



How to Write an APR

NAAB

National Architectural
Accrediting Board, Inc.

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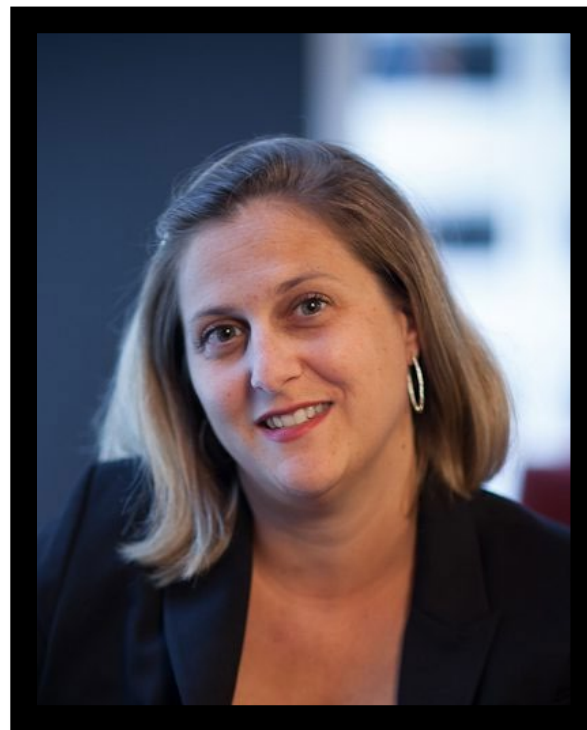
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Presenting Today.....



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What We'll Cover...

1. What is an APR?
2. Components of the APR
3. Getting Started
4. Writing the APR: Elements of Good Practice
5. A Focus on Assessment
6. Writing the APR – A Reprise
7. Uploading the APR
8. More Advice
9. A Reminder about Resources



What is an APR?

- The Architecture Program Report (APR) requires programs to engage in self-assessment and provides a narrative description of compliance with each condition and the processes for continuous improvement.
 - It is the principal source document for conducting the visit and documenting compliance with each of the conditions, including the Program and Student Criteria.

Components of the APR

Introduction

- Progress since the Previous Visit
- Program Changes

1. Context and Mission
2. Shared Values of the Discipline and Profession
3. Program and Student Criteria
4. Curricular Framework
5. Resources
6. Public Information

Getting Started...

- [APR templates](#) for each stage of the accreditation process, with detailed instructions, are available on NAAB's Resources web page.
- The [Guidelines to the Accreditation Process](#) is an important resource for what should, and shouldn't, be included in the APR. Information about uploading digital content can be found in the [Guidelines for the Use of Digital Content in Accreditation Visits](#).
- Map out your timeline. Many people inside and outside of the college/university will be involved. Preparation and organization is essential.
 - Make sure you have plenty of time to get the information you need. Remember that you will need to present a cycle of data related to assessment.
 - Programs often start 12-18 months prior to the deadline.



Getting Started...

- Obtain a copy of the last APR, the most recent VTR, any interim progress reports (2014 Conditions) or Plans-to-Correct (2020 Conditions), substantive change requests, and other NAAB actions.
- Create your Virtual Team Room as you write the APR, to help you think through and organize your evidence and ensure you are properly citing and annotating the evidence.



Writing the APR: Elements of Good Practice

- Follow the template and instructions.
 - Use the numbering in the template exactly – do not add new sections or subsections.
 - In completing the APR template, leave in the narratives to serve as prompts for readers to help them understand what is supposed to be addressed in each section.
- Keep the reader in mind. The primary readers are practitioners, regulators, students, and educators from other programs.
 - Think about the report from the Visiting Team and Board of Directors' points of view. Review the Guidelines, the Visiting Team Report template, and the Board analysis template.



Writing the APR: Elements of Good Practice

- The report must be written clearly in one voice and be manageable in length.
 - Follow page limit and file size instructions.
- The program is expected to **succinctly** describe how it meets each of the conditions for accreditation.
 - Photographs, tables, or other types of information may also be included, but not to the detriment of the narrative.
 - Use consistent, common-sense language. Avoid jargon.
- Include only relevant information.
 - In the appendix, include only items referenced in the APR.
 - Do not include raw data or non-relevant policies or procedures.
 - Make references to non-accredited programs, such as an institution's BS in Architecture, only when necessary.



Writing the APR: Elements of Good Practice

- Use the [Guidelines to the Accreditation Process](#), particularly the “Blue Box.”
- Address **ALL** parts of a condition.
 - If there are sub-conditions, address each one.
 - If conditions are stated as complex sentences, address each part of the sentence(s). Look for “and”, “or”, and other joining words

SC.4 Technical Knowledge—How the program ensures that students understand the established and emerging systems, technologies, and assemblies of building construction, and the methods and criteria architects use to assess those technologies against the design, economics, and performance objectives of projects.

