

**DEAC CHAIR’S REPORT TEMPLATE**

**Follow On-Site Visit to Virtual Site Visit**

# Background

The Distance Education Accrediting Commission’s accreditation process is grounded on the fundamental principle of peer review that enables faculty and administrative staff from within higher education to make recommendations essential to ensuring the quality of learning and institutional operations for all students. The process is guided by transparent standards that are established collaboratively by professional peers and member institutions.

The virtual on-site visit already conducted provided an opportunity for evaluators to meet with key staff members, faculty/instructors, principal managers, outside accountants, governing board members, and advisory council members. The evaluators verified that the institution is meeting its mission and can demonstrate successful student achievement.

The virtual on-site evaluators’ reports informed the Commission whether the institution meets, partially meets, or does not meet each of the DEAC accreditation standards and core components. Approximately six weeks after the on-site visit, the Chair’s Report was provided to the institution for response. Both the Chair’s Report and the institution’s response were submitted to the Commission for review prior to final decision making.

The Chair’s Report for Follow Up Site Visit is a summary of the follow up on-site visit team’s evaluation of whether the evidence presented by the institution verified the accreditation decision made by the DEAC Commission.

# Instructions

The U.S. Department of Education issued guidance to accreditors on March 5, 2020 and on December 31, 2020 with respect to 34 Code of Federal Regulations §602.17(c) which requires accreditors to conduct at least one on-site review when considering an application for initial accreditation approval or accreditation renewal. According to this guidance, beginning on March 13, 2020, for the duration of the national emergency declaration and 180 days following the date on which the COVID-19 national emergency declaration is rescinded, the Secretary is waiving the provisions of § 602.17(c) and requiring accreditors to perform a limited in-person site visit as soon as practicable following the end of the state of emergency. DEAC staff will therefore schedule and conduct a limited in-person site visit guided by Standards I, II, IV and XII to include a sample verification of student and faculty files as allowed by these guidelines or subsequent direction issued by the U.S. Department of Education.

Evaluator(s) should refer to the institutions Self-Evaluation Report submitted during the COVID-19 national emergency as well as the resultant Chair’s Report, Chair’s Report Response, and Commission Findings.

Findings guidelines:

* **Verified:** The institution provided evidence that verifies compliance with the accreditation standard or core component.
* **Partially Verified:** The institution was able to provide evidence that verifies compliance with some, but not all, of the elements contained in the accreditation standard or core component.
* **Unable to Verify:** The institution was unable to provide evidence that verifies compliance with a majority of the elements contained in the accreditation standard or core component.

The Chair should provide clear and concise descriptions within the “Comments” section of the report to support each determination that a standard or core component is verified, partially verified, or that the institution was unable to verify compliance. If an institution presented evidence that verifies compliance with the accreditation standard, the Chair may want to consider highlighting within the Comments section the evidence the institution presented that enabled it to demonstrate compliance. If an institution was only able to partially verify or was unable to verify compliance with a standard, the Chair needs to adequately describe why this decision was reached and refer, as appropriate, to narrative sections and exhibits within the SER that support the determination.

The Chair must also indicate the required actions necessary for the institution to demonstrate compliance with the partially verified or unverified accreditation standard. Each required action must be tied back to an accreditation standard or core component.

For required actions, the Chair should begin each statement with, “[Insert Name of Institution] needs to [insert the evidence necessary for the institution to verify compliance with the accreditation standard.]”

For suggestions, the Chair should begin each statement with, “[Insert Name of Institution] may want to consider [insert the recommendation for improvement.]”

**Report Submission:** The Chair emails the completed report to the DEAC director of accreditation four weeks after the follow up on-site visit. Once all information is received, DEAC notifies the Chair to appropriately dispose of all institutional materials.

