

These guidelines will assist you in the development of compliance narratives by answering frequently asked questions and providing a basis for continuity throughout the report.

Content and Text Style

Write the narrative in clear, brief, concise declarative statements, and provide a compelling argument that supports the level of compliance.

- **Write in the third person (he, she, him, her, them)**, not first person (I, we, us) or second person (all forms of you). Narratives should be in prose style (i.e., the ordinary language people use in speaking and writing). Limit the length of the narrative, and state the essentials first. Keep the narrative focused.
- Because our SACS Review Team members will each review different sections of our report, each narrative should be written as a stand-alone document.
- Use bulleted points when possible.
- Use the active voice.
 - *Active voice:* The committee prepared the report.
 - *Passive voice:* The report was prepared by the committee.
- Select verbs carefully. Avoid subjective verbs such as feel, hope, or believe; **use objective verbs such as review, examine, and analyze**. Keep verb tense consistent throughout the narrative. If you are reporting on something we did in the past, use past tense (Ex: The College established a fund in 2009.) If you are reporting on something are currently doing, use present tense (Ex: The students use computers in developmental math classes.)
- **College Name:** The first instance of the College's name in each narrative should be written in full (Lamar State College-Port Arthur). After the first reference, you may use LSC-PA or the College (if referring specifically to LSC-PA).
- **Names and Titles:** Avoid using names of individuals in narratives – use position titles in place of names. For draft purposes only, you will include the names of individuals contributing to the narrative in the "Organizational Units Involved in Narrative Development" section (see above).
 - Capitalize titles when identifying a specific position.
 - The Deans report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Dean of Technical Programs coordinates programs with Department Chairs and Program Coordinators. (but not Faculty or Students)
 - **Division, College, Department, Office, Committee Names:** Capitalize the name of the division, college, department, office, or committee when referring to a specific entity. When making a general reference, do not capitalize.
 - The Department of Business, Math, and Science meets its outcome goals every semester. Department Chairs keep records for each department.

- Numbers: Numbers nine and below should be spelled out; use Arabic numerals for 10 and above (unless the number starts the sentence – spell out in this case). Use a numeral for scores, statistical representations, and ages. Large numbers may use a combination of letters and numerals: 259 thousand, \$1.7 million
- Dates: Dates should include a comma if the day is cited; otherwise, do not use a comma. Use four digits for the year (November 1, 2008; November 2008). Capitalize time periods in the College Calendar (Fall Semester 2008; In the fall of 2008).
- Common Hyphenations: part-time, full-time, on-campus, off-campus, three-hour course, (not hyphenated: three credit hours; nontraditional, reaccreditation, extracurricular, intramural)
- Italicize names of publications.
- Use the prefix, number, and course title When referring to specific courses:
ENGL 1301 Composition
- Use bullets to set off lists. Use the standard default circle bullet with standard indentation (1/2 inch).
- Define any technical or specialized terms. Avoid jargon.
- Define acronyms in parentheses after the first use of the full name: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Common abbreviations do not need to be defined (e.g., BA, BS, PhD, GPA, state abbreviations such as AL) and do not need periods.
- Use commas in a series as follows: faculty, staff, and students (not faculty, staff and students).
- Use singular verbs and pronouns with collective nouns: "The faculty is delighted in its progress." The term "data" requires a plural verb ("these data were...").
- **Pluralization** of common academic terms
 - curriculum vitae (singular)
 - curricula vitae (plural)
 - curricula preferred to curriculums
 - alumni
 - one man: alumnus
 - one woman: alumna
 - two or more men: alumni
 - two or more women: alumnae
 - for a group: alumni
 - data (plural); datum (singular)
 - emeritus (male, singular); emerita (female, singular); emeriti (plural)
 - syllabus (singular); syllabi (plural)
- **Academic terms**
 - Academic degrees
 - bachelor of arts in ...
 - bachelor's degree in ...
 - bachelor's degrees in ...
 - master's degree in ...
 - doctoral degree in ...
 - doctorate in ...