The following (from the 2020 Procedures, section 3.5.3) describes the types of evidence required for the assessment of SC.5 and SC.6:

Primary Evidence for SC.5 and SC.6. These criteria will be evaluated at the ability level. Programs may design their curricula to satisfy these criteria via a single course or a combination of courses. Evidence supplied for these required courses is provided in the team room and include fully labeled exhibits of student work from each course section. Programs must provide the following:

Narrative: A narrative description of how the program achieves and evaluates each criterion.

Self-Assessment: Evidence that each student learning outcome associated with these criteria is developed and assessed by the program on a recurring basis, with a summary of the modifications the program has made to its curricula and/or individual courses based on findings from its assessments since the previous review. If the program accomplishes these criteria in more than one course, it must demonstrate that it coordinates the assessment of these criteria across those courses.

Supporting Materials: Supporting materials demonstrating how the program accomplishes its objectives related to each criterion. Organize the supporting exhibits in the format specified by the NAAB and include the following for each course associated with the student learning outcome:

- Course Syllabus.** The syllabus must clearly articulate student learning outcome objectives for the course, the methods of assessment (e.g., tests, project assignments), and the relative weight of each assessment tool used by the instructor(s) to determine student performance.
- Course Schedule.** The schedule must clearly articulate the topics covered in the class and the amount of time devoted to each course subtopic.
- Instructional Materials.** The exhibits must clearly illustrate the instructional materials used in the course. These may include a summary of required readings, lecture materials, field trips, workshop descriptions, and other materials used in the course to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Student Work Examples: The program must collect all passing student work produced for the course(s) in which the learning outcomes associated with this criterion are achieved within one year before the visit, or the full academic cycle in which the courses are offered. The visiting team will evaluate approximately 20 percent (no less than three, no more than thirty examples) of the student work collected in this time frame, selected by the NAAB at random before the visit. The program may self-select additional student work, up to 10 percent, for the visiting team to review.

If several courses are used to satisfy the SC, the class lists from each course must be aligned so that a random selection process will collect the work of each student selected in all classes that are used to meet the SC. The student lists provided must comply with FERPA rules.

Writing the APR: Elements of **Good Practice**

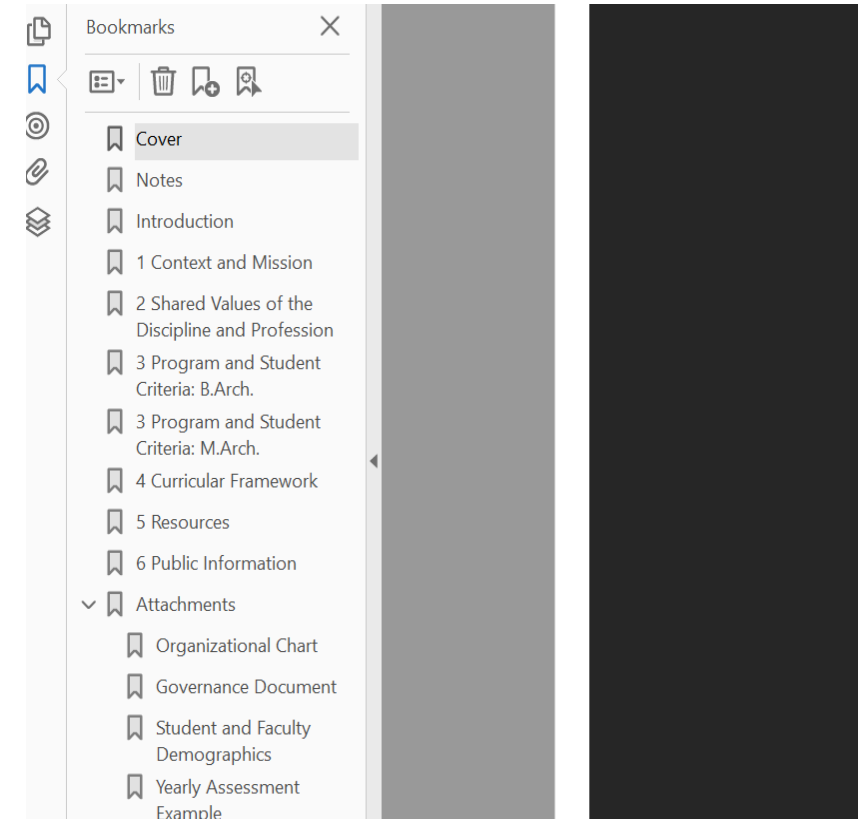
- Cross-referencing
 - If sections are related, cross-referencing can be appropriate and helpful. Be sure cross-referenced sections are consistent and correct.
 - Internal bookmarks and hyperlinks can be useful for cross-referencing.
- Check bookmarks and hyperlinks.
 - If linking to active webpages, links may break as webpages are changed or updated. Take care to ensure pages are held static during the review period.
- Have it copy edited

