



SITE VISIT REPORT STYLE GUIDELINES

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PURPOSE

This guide serves to assist peer evaluators in composing a model Site Visit Report for submission to the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) staff for editing and review. The quality of the report submitted greatly affects the ACEN staff's ability to efficiently review and finalize each report, which is essential for presentation to the Evaluation Review Panel, the ACEN Board of Commissioners, and ultimately, to better serve the program being reviewed.

Please review this document as well as those on the ACEN website under *Resources for Peer Evaluators*. If you have any questions about composing a Site Visit Report, please feel free to contact a member of the ACEN staff.

Benefits to using this style guide:

SAVING TIME. The style guide will save time by providing quick answers to questions that may arise while writing documentation such as "How should I create the interviews list?" It also will lessen hours spent writing, reviewing, and correcting documentation.

CONSISTENCY. A style guide promotes consistency among documents throughout the ACEN. This leads to fewer questions of style and format and to less duplicated effort.

PROFESSIONALISM. The style guide will enhance the ACEN's image by serving as an effective management tool and by consistently producing quality documentation.

GENERAL REFERENCE GUIDE

Yes	No	Rationale
%	Percent Exception: <i>When starting a sentence e.g. "Twenty percent (20%) of the . . ."</i>	
ACEN	NLNAC (<i>may be appropriate in select cases, Ex: documents list: NLNAC SVR, 2011</i>)	Prior to May 6, 2013, the ACEN was known as NLNAC
ACEN Standards and Criteria	ACEN standards and criteria; standards/criteria	
accreditation; initial accreditation; continuing accreditation	full accreditation	
Accreditation Standards	accreditation standards	
ad hoc	"ad hoc"; ad-hoc; adhoc	
allied health (unless Department/Division of Allied Health)	Allied Health	
a.m./p.m.	A.M.; AM; am/P.M.; PM; pm	
anatomy and physiology	A&P	
and	&	
audiovisual	audio-visual; audio visual	
best practices	best-practices	
blueprint (n. and v.)	blue print; blue-print	
bylaws	Bylaws; by-laws; By-laws	
canceled	cancelled (<i>double L is the British spelling</i>)	
case studies	case-studies	
catalog	Catalog; catalogue	Only capitalize if the full title of a document, e.g. "Beowulf Community College Catalog"
childcare	child-care	
committee/department/college/ university/school	Committee/Department/College/ University/School	Only capitalize when referring to a specific entity
conceptual framework	Conceptual Framework	
continuing education, continuing education unit	CE	Spell out the first time, use CEU after the first time
co-requisite	corequisite	
coursework	course work	
criteria (plural) (<i>capitalize when referring to the ACEN Standards and Criteria</i>)	criterion	
criterion (singular) (<i>capitalize when referring to an ACEN Criterion</i>)	criteria	
currently	presently (<i>This word indicates that something is about to happen; "I will attend to that presently" means that I am about to perform that task.</i>)	

Yes	No	Rationale
curricula (plural)	curriculumums (plural)	
curriculum vitae (singular)	curriculum vita/CV	Spell out in formal documents
curricula vitae (plural)	curriculum vita/CVs	Spell out in formal documents
dean/director	Dean/Director	Capitalize only when referring to a specific individual
decision-making	decision making	
dialogue	dialog	
e-book	ebook	
email	e-mail	
ELA (expected level of achievement)	LOA (level of achievement)/ benchmark	
end-of-program	end of program	
evidence-based practice	evidence based practice; evidenced-based practice; EBP	
examination	exam	
faculty-at-large	faculty at large	
Follow-Up Report	Follow-up Report; follow up report; follow-up report	
focused visit	Focused Visit	Capitalize document titles "Focused Site Visit Report" "Focused Visit Report"
full-time/part-time	full time; FT/part time; PT	
fundraising	fund-raising	
greater than/greater than or equal to/less than/less than or equal to	> ≥ ≤ < (symbols may be used in tables)	
handout	hand-out	
Healthcare (adj); health care (n)	health care (adj); healthcare (n)	Ex.: The healthcare facility...; providing health care
help desk	help-desk; HelpDesk; Helpdesk; helpdesk	Capitalize only if within a title
iPad	lpad; ipad; IPad	
inpatient	in-patient	
in-service	inservice; in service	
Internet	internet	
Intranet	intranet	Only capitalize when referring to a specific network
laboratory	lab	
licensure examination test plan or NCLEX Test Plan	test plan; NCLEX test plan	
life-long	lifelong	
login	log-in	
mannequin	manikin	
master's degree/post-master's degree/master's (degree) in	masters/post masters degree/Master's of ____	
maternal-child	maternal child	