- **Gender/ethnicity**
 - do not use boys, girls; use students, men, or women
 - chair, not chairman
 - avoid gender specific pronouns as much as possible, but if you must, use “he and she” and “she and he” (do NOT use hyphenated, “he/she”)
- **Spelling**
 - advisor, not adviser
 - affect/effect
 - affect (verb) – to influence
 - effect (verb) – to cause
 - effect (noun) – a result
 - assure/ensure/insure
 - assure: refers to people and means to convince or give confidence in
 - ensure: means to guarantee
 - insure: monetary coverage according to a policy
 - compose/comprise
 - compose: to create or assemble
 - comprise: to embrace or contain
 - farther/further
 - farther: a physical distance
 - further: an extension of time or degree
 - toward, not towards
 - Web site
 - e-mail
 - online

References and Citations

- **Supporting documentation** referenced in the narrative must provide the evidence.
 - **Do not provide supporting evidence in the narrative, i.e., let the documentation speak for itself, unless the analysis of the requirement or standard indicates the use of a template.** Within the narrative, you can use such statements as: "The referenced document provides evidence of ..." or "the *Catalog* states the procedure for"
 - References to the supporting documentation must be included in the narrative.
 - Use the following examples of titles frequently used in the narrative. The title of the document is in Italics.
 - Lamar State College-Port Arthur *Schedule* or LSC-PA *Schedule*
 - Lamar State College-Port Arthur *Catalog*
 - The Texas State University System *Rules and Regulations* or
 - TSUS *Rules and Regulations*

- *Mission Statement*
- *Guidelines for Instructional Programs in Workforce Education (GIPWE)*
- The narrative should include a list of the organizational units (with associated contact persons) that were responsible for developing the narrative. Include these at the end of the narrative.
- The author of the narrative will be responsible for checking references and links for accuracy.

Example Narrative and Documentation [with instructions within the brackets]

Narrative

At Lamar State College-Port Arthur, any credit awarded is ultimately subject to approval by the appropriate Dean. The *Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual* (1) provides state guidelines for the awarding for lower division academic course work transferred in from other state institutions. The *Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM)* (5) provides guidelines for the awarding of credit from other technical institutions. Credit awarded for work transferred in from out of state is, likewise, ultimately the responsibility of the Dean, who may request transcripts, course descriptions, and even course syllabi from the granting institution.

The College employs a full-time transcript evaluator, who contacts any student seeking to transfer college credit to LSC-PA. The transcript evaluator explains the evaluation process and asks for the student's cooperation and participation. If a student disagrees with the results of the evaluation, there is an appeals process he or she may pursue. Procedures are listed in the LSC-PA *Catalog* sections entitled "Transfer of Credit," "Transfer Dispute Resolution Guidelines," "'Disputes' vs. 'Problems,'" and "Former Students Returning From Another Institution" (3 *Catalog* 18-21 "Admission") [<http://www.lamarpa.edu/bulletin2009/0910%20B%20%20admissions,%20fees%20&%20expenses.pdf>]

The Registrar is confident that most students do submit the previous transcript before enrolling because the enrollment process for fall begins in late spring, giving ample time to receive the requested information. Less than 5 percent are conditionally admitted while waiting for transcripts for courses taken at another institution in the spring for the first summer session at LSC-PA or for courses taken at another institution in the second summer session for the fall session at LSC-PA. (4 Nicholas) Furthermore, the state-mandated *Compact With Texans* (2 section II 58-60) requires that state agencies establish service standards, including maximum wait times, in order to meet the needs of the public in a timely fashion.

Supporting Documents

- 1 *Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual* [section and page number or URL to specific place]
- 2 *Compact With Texans* [section II 58-60 or URL link to specific location]
- 3 *Catalog* 18-21 "Admission" [<http://www.lamarpa.edu/bulletin2009/0910%20B%20%20admissions,%20fees%20&%20expenses.pdf>]
- 4 Nicholas, Connie. Interview. 10 Sept 2010. [pdf info]
- 5 *Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM)* [specific location of information referred to]

[These references need to be links to the specific online section or to a word document that we place on the website for offsite reviewers to access. Make an electronic folder for each narrative that keeps the word documents identified by reference number (1) (4) in the front of the title so it can be found easily.]

Note: I made the number blue in the narrative only to indicate they will be bookmarks. During revisions if a new source is added give it the new document number and just add it to the narrative. Reference 12 may come before 5 in the Narrative.