Writing the APR: Elements of **Good Practice**

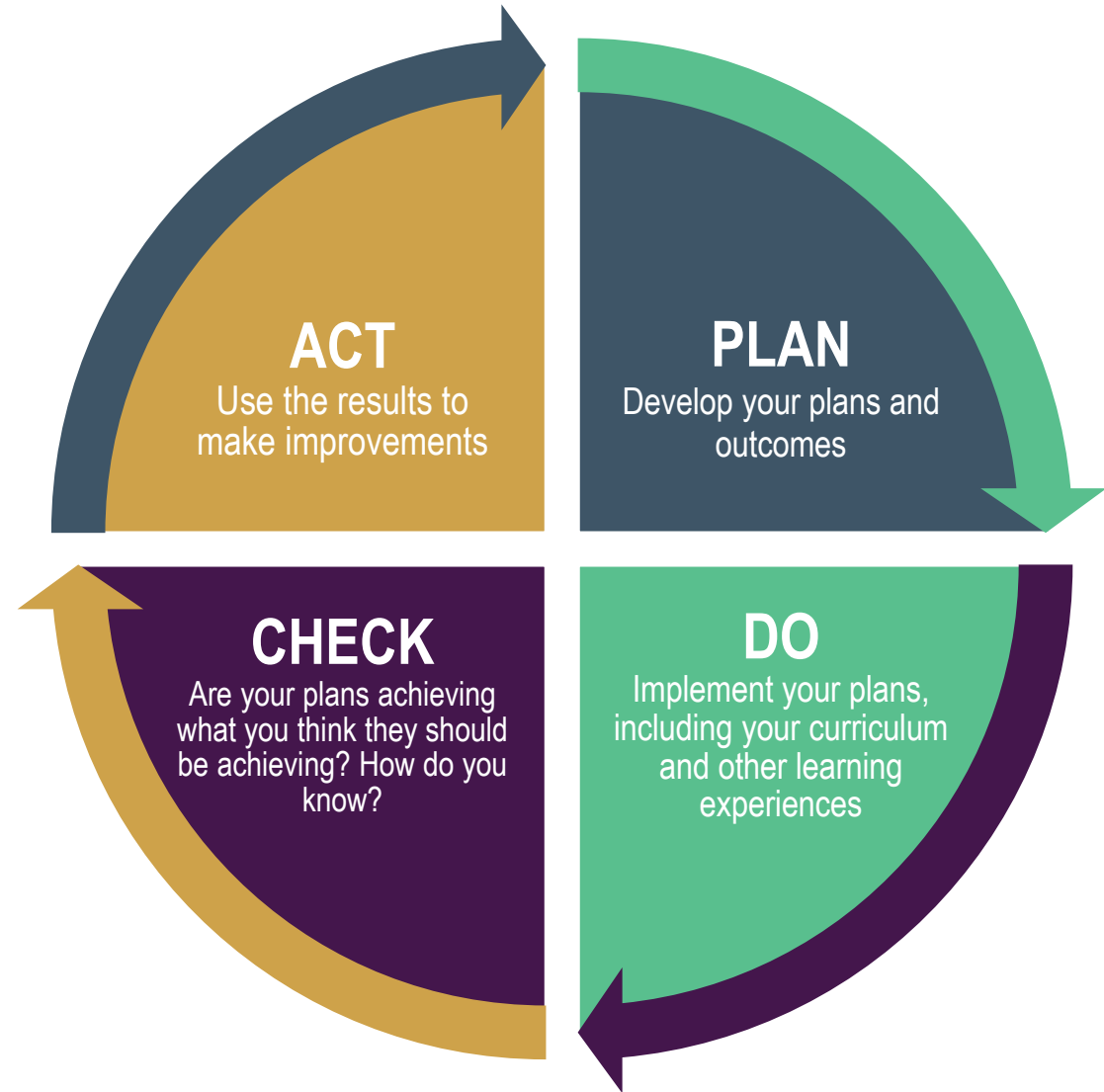
- Formatting and style
 - Pay attention to things that make the document easier to read:
 - Font size
 - White space
 - Page breaks
 - Page numbers
 - Tables and graphs to help convey information
 - If using acronyms or abbreviations, be sure to spell out the full name prior to using the acronym or abbreviation. Don't assume readers will be aware of its meaning.

Writing the APR: Elements of Good Practice

- Converting to PDF
 - Combine files into a single PDF.
 - Use bookmarks to help the Visiting Team navigate through the document.
 - Set up the file properties so that the document opens with the bookmarks visible.
 - Include bookmarks for each major section and appendix and to the tables in each standard
 - Compress photos and graphics.
 - Don't scan documents and convert to PDF – can increase file size.

