



Guidelines for Writing an AAQEP Proposal

The accreditation proposal is an optional activity in an AAQEP quality assurance review that takes place 2-3 years prior to the site visit. The proposal is a written plan that outlines your proposed evidence for meeting Standards 1 and 2, including plans for ensuring data quality, and explains your programs' contextual challenges and any anticipated program changes or innovations. Two trained peer reviewers will provide formative feedback on the proposal, which you may then revise if you choose. AAQEP staff will check the final version of the proposal (including any changes made as a result of reviewer feedback) for completeness before including it in your case record.

Note: Most providers will complete a single proposal for their AAQEP quality assurance review. If you anticipate writing two or more separate self-studies, though, we suggest preparing a *separate proposal for each self-study*. Although some of the language may be repeated across multiple proposals, other sections will benefit from focusing on a subset of your work, making it easier for both AAQEP and you to keep track of evidence for different programs. Writing more than one proposal will also position you to complete your separate Quality Assurance Reports (QARs) informed by more feedback from peer reviewers. Please see the *Guide to AAQEP Accreditation* or contact your AAQEP liaison for more information on the number of QARs you may wish to complete.

Purposes of the Proposal

The working group that designed the AAQEP process developed the proposal component to achieve several goals:

- To provide formative feedback with regard to the self-study effort in a timeframe that allows the provider to make use of the feedback
- To ensure consistency in expectations between the provider and its review team at the time of the site visit by confirming in advance that the *proposed* evidence addresses all aspects of the AAQEP standards for all programs included in the review
- To formally record programs' contextual challenges and planned innovations that are pertinent to the accreditation review

Getting early confirmation of the appropriateness and coverage of the planned evidence set will allow the review itself to focus on the outcomes reported rather than the measures chosen. In addition, by developing an accreditation proposal early in your review process, you'll be giving

timely attention to evidence sources and data quality considerations—and you’ll get a head start on organizing a written record for your QAR. *Note:* You are always welcome to make changes in the measures noted in the proposal as long as you provide a rationale for the change.

Content of the Proposal

The proposal is *not* a rough draft of the entire Quality Assurance Report—in fact, it includes no information related to Standards 3 and 4, except for the treatment of data quality considerations. Instead, it is a relatively brief document with four sections (each described in more detail below):

1. Introduction / overview of your programs and context
2. Measures to be used as evidence for Standard 1 and Standard 2
3. Explanation of how you will establish the validity, reliability, fairness, and trustworthiness of these measures
4. Description of contextual challenges and planned or implemented innovations

1. Introduction / overview of your programs and context

Begin your proposal with a brief description of your institution/organization, its context, and the scope of the preparation programs for which you are seeking accreditation. Include any details you feel are important for reviewers to understand about your program(s). You might describe your programs’ design, candidate population, geographic factors, mission or other commitments, and relevant state requirements.

In addition to telling your story in narrative form, please include a completed version of the program specification table below in order to provide clarity for AAQEP’s reviewers. Later, you will include this same table (updated as needed) in your QAR as an official record of programs seeking accreditation, to be referenced by your Quality Review Team, the Accreditation Commission, and/or the state education agency.

Programs to Be Included in AAQEP Review

Certificate, License, Endorsement, or Other (list specific programs)	Degree Level (e.g., bachelor’s, master’s, postbaccalaureate, certificate only)	Number of Candidates (currently enrolled - identify year)	Number of Completers (most recently completed academic year - identify year)
		TOTAL	TOTAL

2. Measures to be used as evidence for Standard 1 and Standard 2

Describe the evidence sources you intend to use in support of Standards 1 and 2. Reviewers will be looking for each aspect to be addressed explicitly. Overall, the evidence set for Standard 1 (but not necessarily for each aspect) must contain:

- Multiple measures
- Multiple perspectives, including:
 - program faculty,
 - P-12 partners,
 - program completers, and
 - graduates' employers
- Direct measures, including evidence of performance in a field/clinical setting appropriate to the program

The evidence set for Standard 2 will likely have some overlap with that of Standard 1, but with greater emphasis on evidence from completers' practice in their professional roles.