Yes	No	Rationale
measurable	measureable	
medical-surgical	med-surg; medical/surgical	
midterm	mid-term	
multimedia	multi-media	
nurse administrator	Nurse Administrator; NA	
nursing department	Nursing Department	Capitalize only if referring to a specific nursing department
nursing program	Nursing Program	Capitalize only if referring to a specific nursing program
ongoing	on-going	
online	on-line	
onsite	on site; on-site	
p. (singular)/ pp. (plural)	page(s); pg(s); pps.; pps	
part-time faculty; adjunct faculty	part-time/adjunct faculty	Use part-time unless there is a distinction between adjunct and part-time. If they are separate, use terms accordingly
telephone	phone	
PowerPoint presentation	a PowerPoint	
practicum	Practicum	<i>Capitalize when part of formal course title</i>
pre-licensure	prelicensure	
prerequisite	pre-requisite; pre requisite	
program outcomes	Program Outcomes	
résumé	resume	
RN-to-BSN	RN to BSN; RN-BSN; RN/BSN	
Self-Study Forum	self-study forum	
peer evaluator	SV/Site Visitor/PE	
Self-Study Report; SSR	Self-study; self-study report	
funded by the state of [California]	funded by the State of [California]	
advanced; modern; or up-to-date facility	state of the art facility; state-of-the-art facility	The term is subjective
state-wide/college-wide	statewide/Collegewide	
student handbook	Student Handbook	Capitalize only if the entire title
student learning outcomes; SLOs	Student Learning Outcomes	

Yes	No	Rationale
systematic evaluation plan; systematic plan for evaluation	Systematic Evaluation Plan; Systematic Plan for Evaluation	Specific documents to be capitalized. Call SPE what the program refers to it as.
teach out (v) teach-out (adj.)	teach out; taught(-)out; teaching(-)out	
team-teach	team teach	
timeframe	time-frame; time frame	
track	tract	
Vice President	Vice-President	
video camera	Video-camera	
video-conferencing	video conferencing; videoconferencing	
video projector	video-projector	
website/webpage	web site; web-site / web page; web-page	
weekend	week-end	
Wi-Fi	WiFi; wi-fi; wifi	
work week	workweek; work-week	
workload	work load; load; SLOs	

STYLE

USAGE:

- Remove hyperlinks from web addresses
- Use “college administrators” rather than “college administration” when referring to individuals in the narrative (e.g., “During interviews, the college administrators confirmed...”)
- Use “anticipated date of completion” when referring to faculty members enrolled in graduate programs.
- “Faculty” is a plural noun (e.g., “The faculty are considering implementing changes”); use “faculty member” for individuals (e.g., “One (1) faculty member is credentialed with a PhD in nursing” for two (2) or more use “Two (2) faculty members are enrolled in a master’s program.”)
- “Data” is a plural noun (e.g., “The data are presented by cohort,” “Sufficient data have not been collected”)
- Do not use non-standard acronyms (e.g., “NA” for nurse administrator and “PE” for peer evaluators), even when used throughout the report
- Use “according to” or “in accordance with” rather than “per the” (e.g., “According to the SSR,” “In accordance with college policy”)
- Many little things compose one big thing; one big thing comprises many little things; avoid comprise when possible
- If something can be counted individually, use “fewer.” If it cannot be counted individually, use “less.”
 - Ex.: There are fewer students in the class. There is less work to do.
- Brackets may be used inside parentheses, though avoid when possible; exceptions can be made when necessary
 - Ex.: (three [3] credits)
- For multiple programs, the header for each program’s section should be bold and in all caps
 - Ex.: **ASSOCIATE/PRACTICAL**
- Do not use abbreviations in the areas needing development and non-compliance statements
- “That” and “which” are not interchangeable. “Which” modifies the word before it and follows a comma.
 - Ex.: Students attend class in a room that can hold 100.
- Students attend class in the auditorium, which can hold 100.
- Do not use contractions
- Check that ratios match (e.g., 1:12 = faculty-to-student *not* student-to-faculty)
- Minimize the use of “e.g.,” and “i.e.,”
- NCLEX-RN® (associate programs and higher)
- NCLEX-PN® (LPN/PN program)
- Preferred style for program options is to include hyphens and “to”
- Ex.: RN-to-BSN *not* RN-BSN
- Program option titles should be consistent within report
 - Ex.: LPN-to-RN throughout *not* LPN-to-RN in Standard 1 and LPN-to-ADN in Standard 2