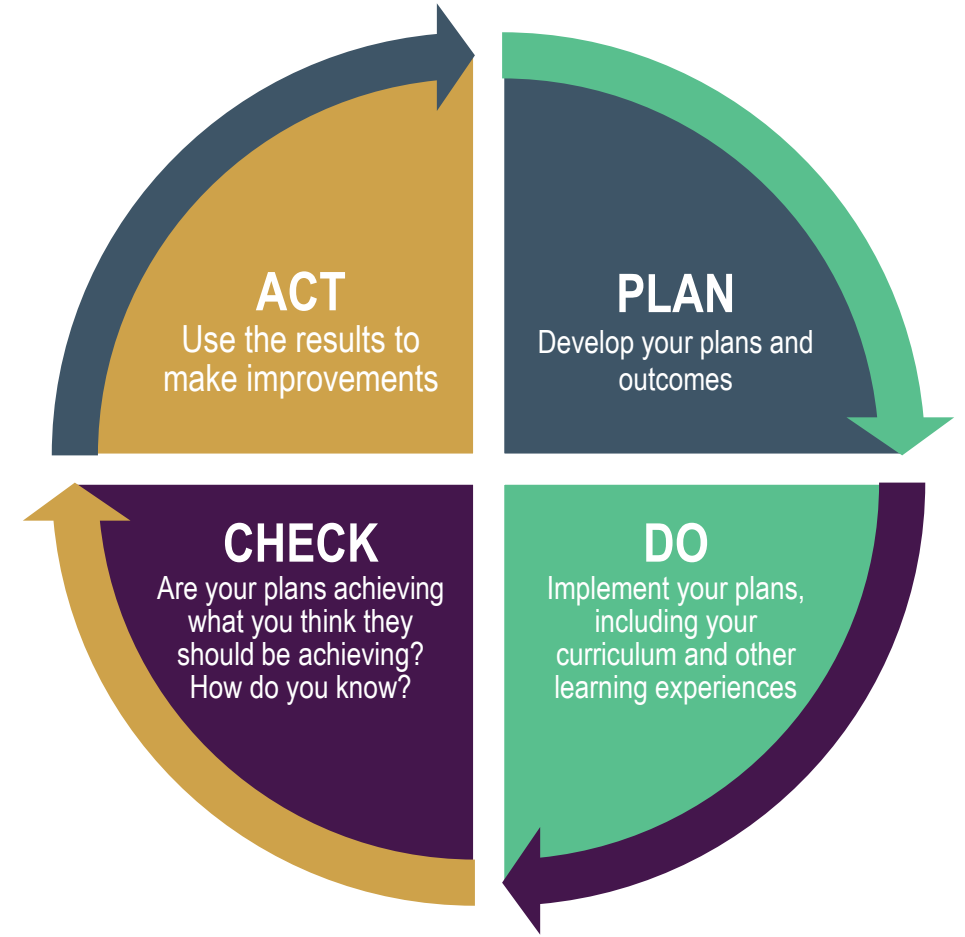


A Focus on Outcomes-Based Assessment

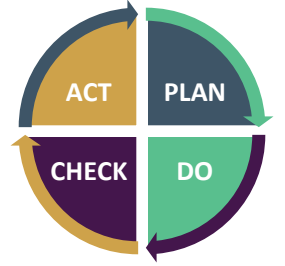


A Focus on Outcomes-Based Assessment

- The 2020 Conditions require programs to **assess student learning** and **engage in a continuous improvement process** that addresses all aspects of the program
- Assessment cycles should represent best practices in assessment including a regular review that allows for data collection, aggregation, and use to improve effectiveness in a timely fashion.

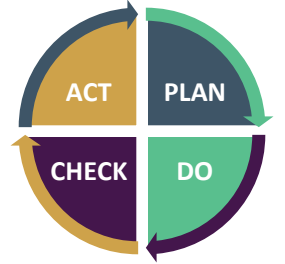


Why Should Programs Assess Their Effectiveness?



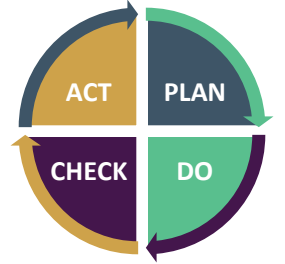
- Assessment helps us determine if programs are meeting their goals.
 - Are students learning what they think they should be learning?
 - Is there a way they can do things better? Where do they need to improve?
- When done well, assessment:
 - Provides diagnostic feedback
 - Helps educators set standards
 - Evaluates progress

Continuous Improvement is the Goal



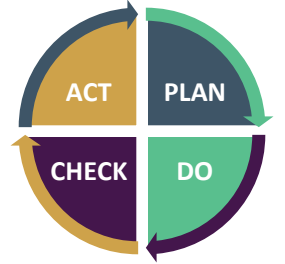
- The key to effective assessment is the use of data.
 - The APR should answer:
 - How does the program use the data? What changes are made to the curriculum, course content, projects, sequencing, or even the assessment measure itself?
 - In the APR and during the visit, programs should be prepared to speak about what **THEY** have learned about the students and their learning through assessment.
- Assessment and continuous improvement cannot be completed in a silo.
 - Programs should work to ensure alignment among processes and outcomes to maximize efficiency and minimize unnecessary complexity.

