

The Accreditation Process

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NCA Overview of the Evaluation Process

The following outline of the NCA evaluation process is quoted from *Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions: An Overview* (NCA, 1995):

The Commission's process of evaluation for both initial and continued accreditation is formulated to determine whether an institution meets the General Institutional Requirements (GIRs) and the Criteria for Accreditation. There are four steps in the process:

- First, the institution undertakes a self-study aimed at examining how it meets the GIRs and the Criteria. The results of the self-examination are summarized in a Self-Study Report that forms the basis for the Commission's evaluation. The completed Self-Study Report constitutes the institution's formal application for initial or continued accreditation.
- Second, the institution is visited by a team of Consultant-Evaluators appointed by the Commission. This team gathers comprehensive information about the institution and summarizes its findings in a written Team Report. The Report assesses whether the institution satisfies the GIRs and the Criteria, offers advice and suggestions for improvement, and concludes with a formal recommendation for accreditation action. The institution has an opportunity to make a formal written response to the Team Report.
- Third, the Self-Study Report and the Team Report are reviewed by a Readers' Panel and/or by a Review Committee that meets with representatives of the institution and the team. If the review process results in suggested changes in the team recommendation, the institution and the team chair have an opportunity to respond in writing.
- Fourth, all recommendations are considered by the Commission, which takes official action on the institution's accreditation.

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The Self-Study Steering Committee and Task Forces

The Self-Study Steering Committee, formed in early April 1997 by President Thompson, is charged with coordinating a campus-wide evaluative self-study involving all parts of the University. The six Task Forces, formed in October 1997, are responsible for particular parts of that task, as outlined below. Browse through the lists or jump directly to a task force.

- [Self-Study Steering Committee](#)
- [Task Force on Institutional Profile and Governance](#)
- [Task Force on Administration](#)
- [Task Force on Financial and Physical Resources](#)
- [Task Force on Student Resources](#)
- [Task Force on Support Services](#)
- [Task Force on Academic Affairs](#)

Self-Study Steering Committee

Sam Buchanan, Associate Provost (Self-Study Coordinator)

Tony Sitz, University Registrar

Carolyn Ishee, Senior Development Officer

Barbara Goswick, Associate Vice President for Financial Services

Gary Roberts, Dean of Students

Larry James, Chief of Police

John Mosbo, Provost

Jonathan Glenn, Professor of English and Director of Academic Planning and Assessment

Task Force on Institutional Profile and Governance

Areas of Responsibility

Task Force Members

Council of Deans
Faculty Senate
Staff Senate
Student Government Association
University Council
Fringe Benefits Committee
Promotion processes and appeals
Tenure processes and appeals
Grievances and appeals
Evaluation processes
Hiring processes and procedures
Salary/reward system
Faculty Handbook
Staff Handbook

Tony Sitz, Chair
Roger Lewis, Director of Institutional Research
Jerry Manion, Professor of Chemistry
Kerry Nichols, Administrative Assistant, Office of the President
Steve Wood, Assistant Vice President of Human Resources
Bill Yates, Director of Career Counseling and Placement

Task Force on Administration

Areas of Responsibility

University Development
Publications
Presidents Office
General Counsel
Public Information
Office of Planning & Assessment
Public Service/Outreach
Public Appearances
Alumni Services
Board of Trustees
Institutional Research
International Programs
UCA Foundation
Ozark Heritage Institute

Task Force Members

Carolyn Ishee, Chair
Cindy Cope, Program Coordinator, Institutional Advancement
Jack Gillean, Director of Governmental Relations
Jim Schneider, Director of Information Services
Leigh Vernon, Coordinator of University Calendar
Penny Eberhard, Director of Public Appearances
Carol Knipscheer, Interim Director of International Programs
Kathy Carroll, UCA Foundation Administrator

Task Force on Financial and Physical Resources

Areas of Responsibility

Accounting
Accounts Payable
Travel
Inventory
Grant Accounting
Budgeting
Cashiering and Student Accounts
Payroll
Internal Audit
Physical Plant
Parking
Purchasing

Task Force Members

Barbara Goswick, Chair
Mary Kay Dunaway, Assistant Controller
Rick McCollum, Assistant Controller
Margaret Wallace, Budget Specialist
Cassandra McCuien-Smith, Buyer
Pam Jolly, Director of Audits
Jerrel Fielder, Director of Physical Plant
Valerie Nicholson, Database Coordinator

Task Force on Student Resources

Areas of Responsibility

Student Conduct
Student Handbook
Financial Aid
Food Services
Housing
Athletics
Student Publications (*ECHO/Scroll*)
Student Organizations
Orientation
Leadership Development
Non-Traditional Student Services
Student Activities/Entertainment
Minority Services
Disabled Student Services
Greek Services
Health Promotion & Wellness
Intramural Sports & Recreation
Student Center