CAPITALIZATION:

- Use lowercase for generic titles, e.g. student handbook, but capitalize and italicize specific titles of documents; generic is preferred
 - Ex: *University of Eyre Nursing Program Handbook*
 - Ex: the university nursing handbook
- Associate, baccalaureate, practical, master’s, diploma, and doctorate should be lowercase unless part of a formal title
- Capitalize “financial aid” only if it is part of a title
 - Ex: The Financial Aid Director provides financial aid counseling.
- Capitalize seasons and semesters only when referring to a specific period, e.g., “during the Fall 2012 Semester” *but* “annually in the fall semester”
- Capitalize governing bodies, proprietary and long-form documents, and events

Capitalize	Lowercase
Board of Commissioners (BOC)	appeal process
Evaluation Review Panel (ERP)	chief executive officer [generic]
Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)	nurse administrator
Accreditation Standards and Criteria	nursing education unit
ACEN Policy #__	state regulatory agency for nursing [generic]
Evaluation Review Panel Summary of Deliberations	candidacy
Follow-Up Report	initial accreditation
Follow-Up Site Visit Report	continuing accreditation
Focused Visit Report	continuing accreditation with conditions
Focused Site Visit Report	continuing accreditation with warning
Site Visit Report	continuing accreditation with warning for good cause
Accreditation Manual	good cause
Annual Report	follow-up visit
Closing Report	focused visit
Appeal Hearing	site visit
Nurse Administrator Site Visitors' Report Response Form	nurse administrator response form (NARF)
Candidacy Eligibility Application	candidacy eligibility application form
Information Form for Accreditation Site Visit	site visit information form
Appeal Panel	third-party comment
Candidacy Review	area needing development
Self-Study Report and Appendix	strength
Self-Study Forum	statement of non-compliance
Nurse Administrator Workshop	accreditation cycle
Title IV	accreditation status
U.S. Department of Education (USDE)	postsecondary

PUNCTUATION:

Place periods and commas inside closing quotation marks

Place semicolons outside closing quotation marks

Place periods outside closing parentheses unless the parenthetical material is a complete sentence

Avoid unnecessary quotation marks and parentheses

Do not include periods in credentials, e.g. "PhD" not "P.h.D"

Use a semicolon to connect similar ideas when a conjunction is not present

Ex: The building is a new facility; funding for the project was completed in 2009.

To ensure clarity, semicolons may be used in complex series and lists even when internal commas are not present; use sparingly

Include a comma after a date listed in its entirety

Ex.: The call was scheduled for June 2, 2009, at 4:00 p.m.

Include a serial/Oxford comma before "and" and other coordinating conjunctions

Ex.: The students described the faculty as accessible, approachable, and attentive to their progress.

Do not hyphenate words that end in -ly

Ex.: The recently hired faculty member *not* The recently-hired faculty member

NUMBERS:

Spell out numbers nine (9) and below and follow with the numeral in parentheses

Ex.: There are six (6) full-time faculty members teaching in the nursing program.

Use numerals only for numbers 10 and higher

Ex.: The students have access to 13 databases.

If numerical range, use en-dash

Ex: The report is due in 6–12 months.