Start by Looking at Existing Processes



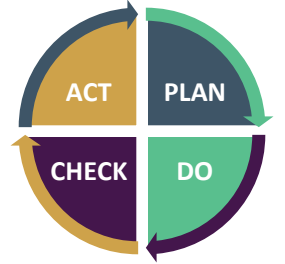
- Existing reports such as the Program/Institutional Assessment Reports or Program/Institutional Effectiveness Reports or similar likely include data that can be presented as evidence in the APR.
- In the APR, programs can share or reference programmatic assessment reports and/or the data collected to provide evidence of assessment in any relevant condition
 - NOTE: Report ONLY data on the accredited program. If a program aggregates data for accredited *and* non-accredited programs in the annual report prepared for the college or university, the program should dis-aggregate the data for use in the APR.

Condition 3: Program and Student Criteria



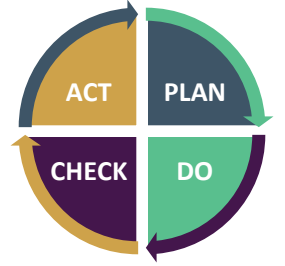
- Assess achievement of Program Criteria and Student Criteria
 - Programs must articulate student learning objectives specifically related to PCs and SCs and objectively and systematically determine whether students in the accredited program have learned what the program intended them to learn.
 - Course level assessment is important but is not the focus here.
 - Student learning objectives may be embedded in or mapped to specific courses and can be assessed within the course structure.
 - The data presented must be specific to that outcome and related to the learning of students in the accredited program.

3.1 Program Criteria



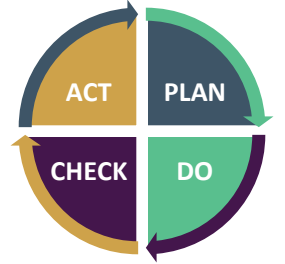
- Visiting teams must verify and document that the program engages in assessment of each criterion on a recurring basis and makes modifications to its curricula and program structures based on findings from these assessment activities.
- Program must provide:
 - A narrative description of how the program achieves each criterion.
 - Evidence that each criterion is assessed on a recurring basis
 - Summary of modifications made to curricula and/or program structures as a result of assessment findings.
- Program must submit primary evidence in electronic format 45 days before site visit.

3.2 Student Criteria (SC)



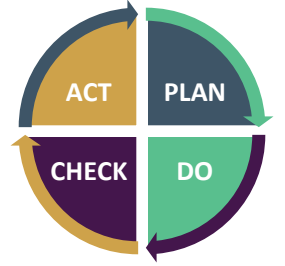
- For SC.1 through SC.4, programs must provide the following:
 - Narrative description of how the program achieves and evaluates each criterion.
 - Self-assessment
 - Supporting materials:
 - Course syllabus
 - Course schedule
 - Instructional materials
- Evaluated at “understanding” level.
- Program must submit primary evidence in electronic format 45 days before site visit.
- No student work is required for SC.1-SC.4.

3.2 Student Criteria (SC)



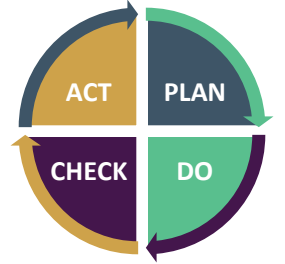
- For SC.5 through SC.6, programs must provide the following:
 - Narrative description of how the program achieves and evaluates each criterion.
 - Self-assessment
 - Supporting materials:
 - Course syllabus
 - Course schedule
 - Instructional materials
 - Student work
- Evaluated at “ability” level.
- Program must submit primary evidence, including student work in electronic format 45 days before site visit.

Condition 3: Program and Student Criteria



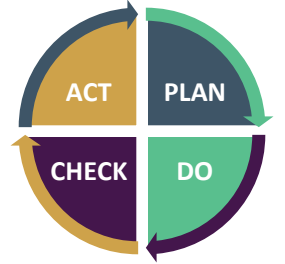
- Evidence provided in **Condition 3** should align with assessment process described in **Condition 5.3** Curricular Development
 - Example: If program describes process of sophomore portfolio review to assess student learning against program learning outcomes, evidence of that assessment and student learning should be provided under the appropriate program criteria.

