

12. Policy on Readiness Assessment

First time applicants for accreditation are **required** to undergo a Readiness Assessment by an independent DETC-appointed evaluator to assist the applicant in preparing for a full on-site examination.

The first purpose of the assessment is to provide a mechanism for DETC to ascertain if the applicant's Self-Evaluation Report provides sufficient evidence and information for a successful on-site committee review. Another purpose is to provide the applicant with guidance on what actions to take to get the institution ready for an accreditation review. The third purpose is to ensure that the applicant meets a minimum level of eligibility qualification for DETC accreditation that would justify the commitment of Commission resources in carrying out a full accreditation examination.

Readiness Assessment Report

The tone of the Readiness Assessment Report is intended to be informal, consultative, collegial, and interactive. The applicant will be provided ample opportunity to seek advice from DETC on how best to prepare for a visit.

In the Readiness Assessment Report, an applicant will be advised whether or not it has met the minimum threshold eligibility requirements and is ready for an on-site visit by a full examining committee.

The name of an initial applicant will not be published in DETC's publications or posted on DETC's website until **after** it has completed a successful Readiness Assessment. A copy of the Readiness Report will be sent to the visiting team members before the on-site visit.

Action

An institution should start writing its Self-Evaluation Report (SER) *before* it submits its Application for Accreditation. Before beginning to write the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), at least one key staff member must complete the *DETC Course on Preparing for Accreditation*. Completing this online course qualifies the person as a "Compliance Officer." This must be complete by the time of application.

The Compliance Officer should consult with the Executive Director and/or Director of Accreditation to discuss the accrediting process, purposes, and procedures. At this point, the Compliance Officer should be fully aware of what and when materials are required to complete all the steps in the accreditation process.

The applicant must first submit **two** paper copies and an electronic copy of a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) within 60 days of the date the Application for Accreditation is received by DETC. The SER should be as close to the final version as possible, and should include all of the exhibits. The institution **must** use the Guide to Self-Evaluation Report in Appendix B when writing its SER.

The fee for the Readiness Assessment is \$3,000 (E.1. Accreditation Fees). The Readiness Assessment will not be scheduled the SER and the check for \$3,000 is received by DETC.

Once the Director of Accreditation receives the SER, she will send it to an evaluator. The evaluator will review the SER thoroughly and prepare a written report as to the “readiness” of the institution to proceed. The evaluator and a DETC staff member will also make notations in the SER to indicate where changes should be made. The report and the marked-up SER will be forwarded to the institution. The report will recommend whether the institution is “ready” or is “not ready” for a visit by a full examining committee.

If the institution is deemed “ready,” the institution should make the appropriate changes to its SER and start organizing for a full on-site visit. The institution should work with the Director of Accreditation to establish a date for submitting its course materials and final SER. The Director of Accreditation will send the courses to be reviewed by outside subject specialists. The Director of Accreditation will also work with the institution to establish a date for the on-site visit. When an institution is “ready” its name will be posted on DETC’s website as an applicant.

If the institution is deemed “not ready” for a full on-site visit, it may not proceed to a full on-site review until it has documented to the satisfaction of the assessing evaluator that it has remedied the areas of concern in the Assessment Report. The institution must correct the areas of concern and submit a revised SER before it can move forward in the process. The resubmission fee is \$2,000.

At this time, the institution may request an in-person consultation at the DETC office. The consultation fee is \$1,000. It is the institution’s responsibility to cover any of its travel and lodging expenses.

If the institution believes that the assessment evaluator has made an incorrect assessment, the institution has the option to request another evaluation of its SER by a different evaluator. The fee for another review by a different evaluator is \$3,000.

If an institution is found “not ready” after its second Readiness Assessment, it must undergo an on-site Readiness Visit or withdraw its Application for Accreditation and wait one year before resubmitting it. The Readiness Visit has one evaluator and a DETC staff member. The cost is \$2,000 per person or \$4,000 total. If after the Readiness Visit the institution is found “not ready” it must withdraw its Application and wait one year before resubmitting it.

The Readiness Assessment Report that is produced will be provided to the Examining Committee. Course/curriculum reviews will not be done before the Readiness Assessment is successfully concluded. However, if the institution is deemed “ready” for a full on-site visit, the Report will be provided to the on-site evaluators.

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