Ex: 5.2–10.5%

Ex: 2015–2016, not 2015–16

Spell out any number that begins a sentence

Ex.: Twenty-five (25) students were in attendance.

For numbers nine and below, do not include numerals in compound modifiers

Ex.: a three-credit course

24-hour access

Five-point Likert scale

Use commas with numbers of four or more digits

Ex.: 6,000 employees

Spell out simple fractions

Ex.: a two-thirds majority

Use numerals for mixed fractions

Ex.: 1½ times the program length

Use \$ for dollar amounts

Ex.: \$10,500 in grants

a \$20-million renovation

For dates, include superscript when not using year; “st,” “rd,” and “th”

Ex.: August 10th

Ex.: August 10, 2016

ITALICS/UNDERLINE/BOLD:

Italicize names of publications, including specific names of documents, handbooks, newspapers, journals, etc.

Note: italics are not used in the documents list of the Site Visit Report

Underline is used sparingly for emphasis, and bold is used for emphasis only in email format

Bold is occasionally used for formatting purposes, such as for headers in reports and letters

CITATIONS:

Place page numbers within parentheses

Ex.: As stated in the SSR (p. 22) *not* As stated on page 22 of the SSR

Use “p.” for single pages and “pp.” for multiple pages

Do not include internal spaces within page ranges; use an en-dash in place of a hyphen

Ex.: (SSR, pp. 102–105) *not* (SSR, pp. 102 - 105)

Separate non-consecutive pages with a comma

Ex.: (SSR, pp. 8, 48)

References to tables may be made in the main text of the sentence or within the parenthetical citation

Ex.: Table 1.4 in the SSR (pp. 46–48) provides a comparison...

As illustrated in the SSR (Table 1.4, pp. 46–48)...

Correct references such as “(see Table 1.4 of the SSR)”

Multiple references may be included in one citation; separate with a semicolon

Ex.: (SSR, pp. 8, 191; SPE, pp. 18–20)

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS:

Abbreviations should be spelled out (e.g., “the student learning outcomes (SLOs)”) when first mentioned in the narrative but do not have to be spelled out in subsequent Standards

Note: For Site Visit Reports, “SSR” may be used throughout and does not need to be spelled out when first introduced in the narrative

Abbreviations of titles should be avoided unless a title is used many times in the same document

Ex:

One or few uses: The Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs stated...

Multiple uses: The Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs (AVPAA)... Later, the peer evaluators consulted the AVPAA regarding...

LIST OF COMMONLY-USED ACRONYMS/BRANDS/COMPANIES/COMPETENCIES:

AACN – American Association of Colleges of Nursing
ANA – American Nurses Association
ANCC – American Nurses Credentialing Center
Angel® (learning management system)
BabySIM®
BBP – bloodborne pathogens
Benner’s novice to expert
Blackboard™ (learning management system)
Bloom’s taxonomy
CINAHL Plus©
Compass® (learning management system)
EBSCOhost©
FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants
FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
Governors State University
Health Source: Nursing/Academic
HESI© – Health and Environmental Sciences Institute
HIPAA – Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
i-clicker®
InfoTrac™
iStan®
The Joint Commission (use in place of JCAHO)
Knowles’ theory of andragogy
Laerdal SimMan®/SimBaby®
Likert scale
MEDLINE©
METIman®
Micromedex 2.0®
Moodle™
National Patient Safety Goals
NCLEX® – Nursing Council Licensing Examination
NOELLE®
PediaSIM®
Federal Pell Grant (Pell grant)
PowerPoint
ProQuest®
QSEN© – Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN Competencies)
SACSCOC© – Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
Scientific and Medical ART Imagebase
SMART© classroom/SMART© board
TEAS© – Test of Essential Academic Skills
Veterans Affairs
VitalSim™
Watson’s theory of caring

COMMA USAGE RULES

Rule 1: Separating words and word groups with a series of three (3) or more.

Ex.: *The \$5-million clinical practicum facility is shared by the master's, baccalaureate, and associate nursing programs.*

Rule 2: Separating two (2) adjectives when the word *and* can be inserted between them.

