

**American Bar Association
Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar
Standards Review Committee**

**Standards 202 - 203
DRAFT FOR January 8 - 9, 2010 Meeting**

Redline and strike-outs from October 2009 draft

Standard 202. PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

The dean, faculty and other constituencies the law school deems appropriate shall engage in a regular planning and assessment process, including ongoing assessment of the school's effectiveness ~~success~~ in achieving its mission and realizing its established goals. Where appropriate, revision of the mission and goals should be made. In addition, before each site evaluation visit a self study document shall be prepared in accordance with the requirements of Rule 2 of the Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools.

Interpretation 202-1

To assure ongoing vitality and successful adaptation to the rapidly changing environment of legal education and the practice of law, law schools must establish periodic or cyclical institutional planning processes and activities. Planning efforts that have proven successful in law schools and other professional or business milieus typically involve the definition and periodic reassessment of both short-term and long-range goals for the successful accomplishment of institutional missions. By framing goals in terms of measurable outcomes wherever circumstances permit, a law school can more readily track progress towards their achievement. The manner in which a law school engages in institutional planning will vary according to available resources and local circumstances, but all law schools ~~shall~~ ~~should~~ be able to document their vision, mission, and goals, evidence indicating their achievement, and strategies for periodic or ongoing reassessment of successes and unmet challenges.

Rule 2. Site Evaluation ~~Standard 203. Self Study~~

[Insert as new paragraph (b), existing paragraph (b) will become (c), etc.]

Before each site evaluation visit a self study document shall be prepared that describes the law school's program of legal education, including changes made since the last site visit. The self Study must demonstrate how the law school is in compliance with the Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools. The Consultant's Memo entitled "Self Study guide" has directions for the self-study process, and information about how the data collected by the ABA, along with the Self Study and other documents prepared by the school, will be used in the site evaluation process by both site teams and the Accreditation Committee. This guide includes information about the suggested format of the Self Study, and questions that schools must address in the Self Study document.

Interpretation 203-1

Law schools must refer to the Consultant's Memo entitled "Self Study Guide" for directions regarding the self-study process, and for information about how the data collected by the ABA, along with the Self Study and other documents prepared by the school, will be used in the site evaluation process by both site teams and the Accreditation Committee. This guide includes information about the suggested format of the Self Study, and questions that schools must address in the Self Study document.

Subcommittee Note:

A "Self Study Guide," like the guides that exist for medical and pharmacy schools, should be prepared to help law schools understand what is expected and required by Standard 202 and Rule 2203, and to help law schools better understand and prepare the document required by Rule 2Standard 203. See, <http://www.lcme.org/selfstudyguide0910.pdf> and http://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/CS_Self-StudyGuideforStandards_2007_Version1.1.pdf

This guide could take the form of a Consultant's Memo that describes how the data collection that takes place through the Annual Questionnaire and the site visit preparation process, along with the Self Study, will help the Accreditation Committee to assess the school's compliance with standards, and advises schools about the preparation process and format of the self study.

Under current practice, schools submit data through the Annual Questionnaire every year, and in advance of a site visit, also do the following: (1) submit additional data through the Site Evaluation Questionnaire; (2) respond to detailed questions in the Site Evaluation Questionnaire about how the program of study meets accreditation standards; (3) prepare a self study document that often substantially overlaps with information provided in response to the questions in the Site Evaluation Questionnaire; and (4) sometimes, but often not, schools will also in the self study document evaluate, set goals, and describe plans for achieving those goals.

Were we to follow the medical school model, the Site Evaluation Questionnaire could focus exclusively on the collection of whatever additional data is needed beyond that already provided in the annual questionnaire. The Guide could ask the questions currently asked in the Site Evaluation Questionnaire about how the program of study meets accreditation standards and suggest a format for the self study document that would assure that all these questions are answered. This will eliminate the current waste of time, effort, and paper caused by the fact that Site Evaluation Questionnaire responses and the self study program descriptions are so often duplicative of each other. In addition, Self Studies have often been little more than descriptions of the school and its program of education, with very little evidence of planning and assessment. By providing more detailed guidance about the required content of the self study, beyond mere description of the academic program, more schools are more likely to do a better job of evaluation, goal setting and planning.