# Helpful Hints

* The Chair’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 Chair’s Report represents an accurate, concise, factual, and thorough presentation of the team’s findings during the on-site visit.
* When making an overall determination whether the institution provided evidence that verifies, partially verifies, or was unable to verify compliance with accreditation standards, the Chair should include evidence of documents reviewed on-site that led to the finding. Include specific examples.
* The Chair’s Report documents attributes and deficiencies using language found in the accreditation standards and core components. All deficiencies must be documented.
* The Chair’s Report should not require an institution to implement a new program or procedure in order to demonstrate compliance with a partially verified or unverified accreditation standard. The Chair’s Report states the required action necessary to provide evidence of compliance. The institution bears responsibility for providing evidence that verifies compliance with DEAC’s accreditation standards.
* The Chair’s Report accurately presents comments, required actions, and suggestions using direct quotations, references, data, and examples from team members’ reports.
* The Chair’s Report should not reference individual team members’ reports or contain supporting exhibits.
* The Chair’s Report does not make recommendations to the Commission concerning the overall accreditation of the institution.

# DEAC Chair’s Report (Confidential)

Institution Name: Insert institution name

Date of Original Virtual Visit: Date of on-site visit

Accreditation Decision by the Commission: Summarize the decision made such as “renewal of accreditation”, “accepted change of location”, etc.

Date of the Commission Decision: Select the meeting.

Date of Follow Up Visit: Date of on-site visit

Submitted By: Evaluator Name

Date of Report: Date of Report

On-site Team Members

Chair/Staff

Name  
Title

Summary of Findings

**Standard I: Institutional Mission**

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| Core Components | Finding |
| 1. Description of the Mission | Choose a finding. |
| 1. Review and Publication of the Mission | Choose a finding. |
| 1. Information on Achievement of the Mission | Choose a finding. |

**Standard II: Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning**

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| Core Components | Finding |
| 1. Institutional Effectiveness Planning | Choose a finding. |
| 1. Strategic Planning | Choose a finding. |

**Standard IV: Educational and Student Support Services**

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| Core Components | Finding |
| 1. Appropriate Technology | Choose a finding. |
| 1. Student Inquiries and Submissions | Choose a finding. |
| 1. Individual Differences | Choose a finding. |
| 1. Encouragement of Students | Choose a finding. |
| 1. Satisfactory Academic Progress | Choose a finding. |
| 1. Grading Policies | Choose a finding. |
| 1. Student Records | Choose a finding. |
| 1. Confidentiality and Privacy | Choose a finding. |
| 1. Student Support Services | Choose a finding. |
| 1. Student Complaints | Choose a finding. |

**Standard XII: Facilities, Equipment, Supplies, Record Protection and Retention**

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| Core Components | Findings |
| 1. Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies | Choose a finding. |
| 1. In-Residence Component (outside scope of this review) |  |
| 1. Record Protection | Choose a finding. |
| 1. Record Retention | Choose a finding. |
| 1. State Authorization | Choose a finding. |

On-site Visit Background and Summary

**Purpose of the On-site Visit (check one):**

Initial  Renewal  Special Visit  Follow up on Virtual Visit

**Visit Summary:** Provide an overview of the on-site visit including how well the institution was prepared.  
**Self-Evaluation Report and Exhibits Structure and Format:** Provide the applicant institution with feedback on the general structure, content, and format of its Self-Evaluation Report and Exhibits.

**Institutional Overview:** Provide an overview of the applicant institution, including founding, organizational structure, target student population, legal form and governance, and status of state authorization.

**Program List:** Provide a list of all programs offered by the institution.

# Accreditation Standards Findings

## Standard I: Institutional Mission

1. **Description of the Mission:** The institution’s mission communicates its purpose and its commitment to providing quality distance educational offerings appropriate to the level of study offered. The mission establishes the institution’s identity within the educational community and guides the development of its educational offerings.

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| **Standard I.A. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

**Comments:** Provide comments to support the finding based on the institution’s responses and evidence provided prior to and during the on-site visit.

