



NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
**LANDSCAPE  
PROFESSIONALS**

ACCREDITED  
**DEGREE  
PROGRAM**

**National Association of Landscape Professionals**

*Accreditation Degree Program*

Guidelines

for the

**Self-Evaluation Report**

Required for Accreditation of  
Landscape Programs

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The guidelines for presenting self-evaluation information required by the NALP Accreditation Committee and the visiting team for each program seeking accreditation should be used as a framework in developing the report. Its use is not intended to limit the scope of comments about the program; however, NALP requests that the report correspond to the recommended outline.

Continuous self-study and self-evaluation are the essential first steps in the accrediting process. The NALP accreditation standards are the framework for the self-evaluation report and assessment procedures used by a visiting team. While a goal of the self-evaluation is to demonstrate compliance with NALP accreditation standards, program self-evaluation also should determine accountability and provide the basis for program planning and improvement.

A self-evaluation is valuable only if it is candid and realistic, and assesses all aspects of the program(s) under review. The self-evaluation report should include materials that show both evidence of critical thinking, planning, development, and implementation during the period since the last NALP review, and anticipated future program directions and changes.

The self-evaluation report is considered the property of the institution and NALP will not release its contents unless authorized in writing to do so.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT**

The quality of the self-evaluation is more important than the quantity of the materials submitted. The self-evaluation is a major undertaking, requiring full support of all those involved in the program. It requires collecting and analyzing extensive amounts of data and information in preparation for the NALP visiting team. Questions and comments may be directed to the NALP Director of Workforce Development, who is available to assist the program in undertaking its self-evaluation and on-site visit. The Site Visit Team Leader may also be able to assist the program.

Suggestions for conducting the self-evaluation include:

- 1) Identify the date of the Accreditation/Re-accreditation. Develop a timeline for preparation and submission of the required information. Adopt and adhere to a definite and realistic timetable. The Student Learning Outcome Matrix, current Course Outlines (or syllabi) and the College Catalog (or webpage link) report is due **at least 60 days** in advance of the scheduled on-site visit. The Self-Evaluation is due **at least 30 days** in advance of the schedule on-site visit, but should not be written more than 12 months in advance of the visit. Plan for 1-2 months lead time for each submission.
- 2) Identify the person who will coordinate the work on the report. Have them review the Guidelines for Self-Evaluation.

- 3) Identify the individuals who will contribute to the report and form a committee. Develop a plan of work to spread out the responsibilities and workload. It is helpful for the committee to include a person who was actively involved with a previous self-evaluation.
- 4) Provide the coordinator with adequate time to carry out this important function. Make sure the committee has adequate support services throughout the self-evaluation process.
- 5) The steering committee must become very familiar with the NALP accreditation standards and be ready to question, analyze, and debate the contents of the report.
- 6) Determine early what factual and statistical data are required and request the appropriate institutional offices, persons or committees to prepare them.

The steering committee should inform the program's community and constituencies about the self-evaluation and encourage involvement. Involve faculty, administrators (including central administrative officers), advisory boards, staff, students, employer groups, and alumni in the self-evaluation process.

Allow at least a month prior to the submission date for final editing and copying. The steering committee must reduce the bulk of materials to a concise, comprehensive report that the visiting team can be expected to read, study, and understand. **The report is not a collection of submitted files, but a concise report addressing the standards as outlined in the guidelines.** Conciseness in the main body of the report is suggested. Supportive data, summaries in graphic and tabular form, and other materials documenting the main body summaries should be included in clearly defined appendices.

Send the report, along with supporting materials, electronically to the NALP Director of Workforce Development.

## **OUTLINE OF INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT**

Use the following list of Standards to determine appropriate information to include in the self-evaluation report. This outline suggests the type of response required to satisfy each standard. It is not presented to restrict a program's description of how compliance with a standard is achieved.

### **STANDARD I: PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**

*The program shall have a clearly defined mission supported by educational objectives appropriate to the Landscape Contracting business community. The planning process shall demonstrate progress towards the attainment of the objectives.*

1. Document the program's mission, goals and objectives and describe how they meet Standard I. These should be referenced to where they appear in publicly disseminated materials or information.
2. Describe the planning process used for periodic self-evaluation and revision of the program's mission, goals, and objectives. Provide evidence that progress has been made since toward attaining these goals and objectives as a result of the process.
3. Describe how the Programs Mission, Goals, and Objectives support the broader Mission, Goals, and Objectives of the Institution. Include current Institutional Mission statement with a list of strategic goals and objectives.
4. Provide a written and documented "History of the Program" that is up-to-date and is a reflection of historical development of the program that includes important development points over time.