Condition 3: Program and Student Criteria



- PCs and SCs can be assessed using both direct and indirect measures, however, each PC or SC should be assessed using at least one direct measure.
- Direct measures – faculty members assess how well a student has learned a concept.
 - Examples: faculty-graded projects, capstone projects, papers, and questions on exams (typically measured against traits on a rubric)
- Indirect measures – faculty can infer that a student has learned a concept from a piece of evidence.
 - Examples: student reflections and reporting on what s/he has learned, including student surveys and course evaluations, overall project or course grades, interviews, and focus groups.

Condition 3: Program and Student Criteria



- A best practice is to align institutional and programmatic student learning outcomes to program and student criteria to simplify assessment streamline the provision of evidence of compliance.
- Example:
 - Program or institutional SLO is mapped to Shared Value of Environmental Stewardship and PC.3 Ecological Knowledge and Responsibility.
 - Program provides data collected in the assessment of this institutional outcome and describes the assessment process as evidence of an ongoing assessment of student learning in this area. Note: Programs should use ONLY data that reflects the learning of students enrolled in the accredited program and not institutional level data.

Writing the APR -- Reprise

- The Procedures describe the structure for presenting evidence for Condition 3 in the 2020 Conditions. This framework is:
 - Narrative
 - Self-Assessment
 - Supporting Materials
- This is a straight-forward framework and can be used to respond to all conditions.

Writing the Narrative: All Conditions

- For conditions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, include the approach to the condition. It should answer the questions:
 - How does your program do XXXX? How does your program teach XXX?
 - How/where/when do evaluate the program to know that you have achieved XXX?
- Address all elements of the condition – pay attention to conditions that include "and"
- Sub-conditions should be noted and addressed separately for example:
 - 5.4.1
 - 5.4.2
 - 5.4.3
 - 5.4.4

Writing the Self Assessment: For Conditions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

- Self-assessment should answer the question "what data have we collected that shows us that we have achieved XXXX?"
- For example, using Condition 5.4 Human Resources and Human Resource Development *The program must demonstrate that it has appropriate and adequately funded human resources to support student learning and achievement.*
 - How does the program know that its resources are appropriate to support student learning? How do you know if you need to hire more expertise in an area? What data tells you this?
 - If you used data to make a change, what change did you make? What happened? How did the change impact student learning?

Writing the Self Assessment: Condition 3

- Having described the specifics of how the PC or SC is assessed in the narrative, the self-assessment is where the program presents the data/information it has collected and evaluates its performance. Programs should include:
 - Aggregated data (summarize and/or link to the data as appropriate)
 - An evaluative statement about the program/students meeting /not meeting the outcomes described in the narrative and
 - A summary of changes or improvements made based on data
- The program's self- assessment response should answer
 - How do you know your students are learning?