**Required Actions:** Provide the required actions necessary for the institution to verify 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 verify minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

1. **Review and Publication of the Mission:** The institution’s leadership, faculty, staff, administrators, and other stakeholders regularly review the mission to assure continued institutional quality and viability. The published mission statement is readily accessible to students, faculty, staff, other stakeholders, and the public.

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| **Standard I.B. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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

1. **Information on Achievement of the Mission:** The institution identifies key indicators it uses to demonstrate that it is effectively carrying out its mission. The institution documents the achievement of its mission and shares appropriate information on this achievement with relevant groups (e.g., Advisory Councils, faculty, staff, students, and the public).

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| **Standard I.C. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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

## Standard II: Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning

1. **Institutional Effectiveness Planning:** The institution demonstrates a commitment to its educational offerings and administrative operations through processes that monitor and improve institutional effectiveness. The institution engages in sound research practices; collects and analyzes evidence about its effectiveness; and develops action plans that are used to improve operations, educational offerings, and services.

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| **Standard II.A. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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

1. **Strategic Planning:** The institution has a systematic process of planning for the achievement of goals that supports its mission. The institution’s planning process involves all areas of the institution’s operations (e.g., admissions, academic, technology, etc.) in identifying strategic initiatives and goals by evaluating external and internal trends as they affect the future. At a minimum, the strategic plan addresses finances, academics, technology, admissions, marketing, personnel, and institutional sustainability. The strategic plan is reviewed and updated annually using established metrics designed to measure achievement of strategic planning goals and objectives. The plan helps institutions set priorities, manage resources, and set goals for future performance.

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| **Standard II.B. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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## Standard IV: Educational and Student Support Services

1. **Appropriate Technology:** The institution uses appropriate and readily accessible technology to optimize interaction between the institution and the student that effectively supports instructional and educational services. Students, faculty, and involved practitioners receive training and support for the technology used to deliver the educational offerings.

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| **Standard IV.A. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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

1. **Student Inquiries and Submissions:** The institution publishes all available methods students can use to submit inquiries and assignments. The institution responds promptly and thoroughly to all student inquiries using all these channels.

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| **Standard IV.B. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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

1. **Individual Differences:** Academic advising and instructional support are provided to assist students in achieving institutional and program requirements, program outcomes, course learning outcomes, and educational goals consistent with best educational practices and as required by applicable federal and state laws.

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| **Standard IV.C. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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**Required Actions:** Provide the required actions necessary for the institution to verify 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 verify minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

1. **Encouragement of Students:** The institution’s policies and procedures optimize interaction between the institution and students. The interaction proactively promotes student completion and success.

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| **Standard IV.D. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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**Required Actions:** Provide the required actions necessary for the institution to verify 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 verify minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

1. **Satisfactory Academic Progress:** The institution implements and consistently applies a satisfactory academic progress policy and discloses this policy to students. Standards for measuring satisfactory academic progress include qualitative and quantitative standards used for evaluation of student progress. The institution takes appropriate action if students fail to meet the institution’s minimum standards of progress. Students are informed of their academic progress and standing in the program at regular intervals throughout their enrollment.

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| **Standard IV.E. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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**Required Actions:** Provide the required actions necessary for the institution to verify 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 verify minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

1. **Grading Policies:** Student academic performance is measured using published grading policies that include prompt return of accurately, fairly, and consistently graded assessments that are supervised by a qualified instructor or faculty member. The institution publishes its assignment marking system, course extension policy, and information on issuance and completion of incomplete grades, and applies them with fairness and consistency.

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| **Standard IV.F. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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**Required Actions:** Provide the required actions necessary for the institution to verify 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 verify minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

1. **Student Records:** Accurate student records are securely and confidentially maintained. Policies and procedures for keeping records on students’ academic progress are in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and professional requirements. Transcripts are readily accessible and are maintained permanently in either print or digital form.

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| **Standard IV.G. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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**Required Actions:** Provide the required actions necessary for the institution to verify 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 verify minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

1. **Confidentiality and Privacy:** The institution’s policies protect student confidentiality and privacy as required by applicable federal and state laws.