## **STANDARD II: PROGRAM GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION**

*The administration recognizes the value of the program and its impact on the community and landscape industry. The program shall have the authority and resources to achieve its educational goals as means of furthering the institutions goals.*

1. Provide a brief description of the community served by the institution.
2. Describe the state governance structure and how the institution is funded. Include the how the funding has changed over time (or since last accreditation/re-accreditation). What is the current student tuition and fees?
3. Present an organizational chart of the institution and the programs relationship to the institution's central administration.
4. Describe the support that is provided to the program and students by various levels of administration. Provide documentation for how this support improved the program and student outcomes.

## **STANDARD III: PROGRAM FUNDING**

*The program shall be funded at a level that provides students with quality education and training that reflects the goals and mission of the department and institution.*

1. Provide a current budget for the program that categorizes the expenditures. Materials and Supplies, Capital funds, Student Travel, Professional Travel, Professional Development are common categories. If individual program budgets do not exist, provide an

accounting of what was allocated in these general categories. Discuss how the budget has changed for the last three years.

2. Explain how the budget is developed and approved for each academic year. Include how program planning is related to budget requests and allocation.
3. Describe how budget requests and funding support one or more of the college's strategic goals or initiatives or one or more of the institutional learning outcomes.

### **STANDARD III. CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

*The program has a process of evaluation and program improvement that is up-to-date and documented.*

1. Describe the process or program the institution uses to evaluate the program.
2. Describe how the program and faculty assess and measure the effectiveness of student learning.
3. Provide data that illustrates the course level assessments of students and what changes are made for improvement.
4. Describe how the program review process works and provide current results of that review. Document the strengths and weaknesses identified for the program. Include improvements planned as a result of the process. Describe short term and long term planning conducted by the program. Provide a copy of the planning report.
5. Provide information or data relating to graduate surveys or other summative instruments for determining student satisfaction and success.
6. Identify and provide results of any external assessments used by the program for determining effectiveness of student learning. Examples could be State Pesticide Applicator tests, State Landscape License tests, Certified Landscape Technician or Professional tests, or Certified Arborist tests.

### **STANDARD IV. PROGRAM CURRICULUM**

*The curriculum reflects the knowledge and skills required in the Landscape Industry. These include not only industry-specific skills but also the ability to communicate, think critically, interact positively with others, and appreciate human culture.*

1. Provide a copy of the Program outline for the 2-year or 4-year program. It should include what classes are offered and when, what classes are required, and what classes are electives. The total number of credit hours for the program should be included.
2. Describe the general education requirements of the institution. Document the institutional 'Goals for General Education'. Provide number of credit hours for each class. If program classes are accepted for general education credit, explain how that is achieved.
3. Complete the Student Learning Outcomes Matrix spreadsheet. Follow the directions as set forth in the document.

## **STANDARD V. PROGRAM RESOURCES**

*The program has up-to-date resources and makes use of technology to provide students with current information and techniques used by the landscape industry.*

1. Provide a copy of the course outline provided to students for each class in the program. Formal Course Syllabi should only be submitted if that is the same as what the students receive in class. The course outline should include at least:
  - a. Title, credit hours, and lecture and laboratory hours.
  - b. Textbook required. Supplemental Texts or Materials recommended.
  - c. Brief course description
  - d. Course outline which may include lecture schedule.
  - e. laboratory topics and schedule
  - f. Course assessment.
  - g. Required materials.
  - h. Type of presentation – in person, on-line, or hybrid.
2. Provide a list of common software used within classes. Evaluate the quality of the software and discuss any plans for change or upgrades.
3. Provide a copy of the materials or Handbook that is used with the Internship class. This should include examples of what is expected of the student, employer, and instructor.
4. Describe how the institution and program webpages support the program.
5. Identify the services the institution provides faculty via the website. Include how these support the improvement in quality of the program?
6. Identify the study materials students use to prepare for the National Collegiate Landscape Competition (NCLC) and explain how they access them.
7. Identify how program information, employment opportunities, and announcements are displayed or distributed to students.

