

The heart of the accrediting process is the self-study,  
a systematic examination by the unit of the environment in which it operates, its mission,  
range of activities, accomplishments and plans for the future.  
The self-study should concentrate on the extent to which a unit achieves its goals.

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## Self-study Tips

### ➔ Style and presentation notes:

Self-studies are often a compilation of work by several individuals. Attention to writing and style will help create a comprehensive report.

- Use a singular voice or tone throughout the report.
- Do not use first person. The self-study should be representative of the entire unit, not one person's perspective.
- Be consistent in style and word use. Examples: Adviser/advisor and website and website. We recommend using AP style.
- Use a consistent approach throughout the report when referencing supporting documents. If using digital folders for supporting documents, name the supporting document the same as it is in the narrative.
- Be mindful of FERPA and privacy laws. Do not include names of students and their grades; avoid using names when writing about personnel issues. If needed, this information can be shared in one-on-one conversations with the site team.
- Use page numbers.
- Use course titles; don't rely solely on course numbers. The site team will not be familiar with the curriculum or course numbers.
- Boldface questions/directives to set them apart from responses.
- Do not remove, rewrite or reorder the questions or directives.
- CHECK THE MATH.

## ➔ Digital delivery of your self-study:

In 2018, ACEJMC transitioned to all digital online delivery format, which opened up several avenues for submitting self-studies. The Council has not yet stipulated one particular delivery method that must be used.

Whatever delivery system used, there are a few points to keep in mind:

-- Ease of access to the report. You want to ensure the site team can easily access the report, as well as close and reopen as often as needed.

-- Ease of navigation: Avoid using a system that requires leaving the narrative document to view a supporting document

-- Embedded live links in the narrative are a wonderful tool for quick access to supporting documents and evidence.

- Make sure the links work.
- Make sure those outside the university's system have access privileges to linked documents.
- Format the links to open in a separate window from the narrative.

## ➔ Narrative Responses:

Responses to directives and questions in the self-study should be concise, candid and detail oriented. Avoid making rhetorical statements; focus on specifics.

Several directives ask for a description of policy or process. Avoid inserting lengthy formal documents directly into the narrative as the response. Doing so disrupts the flow of the narrative. It is preferred to provide a brief narrative response and then a link to the full formal document.

Several directives have multiple elements. Make sure a response is given for all.

Don't dump raw data as a substitute for narrative discussion. There are areas in the self-study, particularly in Standard 3 Assessment, that ask for findings from data analyses. The site team expects that the unit will have collected the data, analyzed the data, and be able to write about the findings in the narrative. Raw data can be provided separately as supporting evidence. Similarly, assessment reports are evidence; they do not take the place of narrative discussion.

Several areas ask for details about faculty. Be consistent within the narrative when reporting the number of faculty. (Part 1 faculty numbers could be different from the narrative if a faculty line changes after the self-study is submitted.)

On the self-study template, several standards begin with instructions pertaining to access to specific documents during the site visit. These instructions are sometimes removed in the

writing and design process, and then forgotten entirely. It's best to acknowledge these instructions in the self-study report with information on how or where these documents will be made available.

➔ **Information required to be displayed prominently on the unit's website:**

- Your unit's mission statement and strategic plan (included in Standard 1)
- Your unit's student enrollment, retention, graduation data (included in Standard 1)
- Your unit's assessment plan (included in Standard 3)
- Your unit's diversity plan

**Part 1: General Information Section becomes a part of the site team report and is shared with the Accrediting Committee and Accrediting Council.** This section should be updated with the most up to date information, particularly regarding full- and part-time faculty.

**Part 2: Supplementary Information**

-- Table 2 Full-Time Faculty seeks information on each faculty member, including professional experience working in the industry and teaching experience in academia. Report each separately. Do not count years of college teaching as years working in the industry.

**Table 2. Full-Time Faculty**

	years full-time in the industry	years full-time college teaching	years on this faculty	years at present rank	highest earned degree	tenured (y/n)
<b>Unit Administrator</b>						
Name						
<b>Professors</b>						
Name						
Name						
Name						

-- Question 6 asks several questions about the unit's self-study process. Questions about strengths and weaknesses discovered during the unit's self-evaluation, and steps taken to address the problems should be answered. A thorough self-examination will elevate strengths and uncover areas that need attention. It's OK – even encouraged -- to celebrate and write about your program's strengths. Identify areas that could be improved and actions taken or planned to address these areas.

**Standard 1: Mission, Governance and Administration**

There are two forms of published data required in this standard: Your unit's student retention and graduation data, which is published on your unit's website, and ACEJMC's

searchable database, which is managed by an external IT service and hosted on an external server. You must register with the IT service to access the searchable database.

