

The Self Study Process

A programmatic self-study was undertaken at American University of Kuwait (AUK) in preparation for the accreditation site visit from the Commission for Intensive English Program Accreditation (CEA) on February 22-24, 2009. Faculty, administrators, and students studied the Intensive English Program (IEP) in an effort to assess whether current policies, plans, and practices ensure fulfillment of the mission and the established accreditation criteria.

A coordinator for the process was identified in August 2007. Early in the fall 2007, representatives from major university areas, academic affairs, student affairs, admissions, finance, human resources, and registration, identified leaders to chair the criterion groups.

The Accreditation Steering Committee is a set of interactive teams engaged in the numerous tasks of the self-study process and report production. By early in the fall semester of 2007, the core team was in place, and membership in the various criterion teams was under consideration. The criterion teams were directed to study the criteria and identify examples of evidence to indicate that AUK's IEP satisfies the core components for each criterion. Care was taken to involve membership from many units over various departments. A group was formed for each criterion. These criterion teams have interacted with the core team through the chairs of the respective criterion groups.

The main work of the criterion groups occurred within the academic year 2007-2008. They surveyed, interviewed, and gathered data to develop the evidence to indicate that the criteria were fulfilled. The processes that the various groups utilized to develop the materials differed depending on the size of the group and the magnitude of the task. Those two groups tended to work as units on their evidence gathering. The other criterion groups had more members and after initial discussions, tended to work in subgroups of two or three on specific core components.

Over the summer of 2008, writings developed from the groups and filtered through the chairs were provided to the director. During the 2008 summer of the self-study, the activities shifted to the writing of the self-study report itself. The task of writing the self-study report was organized into three preliminary drafts with a final draft to be presented to the CEA. At the beginning of the writing process the materials produced by the criterion teams, were disseminated to the steering committee. Once the writer produced a first draft, questions, needs, and requests associated with that draft were circulated back to the core and writing team. With input from those two teams, individuals were identified to respond to further information requests. The responses were returned to the director who then cycled that information back to the writer, and the team.

For each successive draft of the self-study report, the content and the presentation were discussed and adjusted through the process of multiple teams reviewing the material. The director served as a conduit for both communication and documents to facilitate effective interactions between and within the teams.

During the fall of 2008, the draft versions of the self-study report were available and constituents had the opportunity to read and respond to the report.