## **STANDARD VI. FACULTY**

*The qualifications, academic position and professional activities of faculty and instructional personnel shall promote and enhance the academic mission and objectives of the program and institution.*

1. Provide a list of current full-time and adjunct faculty. Include a list of the courses they teach.
2. Provide a resume for each faculty member.
3. Provide a list of the professional development activities undertaken by each of the faculty members in the last three years (if not included in resumes).
4. Provide data on the typical faculty course load for the year. Include how many semester hours taught and what constitutes an overload. This should be broken down by semester.

## **STANDARD VII. FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENT SUPPORT**

*The program has support from the college's technology, services and administrative offices that supplement its educational and promotional efforts.*

1. List the various support services and personnel provide to faculty and staff. Include direct office support, technical support, and laboratory support.
2. Describe how the marketing/communications department(s) support the program. Include examples of written or digital materials developed by these departments. Discuss how these are used and how they support the program.
3. Identify and evaluate the resources and support provided adjunct faculty.
4. Describe and evaluate the advisement of students and the support received by the Counseling/Advisement offices.
5. Describe the various support services available for students to assist their success. Evaluate the quality of these services to the students and faculty
6. Identify the scholarships available to students in the program. Describe the extent that students take advantage of scholarship opportunities.

## **STANDARD VIII: STUDENTS**

*Program shall demonstrate that students are being adequately prepared to pursue a career in the landscape contracting industry. Student work is evaluated by criteria related to program*

*objectives, and the information gained from such evaluation is used to enhance curriculum, instruction and other program aspects. Students are encouraged to engage in activities that relate to the contracting industry and to participate in the enrichment of the larger community.*

1. Provide data on program enrollment for the past three years. Describe any changes that have occurred and what plans are there to address the changes.
2. Describe opportunities for students to participate in a range of academic and extracurricular offerings, which encourage the development of technical and leadership skills and promote cultural awareness.
3. Document that the program follows institutional policies and guidelines in recruiting and retaining motivated and academically qualified students who reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity. Describe institution, academic unit and/or program efforts at recruiting and retaining a diverse enrollment.
4. Describe the program's commitment to quality student advising regarding students' academic, professional, and career opportunities.
5. Document student opportunities after graduation, types of positions and the average salary earned.

#### **STANDARD IX. ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*A fully functioning advisory committee made up of faculty, industry and student representatives shall be in place.*

1. Provide a list of advisory committee members with their current employment.
2. Provide the minutes of the last three years committee meetings.
3. Include a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws that govern the operation of the committee meetings.
4. If available, submit a copy of the Advisory Committee's Plan of Work for the coming year.

#### **STANDARD X. Program Facilities**

*Faculty, students and staff shall have access to quality facilities, equipment, library and other information systems necessary for a positive learning environment. These should be up-to-date and reflect those that are currently found in the Landscape Industry.*

1. Document the instructional facilities available to the program. These include indoor, outdoor, on- and off-campus. Explain how each of these facilities supports achievement of student learning outcomes.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of available facilities. Provide a brief description of program plans for improvement.

## **STANDARD XI. PROGRAM EQUIPMENT**

*Faculty, students and staff shall have access to quality facilities, equipment, library and other information systems necessary for a positive learning environment. These should be up-to-date and reflect those that are currently found in the Landscape Industry.*

1. List the equipment purchased for the program for in-class student learning.
2. List the equipment available for use to students from other programs, campus facilities maintenance, or other on-campus entities.
3. List the equipment available for use from alumni, local businesses, or local public entities (such as park districts).
4. List the various hand tools and equipment maintenance machines available for student learning.
5. Discuss how the equipment and tools are used to meet student learning outcomes.

## **STANDARD XII. PROGRAM SAFETY**

*Safety is a priority for NALP. This should be reflected by any NALP Accredited Program. Safety should be inculcated in all aspects of the education and training within the program.*

1. Document how safety in equipment operation, pesticide handling and use, and workplace safety, and First Aid are included in instruction and support student learning outcomes.

## **STANDARD XIII. INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

*Faculty, students and staff shall have access to quality facilities, equipment, library and other information systems necessary for a positive learning environment. These should be up-to-date and reflect those that are currently found in the Landscape Industry.*

1. Document the availability of technology hardware and evaluate its quality.

2. Describe the support provided by the institution to maintain the various technologies used by the program. Evaluate the quality of these services to the students and faculty.
3. Identify the learning management technology used for information distribution and on-line learning by the institution, i.e., Blackboard, Canvas, etc. Describe any changes expected in the future.

