

III.7 The ERP Report

The COA uses the ERP Report in conjunction with the Self-Study. Thus, the ERP Report should address key points from the *Standards* based on evidence as outlined in II.7.4, but it should not recapitulate the information contained in the Self-Study or quote large passages from the *Standards*. References to pages in the Self-Study should be made instead.

Panelists' observations and evaluations must be founded on the *Standards* and must provide an objective assessment of the program supported by evidence presented within the Self-Study and/or gained as part of the site visit. Evidence can take the form of student achievements (grades, projects, appointments, awards and recognition, job placements, etc.), interviews, surveys of program stakeholders, quotes from program publications or communications, and similar documents.

The report should be written in a manner that provides analytical, evaluative, and constructive information about the program's compliance with the *Standards*. It should lead the reader to draw conclusions about the strengths, limitations, and challenges of the program. The report should be balanced in order to help improve the quality and effectiveness of the program and the school. Even if criticism is warranted, the panel should also recognize the strengths of the program and school.

III.7.1 Content of the report

The ERP Report should include the following sections:

III.7.1(a) Introduction

The introduction provides a brief description of the visit and of the individuals interviewed during the visit, along with a description of any other means (i.e., web-based questionnaires, phone interviews, personal interviews, etc.) by which the panel collected information.

III.7.1(b) Analysis

This section of approximately 20 pages analyzes the program within the context of the *Standards*. Organized by standard, this section provides an analysis, based on data and evidence, of the extent to which the program demonstrates compliance with each standard. The panel has a responsibility to report areas of both strength and limitation, as well as areas, if any, that may not be in compliance with the *Standards*, and to identify areas for improvement.

Analysis of facts, trends, strengths, and identification of concerns should be based on data and other information obtained through the Self-Study and the on-site visit. This analysis should be supported with evidence as suggested in section II.7.4. The ERP does not make recommendations as to whether or not the program should be accredited.

The report should not include specific statements regarding the program's compliance with the *Standards*, either individually or as a whole (for example, "The program does not comply with Standard I."). Rather, the report should help the reader draw conclusions about the program's compliance with the *Standards* and should use the *Standards* as the point of reference. If the panel finds that information on which to base its analysis is

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incomplete or missing, this should be noted. Comparisons with other programs are inappropriate and should not be included.

III.7.1(c) Summary

The report should end with a brief summary statement. The summary statement should highlight strengths, limitations, and/or challenges for the program.

III.7.2 Format of the ERP Report

The report should adhere to the following format:

- The ERP Report should be prepared in accordance with a recognized style manual;
- Set margins to a minimum of 1 inch;
- Double-space the report;
- Use consecutive page numbers throughout the report and be consistent in their placement;
- Prepare a title page that includes all information in the sample in section III.7.3;
- Write the report in the third person; for example, “The External Review Panel notes that....”;
- Use terminology that is gender-neutral. ALA policy calls for use of the term “Chair” for the panel leader. Social or gender-related titles such as Mr. or Ms. should not be used. Academic titles (Dr.) may be used. Use of gender-specific words should be avoided, as should diminutives;
- When referring to the *Standards*, use either *Standards* or *Standards for Accreditation*;
- Be sure the names of the university, college, school, department, the program, and titles of individuals are correct. These names should be used throughout the report;
- Properly cite references to the Self-Study and/or other information sources;
- If information that came from an individual is used, include the person’s name and title;
- Include page references in the text for quotations and when paraphrasing;
- Avoid confusion between various drafts and the final report. Date the drafts, use a different title page for each report, and include a header or footer stating, for example, “Draft for correction of factual errors” or “Final ERP Report.”

III.7.3 ERP Report title page

The title page of the ERP Report should list the following information. The draft ERP Report should be clearly labeled as such.

- External Review Panel Report (or External Review Panel DRAFT Report)
- [Degree name] program
- [Department, School or College Name],
- [Institution name]
- Conducted on behalf of the American Library Association Committee on Accreditation
- [Panelist names]
- [Report date]

III.7.4 Deadlines

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| 3 weeks after the visit | The ERP Chair sends a draft of the ERP Report to the Program Head, the panel members, and the Office for Accreditation via email attachment requesting receipt confirmation. Each recipient reviews the draft report and offers corrections to any factual errors. |
| 4 weeks after the visit | The Program Head provides factual corrections (if any) to the draft ERP Report to the ERP Chair and the Office for Accreditation by email. The ERP Chair works with the ERP to revise the draft report as needed to incorporate factual corrections and to produce the final report. |
| 5 weeks after the visit | The ERP Chair sends the final ERP Report to the Program Head, Office for Accreditation, and all ERP members via email attachment requesting receipt confirmation. |