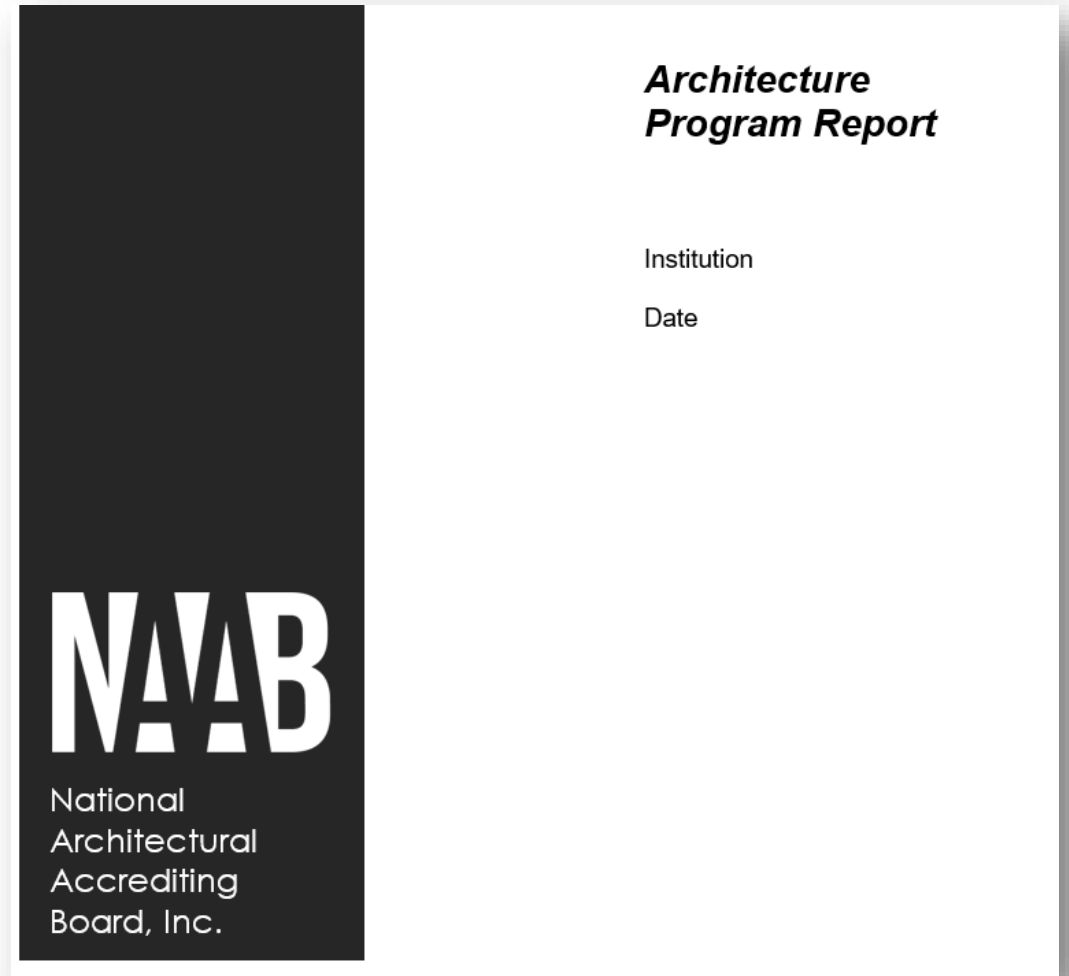
Supplemental Materials as Evidence

- Related to the narrative (All conditions)
 - May include policy documents and/or other documents as appropriate
 - PCs & SCs only
 - Course related materials
 - Policy documents (PCs only)
 - Student work (for Condition 3.2, SC 5 and 6 only)
- Related to the self-assessment
 - Aggregated data (or links to aggregated data)
- All supporting material should be relevant to the narrative provided. Programs should direct teams to specific information that demonstrates compliance with the condition.

Using Links

- Presenting links as evidence
 - Use static links for most evidence, including assessment data, supporting materials, student work
 - Use active links for public disclosure requirements in Condition 6
 - For all links, ensure that links remain active and unchanged until the NAAB Board takes action on the program's accreditation.
 - Condition 6 links must remain active and valid at all times.

Uploading the APR and ... Some More Advice and Reminders



The image shows the front cover of the NAAB Architecture Program Report form. It is a white rectangular document with a black header bar at the top. The header bar contains the NAAB logo on the left and the title 'Architecture Program Report' on the right. Below the header bar, there are two lines of text: 'Institution' and 'Date'. The bottom of the cover features the NAAB logo and the full name of the organization: 'National Architectural Accrediting Board, Inc.'

**Architecture
Program Report**

Institution

Date

NAAB
National
Architectural
Accrediting
Board, Inc.

Uploading the APR

- Upload the APR to NAAB by September 7.
 - For initial and continuing candidacy, upload APR no later than 180 days before site visit.
- APRs may be submitted in electronic format only.
- Oversized files will not be accepted.

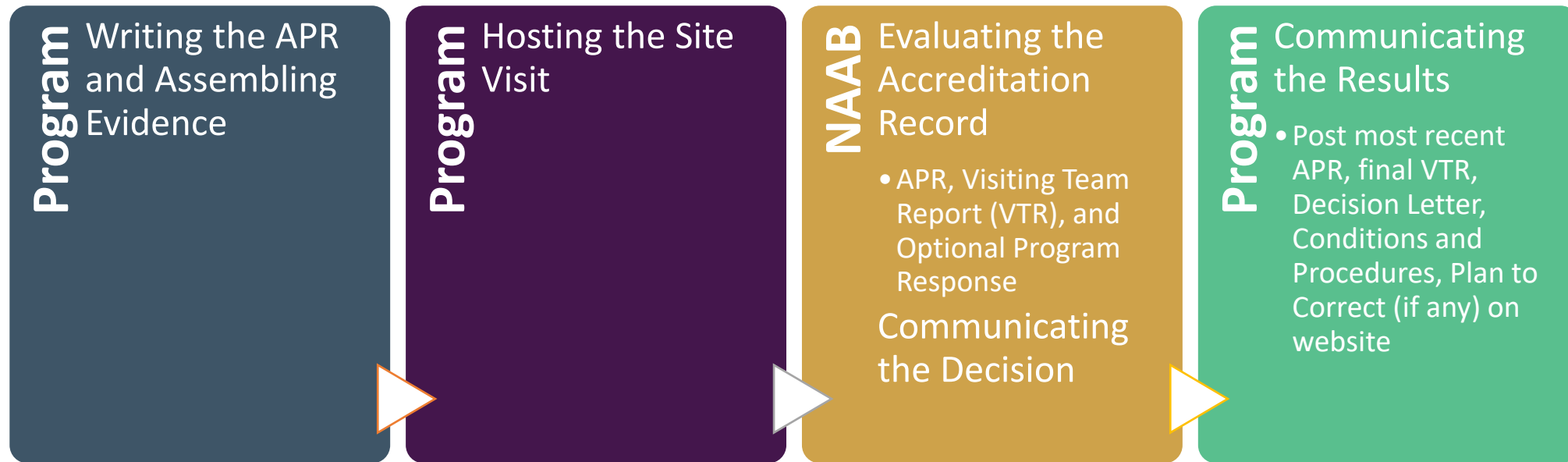
Reminders...

