

ACPE Guidelines for Preparing Electronic Self-Study Documents (v1.0)

Preparing for evaluation for purposes of accreditation or preaccreditation requires the submission of an in-depth and broadly-based, self-study document. Self-study documents have traditionally been submitted on paper; however, ACPE will also accept self-studies that are submitted electronically, provided that the content is prepared in accord with the *Standards 2007 Self-Study Guide (V1.0)* and the medium of delivery does not encumber any stage of the evaluation process. ACPE's staff has drafted the following guidelines to assist a college or school that is interested in preparing and submitting an electronic self-study.

- **Provide start-up directions on paper:** Inform the reviewer of hardware and software needed to use the self-study. Include clear directions on how to begin and provide the name, email address, and phone number of a technical contact in the event that the reviewer experiences problems.
- **Label and date all media:** Label diskettes, CDs, DVDs, etc., to make them easy to identify in the event that they are removed from their cases or packaging. Labels should minimally include the name of the college or school of pharmacy and the date that the information was prepared.
- **Make all computer-based media both Macintosh and PC compatible:** Reviewers will come from a variety of computing environments. Any documents or applications included in the self-study must run on both Macintosh and PC computers.
- **Provide required applications:** Provide installers for any applications needed for reviewing the self-study along with the means for uninstalling the applications. Be sure to have the proper licensing agreements when distributing any application.
- **Facilitate in-document note taking:** Use applications for presenting text-based documents that allow in-document note taking. Disable document features (e.g., Adobe Acrobat® passwords) that prevent the reviewer from taking notes.
- **Organize the materials for quick search and retrieval:** Make information quickly and easily accessible. Information that is difficult to locate, separated from the main documents because of links or embedded in several layers of menus may be overlooked by the reviewer.
- **Structure documents for on-screen reading:** Wherever possible, break information into screen-sized chunks that are legible at 72 DPI. Use simple navigation so that the viewer either scrolls through a document or pages through it. Avoid making the reviewer scroll and page within the same document.
- **Facilitate printing:** Ensure that documents can be printed on 8.5 x 11-inch paper while maintaining legibility and logical page breaks.
- **Print critical documents:** Documents that are critical to the evaluation and that cannot be properly printed by the reviewer (e.g., course catalogs) should be printed by the college or school and provided with the other self-study materials.
- **Limit web access or file downloads to optional materials:** The college or school should provide all information and materials that are required for the self-study report. The self-study should not link to documents on the Internet unless they are only supplementary.
- **Select the most appropriate medium for the content:** If the technology gets in the way of clarity or speed, then the reviewer may overlook information or not understand the program in detail. Use the medium that presents each piece of information in the most accurate and effective way possible.
- **Use computer-based video, animations and audio sparingly:** Avoid using computer-based video, lengthy animations and audio except where they add to information about the program or present the content more effectively than other methods (e.g., a visual tour of facilities). If these media are used, give the reviewer full control over playback including the ability to fast-forward or skip presentations.

ACPE staff will be happy to receive comments or answer questions about these guidelines or other issues. Please contact our office at (312) 644-3575 or check our website at <http://www.acpe-accredit.org> for staff email addresses.