

How to Write the Evaluation Reports for Technical Programs
New England Association of School and Colleges
Committee on Technical and Career Institutions
September 2019

Introduction

This document was developed to assist you in drafting reports for technical programs that are being evaluated by Visiting Teams from the New England Association of Schools & Colleges. Use it as a guideline. Because no two Schools/Centers are exactly alike and no two technical programs are exactly alike, your report may not address each one of the areas outlined below. If that is the case, please don't panic. We recognize that reports will vary in length, substance, and style.

Remember that the report you are being asked to write is designed to provide educators at the School/Center with solid, impartial feedback from fellow professionals. Your report must fairly and objectively state what is happening in the Technical Program, highlight program strengths and include recommendations for program improvement.

The administrators, teachers, and staff at the School/Center have spent many hours preparing for your visit. They are looking forward to meeting with you. They want to read your report. Put simply, they are counting on you.

If you follow these guidelines, we are confident that your report will be one which provides the School/Center staff with the type of feedback they are seeking.

Format of the Report

Your report will consist of three things: (1) a Program Narrative, (2) Commendations, and (3) Recommendations. These are discussed separately in the coming few pages.

While you are reading the Self-Study and meeting with staff from the School/Center you are evaluating, keep all three components in mind.

Length of the Report

NEASC does not require you to write a report of a specific length. However, as a rule, reports for Technical Programs should be roughly three (3) pages in length.

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Program Narrative

Make your report clear, concise, honest, and well written.

Write short sentences. State what you observe. Support your judgments with facts.

To the best of your ability, follow the outline below. Do so in the order indicated, if possible. Respond to as many of the questions as you can.

1. Program Basics. What is the physical layout of the program? Where's it located? How many rooms are there? Where are the machines? Are there any obvious safety or health issues? Does the area appear to be clean? Is there proper signage? Is there a clear evacuation route? Are there lockers? Bathrooms? How many student computers? What's the overall appearance to visitors?
2. Student Demographics. How many students are enrolled in each year of the program? Are the numbers going up or down? That is, what are the trends? What are the likely reasons for that? Are students mainly male or female? What are the trends? Why?
3. Curriculum. What is taught? By whom? To whom? Where does the curriculum come from? Is it aligned with the Core Values of the School/Center? What are the performance expectations? Is the curriculum competency-based? Is the curriculum aligned from grade 9 through grade 12? How often is the curriculum reviewed?
4. Instruction. When you observe instruction, how are students being taught? Are lessons student-centered? Is the instruction differentiated for mixed-ability learners? Is technology integrated into the instruction? If so, to what extent? Is lesson objective(s) clearly stated? Are they aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy? Do you see effective use of classroom management strategies? Does the instructor make accommodations for students on IEPs or Section 504 Plans?
5. Assessment and Credentialing. How does the program assess student progress? Are there both formative and summative assessments? To what extent is assessment data disaggregated and used to inform instruction? How are assessment results communicated to students and parents? To what extent are rubrics used to assess student achievement? How does the School/Center ensure that students attain the skills being taught in their program? To what

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extent do students earn state or national licenses or industry-recognized credentials?

6. Student Clubs and Awards. What is the level of student involvement in co-curricular activities such as SkillsUSA, Honor Society, DECA, Business Professionals of America, FFA, etc.? If students take part in technical or leadership competitions, to what extent have they been successful?
7. Student Placement. What is the program's record for student placement in work-based experience such as internships, employment shadowing, or cooperative education? Does the program have school-industry partnerships? Does it have articulation agreements with higher education?
8. Graduation Rates. Does the School/Center keep track of where its graduates go? If so, how? Over the past 3-5 years, what have the graduation rates from the program looked like? What are the actual numbers of students (or percentages of students) who have gone to college; gone directly into the workforce, either in the field or outside of it; pursued a military career; or done something else entirely?
9. Faculty. How do instructors in the program keep up-to-date in their field? Do they receive adequate professional development? How do they demonstrate professional leadership and other teacher responsibilities?
10. Adequacy of Program Resources. In your professional judgment, does the program appear to have sufficient resources? Is the equipment and technology consistent with current practice? If not, what is missing? Is all the equipment working properly? Does the program appear to receive a budget large enough to implement the curriculum?

