

University of West Georgia
Quality Enhancement and SACS Compliance Process

In the spirit of continuous improvement, SACS requires institutions to operate in compliance with 78 principles. These principles are stated in the SACS document titled: “The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement.”

Under previous SACS requirements, each institution completed a “self-study” prior to a team visit by SACS evaluators. Under the new principles (adopted in 2001) SACS requires institutions to provide evidence that they operate within the principles on an ongoing cycle of assessment and improvement.

In SACS language: “Implicit in every Core Requirement (comprehensive standard or federal requirement) mandating a policy or procedure is the expectation that the policy or procedure is in writing and has been approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and implemented and enforced by the institution.” With this mandate, the process of quality enhancement and SACS compliance must be integrated into the administrative systems of an institution.

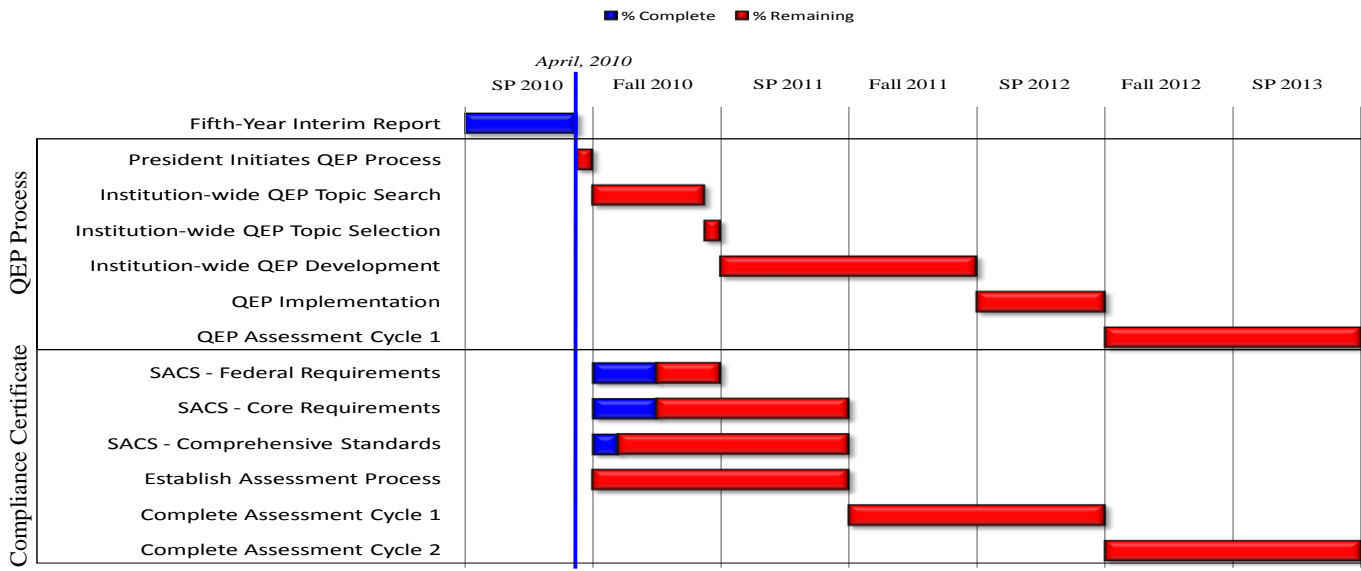
Additionally, SACS core requirement 3.12.1 requires that: “The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that includes an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution.” SACS Comprehensive standard 3.3.2 requires that this plan “(1) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP; (2) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP; and (3) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement.”

In the 2009-2010 academic year, UWG completed and submitted its first document measuring institutional practices against the SACS principles of accreditation. The institution was required to provide evidence of compliance with 14 of the 78 standards. While many areas across the institution systematically plan, assess, and improve internal processes, the preparation of the Fifth-Year Interim Report revealed that many administrative processes do not provide the planning, assessment, and enhancement process required by SACS.

UWG is in the SACS class of 2014, as such, the institution will be required to submit a complete compliance certificate (due in September of 2013), and a completed quality enhancement plan (due in late fall semester 2013). These reports must provide evidence that policies and practices required by SACS have been “approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and implemented and enforced by the institution.” Examples of the implementation and enforcement of policies must be documented and systematic.

In order to complete the requirements, the institution must engage in a systematic review of policies, practices, and administrative processes to assure their compliance with SACS standards and build evidence that appropriate policies and procedures are approved, implemented, and enforced. The following Gantt Chart outlines the institutional process to accomplish this review. Target completion dates are in the parentheses.

**University of West Georgia
Quality Enhancement and SACS Compliance Process**



Bars represent the semester and length of time planned for completion
Bar colors represent the % of the item that is complete. If a red bar section is behind the the blue month line, the item is behind schedule.

Quality Enhancement Plan Development Process

The following are key steps, including people and areas that will be involved, in the development of the institutions Quality Enhancement Plan:

- 1) President Initiates QEP Process (April, 2010)
 - a. SACS Liaison will address the Faculty Senate, April 23, 2010.
 - b. President, Provost, and SACS Liaison will address the faculty at large, April 29, 2010.
- 2) Institution-wide QEP Topic Search (Fall, 2010)
 - a. All senate committees, academic and administrative units will review assessment data to find possible QEP topics.
 - b. Students, alumni, and stakeholders will be invited to submit possible QEP topics.
 - c. Lists of possible topics will be managed by the SACS Liaison.
- 3) Institution-wide QEP Topic Selection (Fall, 2010)
 - a. From the large lists of possible QEP topics, stakeholders will be invited to narrow the selection list until a final topic is identified.
- 4) Institution-wide QEP Development (Spring, 2011)
 - a. All UWG entities will engage in identifying areas within their domain that can enhance the quality of the delivery of QEP outcomes.
 - b. The areas for enhancement will be refined by each unit and incorporated into an institution-wide QEP.
- 5) QEP Implementation (Spring, 2012)
 - a. Through the shared governance model, administration, the faculty senate, and the academic and administrative units will begin the process of implementing the QEP.
- 6) QEP Assessment Cycle 1 (Spring, 2013)
 - a. All UWG entities that have been identified to implement enhancements based on the QEP topic for Cycle 1 will assess the level at which implementation and outcomes have occurred.