Guide to Writing the Self-Study

American Board for Accreditation in Psychoanalysis, Inc.

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The Self-Study Process

Purpose

The self-study is an essential aspect of accreditation serving two equally important purposes.   It is both a critical opportunity for the training program to examine its own performance with respect to each of ABAP, Inc.'s standards, and it is the primary mechanism, in conjunction with the site visit, by which the ABAP, Inc. Committee on Accreditation evaluates a psychoanalytic training program applying for accreditation or reaccreditation.

The self-study report is an introspective study of the program's strengths and limitations, as well as a candid evaluation of how well the program complies with ABAP, Inc.'s Standards for Accreditation.   It is designed to help the program evaluate its current situation and plan for improvement, and to stimulate critical, collegial, constructive dialogue and discussion about an institution's psychoanalytic training program.

The Self-Study Process and Timing

The self-study and site visit process are meant, together, to provide a comprehensive assessment of a psychoanalytic training program in light of ABAP, Inc.'s Standards for Accreditation.   The process of developing the self-study ideally includes all members of the psychoanalytic program's community in a candid self-assessment, discussion, drafting of the self-study, and revision process over the course of a year's time.   After the program submits the self-study, the site visit and evaluation processes that lead ultimately to an accreditation action by the ABAP, Inc. Board typically take another year.   **Therefore, programs seeking reaccreditation should begin the self-study process two years before their accreditation status expires and should submit the self-study to the Office of Accreditation one year prior to the expiration date.**

Allowing one year for the composition of the self-study allows program leaders to complete a quality self-study, including fact-finding, self-assessment, committee discussion, writing and revising the document, and preparing all necessary supplemental materials.

ABAP, Inc. expects a representative portion of the institute's administrative staff, teaching faculty, students, alumni, and governing body to be involved in developing the self-study. Through a thorough assessment of the program's strengths and limitations, the self-study process should not only document existing conditions, but also evaluate to what extent the program meets ABAP, Inc. standards.   The self-study should identify strengths, problem areas, and revised goals and objectives in relation to each standard. This is an educational process, and the resultant document

should be helpful to the program in achieving its potential growth and development.

After the program submits the self-study, ABAP, Inc. allows about six months for the Committee on Accreditation (COA) to critically evaluate the self-study. The COA may request revisions or more information before recommending that the Office of Accreditation schedule an on-site evaluation by a visiting team. It then takes another six months for the scheduling of the site visit, the site visit itself, the development of the team's evaluation report, consideration of the evaluation report by the COA, the COA's recommendation to the Board, and an accreditation action by the Board of Trustees.

Format

The self-study is preceded by the Preliminary Fact Sheet that summarizes the program.

Following the Fact Sheet is the self-study itself. The self-study examines the training program's performance with respect to each of ABAP, Inc.'s standards. The document is organized according to each standard, as indicated in the outline below. Within each standard, the report is designed to accomplish the following:

  a. Describe what exists relative to the standards.
  b. Assess the adequacy of what exists in relation to what the standard requires, addressing areas of strength and compliance, partial compliance, or admitted non-compliance.
  c. Plan how the program will improve in relation to the standard, addressing any deficiencies discovered as part of the self-analysis, but also any plans to build on strengths.

Therefore, within each standard, the self-study report should be divided into three separate sections:

  a. DESCRIPTION: This section describes what exists relative to all the multiple sub-standards within each standard. It makes reference to supporting documents and materials that demonstrate what is being described, e.g., course catalogs, handbooks, statistical reports, etc. This section does not attribute value to what is being described. It will most likely be the longest part of the chapter.

  b. ASSESSMENT: This section candidly evaluates the adequacy of what exists in relation to what the standard requires, addressing areas of strength and compliance,

partial compliance, or admitted non-compliance.   It should demonstrate an honest assessment of the current state of the program in relation to where it has been and where it is going.   It describes or makes reference to program evaluations, statistics, or other institutional research, whether quantitative or qualitative, which support the self-study's assessment conclusions.   It might include program leadership's opinions as well as the voices of other constituents within the community, which may have surfaced during the course of the self-study.   This is also an appropriate place to highlight areas of concern that were discovered during the self-study process but were already corrected.   This section should not exceed two pages.

c. PLANNING: This section provides short and long-term plans regarding how the program will improve in relation to the standard, particularly addressing any deficiencies discovered as part of the self-analysis, as well as plans to build on strengths. This section will usually not exceed one page.

