

Preparation for an External Review and ACJS Program Endorsement Consideration

July 2026

There are several steps in carrying out an external review. They are outlined below.

1. Preparation of the self-study

The self-study is a written report that is the most time-consuming part of the external review. It involves the collection of information and data with written responses for each of the published ACJS Quality Standards.

<https://www.acjs.org/page/ProgramStandards>

- A. Program Missions and History (1 Standard)
- B. Program Structure and Curriculum (10 Standards)
- C. Faculty (10 Standards)
- D. Admissions and Articulation (6 Standards)
- E. Resources (4 Standards)
- F. Student Services (3 Standards)
- G. Integrity (6 Standards)
- H. Program Quality and Effectiveness (4 Standards)
- I. Branch Campuses, Additional Locations, and Other Instructional Sites and Modalities (4 Standards)

Following each set of Standards, recommended indicators are provided to guide the completion of the self-study. Because this is a labor-intensive task, it is usually the case that a faculty member is provided a course reduction, or other workload reduction, for assembling the information and drafting the self-study that forms the basis for the external review.

2. Setting Up the External Review & Reporting

a. **Reviewers:** First the program chair, or external review coordinator, contacts the ACJS Academic Review Committee to discuss the type and background of reviewer best suited to conduct the review. Type of institution, experience, and nature and size of the programs to be reviewed are considered. It is discussed whether a one-person or two-person review is best suited for the type of review requested.

b. **Cost:** It takes several days of effort to conduct an external review. The reviewer(s) must read the report, develop questions and any additional information requests, travel to the program, conduct all the interviews, and write a report. In most cases, a reviewer is paid an honorarium of \$1,000-\$2,000 depending on the nature of the external review requested.

c. **Site visit:** The site visit is normally a two-day visit to the program under review. This involves a pre-set schedule of meetings with program faculty, administrators, a group of students, and other relevant parties (e.g., librarian, student success coordinator). The site visit schedule is arranged by the program under review in consultation with the peer reviewer(s).

d. **Travel:** in most cases, the travel is arranged directly between the host institution and the external peer reviewer(s). No more than one or two nights lodging is also required with a per diem.

e. **Draft and final external review report:** The reviewer(s) will provide feedback to the university, usually within two weeks of the site visit, but that feedback will not include an assessment of the number of the standards that the program met, nor whether the program has earned ACJS Program Endorsement. The reviewer(s) will provide their findings to the ARC, which will review the report and determine whether the program exceeds (95%, including Standard C.4), meets (85%, including standard C.4) or fails to meet ACJS Program standards. Programs that are found to meet or exceed the standards will be listed on the ACJS website as such for seven years.

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