Making a Case for Accreditation

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Session Description

• This session will provide guidance on how to use data and evidence to "make the case" for a positive accreditation decision.
• Provides an example of stronger and weaker cases for meeting component 1.2
• Prevents evaluation criteria for each standard and component that will be used by site visitors and the Accreditation Council.
The Purpose

Of Accreditation
• To provide quality assurance based on external standards valued by multiple stakeholders
• To apply the same standards to all programs seeking accreditation to provide common points of comparison

Of the Self Study Report
• To provide EPPs with the opportunity to contribute a self-evaluation to the decision-making process
  ▪ To present the EPPs case that each standard is met and describe how the EPP operates and makes judgments about its own quality
The Challenges

• High Stakes
  ▪ Pressure from a variety of stakeholders with diverse expectations
  ▪ Potential threats to funding and ability to operate

• Resources
  ▪ Time
  ▪ Energy
  ▪ Money
  ▪ Personnel
Making Your Case: The Steps

1. Decide what you want to argue about your program’s quality
2. Decide what is convincing
3. Use appropriately rigorous research and data analysis methods
4. Minimize Subjectivity / Promote Inter-Subjectivity
Step 1

1. **Decide what you want to argue about your program’s quality**
   - Examine the standards and components and decide how you meet them and which you want to emphasize in your narrative or claims.
   - Although every component must be addressed, meeting the standard is based on the preponderance of the evidence about the standard as a whole, so the case can emphasize a particular component.
2. **Decide what is convincing**

- What convinces you that your program meets each standard or component?
- Think of an EPP or our alternative preparation model that raises doubts for you about quality. What are your doubts and what would they need to provide to you to convince you that they have a quality program?
3. Use appropriately rigorous research and data analysis methods

- There is a variety of methodologies and methods for rigorous inquiry. Some are more appropriate for some questions than others.
- Refusal to use either qualitative or quantitative methods limits the strength of the case that can be made and the ability to communicate effectively with others. Distrust and power struggles are the result.
4. **Minimize Subjectivity / Promote Inter-Subjectivity**
   - Communication is the best tool for diffusing the tension, but communication needs to be objective to transcend boundaries between strangers.
   - While complete objectivity is not possible, and “objective” communication is no panacea, the effort yields more agreement and more respectful disagreement than messages that appear vague, defensive, or self-serving.
Increasing Objectivity

• Data and evidence increase the objectivity of communications, which makes the case stronger.
• The stronger case will generally be the better-specified case:
  ▪ The case that lays out the Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why regarding the evidence for meeting the standard
  ▪ The following examples of a case for meeting Component 1.2 designed to demonstrate this.
  (See CAEP Evidence Guide for qualities of good evidence)
Example 1: Component 1.2
Providers ensure that completers [at exit] use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students’ progress and their own professional practice.

Case 1: Weaker Case (see handout)

• Features
  - It is not clear how the research literature in the syllabi distributed across the areas mentioned in the standard. Did they focus mostly on the teaching profession but minimally or not at all on how to measure progress or evaluate practice?
  - It is not clear what the assignments in the syllabi that involved research asked the candidates to do. Were they given sources or asked to do their own literature search? If they conducted their own literature search, were the sources that they used current, credible, and strong?
  - The survey instrument asks vague and leading questions. Responses may reflect social-desirability bias.
  - The results are filled with conclusions, not with the data or evidence that gave rise to the conclusions.
Conclusions Supported/Not Supported

Case 1 (Weaker Case)

- **Supported**
  - The candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession.
  - They commit to use research and evidence throughout their careers to evaluate student progress and their practice.

- **Not Supported**
  - Candidates evaluate students’ progress and their own professional practice using research and evidence.
Example 2: Component 1.2
Providers ensure that completers [at exit] use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students’ progress and their own professional practice.

Case 2: Stronger Case (see handout)

• Features
  § The method is clearer. The reader can see how the data sources were evaluated and that the survey instrument led to more valid conclusions.
  § The assignment instructions are provided and they show that candidates complete assignments that address each area of the component (understanding the profession, using research and evidence to measure student progress, and using research and evidence to assess their own professional practice).
  § The results disaggregate the findings across the three areas of the component and make it clear what was accomplished regarding the component as a whole.
Conclusions Supported/Not Supported

Case 2 (Stronger Case)

• Supported
  ▪ The candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession.
  ▪ They evaluate students’ progress and their own professional practice using research and evidence.
  ▪ They commit to use research and evidence throughout their careers to evaluate student progress and their practice.