Ex: *The nursing program has a diverse, qualified faculty. / The class takes place in a renovated lecture room.*

Rule 3: Using an *-ly* adjective with other adjectives.

NOTE: To test whether an *-ly* word is an adjective, see if it can be used alone with the noun. If it can, use the comma.

Ex: *The faculty member was an hourly, part-time employee.*

Rule 4: Surrounding the name or title of a person directly addressed.

Ex: *The nurse administrator consults her supervisor, the Vice President, for approval.*

Rule 5a: Separating the day of the month from the year and after the year.

Ex.: *The program was established on December 5, 2003, in Mill Valley, California.*

Rule 5b: If any part of the date is omitted, leave out the comma.

Ex.: *The program was established in December 2003 in Mill Valley.*

Rule 6: Separating the city from the state and after the state in a document.

Ex: *The governing organization was founded in San Francisco, California, 20 years ago. / The clinical coordinator taught at the campus in San Francisco, California for 20 years.*

Rule 7: Surrounding degrees or titles used with names.

Ex.: *Jane Smith, PhD, knew Sam Sunny Jr. and Charles Starr III.*

Rule 8: Setting off expressions that interrupt sentence flow.

Ex.: *The students, who were present at the time of the visit, expressed their satisfaction with the program.*

Rule 9: Starting a sentence with a dependent clause; do not use a comma when the sentence starts with a strong clause followed by a weak clause.

Ex: *If the students are available for interview, inform the peer evaluators. / Inform the peer evaluators if the students are available for interviews.*

Rule 10: After phrases of more than three words that begin a sentence. If the phrase has fewer than three words, the comma is optional.

Ex: *To be a nurse administrator, you must have previous nursing educator experience. / On August 15th many schools will be back in session. **OR** On August 15th, many schools will be back in session.*

Rule 11: If something or someone is sufficiently identified, the appositive is considered nonessential and should be surrounded by commas.

Ex: *The Vice President of Academic Affairs, who holds a master's degree in education, was present during the exit meeting. / The college administrator who holds a master's degree in education was present during the exit meeting.*

Rule 12: Separating two strong clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction--*and, or, but, for, nor*.

Ex: *The nurse administrator revised the curriculum, but the faculty are still updating the syllabi. / The nurse administrator makes revisions and the faculty implements changes.*

Rule 13: Separating two sentences if it will help avoid confusion.

Ex: *The team chair interviewed students at the rehabilitation center and the medical-surgical unit, and the mommy unit was their third stop.*

Rule 14: A **comma splice** is an error caused by joining two strong clauses with only a comma instead of separating the clauses with a conjunction, a semicolon, or a period. A **run-on sentence**, which is incorrect, is created by joining two strong clauses without any punctuation.

Incorrect *The students indicated that the clinical experiences are sufficient, clinical experiences are always informative. (Comma splice)*

Correct *The students indicated that the clinical experiences are sufficient; clinical experiences are always informative. OR The students indicated that the clinical experiences are sufficient, and clinical experiences are always informative. OR The students indicated that the clinical experiences are sufficient. Clinical experiences are always informative.*

Rule 15: If the subject does not appear in front of the second verb, do not use a comma.

Ex.: *The faculty member thought quickly but still did not answer the peer evaluator's question adequately.*

Rule 16: Introducing/interrupting direct quotations shorter than three lines.

Ex: *The student said, "I do not care." / "Why," the peer evaluator asked, "do you not care about it?"*

Rule 17: Separating a statement from a question.

Ex.: *The program was in compliance, was it not?*

Rule 18: Separating contrasting parts of a sentence.

Ex.: *That is his classroom, not hers.*

Rule 19: Beginning sentences with introductory adverbs such as *well*, *now*, or *yes*.

Ex: *Yes, the nurse administrator needs the draft report in one (1) week. / Now, the class is held in another building.*

Rule 20: Surrounding words such as *therefore* and *however* when they are used as interrupters.

Ex: *I would, therefore, like a response by Wednesday. / She would be happy, however, to volunteer to be a peer evaluator.*

Rule 21: Offsetting negation in a sentence.