#### **STANDARD XIV. Library Support**

*Faculty, students and staff shall have access to quality facilities, equipment, library and other information systems necessary for a positive learning environment. These should be up-to-date and reflect those that are currently found in the Landscape Industry.*

1. Describe the services provided to faculty and students by the library and its staff. Explain how these services are used to enhance student learning.
2. Evaluate the quality of the references related to the Landscape and Horticulture Industry on the shelves.
3. Evaluate the access to landscape industry periodicals provided to students and faculty.
4. Describe how the program encourages students to access the library and its services.

#### **STANDARD XV. INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

*The program will have a formalized work experience or internship program of a minimum of 10-12 weeks. The experience is to be documented and evaluated by students, faculty, and employer.*

1. Provide documents that describe the internship program. Include items or forms that students, faculty, and employer are required to complete.
2. Provide documents that support the success of the internship from a student and an employer perspective. A summative evaluation by the student and the employer is recommended.

#### **STANDARD XVI. STUDENT ORGANIZATION**

*The program will have a student organization that encourages social development and promotes community service by students. The organization should be formal with adequate documentation of structure and operation. The organization may serve as the required NALP Student Chapter.*

1. Provide a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws for the student organization.
2. Provide a copy of the minutes of the meetings for the last year.

3. Provide data on number of students participating in the organization
4. Describe the various activities undertaken the student members during the past 3 years. Identify those activities that were community service projects.
5. Describe how the organization generates funds for its various activities.
6. Describe how the officers of the organization communicate with the members.
7. Describe the participation of the students in NALP sponsored events the past three years. Include attendance at 'Landscapes' and the National Collegiate Landscape Competition (NCLC).

#### **STANDARD XVII. ALUMNI**

*The program shall provide evidence of alumni's accomplishments and their involvement in advancing the program. This would include accomplishments, positions of responsibility in and service to the industry and community, professional awards, licensing, certification, etc. Program should consider alumni for speakers, evaluators or advisory committee members.*

1. Describe the success of the graduates of the program and how they have contributed to the landscape industry. Include types of positions in the industry they have. Identify the numbers that have formed their own business.
2. Describe how the program alumni continue to interact and support the program.

#### **STANDARD XVIII. INDUSTRY RELATIONS/RELATIONSHIPS**

*The Program shall provide evidence of interaction with industry representatives from a variety of businesses associated with landscape contracting. This would include career fairs, internships, and full-time employment. Program receives support from regional or national organizations and businesses which may include lectures and presentations from industry representatives.*

1. Document the local, state, and national events that students and faculty have participated in the last three years.
2. Describe other methods by which faculty and students interact with industry representatives.
3. Describe any support, monetary or otherwise, provided by local, regional, or national companies in the landscape industry.

## **STANDARD XIX. RELATIONSHIP TO THE OVERALL INSTITUTION AND THE COMMUNITY.**

*Program shall promote positive relationships within the overall academic institution and the community. Interdepartmental cooperation and community service are indicators of a well-rounded, quality program. Outreach efforts are important for recruitment and enhancing the image of the Program.*

1. Describe the interactions the program maintains between institutional academic and service departments.
2. Describe and/or document community service activities supported by the program.
3. Document all places where accredited status of degree programs is published, including but not limited to, the academic catalog, institution web pages, and program web pages.
4. Document where information on student achievement is publically available. The information may include, but is not limited to, job placement rates of the program, graduation rates of the program, pass rates of professional certification exams, average starting salaries of graduates, and other information as determined by the program and institution. It is expected that information on student achievement – or links thereto – will be clearly present on department or program web pages. If institutional policy proscribes such information or links, provide an explanation of the policy.

## **STANDARD XX. RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS.**

*NALP strongly supports the development of reciprocal articulation of community college and university programs as well as networking between faculty members to promote quality education for students in landscaping.*

1. Document any articulation agreements between the program and programs at the high school, 2 year college and University level. Describe any local, state or national articulation efforts in which the faculty or staff participate.
2. Describe how faculty advise students on transfer opportunities and requirements.
3. Identify meetings, committees, and other events in which faculty have the opportunity to network with fellow faculty members.