• Not Supported
  ▪ None
Implications

• These programs may well have taken the exact same approach to preparing their teachers.

• But the second case is stronger because it presents the evidence in the results rather than a series of conclusions as in the first case.
  - A reader can query the data and procedures in the second case and decide whether the approach is reasonable and the conclusions are justified.

• A reader may have additional questions and you can never eliminate all doubt among the skeptical, but the stronger case provides better protection from unfair judgment.
CAEP Evaluation Criteria: The Standards

- The following slides present the highlights for each Standard overall.
  - When building the case toward meeting the standard, examine the strength of the case that can be made for meeting each component based on the elements in the evaluation criteria for the components.
CAEP Evaluation Criteria: General Rules

• Data Quality is a critical prerequisite for making a strong case. For CAEP Accreditation, this means that:
  ▪ Most instruments are Sufficient as defined by CAEP Assessment Rubric
  ▪ Evidence, as indicated in Component 5.2 is “relevant, verifiable, representative, cumulative and actionable, and produces empirical evidence that interpretations of data are valid and consistent” as defined by the CAEP Evidence Guide
A note on Assessments/Measures

- EPPs are **not** held responsible for the quality of **required** assessments developed or mandated by the state, but should understand and describe their design and, if available, their psychometric properties.
  - However, if the state measures are of insufficient quality, EPPs are expected to supplement with higher quality sources to obtain CAEP accreditation.
- EPPs are **held responsible** the quality of **optional** State and Commercial instruments that they choose to use as evidence sources.
CAEP Evaluation Criteria: General Rules

• Data Quantity: A strong case has enough data to support confident decision-making by the EPP and by CAEP. For CAEP Accreditation, this means
  ▪ At least 3 sequential and most recent administrations of performance measures. Data about operations, including partnerships, addresses multiple points over time.
  ▪ At least 2 separate sources (e.g., multiple instruments)
    • Examinations, observations, surveys
    • Surveys, meeting minutes, action logs

See Accreditation Resources and Handout: Evaluation Criteria for Self-Study Evidence
CAEP Evaluation Criteria: General Rules

• All CAEP Standards and Components must be addressed in the Self-Study Report, regardless of accreditation pathway (IB, SI, TI)
A note on Required Components

- The standard cannot be met if a required component is not met.
- The required components are 3.2, all components of Standard 4 (4.1-4.4), and two of the *continuous improvement* components of Standard 5 (5.3 and 5.4).
- In the case of these components, the preponderance of evidence relates to the weight of evidence for meeting the set of sufficiency targets within the component.
Additional Evaluation Criteria: Standard 1

- All data must be disaggregated by specialty licensure area for Standard 1.
- Evidence from Standard 1 is cited in support of continuous improvement and part of an overall system of review (Standard 5).
- There are no required components for Standard 1.
Additional Evaluation Criteria: Standard 2

- There are no required components for Standard 2.
- Examine the criteria for the 3 components to build the case that the standard is met.
Additional Evaluation Criteria: Standard 3

- All 6 components must be addressed, but meeting Component 3.2 is required in order to meet Standard 3.

- If one of the Alternative ways of meeting Component 3.2 is pursued, the burden is on the EPP to demonstrate that the rigor of the approach withstands scientific scrutiny.
Additional Evaluation Criteria: Standard 4

- All components for Standard 4 must be met for the standard to be considered met.
- Evidence that is currently available for any of the components can be presented even if a plan is used for remaining evidence.
- All phase-in requirements must be met if the phase-in option is pursued. Plans will be evaluated according to the CAEP Guidelines for Plans: Phasing In Accreditation Evidence.
Additional Evaluation Criteria: Standard 5

- Components 5.3 and 5.4 are required.
- All phase-in requirements must be met if the phase-in option is pursued. Plans will be evaluated according to the CAEP Guidelines for Plans: Phasing In Accreditation Evidence.
- While 5.2 is not a required component for meeting Standard 5, meeting it is essential for meeting other standards (particularly Standards 1 and 4).
Conclusions

• The EPP must make the case, not supply the relevant data and assume the site visit team or Accreditation Council will analyze it to make the case.

• Although the Inquiry Brief (IB) self-study report format currently places the case for meeting Standard 2, 3, and 5 in the appendices, these standards are not extraneous in the IB Pathway process.
  ▪ A strong and complete case should be made for them regardless of their location within the report.
A Final Note

• Non-required components are not less important than required components, they simply have less adverse impact (individually) on judgments about preponderance if they are not met during these transitional years.

• Accreditation cannot be achieved by demonstrating only that all of the required components are met.
Thank You

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