Task Force Members

Gary Roberts, Chair
Teri Powers, Interim Director of Financial Aid
Tom Pilgreen, Director of Housing and Resident Life
Danny Powell, Associate Athletic Director
Ernie Dumas, Assistant Professor of Journalism
Hank Phelps, Director of Orientation and Leadership Development
Ronjanett Mayfield, Student Activities Program Coordinator
Wendy Walker-Holbrook, Acting Director of Disability Support Services
Jennie Taylor, Director of Greek Services and University Programs
Terry Love, Director of Health Promotion and Wellness
David Dennis, Director of Intramural Sports and Recreation
John Cagle, Director of Student Center

Task Force on Support Services

Areas of Responsibility	Task Force Members
Admissions	<i>Larry James, Chair</i>
Computer Services and Telecommunications	Huey Antley, Coordinator of Research, Undergraduate Studies
Bookstore	Tanya Buchanan, Assistant Manager, Bookstore
Copy Center	Joe Darling, Director of Admissions
Post Office	Willie Hardin, Dean of the Library
Counseling and Health Services	Earl McGehee, Director of Computer Services
Library Services	Ernie Ness, Director of Counseling Center
Registrar	Brooks Walthall, Director, of Cooperative Education
Police Department and campus safety	Valerie Williams, Assistant Registrar
Career Services and Cooperative Education	
Scholarships and Graduate Assistantships	

Task Force on Academic Affairs

Areas of Responsibility	Task Force Members
Academic Divisions	<i>John Mosbo, Chair</i>
Office of the Provost	Charles Harvey, Professor of Philosophy
Honors College	Barbara Williams, Professor and Chair, Department of Nursing
Continuing Education	Patty Phelps, Associate Professor of Administration and Secondary Education
College of Business Administration	Jayne Stone, Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies
College of Education	Bill Lammers, Associate Professor of Psychology
College of Fine Arts and Communication	David Harvey, Associate Professor and Chair, University Writing Program
College of Health and Applied Sciences	
College of Liberal Arts	
College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics	
Graduate Affairs and Faculty Development	
Graduate School/Graduate Faculty/Graduate Council	
Sponsored Programs	
Instructional Development Center	
Research/Teaching/Service Awards	
Faculty Development Committee/Sabbatical	

Leave Committee/Reassigned Time/URC

Radiation Safety/IRB/Animal Care

Undergraduate Affairs

Student Advising

Exemplary Studies

Student Retention Committee/Freshman Year

Experience

Residential College/Clustering

RIP/Freshman Seminar/U1100 Success/

University Center for Academic Success

Undergraduate Studies

Undergraduate Council

Adjustments and Credentials Committee

Institutional Testing

General Education

UCA at Night

Academic Processes

Curriculum Approval Process

Scheduling/Space

Undergraduate Bulletin/Graduate Bulletin

Academic Assessment

Educational Outreach

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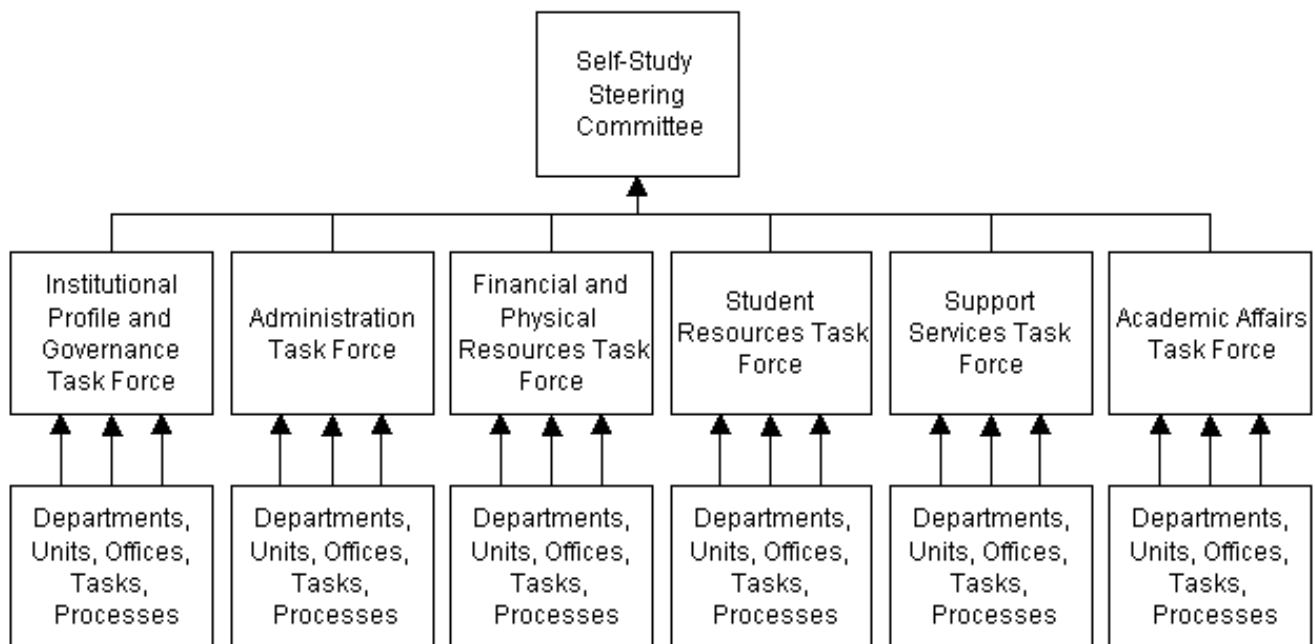
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Self-Study Information Flow

