

**OFFSITE SUBJECT SPECIALIST’S MASTER’S DEGREE PROGRAM
REPORT TEMPLATE**

Instructions

**The following Offsite Subject Specialist Report Template is for master’s degree programs only.**

It is the off-site subject specialist’s responsibility to make an initial determination of whether the institution’s educational offerings meet DEAC’s accreditation standards and core components and to complete the following report template.

Findings guidelines:

* **Meets Standard:** The institution’s educational offerings demonstrate compliance with the intent of the accreditation standard or core component.
* **Partially Meets Standard:** The institution’s educational offerings demonstrate compliance with some, but not all, of the elements contained in the accreditation standard or core component.
* **Does Not Meet Standard:** The institution’s educational offerings do not demonstrate compliance with a majority of the elements contained in the accreditation standard or core component.

The evaluator should provide clear and concise descriptions within the “Comments” section of the report to support each determination that a standard or core component is met, partially met, or not met.

**If an institution meets the accreditation standard**, the evaluator should highlight within the Comments section the processes and procedures the institution followed that enabled it to demonstrate compliance. This report is part of the record that is provided to the Commission and must clearly indicate how the institution demonstrated compliance. Any direct quotes from the Educational Offering Report (EOR) should be indicated by quotation marks and any paraphrased materials should indicate that the source material is the EOR. In addition to narrative material sourced from the EOR, Comments should explain what exhibits/additional materials were reviewed to verify compliance.

**If an institution partially meets or does not meet a standard**, the evaluator must to adequately describe why the decision was reached and refer, as appropriate, to narrative sections and exhibits within the EOR that support the determination. The evaluator must also indicate the required actions necessary for the institution to demonstrate compliance with the partially met or unmet accreditation standard. **Each required action must be tied back to an accreditation standard or core component.**

For required actions, the off-site subject specialist should begin each statement with, “[Insert Name of Institution] needs to [insert the action necessary by the institution to demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standard.]” Alternately, “Standard XXX requires [Insert quotation of the specific Standard /Core Component]. [Insert Name of Institution] needs to [insert the action necessary by the institution to demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standard.]”

Again, the required action must clearly establish which specific parts of the standard were not met and provide discrete actions the institution must take to fix the issue(s) and demonstrate compliance with the referenced Standard. Comments should also provide context and discussion of the issues observed (e.g. Required Actions that seemingly come out of nowhere can be confusing for institutions and harder for the institution and Commission to understand).

As part of the peer review process, it is important that institutions receive suggestions for improving their educational offerings and support services. The accreditation process allows the institution to benefit from an external review and perspective. The off-site subject specialist is encouraged to provide suggestions within the report. Suggestions are those recommendations that are not required to meet minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

For suggestions, the off-site subject specialist should begin each statement with, “[Insert Name of Institution] may want to consider [insert the recommendation for improvement.]

**Report Submission:** The off-site subject specialist emails the completed report to the DEAC manager of institutional development and assessment (Lissette.Hubbard@deac.org). Once all information is received, DEAC notifies the off-site subject specialist to appropriately dispose of all institutional materials.

Helpful Hints

* The off-site subject specialist’s report should be objectively written in third person, narrative format using declarative sentences and simple verbs. The report should avoid broad generalities and speculative views.
* The off-site subject specialist’s report represents an accurate, concise, factual, and thorough presentation of the individual findings as a result of the review. The off-site subject specialist clearly communicates findings to DEAC by providing evidence.
* When making a determination whether the institution meets, partially meets, or does not meet accreditation standards, the off-site subject specialist should include evidence of documents reviewed or analyzed in the program report and exhibits that led to the finding. Include specific examples.
* The off-site subject specialist’s report documents attributes and deficiencies using language found in the accreditation standards and core components. All deficiencies must be documented.
* The off-site subject specialist’s report should not require an institution to implement a new program or procedure in order to demonstrate compliance with a partially met or unmet accreditation standard. The off-site subject specialist’s report states the required action necessary to provide evidence or demonstrate compliance. The institution bears responsibility for demonstrating compliance with DEAC’s accreditation standards.
* The off-site subject specialist’s report accurately presents comments, required actions, and suggestions using direct quotations, references, data, and examples from the application.
* The off-site subject specialist’s report does not make recommendations to the Commission concerning the overall accreditation of the institution.



DEAC Offsite Subject Specialist’s Report (Confidential)

Name of Institution: Name of institution

Date of Review: Date of review

Report Submitted: Graduate Degree Program Report

Program Reviewed: Program reviewed

Courses Reviewed: Course(s) reviewed

# Accreditation Standards

Standard IV: Academic Achievement

1. **Student Learning Outcomes**

Student learning outcomes are clearly defined, simply stated, and measurable and define success for students who are reasonably capable of completing the educational offering.

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| **Standard IV.A. – Meets, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

**Comments:** Provide comments to support the finding based on the institution’s responses and evidence provided.

**Required Actions:** Provide the required actions necessary for the institution to demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standards. Each required action must correspond to an accreditation standard or a core component.