The self-study report *per se* should be no more than 35 to 50 pages in length, single spaced. Conciseness is encouraged, and longer rough drafts should be honed to be succinct.

Following the self-study are the supplemental documents that support each standard, in order of appearance, and unduplicated, as well as a list of additional documents that will be available to the on-site evaluation team.   The self-study should refer to the supplemental materials and indicate how they provide evidence of compliance. Self-studies submitted with unnecessary materials submitted in lieu of a true, organized self-assessment will be returned for editing by the Office of Accreditation prior to submission to the Committee on Accreditation.

In addition to the supplemental materials, the self-study includes required forms, provided in the appendix of this document.   The final self-study is thus organized in the following order:
- Preliminary Fact Sheet
- Self-study *per se* (following the outline below)
- Supplemental documentation (addressing each standard in order)
- Public Disclosure Checklist

The program submits the final self-study and supplemental documents electronically to the Office of Accreditation as one seamless .pdf file.   (Please contact the Office of Accreditation for assistance if necessary.)   The self-study may also refer to the program's web site, if it contains pertinent resources.

Self-Study Outline

Overview (2-4 pages)

The self-study begins with a brief overview of the institution.   In a reaccreditation report, the overview should describe the extent to which the program has achieved the goals it set in the previous self-study.   The overview highlights major achievements as well as what remains to be done. It very briefly summarizes the main conclusions of the self-study.

The overview also provides a brief description of how the self-study was developed, including who participated and what process they followed.

Standard One: Mission, Organization, and Governance (3-6 pages)

DESCRIPTION:

This section describes the institution and program in relation to Standards 1-10 under Mission, Organization, and Governance, referring specifically to each standard.

- In the narrative, set forth the purpose of the program, including a history of the establishment of the program, early planning and original educational aims, and current educational objectives and goals. This section should also include a presentation of the program's philosophy on what goes into the making of a psychoanalyst.

- Discuss how the institution is organized to carry out its educational function, including a description of the ownership, control, and type of legal organization of the institution, and the relationship of the program to the institution as whole. Describe the program's authority to operate, particularly (for distance learning programs) with regard to operating in multiple jurisdictions.

- Describe the governing board and its composition and qualifications (including ratio of public members), as well as personnel assignments and how those are contracted.   Describe major committees, their functions, and their composition, including any student participation.   Biographical descriptions of the major players will help evaluators understand how program leaders are qualified in their respective roles.

- Include information on how the governing body develops, establishes, and evaluates educational programs and policies, including a description of short-term and long-term strategic planning.

- Describe risk management policies, such as insurance coverage for the program.

ASSESSMENT:

This section evaluates the adequacy of what exists in relation to the standards under Mission, Organization, and Governance, addressing areas of strength and compliance, partial compliance, or admitted non-compliance.

- Provide an analysis of how well the program meets the spirit and the letter of these standards.   For example, how well does the administrative structure support the execution of the mission?   Are there goals for development of the Board?

- For programs with multiple locations or a significant distance learning component, provide an assessment of how well the governance structure manages these components.

PLANNING:

This section provides short and long-term plans regarding how the program will improve in relation to Mission, Organization, and Governance, particularly addressing any deficiencies discovered as part of the self-analysis.

- Describes any expected changes to the program's purposes.

- Describe any projected changes to personnel, leadership, or board composition.

APPEND THE FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

1. _____The mission statement of the institution and the program itself, if different

2. _____The incorporating documents of the institution and evidence of the authority under which the program operates (articles of incorporation and amendment, any additional government approvals)

3. _____A list of the governing board members and their affiliations and areas of expertise

4. _____A list of the administrators and their qualifications and responsibilities

5. _____An organizational chart

6. _____The institution's bylaws

7. _____The institution's and/or program's conflict of interest policy and other Board policies

8. _____Any relevant contracts (may be provided on-site if described in the narrative)

9. _____The institution's insurance policies (may be provided on-site if described in the narrative)

10. _____Any strategic planning documents (may be provided on site if described in the narrative)

Standard Two: Financial Resources (2-5 pages)

DESCRIPTION:

This section describes the financial resources and financial management of the program.