Ex.: *The peer evaluators noted eight (8) licenses on file, not nine (9), when they reviewed the student records.*

Rule 22: Use either a comma or a semicolon before introductory words such as *namely*, *that is*, *i.e.*, *for Ex.*, *e.g.*, or *for instance* when they are followed by a series of items. Use a comma after the introductory word.

Ex: *Peer evaluators review many documents, for example, catalogs, syllabi, and curricula. OR Peer evaluators review many documents; for example, catalogs, syllabi, and curricula.*

SITE VISIT REPORTS

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PAGE MARGINS:

Site Visit Reports

Top/bottom: = 0.5”

Left/right: = 1”

FONT AND SPACING:

Table cell margins = 0

Body copy = Times New Roman, 11 pt. (including headers)

Tables/charts = Times New Roman, 9 pt.

No internal spaces for forward slashes (e.g., “yes/no” *not* “yes / no”)

Use single-character ellipsis (...)

Single-spaced text throughout

No double-spacing after periods

FORMATTING:

Remove website addresses from all sections of the report

Omit “program” after program type in header, program type, faculty table, etc. (in first pages of report)

Under summary section, underline “Compliance,” but do not underline “Strengths”

ADDRESSES/ADDRESS BLOCKS

First Last, Credentials

Title

Nursing Education Unit (may be combined with title in previous line, if appropriate)

Governing Organization

Address 1 (Spell out “Road,” “Lane,” “Avenue,” “Boulevard,” and cardinal directions, “Northeast,” etc.)

Address 2 (“PO Box,” not “P.O. Box”; spell out “Suite,” etc. Do not include rooms or room numbers)

City, State Zip

Ex.:

Jane Doe, MSN, RN

Director, School of Nursing

Flamingo College of Health Sciences

123 ACEN Lane

PO Box 789

Atlanta, GA 30326

USAGE:

Use titles rather than names within the narrative

Ex.: According to the Vice President for Academic Affairs *not* According to Dr. Ray Smith, Vice President for Academic Affairs

Do not include extra information under program established section

THIRD-PARTY COMMENTS:

The section for third-party comments should consist of at least three paragraphs: one containing information regarding methods used to solicit public comments, one containing information about attendance and comments received at the public meeting, and one describing written comments received, if any. If no written comments were received, the third paragraph will be a sentence saying, “The ACEN did not receive any written third-party comments.”

INTERVIEWS/DOCUMENTS LISTS:

- Do not include courtesy titles (e.g., “Dr. Anne Williams”)
- Remove periods from credentials
- List credentials before position title
 - Ex.: James Smith, EdD, Director of Learning
- Credentials order: academic degrees beginning with the highest degree achieved; licenses; certifications
 - Ex.: Anne Williams, PhD, MSN, RN, CNE
- Ronald Garcia, MBA, MS
- When multiple degrees are listed from the same discipline, remove all but the highest degree
 - Ex.: Paul Lin, MSN, RN *not* Paul Lin, MSN, BSN, RN
- Betsy McIntire, MA *not* Betsy McIntire, MA, BA
- Do not include subject areas in credentials
 - Ex.: Jillian Laxmi, MA *not* Jillian Laxmi, MA history
- Do not abbreviate titles
 - Ex.: Melanie Flint, PhD, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs *not* AVP for Academic Affairs
- Maintain consistency in titles
 - Ex.: Director of Practical Nursing; Dean of Allied Health
- Director, Practical Nursing; Dean, Allied Health
- Use a lowercase “n” for number of students interviewed; do not list individuals by name
 - Ex.: LPN-to-RN students, n=8
- Include dates for documents (or “current,” when applicable) and separate with semicolons
 - Ex.: Student Handbook, 2010; 2011
- Clinical Agency Contracts, current
- Course Syllabi, Fall 2012; Spring 2013; Fall 2013
- Capitalize committee names *but not* “meeting minutes”
 - Ex.: Nursing Advisory Committee meeting minutes, 2010–2013
- Fiscal years may be noted as FY
 - Ex.: Budget Reports, FY 2010; FY 2011; FY 2012