**Suggestions:** Suggestions are those recommendations that are not required to meet minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

1. **Direct Measures**

The institution evaluates student achievement using student outcome indicators (e.g., completion rates) and other measures that it determines to be appropriate relative to its mission and educational offerings, including post-completion measures. The institution maintains systematic and ongoing processes for assessing student achievement, analyzes aggregated and disaggregated data, and documents that the results meet both internal and external benchmarks, including those comparable to courses or programs offered at peer DEAC-accredited institutions. Data on student achievement is collected on a continuous basis and evaluated annually.

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| **Standard IV.B. – Meets, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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Standard V: Academic Program Requirements

1. **General Program Requirements**

The institution’s programs are aligned with its mission. Program content, student learning outcomes, and standards of student performance are appropriate to the academic discipline and level of the credential conferred. Entry and completion requirements for each program are clearly defined and consistent with commonly accepted program expectations of the authority for awarding the credential. Program length for degree programs must adhere to the following minimum standards:

1. Associate degree – minimum 60 semester hours or equivalent.
2. Bachelor’s degree – minimum 120 semester hours or equivalent.
3. Master’s degree – minimum 30 semester hours or equivalent beyond the bachelor’s degree.
4. First Professional degree (at any level) – minimum 50 semester hours or equivalent beyond the bachelor’s degree.
5. Applied doctorate – minimum 48 semester hours or equivalent beyond the master’s degree.
6. Research doctorate – minimum 60 semester hours or equivalent beyond the master’s degree.

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| **Standard V.A. – Meets, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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1. **Alternative Program Structures**

Institutions may offer alternative program structures appropriate to the institution’s mission. Such program structures may include direct assessment (competency-based) programs, joint degrees, dual degrees, double majors, and advanced standing degree enrollment as defined in the glossary. Alternative degree plans must meet all student learning outcomes and DEAC’s standards of accreditation, including the requirement that the majority of each program be offered through distance education.

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| **Standard V.C. – Meets, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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1. **Program Advisory Council(s)**

The institution maintains an Advisory Council of individuals external to the institution with expertise for each major group of programs or major subject matter disciplines it offers to inform curricular development decisions and align program content to current practices. Institutional personnel may participate as liaisons to Advisory Councils.

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| **Standard V.D. – Meets, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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Standard VI: Curriculum Development

1. **Program Curricula Development**

Institutions have a documented process for curriculum development that clearly articulates the principles of learning and pedagogical foundations used to frame the program. The institution’s curricula are supported by reliable research and align with commonly accepted educational practices within the fields of practice. Qualified faculty and academic leadership hold the primary responsibility for all program content and instructional design and supervise staff, third-party providers, or consultants used in curricula development. Program curricula are reviewed on a periodic basis by academic leadership, program leadership, program faculty, and the Program Advisory Council. The review integrates program performance data collected on an annual basis with respect to student progression; student learning outcomes; faculty and student feedback; and content currency, accuracy, and comprehensiveness.

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| **Standard VI.A. – Meets, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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1. **Instructional Design and Materials**

All curricula and instructional materials are designed for the program’s distance learning delivery modality by qualified individuals and grounded in instructional design principles. Instructional design considers how students learn, the nature and accessibility of the materials, and methods deemed most effective to help students learn in specific delivery modalities. Courses integrate access to learning materials and resources. Courses include instructions and suggestions on how to study and how to use the instructional materials to learn effectively and efficiently. Syllabi are aligned with course content and are structured to direct course learning experiences and activities.

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| **Standard VI.B. – Meets, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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1. **Academic Units of Measurement**

The institution documents policies and procedures used to define and calculate the chosen academic unit of measurement. The framework for academic units must be supported by research and consistent with the program learning outcomes. Academic units are measured by credit hours or competencies. Academic unit measurements for all delivery modalities and program types must clearly show that each program is delivered with at least 51 percent distance education. The institution measures and documents the amount of time it takes the average student to achieve learning outcomes and specifies the academic engagement and preparation time. If academic units are measured in clock hours, the institution documents its implementation and application of policies and procedures for determining clock hours awarded for its courses and programs. A clock hour is one instructional hour. One instructional hour is defined as 50 minutes of instruction in a 60-minute period.

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1. **Credit Hour Definition**

Semester and quarter credit hours are equivalent to the commonly accepted and traditionally defined units of academic measurement. Academic degree or academic credit-bearing distance education courses are measured by the learning outcomes normally achieved through 45 hours of student work for one semester credit or 30 hours of student work for one quarter credit. One credit/semester hour is 15 hours of academic engagement and 30 hours of preparation. One quarter hour credit is 10 hours of academic engagement and 20 hours of preparation.

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| **Standard VI.D. – Meets, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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Standard VII: Learning Materials, Resources, and Research Support

1. **General Learning Resources**

Institutional learning resources include general materials or resources that are available to students outside individual class environments. Learning materials and resources are designed to adequately support educational offerings in meeting learning outcomes.

