

Guidelines for Evaluation Committee Reports

ATS Commission on Accrediting

Thank you for agreeing to be part of an evaluation visit on behalf of the ATS Commission on Accrediting. We appreciate your willingness to serve on one of our evaluation committees. The guidelines listed below are meant to help you contribute to a more effective committee evaluation report.

1. The major product of the evaluation committee is a 20-25 page report (Times New Roman, 12 point, single-spaced) that provides overall recommendations to the ATS Board of Commissioners, who make the final decisions. The committee's recommendations (constituting the last 1-3 pages of the report) are preceded by a narrative discussion of each applicable standard, describing how well the committee thinks the school has met that standard.
2. All recommendations in the last part of the report must be copied (word for word and in bold font) into the part of the narrative that deals with the standard in question. Each recommendation should be specific enough so that the school knows what is expected. The narrative section preceding the specific recommendation should provide a context/rationale for it. Recommendations are typically introduced with the phrase: "Therefore, the committee recommends..." [in bold font]. Each one must conclude by citing one or more specific standards tied to that recommendation. If a specific standard cannot be cited, the recommendation should not be made, though a suggestion may be.
3. Each committee member is typically responsible for evaluating 3-5 standards and writing 1-2 page reports on each one, describing how well the school meets those standards. The chair usually asks committee members to submit all of their sections within a few days of the end of the visit. The chair will edit all sections for consistency and clarity and email a draft copy to the committee and staff liaison for a final review. The chair will make any final changes before sending it to the school and staff liaison within two weeks of the end of the visit. The school has two weeks to notify the chair of any factual errors. The chair will make any necessary corrections before sending a final copy to the Commission staff liaison. The final copy of the report sent to the school and chair comes from the ATS office. The school has 30 days to write a response to the final report, agreeing or disagreeing with any recommendations.
4. As stated in *Chapter Four of the Self-Study Handbook: [Guidelines for Evaluation Committee Members](#)* (p. 10): "The report should draw attention to issues, problems, and strengths without implying doubts about the institution's wisdom or the competence of its staff or faculty." That means the report should not "name names" or call attention to any person(s), but rather "identify concerns" and refer to issues that need to be addressed. Inclusive language should be used.
5. As also noted in *Chapter Four* (referenced above, p. 11): "Effective reports are characterized by a distinctive tone and style. The tone should be descriptive, not prescriptive. In other words, the report should identify those facts about an institution that have led to a committee's judgments and should *not* indicate what the institution should do." The report should be written in the third person, emphasizing the consensus of the committee (e.g., "the committee observed..." not "I heard..." or "I believe...").
6. The committee is also responsible for completing and reviewing the *Targeted Issues Checklist* (listed at the bottom of [this link](#)), though the person reviewing the standards on integrity and on students often take the lead in this (along with help from the Commission staff liaison). The completed Checklist must be appended to the report.
7. The ATS Commission office will also provide each committee member a "Committee Report Framework" at least 7 weeks before the visit. That document provides further guidance on what reports should cover, including criteria for deciding how long a period of accreditation to recommend and what kinds of recommendations are available to committee members.