

# Expediting a Response to the Accreditation Criterion 5 Core Components

## *Suggested Tools and Techniques*

**Robert E. Brown**  
Associate Director

**David G. Knaggs**  
Engagement Specialist

University-Community Partnerships  
University Outreach & Engagement  
Michigan State University

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University Outreach  
& Engagement  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing

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Copies of this guide are available  
from:

**University Outreach &  
Engagement**

Michigan State University  
Kellogg Center, Garden Level  
East Lansing, Michigan 48824  
Phone: (517) 353-8977  
Fax: (517) 432-9541  
E-mail: [outreach@msu.edu](mailto:outreach@msu.edu)  
Web: <http://outreach.msu.edu>

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For more information, contact Robert  
E. Brown at the above address or  
phone number, or email:  
[brownr23@msu.edu](mailto:brownr23@msu.edu).

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# Purpose

During the 2005-06 academic year, Michigan State University will undergo an institution-wide accreditation review by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. This brief is one of two guides prepared by University Outreach & Engagement to assist MSU units with coordinating their response to the HLC/NCA Accreditation Criterion 5 Core Components.

The HLC/NCA Re-Accreditation Self Studies at MSU Web page (<http://www.accreditation2006.msu.edu/assessment/index.html>) states:

Each unit (academic and support) must provide examples under each of the four core components for Criterion Three.

For Criteria One, Two, Four, and Five, each unit must provide an example for ONE core component. Lead with your strengths! Units may, of course, provide an example of more than one core component.

Examples should include the following, using short concise sentences.

1. The goal
2. Activities to reach the goal (What did you do?)
3. Processes used to assess and evaluate the activities (How did you assess?)
4. Analysis of the assessment data (What did you find?)
5. Feedback loop to improve the activities to reach the goal (What did you change as a result of the assessment?)
6. What happened as a result of the change?
7. How are you continuing to use assessment to improve?

This brief suggests approaches, actions and tools that some may find helpful in effectively and efficiently completing MSU's basic requirements for a unit level response to the Accreditation Criterion 5 Core Components.

The following is only intended as a guide. The series of charts and questions will help you formulate the succinct responses called for by the Re-Accreditation Self-Study Guide. Since the nature of internal and external connections and the amount of existing constituent information that is available varies considerably from one unit to the next, individual units may well find that they have means for meeting the requirements that are more effective than the following suggestions.

# I. Getting Started

## A. Identify your Outreach and Engagement Focus

<i>Research/Discovery</i>	<i>Teaching and Learning</i>	<i>Service/Citizenship</i>
Applied research	Service-learning	Clinical services
Community based research	Study abroad programs	Consulting
Contractual research	Distance education and off-campus instruction	Policy analysis
Demonstration projects	Continuing education	Service to community-based organizations
Exhibitions/performances	Contract courses or programs designed for specific audiences	Knowledge transfer and workshops
Needs assessments/evaluations	Conferences, seminars and workshops	Expert testimony
Knowledge transfer and research	Educational programs for alumni	Technical assistance
Technical assistance	Participatory curriculum development	Contributions to manage leading professional societies and organizations
Publications/presentations		Commercialization of discoveries
		New business ventures

## B. Identify your Major Constituent Groups

Use the following chart to list the major individuals, groups, organizations, or entities that may benefit from the unit's information, services or expertise. (*Tip:* Think about groups that represent types of people as well as organizations, such as decision-makers or people in crisis.)

<i>CONSTITUENT GROUP</i>	<i>TYPE OF CONSTITUENT</i>			
	<i>Internal</i>	<i>External</i>		
		<i>International</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>Local</i>

## C. Decide Which of the Four Core Components your Organization will Use as an Example of its Work

Consider which of the following are strengths for your unit, in terms of the quality of the relationship, the availability of information, and/or the ease of getting information if it is not now available. The component selected will be the one reported on in the steps that follow.

Select one of the following core components:

- 5a. The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.
- 5b. The organization has the capacity and commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.
- 5c. The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.
- 5d. Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

Several of the above components require that the unit have an understanding of the needs or interests of their constituents.

#### **D. Determine Constituent Need**

In order to respond effectively to some of the components it will be necessary for your unit to have taken some action to determine the needs or interests of your constituents. The following questions may provide a guide for determining constituent need.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Response (short, concise sentence)</i>
What challenges are constituents facing and what might they expect from our unit?	
What benefits are likely to exist for constituents who connect with us?	
What is their current opinion of our work? How do we know?	

# II. Re-Accreditation Self Study

Fill out the following. For examples and to see how to format your response go to: <http://www.accreditation2006.msu.edu/assessment/examplerreporting.htm>

	<i>Item</i>	<i>Response</i>
Core Component	[List the core component selected in Section I-C above.]	[Use short, concise sentences.]
Step 1. Goal	Using the goal statements listed below in step 1, select one statement and elaborate.	
Step 2. Activities to Achieve the Goal	Describe the actions taken to achieve the goal.	
Step 3. Assessment Method	Describe how your unit assesses its achievement of the goal articulated in Step 1.	
Step 4. Assessment Results	Describe your analysis of the assessment data. What did you find?	
Step 5. Action Taken	What actions have you taken as a result of your assessment findings?	
Step 6. Action Results	What happened as a result of Step 4?	
Step 7. Future Steps	What are the one or two "next steps" that you will be enacting?	