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1. **Course Level Learning Resources**

In-course learning resources for faculty and students are available and appropriate to the level and content of the course within the scope of the program offering. Program designers and faculty use effective teaching aids and learning resources, including educational media and supplemental instructional aids, when delivering courses and teaching students. The institution provides faculty and students with access to all relevant learning resources, materials, or related services that are appropriate for the achievement of course learning outcomes.

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1. **Library and Research Support**

Staff or contracted librarians must support the learning, teaching, and research functions of institutions, as well as provide overall support to the institution’s curriculum as applicable to the level and content of the institution’s academic programs. A process is in place to select, acquire, organize, and maintain institutional learning materials and resources for each program.

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**Suggestions:** Suggestions are those recommendations that are not required to meet minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

1. **Evaluation, Review, and Revision.**

The quality, adequacy, currency, and accuracy of institutional learning resources, technologies, library resources, and in-course learning resources for each program are reviewed and evaluated at least annually. The review is conducted by institutional academic leadership and program leadership, with input from faculty and students. The process and applicable resources are revised as appropriate, based on each review.

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Standard VIII: Academic Delivery

1. **Curricula Delivery**

All curricula and instructional materials are developed in alignment with the institution’s mission and delivery modality. Regardless of methodology, delivery supports interactions with faculty in synchronous or asynchronous learning.

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| **Standard VIII.A. – Meets, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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1. **Supporting Academic Technologies**

The institution uses technology appropriate to its modality and institutional context to support the delivery of its educational programs. This includes not only technology that delivers course materials and content, but also technology that (1) supports communications between students and faculty; (2) monitors student progress and achievement; (3) provides access to other academic resources, such as online libraries and third-party programs; (4) offers readily accessible channels for students to communicate questions, complaints, and concerns to applicable faculty or institutional staff; (5) protects the integrity of academic programs, testing, student work, and student communications; and (6) otherwise supports the collection of data necessary for the institution to evaluate its operations and performance.

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| **Standard VIII.B. – Meets, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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Standard IX: Academic Leadership and Staffing

1. **Faculty Qualifications**
2. The institution provides the appropriate number of qualified faculty to achieve program and course outcomes and provide instruction. The institution maintains faculty résumés, official transcripts, and copies of applicable licenses or credentials on file.
3. Faculty teaching in master’s degree programs possess a doctoral or terminal degree and demonstrate expertise in the subject field they are teaching.
4. Faculty may be assigned, in limited and exceptional cases, to teach at the undergraduate or master’s level by documented equivalency consisting of a demonstrated depth and breadth of experience in the content area. An institution that uses experiential equivalency in lieu of the required degree qualifications for faculty and other academic positions must establish and adhere to a clearly stated policy which authorizes the use of experiential equivalency only in exceptional cases and only where equivalency is demonstrated pursuant to published and objective criteria. In such cases, the institution implements:
5. a well-defined policy, with processes and procedures to evaluate the need for and assignment of faculty by equivalency; and
6. procedures that ensure that adequate oversight of teaching and learning is provided by individuals who possess degree qualifications in accordance with faculty qualifications listed in IX.B.4-6 and 8 above.

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Standard X: Academic Policies

1. **Institutional Review Board**

Any institution that has students or faculty engage in research involving human subjects implements an institutional review board (IRB). The IRB ensures that such research studies comply with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations under 45 CFR Part 56 and other applicable regulations, meets commonly accepted ethical standards, follows institutional policy, and adequately protects research participants. The IRB is responsible for approving and providing oversight on all research activities involving human subjects conducted by students, faculty, and other academic support personnel.

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| **Standard X.G. – Meets, Partially Meets, Does Not Meet, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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Focused Comments on Courses Reviewed

The focused course reviews fall under the scope of the DEAC standards included in the program’s Educational Offerings Report (EOR). Any concerns or issues raised should be included or referenced in the comments and/or required actions for those standards.

**For each course, include comments on the following in the Comments field**:

1. Do the course outcomes link to program outcome(s)?
2. Are the course curriculum and instructional materials appropriate for the program level and subject field?
3. Are the instructional materials up-to-date and reflective of current knowledge?
4. Will the examinations and assessments provide adequate evidence of course outcomes achievement?
5. Is the identified instructor of record for this course identified and appropriately qualified?

Copy and paste more Focused Comment fields as needed to provide comments on each representative course.

**Course Code/Name:** Insert course code and name

**Comments:** Provide specific comments or observations on the identified course and **note any standard(s) where the institution needs to further demonstrate compliance.**

**Suggestions:** Suggestions are those recommendations that are not required to meet minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

**Course Code/Name:** Insert course code and name

**Comments:** Provide specific comments or observations on the identified course and **note any standard(s) where the institution needs to further demonstrate compliance.**

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**Course Code/Name:** Insert course code and name

**Comments:** Provide specific comments or observations on the identified course and **note any standard(s) where the institution needs to further demonstrate compliance.**

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