Note: Comments on safety concerns or major defects in the structure of the physical plant (i.e., condition of the roof, walls, lighting, heating, ventilation, bathrooms, signage, personal protective equipment, handicapped accessibility, etc.) should also be included in the Visiting Team's Report under Standard 7, Indicator 5.)

11. Production Work. Does the program do any production work, either for the School/Center or for the community? Does it do any work outside the School/Center? Over the past few years, what kind of work has it done?

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12. Climate in the Program. What is your sense of the culture/climate/atmosphere in the program? Is there a welcoming, all-inclusive atmosphere? Is it collaborative? Is there any evidence of harassing language or behavior? Is the climate gender-neutral?

13. Outside Input. Does the program have a Trade Advisory Committee? Does it use it? What groups are represented on the Committee? Based upon a review of meeting minutes and discussion with faculty, is the Trade Advisory Committee having a positive impact upon program improvement?

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Commendations

Part of your work in writing the report is to identify “Commendations” for the program.

- Offer commendations for accomplishments or achievements that go “above and beyond” the norm. Commend the School/Center for doing something “exemplary,” “exceptional,” “one-of-a-kind,” or “truly outstanding.”
- Do not commend the School/Center for simply doing its job – or even doing its job well – only for doing its job **exceptionally** well.
- If you don’t find something that you feel is worthy of a “Commendation,” leave this section blank.
- Commend the “*What*” outcome (creating a new program or initiative, exceptionally active Advisory Committee, numerous articulation agreements with higher education), done by “*Who*” – the input (the students, the faculty, the administration, the parents, the school culture, the technology rich classrooms, etc.), and then follow with the “*Why*” – the impact of the outcome on student learning

Here are a few examples:

The Visiting Team commends ...

1. The creation of the student study circles from Student Council input that allows students the opportunity to discuss social and civic issues (5.1)
2. The donation of two vehicles from a past graduate and a member of the advisory committee which has allowed students greater access to training vehicles (7.1)
3. The warm and inviting school culture which helps all students feel included as valued members of the school community resulting in a 20% decline in reported incidents of bullying and harassment in the past two years (5.1, 5.2)
4. The selection of the school to receive the Secretary of Education’s Academic Excellence Award, one of only two schools in the country to receive such an honor (1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1 5.1, 6.1, 7.1)
5. The securing a \$250,000 state grant by the faculty to modernize the Plumbing program’s equipment and expand training opportunities for their students (5.8)

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Recommendations

When they receive the final NEASC Visiting Team Report, many readers will jump immediately to the sections dealing with Recommendations. For this reason, your Recommendations must be clear and concise. They must be supported by facts.

- Identify recommendations to improve the quality of the program or opportunities for students.
- Identify only those recommendations that are clearly supported by what you see and hear during the visit. Do not include recommendations that appear to result from a single personal gripe, personal grudge, or personal interest.
- In drafting the Recommendation, identify the issue but do not offer a solution. Deciding how to implement the Recommendation is the job of the School/Center.
- Begin the Recommendation with an action verb (create and implement), to do what? (to address the lack of adequate storage for instructional materials in the construction cluster), why? (to eliminate a safety issue)
- If you cannot find something that you feel is worthy of a Recommendation, leave the Recommendations section blank.

Here are several examples of Recommendations:

1. Create and implement a plan to address the lack of adequate storage for instructional materials in the construction cluster to eliminate a safety issue. (7.5)
2. Replace damaged ceiling tiles in the main lobby to improve overall appearance of the School. (7.5)
3. Communicate grading expectations and practices to parents so they can be better informed about their child's progress. (4.2)
4. Expand the membership of the Trade Advisory Committee to include more members from business and industry to ensure that the program is getting advice from a wider range of prospective employers. (7.8)
5. Pursue articulation agreements with additional institutions of higher education to expand opportunities and reduce costs for students planning to enroll in college after high school graduation. (7.8)