The most important principle in UCA's 1998-2000 self-study is the conviction that the departments, units, and processes of the university--where the work of the university is most fundamentally carried on--should not only be the primary source of information for the self-study, but should also be the first source of analysis and evaluation, identifying their own most significant strengths and concerns and making initial recommendations for action. Thus the *university's* self-study begins with departmental/unit/process self-studies which inform each more general stage of evaluation.

The following graphic illustrates the general flow of information in the self-study process. To see a more detailed list of departments/units/processes associated with each task force, jump to the Self-Study Steering Committee and Task Force list by clicking on the relevant task force in the graphic (use your browser's Back button to return to this page).



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Key Questions for a Self-Study

The areas outlined below identify the critical dimensions of a self-study--a review intent on excellence. The areas are keyed to the criteria for accreditation published by NCA in its *Handbook of Accreditation*, but they are not identical to those criteria. (To learn more about NCA's five criteria, jump to NCA's Five Criteria for Accreditation. [Note: the NCA Higher Learning Commission has revised its criteria for accreditation since the creation of this page, and the old link is no longer available. For links to old and new criteria on the HLC web site, use this [link](#).]) The questions listed in each area are suggestions, ways to approach the concerns addressed in each area, and applicable--with appropriate adjustments--to the university as a whole *and* to the units within it. The questions intend to make possible a comprehensively evaluative self-study.

Area 1: Purposes, Processes, Resources (Criteria 1, 2)

This area addresses an organization's purposes and the ways in which the organization accomplishes those purposes.

1. What are our purposes? Why do we exist? What do we do? How do our purposes support the university's mission?
2. How do we accomplish our purposes? What processes, functions, tasks do we use?
3. What resources (human, financial, physical) are available to allow us to accomplish our purposes? How are these resources organized (organizational structure and leadership, budgeting, use of space and equipment)?

Area 2: Self-Assessment and Improvement (Criteria 3, 4)

This area addresses an organization's effectiveness, its ways of monitoring effectiveness, and its responsiveness to the conclusions drawn from its self-assessments.

1. Are we accomplishing our purposes? How *effectively* are we accomplishing our purposes? What do we do well? What do we not do so well?
2. How do we demonstrate our effectiveness? Do we have an on-going self-assessment plan to monitor our effectiveness? How well do our self-assessment processes work?
3. What is our response to the results of our self-assessments? How can we accomplish our

purposes more effectively?

Area 3: Perspectives and Planning (Criterion 4)

This area addresses the historical perspective/development of the organization and asks about mid- and longer-range planning. Its questions about stability and planning for change are a balance to the questions about responsiveness asked in area 2.

1. How has our organization evolved over the past ten years? Have our purposes changed? Have the ways in which we accomplish our purposes changed?
2. How stable/sustainable is our organization?
3. Where would we like to be ten years from now? What changes need to take place? What planning processes are in place (or proposed) to enable us to get where we want to be or to make the desired changes?

Area 4: Practices and Relationships (Criterion 5)

This area addresses all organizational practices and relationships and their integrity. We can identify key relationships by asking, "Whom do we serve?" "Who depends on us?" "On whom do we depend?" This area also concerns itself with the quality of faculty/staff/workplace climate and, in general, with service orientation.

1. In general: What are our key relationships? How responsive are we to the interests and concerns of our constituents? How well are our purposes understood inside and outside the organization? What are our policies? Are they accessible (published, disseminated appropriately)? Are they being followed?
2. Internal relationships: What are our key relationships within the university? How are they monitored? What policies govern them? Are these policies understood and followed?
3. External relationships: What are our key relationships with entities outside the university? How are they monitored? What policies govern them? Are these policies understood and followed?

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Self-Study Timeline

Check marks in the righthand column indicate completed stages in the self-study process.

Description	Projected Completion	
Develop Formative Questions	15 October 1997	✓
Form and Charge Task Forces	22 October 1997	✓
Task Force Orientation	20 November 1997	✓
Task Force Orientation with Consultant	5-6 December 1997	✓
Campus Orientation (individual units)	Fall semester 1997	✓
Unit Self-Studies to Task Forces (first submission)	Summer 1998	✓
Task Force Reports	February 1999	✓
Draft and Revisions of Institutional Self-Study Report	31 January 2000	✓
Submission of Completed Self-Study Report	15 February 2000	✓
Team Visit	April 2000	✓

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