirmation of exam pass/fail results must be specified.
- Official confirmation letters from employers of students regarding dates of hire and positions in the field of training/related field of training. The name of business, contact person, location of business, contact number, and signature of contact person must be specified.
- Email confirmation from former students regarding the results of licensure exams taken. Student name and dates of successful licensure exam test must be specified.
- Copies of industry licenses issued by state/federal agencies.

VERIFYING Student Achievement Data

Verification of student achievement data is a separate activity from documenting data reported in the annual report. The verification process (an auditing process) is conducted by members of COE visiting teams who search student files for evidence that

1. institutions are performing required follow up with former students and employers of students to collect outcomes data,
2. student files contain required information, and
3. data reported in the Annual Report is deemed to be accurate based on a random sampling of the data collected by institutions.

Team members commonly verify the accuracy of data by random selection of student files, which should contain accurate and up-to-date contact information for former students and their employers. Members most often call students and employers of students/former students to confirm program completion, employment, and licensure exam results.

The accreditation process requires that at least five positive verifications are secured in four categories: graduate completion, placement for graduate completers, placement for non-graduate completers, and licensure exam pass results.

In addition to calling state/federal agencies for licensure exam results, team members may verify accuracy of data reported for licensure exams by reviewing official state/federal reports of licensure exam results from those agencies.

When a team is unable to secure at least five positive verifications of data reported in COE annual reports and contained in student files, findings of non-compliance are cited in the official report of the team visit. The Commission frequently requires institutions to host a second, focused visit as a second attempt to secure positive verification of data. Repeated failure of an institution to provide data that is verifiable may be grounds for it to lose its status with the Council.

REFERENCE: *Handbook of Accreditation: 2021 Edition*, page 66