- Be sure that you understand all the nuances of the Conditions.
- Follow the instructions in the NAAB Procedures and Guidelines documents.
- Start early and ask: Is our program really meeting each of the conditions? It's never too late to address any problem areas.
- Create and follow a timeline.
- Study previous successful reports.
- Encourage broad involvement by faculty, staff, supporting areas.
- Think like Visiting Team members: make it easy for them to review.
- Use graphics to supplement the text.
- Pay attention to formatting, ease of navigation.
- Ask external experts to review the draft report for copy-editing, ease of understanding and navigation, awkward shifts in "voice," malfunctioning links, and missing evidence.

Reminders...

- Give the process more time than you think it will take – especially if you need other offices to sign off before you submit.
- Email accreditation@naab.org if you have questions.
- If you know you're going to miss the deadline, email accreditation@naab.org.
- Programs will be fined \$100/day for each calendar day the APR is late without an extension.
- The fine is assessed when the program is billed for visiting team expenses.

A Reminder About the Process...



See 2020 Procedures, Guidelines for Accreditation, and Guidelines for Use of Digital Content for details.

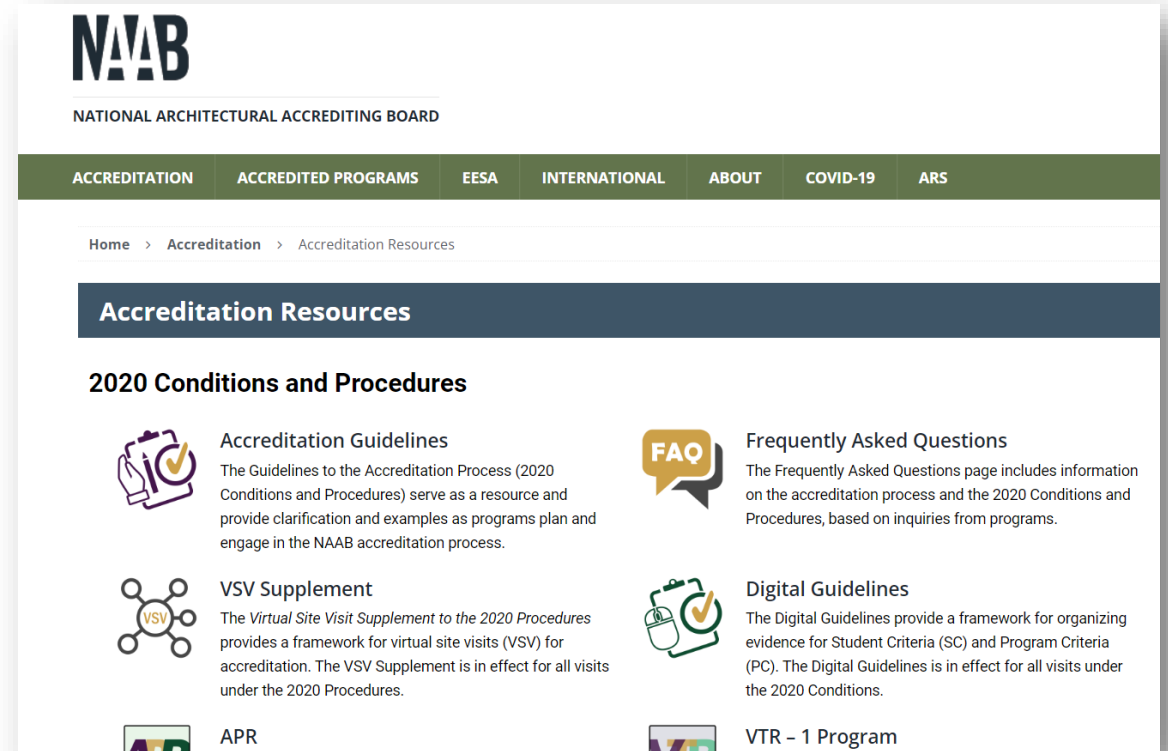
A New, Additional Way of Communicating Your Accreditation Status...

- Starting in August 2022, NAAB will make the NAAB logo available in badge form for programs to use as an additional way to communicate their accreditation status to their stakeholders.
- Email accreditation@naab.org for more information.



A Reminder about Resources

- [2020 Conditions](#)
- [2020 Procedures](#)
- [NAAB Resources webpage](#)
 - [APR templates](#)
 - [Guidelines to Accreditation](#)
 - [Guidelines for the Use of Digital Content in Accreditation Visits](#)
 - [FAQs](#)
- NAAB staff at accreditation@naab.org.



Thank you!