## Step 1. Goal

Depending on the component selected, the following examples may help you frame your goal statement. Select one statement and elaborate on it.

<i>Core Component</i>	<i>Examples of Goal Statements</i>
5a. The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To gather up-to-date information on the most current trends in the field ...</li> <li>• To continually monitor needs, interests and circumstances in order to provide timely, targeted support ...</li> <li>• To provide enriched and creative opportunities for scholarship ...</li> <li>• To enhance existing curriculum, and improve teaching and learning ...</li> </ul>
5b. The organization has the capacity and commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To monitor changing needs and demands and shift unit resources to continually meets constituent needs ...</li> </ul>
5c. The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide the most current evidence-based information ...</li> <li>• To keep key constituents informed of unit and MSU actions, opportunities and events ...</li> <li>• To maintain a continued connection in order to take advantage of new opportunities ...</li> </ul>
5d. Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ascertain constituent satisfaction with ...</li> <li>• To obtain constituent feedback by ...</li> </ul>

## Step 2. Activities to Achieve the Goal

If you feel you need additional description of your goal, you could identify the activities used to reach the goal by utilizing the following table:

<i>Type of Activity</i>	<i>Short, Concise Sentence Describing Activity</i>
Actions that focus on changes in knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, understandings, beliefs or values	
Actions that focus on cultural changes, such as changes in common understandings, collective agreements, norms, or culture	
Actions that focus on changes in behavior, such as changes in test scores, changes in speech, or changes in action by others	
Actions that focus on structural changes, such as changes in laws, rules or orders, changes in committee or organizational structures, changes in the physical environment, or improved products	

## Step 3. Assessment Method

Describe how your unit assesses its achievement of the goal articulated in Step 1. The table below identifies an array of potential assessment/evaluation strategies.

<i>Core Component</i>	<i>Examples of Assessment or Evaluation Methods</i>
5a: The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constituent analysis</li> <li>• Internal focus group exploring changed unit practices</li> </ul>
5b: The organization has the capacity and commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constituent analysis</li> <li>• Internal resource allocation/capacity assessment</li> </ul>
5c: The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constituent analysis</li> <li>• Surveys or Interviews</li> </ul>
5d: Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constituent satisfaction surveys</li> <li>• Number of constituents who return for additional engagement</li> </ul>

## Step 4. Assessment Results

Describe your analysis of the assessment data. What did you find? Use the following table to help you think about possible findings.

<i>Core Component</i>	<i>Assessment or Evaluation Methods</i>	<i>Examples of Findings</i>
5a. The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.	Constituent analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fourteen key constituents were identified.</li> <li>• Three of the 14 were prioritized as the most important constituents to engage.</li> <li>• Their primary interests appropriate for our engagement were identified as ...</li> <li>• A set of engagement strategies was developed for each.</li> </ul>
	Internal focus group exploring changed unit practices	Based on our ongoing work with constituents we have altered our engagement practices as follows to better serve our constituent ...
5b. The organization has the capacity and commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.	Constituent analysis; internal resource allocation/ capacity assessment	<p>Based on our internal capacity assessment we engage with our identified constituencies and communities as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applied research</li> <li>• Community based research</li> <li>• Contractual research</li> <li>• Needs assessments/evaluations</li> <li>• Technical assistance</li> </ul>
5c. The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.	Constituent analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fourteen key constituents were identified.</li> <li>• Three of the 14 were prioritized as the most important constituents to engage.</li> <li>• Their primary interests appropriate for our engagement were identified as ...</li> <li>• A set of engagement strategies was developed for each constituent.</li> </ul>
	Surveys or interviews	Eighty-six percent of the constituents surveyed indicated that the unit was very responsive to their needs.
5d. Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.	Constituent satisfaction surveys	Ninety-eight percent of the constituents surveyed indicated they were very satisfied with the services we provide.
	Number of additional engagements	Eighty-nine percent of the constituents returned for additional engagement during the year.

## **Step 5. Action Taken**

What actions have you taken as a result of your assessment findings?

## **Step 6. Action Results**

As a result of Step 4, what happened? The chart below might be helpful in looking at the different types of possible change.

<i>Type of Activity</i>	<i>Short, Concise Sentence Describing Activity</i>
Changes in knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, understandings, beliefs or values	
Cultural changes, such as changes in common understandings, collective agreements, norms, or culture	
Changes in behavior, such as changes in test scores, changes in speech, or changes in action by others	
Structural changes, such as changes in laws, rules or orders, changes in committee or organizational structures, or changes in the physical environment	

## Step 7. Future Steps

What are the one or two “next steps” that you will be enacting?

Submit your response electronically to Kelly Funk,  
Director of Assessment, [funkk@msu.edu](mailto:funkk@msu.edu).