- Provide a brief narrative about the program's financial situation, including sources of revenue and expenses.

- Describe both financial assets and liabilities.

- Describe how finances are managed, including policies such as refund policies, and mechanisms for ensuring integrity in financial management and reporting.

- Describes the qualifications of financial managers, the role of the governing board in ensuring financial integrity, and the program's budget process.

ASSESSMENT:

This section evaluates the adequacy of the program's financial resources, including an analysis of sustainability going forward.

- How does revenue compare to expenses? Does the program regularly and currently run a profit or a deficit? What is the impact on cash reserves?

- What is the likelihood that anticipated sources of revenue will support the program's activities?

- Provide an assessment of financial management personnel and procedures.

PLANNING:

This section provides short and long-term plans regarding financial sustainability.

- How are current financial realities influencing future budgeting?

- Describe any expected changes to finances or management that might occur.

- How does the program provide contingencies to respond to unanticipated changes?

APPEND THE FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

1. _____Three years of formal financial statements that have been reviewed or audited by a certified public accountant.   (The review requirement began in 2013.   This requirement asks that a CPA provide evidence of a formal review on letterhead.)

2. _____This year's unreviewed financial statements to date, in the form of an income statement and a balance sheet.

3. _____A three-year projected operating budget, including enrollment projections

4. _____Resumes of financial management personnel (may be provided on-site)

Standard Three: Library Resources (2-5 pages)

DESCRIPTION:

This section describes the library and information resources that are available to students and faculty of the program.

- Describe the program's collection, including books, periodicals, reference materials, and electronic resources.

- Indicate how decisions are made about new acquisitions.

- For programs where library resources are highly dependent on specific individuals or external libraries, describe how access to library resources is guaranteed currently and going forward.

- Indicate library hours and provide an estimate of student and faculty usage.

- For programs with extensive distance learning, describe how students access information resources.

- Describes any library personnel, library instruction, or other support for individuals seeking help with information resources.

ASSESSMENT:

This section evaluates the adequacy of the program's library and information resources.

- Provide an analysis of how well library resources are geared to the instructional objectives of the program.

- How accessible are library and information resources, and how sustainable is that access going forward?

- For programs where library resources are highly dependent on specific individuals or external libraries, evaluate how resources may be affected in the future.

- Include the program's "wish list" for library resources.

PLANNING:

This section provides short and long-term plans regarding the further development of information resources.

- What are the plans for collection development or electronic subscriptions?

- Describes any projected improvements to access and availability of library resources.

- What actions will be taken towards achieving that wish list?

- Identify contingency plans for unexpected disruptions in library access.

APPEND THE FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

1. _____Any formal agreements for access to libraries outside the institution, including faculty libraries

2. _____Library budget

3. _____Resumes of library personnel (may be provided on site)

Standard Four: Physical and Technological Resources (2-5 pages)

DESCRIPTION:

This section describes the facilities, space, equipment, and technological resources that are available to the program.

- Provide evidence of a consistent, published address for administrative offices and indicate where administrative and student records are securely housed.

- For the administrative, instructional, and clinical spaces, indicate the location(s) as well as the number of students, faculty, and staff accommodated by the facilities.

- For each location, describe the availability of personnel and mechanisms for oversight of training.

- For programs which rely on outside agencies or individuals for instructional or clinical space, describe how access to those facilities is guaranteed.

- For programs with significant distance learning components, describe the technology used and the arrangements for clinical placements.

ASSESSMENT:

This section evaluates the adequacy of the program's facilities, equipment, and technology, including distance learning technology.

- How well do physical and technological resources meet the educational and clinical objectives of the program?

- For programs which rely on outside agencies or individuals for instructional or clinical space, analyze how resources may be affected in the future.

- Include the program's "wish list" for facilities and equipment.

PLANNING:

This section provides short and long-term plans regarding the further development of facilities and equipment.

- What actions will be taken towards achieving that wish list?

- What are the contingency plans for unexpected changes to facilities, such as the loss of a lease?