Instructions on how to register for the database are provided on the self-study template in Standard 1 and at <http://www.acejmc.org/resources/acejmc-database-instructions-2>.

**Do not wait until a few days before the site visit to try to register for the searchable database.** The process takes time. We recommend you register for the database at least several weeks before your scheduled visit.

### Standard 3: Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Question 7 asks for a matrix that aligns the student learning outcomes with the courses where they are taught, and the direct and indirect measures that assess the outcomes. Here is one example, courtesy of Texas State University’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication. **NOTE: THIS IS JUST ONE EXAMPLE. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO FOLLOW THIS MODEL. USE WHAT WORKS FOR YOUR UNIT.**

ACEJMC competencies are integrated into our yearly assessment process.

10 ACEJMC Competencies	MC 1301- Intro to Mass Communication	Writing course appropriate to discipline	MC 4301- Media Law and Ethics	MC 4381- Digital and Online Media	MC Major courses	Non-MC Required courses	Unit Initiatives Annual events, Study Abroad
Freedom of Expression-Global Context							
Multicultural History and role of media							
Culturally proficient communication							
Images and Information							
Write Correctly and Clearly							
Ethics							
Critical thinking							
Use of numbers and statistics						Sociology 3307- Statistics for Behavioral Sciences is required for all majors	
Critically evaluate own work and the work of others							
Apply tools and technology							

White cells: this course does not expose students to the competency.

Lighter cells: students gain an awareness and understanding of the competency. 

Darker cells: students apply the values and competencies. 

## Standard 4: Diversity and Inclusiveness

Question 4 asks for a grid that outlines where cultural communications proficiency is taught in the curriculum. Here is one example, courtesy of Texas State University’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication. **AS NOTED EARLIER, THIS IS JUST ONE EXAMPLE. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO FOLLOW THIS MODEL. USE WHAT WORKS FOR YOUR UNIT.**

Standard 4 Grid	MC 1301- Intro to Mass Communication	Writing course appropriate to discipline	MC 4301- Media Law and Ethics	MC 4381- Digital and Online Media	MC Major courses	Campus events and activities	Unit Study Abroad
Culturally proficient communication							

Lighter cells: students gain an awareness and understanding.   
 Darker cells: students apply culturally proficient communication.

## Glossary for Standard 4:

**Diversity** – all of the differences that exist within people, with the recognition that some elements of diversity are linked to the disenfranchisement of people

**Inclusion** – feeling as if a person belongs and is a respected and valued member of the organization; proactive behaviors that make each person feel welcome and a part of an organization

**Equity** – process of ensuring fairness and equal opportunity based on circumstance, especially engagement to ensure that people with marginalized identities have the opportunity to grow, contribute, and develop.

**Domestic minorities** – citizens of the unit’s nation who are from a racial or ethnic group whose population is not the majority in the nation or who have less economic or political power than the majority. (Permanent visa or temporary visa holders are not included in this domestic minority count.)

**International faculty/students** – faculty members or students who hold a temporary visa (non-immigrant) or a permanent visa (immigrant status) to work or study in the unit’s host country

**Culturally Proficient Communication** – communication that enables students to effectively, accurately exchange information that also empowers at both verbal and nonverbal levels with diverse groups, that have been traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially along racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation and ability differences

**Key Performance Indicator** – A goal is the broad target you want to achieve. An objective is the specific target you want to achieve.

A KPI is the key performance indicator which includes measurement tool and target level of achievement.

## Standard 5: Faculty

The Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities grid seeks an accounting of the productivity during the review period. The first column, Total from Unit, and the last column, Total (Individuals) are often confused as being the same. They are not.

Example: If three faculty members collaborated on one academic paper. The Total from Unit would show 1; the Total (Individuals) would show 3.

Scholarship, Research, Creative and Professional Activities	Total from Unit*	Individuals				Total Individuals (XX)
		Full Professors (XX)	Associate Professors (XX)	Assistant Professors (XX)	Other Faculty** (XX)	
Refereed Conference Papers	<b>1</b>		1	2		<b>3</b>
Invited Academic Papers						
Encyclopedia Entries						
Book Reviews						
Articles in Non-refereed Publications						
Juried Creative Works						
Non-juried Creative Works						
Other (please specify)						

\*Co-authored work should be counted as a single publication in the unit totals. However, if, for example, two members of the faculty are co-authors on the same journal article, it would be reported as a publication for both authors. \*\*Includes all full-time faculty who do not hold listed ranks, such as instructors and others on term appointments. Many faculty in this category may hold teaching appointments without significant scholarship, research or creative requirements.