The following table is *one example* of how you might indicate the measures you intend to use for each aspect of Standards 1 and 2 as well as for addressing the associated evidence requirements. Include multiple versions of the table if any of your programs require different measures from others; for example, instructional leadership programs may use altogether different measures from initial teacher preparation programs. Be sure to label each table so your proposal reviewers know which program(s) it reflects.

Standard/Aspect	Measure	Direct or Indirect	Planned or In Use	Perspective/ Source (candidate, completer, employer, etc.)

Some measures offer evidence that can be applied to multiple aspects of a standard (e.g., different rubrics of a teacher performance assessment or items in a survey). To help your AAQEP reviewers understand your plans for any such measures, please indicate the particular element(s) that map to each aspect using an illustration such as the table below.

Measure: [e.g., a performance assessment or survey]	
Rubric or survey item #	AAQEP standard(s) and aspect(s) addressed

3. Explanation of how you will establish the validity, reliability, fairness, and trustworthiness of the measures

In this section, explain how you are examining the quality of the measures you propose to use. Although you might not have completed this step yet, your reviewers are looking for both what you've already done and what you plan to do (and receiving peer feedback on your plans may help inform your work).

Describe how you are establishing validity (through whatever means is appropriate to the measures and the contexts of their use), ensuring reliability in implementation of the measures, and exploring and mitigating any challenges to fairness and trustworthiness (including consideration of potential bias). It is also helpful for reviewers if you append or provide links to samples of assessment instruments.

Below is an *example* of a possible format for reporting on the data quality of each measure.

Measure:	
Evidence (or plans) regarding validity	
Evidence (or plans) regarding reliability	
Evidence (or plans) regarding fairness	
Evidence (or plans) regarding trustworthiness	

4. Description of contextual challenges and planned or implemented innovations

The final section of your proposal serves to identify new or emerging aspects of your programs. Describe any recent innovations or any changes that you anticipate will be in process by the time of your AAQEP site visit. Also describe any elements of your programs that will rely on novel evidence or on evidence different from the data set described above, such as new assessments being introduced. Include an account of how you plan to monitor these changes and what markers you will use to guide and evaluate them. The purpose of this section is to put context and innovations on the record for peer review and to ensure they are recognized and acknowledged in the review process.

Proposal Submission

Once you have written your proposal, please send it as a *single* Word or PDF file to AAQEP's accreditation coordinator, Sara Hiller, at s.hiller@aaqep.org. AAQEP will select peer reviewers for proposals on a quarterly basis (February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1). The system is designed to get members feedback within 3 months of the next match date after their proposal is received.

Proposal Review and Revision

AAQEP staff will share your proposal with two trained peer reviewers who have signed confidentiality agreements. Each reviewer will provide written feedback on a Proposal Review Form and email it directly to you when it is complete. (Note that your reviewers will not compare notes or otherwise collaborate on your proposal review, so although they have been trained and calibrated for their role, their responses will not necessarily align with each other—just like peer review of journal articles or conference presentations.)

After you receive the reviewers' forms, you may schedule a feedback exchange meeting with them (separately or at the same time) to take place by phone, email, or virtual meeting platform. Depending on the nature of reviewers' feedback, you may then decide the proposal is ready to file as-is or that it needs revision. Revisions are advisable when the feedback indicates gaps in one or more key areas—for example, if reviewers expressed concerns such as:

- Lack of clarity regarding context or scope
- Evidence is not identified in relation to some aspect
- Investigation of data quality needs greater specification

Once you are satisfied that your proposal is finished, send the final copy to AAQEP's accreditation coordinator (even if it is the same as the original version).

Check for Completeness

The final step in the proposal process is the check for completeness by AAQEP staff. This check confirms that the proposed evidence set is complete and that data quality issues have been addressed. The aim of this completeness check is to allow the Quality Review Team to focus on the findings, not the selection of evidence sources, during the site visit. The accreditation coordinator will inform you when this check is done and will file the proposal with your case record.

Anticipated Outcomes

The overall aims and anticipated outcomes of the proposal phase of the AAQEP process are to provide you with timely formative feedback, to add a cycle of professional collaboration to the accreditation pathway, and to ensure clarity of expectations throughout the process.