APPEND THE FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

1. _____A list of addresses where the program operates

2. _____Any leases or agreements for access to facilities (may be provided on-site)

3. _____Floor plans, if appropriate (may be provided on-site)

Standard Five: Faculty Resources (4-6 pages)

DESCRIPTION:

This section describes the program's faculty.

- Provide numbers of core and/or part-time faculty, and education and experience criteria and qualifications for faculty and supervisor appointment.

- Provide a short bio for each core faculty member.

- Describe faculty policies and procedures, including recruitment and retention policies and grievance procedures.

- Provide information on faculty workloads, retention statistics, faculty salaries, and any faculty training programs.

ASSESSMENT:

This section evaluates the adequacy of the program's faculty, in terms of quality and quantity.

- How sufficient and well qualified is the faculty to implement the training program?

- Evaluate the current availability of qualified faculty members and anticipate future needs if the program is growing or if turnover is anticipated.

- Describe any goals for faculty development, such as increasing faculty publications or other goals.

PLANNING:

This section provides plans for faculty development, including training, recruitment, and professional development.

APPEND THE FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

1. _____Faculty handbook and/or other policy documents

2. _____Faculty bios if not provided in the text (faculty resumes are provided on-site)

3. _____Any lists of faculty publications (may be provided on-site)

Standard Six: Student Support Resources (2-5 pages)

DESCRIPTION:

This section describes how students are supported throughout their clinical training.

- Describe the program's student body, including numbers of students and their demographics, and make note of how students participate in the life of the program.

- Describe the program's student support services, such as academic advising, placement services for internships or clinical work, and career guidance on the practice of psychoanalysis.

- For distance learning programs, emphasize how students are advised, provided clinical experience, and supervised at a distance.

- Elaborate how the program trains and oversees faculty members and other staff who are responsible for advising students.

ASSESSMENT:

This section evaluates the adequacy of the program's student support services.

- How knowledgeable are faculty or staff advisors regarding the program's curriculum, program requirements, and graduation requirements, and are advisors sufficient in quantity?

- Indicate whether the self-study revealed any student needs the program might help address, such as financial aid, job placement, or other assistance.

PLANNING:

This section describes how the program plans to address any concerns identified in relation to student support services.

APPEND THE FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

1. _____Registration materials

2. _____Student handbook and/or other policy documents

Standard Seven: Public Disclosure and Institutional Integrity (3-7 pages)

DESCRIPTION:

Making reference to the many standards under Public Disclosure and Institutional Integrity, this section describes the published materials, whether in print or electronic, that are made available to students, faculty, staff, and the public.

- Describe the program's non-discrimination policies and elaborate how admission and advancement decisions are reached by the faculty and administration.   Does the program publish the requirements for student advancement through stages of training?

- Indicate how student records are maintained and accessed, by whom, including confidentiality policies and procedures.

- Describe or refer to policies regarding (a) changes in program requirements, (b) tuition refunds, (c) transfer of credit, and (d) ethical behavior.

- Describe appeals procedures by which students may appeal adverse decisions, and describes the grievance policies and procedures in place to protect students, faculty, and others.   Describe any grievances brought against the program, describe the status of those grievances, and indicate where the visiting team may find a record of complaints and grievances.

ASSESSMENT:

This section candidly discusses the program's performance in terms of disclosing information as required by the standards, including such issues as access to records.

- Discuss the disclosure challenges inherent to psychoanalytic training programs, such as how to evaluate students with transparency and integrity, in the best interest of both the student and the program.

- Discuss any grievances brought against the program, and indicate any lessons learned.

- Evaluate the adequacy of the program's policies and suggest areas for improvement.

PLANNING:

This section provides the program's plans to address any areas of concern or improvement. It also provides a contingency plan to assure that currently enrolled candidates will have an opportunity to complete their training should the program, for any reason, cease to function.

APPEND THE FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

1. _____ABAP, Inc.'s Public Disclosure Checklist

2. _____Website addresses for institutional bulletin and program catalog

3. _____Student handbook and other policy documents

4. _____Faculty handbook and other policy documents

5. _____Application and registration materials (may be provided onsite)

Standard Eight: The Education and Training Program (5-8 pages)

DESCRIPTION:

Making reference to standards 1-4 under Education and Training Program, this section describes the psychoanalytic training program.   Discuss the following:

- The admission requirements and procedures for the program, including required educational background and degrees, licenses, and intellectual, personal, and experiential qualifications.   Who evaluates applicants, and what ratio of applicants is admitted?