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| **Standard IV.H. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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**Required Actions:** Provide the required actions necessary for the institution to verify 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 verify minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

1. **Student Support Services:** The institution provides support services designed for the students enrolled, such as financial aid guidance, advising services, employment assistance, and/or alumni services. Appropriate academic support services are readily available. Any career services and/or alumni services are offered as published in the institution’s materials.

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| **Standard IV.I. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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**Required Actions:** Provide the required actions necessary for the institution to verify 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 verify minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

1. **Student Complaints:** The institution has policies and procedures for receiving, responding to, and addressing student complaints. The policies and procedures should embody the principles of fairness, responsiveness, respect, due process and proportionality.
   1. Institutional Complaints

DEAC requires institutions to have written complaint policies and procedures for the purposes of receiving, responding to, addressing, and resolving complaints made by students, faculty, administrators, or any party, including one who has good reason to believe that an institution is not in compliance with DEAC accreditation standards.

* 1. At a minimum, the institution’s policy instructs students how to file a complaint or grievance and the maximum time for resolution. The institution’s complaint policy and procedures are available to all students. The institution defines what it reasonably considers to be a student complaint.
  2. The institution reviews in a timely, fair, and equitable manner any complaint it receives from students. When the complaint concerns a faculty member or administrator, the institution may not complete its review and make a final decision regarding a complaint unless, and in accordance with its published procedures, it ensures that the faculty member or administrator has sufficient opportunity to provide a response to the complaint. The institution takes any follow-up action, including enforcement action if necessary, based on the results of its review.
  3. The institution’s complaint policy states how complaints can be filed with state agencies and its accrediting organization.
  4. The institution will retain the complete files for all complaints which may be filed against the institution, its faculty, staff, students or other associated parties for the longer of five years from the filing of the complaint or the completion of the institution’s next cycle of evaluation for reaccreditation.

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| **Standard IV.J. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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**Required Actions:** Provide the required actions necessary for the institution to verify 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 verify minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

## Standard XII: Facilities, Equipment, Supplies, Record Protection and Retention

1. **Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies:** The institution maintains sufficient facilities, equipment, and supplies to achieve its mission and values and support its educational offerings and future operations. A written plan outlines the maintenance and upgrade of facilities, equipment, and supplies, and includes a disaster response and recovery plan. The plan states the resources that are budgeted to support its goals. Buildings, workspace, and equipment comply with local fire, building, health, and safety regulations and are appropriately equipped to handle the educational program(s) of the institution.

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| **Standard XII.A. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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**Required Actions:** Provide the required actions necessary for the institution to verify 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 verify minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

1. **Record Protection:** The institution’s financial, administrative, and student educational records are maintained in a reasonably accessible place and are adequately protected in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
   1. If maintaining documents electronically, the institution provides audit records to verify that the images were properly created and validated.
   2. If an institution accepts digitally signed transcripts or electronically transferred verified data from an outside source, the institution documents the outside source using a system that provides registration and verification of participants, protocols for securely sending and receiving files, logging of file transmissions, and electronic notification. The outside source complies with all applicable laws and regulations governing the activities and services provided, including FERPA and other laws concerning the privacy and confidentiality of information and records.

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| **Standard XII.C. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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**Required Actions:** Provide the required actions necessary for the institution to verify 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 verify minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

1. **Record Retention:** The institution’s financial, administrative, and student educational records are retained in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. The institution implements a comprehensive document retention policy.

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| **Standard XII.D. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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**Required Actions:** Provide the required actions necessary for the institution to verify 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 verify minimum accreditation standards but are provided to the institution as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

1. **State Authorization:**
   1. The institution is properly licensed, authorized, exempted, or approved by all applicable state education institutional authorizations (or their equivalent for non-U.S. institutions).
   2. Exemptions from state law are supported by state-issued documentation or in statutory language for that state.

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| **Standard XII.E. – Verified, Partially Verified, Unable to Verify, or Not Applicable** | Choose a finding. |

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

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