- The program's learning objectives, that is, expected learning outcomes such as student competencies.   What does the program seek to achieve with students?

- The curriculum, including required and elective courses, making specific reference to the standards.   What are the methods of instruction?

- Clinical experience requirements and training opportunities, as well as requirements for group and/or individual supervision and control analysis, again, making specific reference to the standards.

- Requirements for training analysis.   How are training analysts selected?   What are the criteria to be considered as a training analyst?

- Methods of student evaluation in coursework and supervision.   Are there required case presentations, exams, or research requirements?   How does the program deal with factors that interfere with the trainee's clinical performance?

- Overall graduation requirements.   What is the advertised time to graduation? How long does it take students to complete the program?   What percentage of admitted students graduate?   What is the attrition rate?

- Describe any residency requirements or, for distance learning components, how courses are offered and how students are evaluated.

- Describe any research program and include the relationship of research activities to the learning objectives and the goals of the program.

- Last but by no means least, emphasize what procedures have been established to provide for the self-evaluation of the program. What (qualitative and/or quantitative) methods does the program use to engage in self-assessment toward the goal of improving its educational programs? How does the program measure its success in teaching students to achieve the learning objectives and other indicators of student achievement? How are students involved in the evaluative process?

ASSESSMENT:

Using results of the self-assessments, describe the strengths and limitations of the educational program.

- How well is the admission process working?

- Do the curriculum and training experiences effectively carry out the program's learning objectives? How do you know?

- Evaluate the way the program is evaluated. Are there opportunities for leadership to learn more about what the program is or is not accomplishing?

PLANNING:

This section outlines any planned changes to the program's admissions or to the program itself based on the self-assessment.

- What program revisions are under consideration?

- Describe any new mechanisms that program leaders plan to implement in order to better evaluate the program.

APPEND THE FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

1. _____Application materials

2. _____Program bulletin and/or catalog, including course descriptions (or link to it on web site)

3. _____Program evaluation reports (may be provided on-site)

4. _____Course schedules for past two years (provided on-site)

5. _____Course syllabi (provided on-site)

PRELIMINARY FACT SHEET

INSTITUTE NAME _____

The Program Leads to What Certificate or Diploma? _____

Please indicate the Program's minimum requirements for:

                                                 NUMBER OF HOURS

        Course Work   _____

        Personal Analysis   _____

        Individual Supervision   _____

        Group Supervision   _____

        Pre-psychoanalytic Internship, if any   _____

        Supervised Psychoanalytic Clinical Experience   _____

Approximate Number of Students   _____

Approximate Number of Faculty   _____

ABAP Public Disclosure Checklist

In order to assist the site visitors, please indicate where the following pieces of information can be found. Please indicate "n/a" if not available or not applicable.

	Information	Web Addresses		Print Publications
(a)	Program mission and objectives			
(b)	A description of the ownership, control, and type of legal organization of the institution			
(c)	The names and affiliations of members of the governing board and policy and decision-making bodies, and the names of principal administrative personnel			
(d)	The names and credentials of the faculty			
(e)	Admissions policies and procedures			
(f)	Non-discrimination policy			
(g)	A description of the program(s) and the requirements for advancement through the various levels of the program(s) and for graduation			
(h)	The procedures and criteria utilized in arriving at decisions regarding the advancement of candidates and graduation			
(i)	A description of the educational and student support resources available			
(j)	Grievance and appeal policies and procedures for faculty, staff, and students with complaints against the institution			
(k)	Tuition and fee schedule and refund policies			
(l)	Transfer of academic credit policy			
(m)	Policies regarding release of records			

	Additional information:			
(a)	Institutional catalog			
(b)	Expected educational outcomes			
(c)	Expected time to graduation			
(d)	Student achievement data, such as retention rates, graduation rates, rates of passage of licensure exams			
(e)	Total cost of education, including availability of financial aid and typical length of study			
(f)	Statement about accreditation			