

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR BIBLICAL EDUCATION (IABE)

SELF-STUDY GUIDE

Guide for Institutions Preparing for IABE Accreditation

2026 Edition



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

No.	Section	Page
1	Introduction	3
2	Purpose of the Self-Study	3
3	Understanding the Self-Study Report	4
4	Preparing for the Self-Study	4
5	Self-Study Committee	5
6	General Instructions for Preparing the Report	6
7	Institutional Profile	7
8	Academic Programs and Curriculum	8
9	Faculty and Academic Leadership	9
10	Student Admission, Records, and Support	10
11	Library and Learning Resources	11
12	Facilities and Infrastructure	11
13	Financial Stability and Integrity	12
14	Ethical and Doctrinal Integrity	22
15	Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement	13
16	Institutional Strengths, Challenges, and Improvement Priorities	14
17	Evidence and Supporting Documentation	15
18	Reviewing and Approving the Self-Study Report	16
19	Submission of the Self-Study Report to IABE	16
20	IABE Evaluation and Assessment	17
21	Institutional Preparation for the Evaluation Visit	17
22	After the Evaluation	18
23	Continuing Institutional Responsibility	18
24	Self-Study Preparation Checklist	19
25	Final Declaration	22
26	Contact Information	23

1. INTRODUCTION

The International Association for Biblical Education (IABE) is committed to advancing excellence in biblical and theological education through faith-based accreditation, institutional accountability, quality assurance, and continuous improvement.

The IABE Self-Study is an important part of the accreditation process. It provides an institution with an opportunity to conduct a comprehensive internal evaluation of its mission, governance, academic programs, faculty, student services, resources, financial practices, doctrinal integrity, and quality assurance systems.

The Self-Study also provides the foundation for the external evaluation conducted by IABE. The institution should therefore prepare the report carefully, honestly, and comprehensively.

IABE's Accreditation Manual identifies the Self-Study Report as a critical component of the accreditation process and describes it as a comprehensive internal evaluation of the institution's compliance with IABE standards, institutional effectiveness, and readiness for external review.

2. PURPOSE OF THE SELF-STUDY

The primary purpose of the Self-Study is to help the institution evaluate its own effectiveness and demonstrate its readiness for IABE accreditation.

The Self-Study should:

- Evaluate the institution's compliance with IABE accreditation standards.
- Provide an accurate description of the institution and its operations.
- Identify institutional strengths.
- Identify challenges and areas requiring improvement.
- Encourage institutional reflection and accountability.
- Support strategic planning and continuous improvement.
- Provide reliable information and evidence for the IABE evaluation process.
- Demonstrate the institution's commitment to academic excellence and biblical integrity.

The Self-Study is not intended merely to present favorable information. Institutions should provide an honest assessment of their current condition and identify areas where further development is needed.

IABE's Manual specifically identifies institutional reflection, accountability, development, and accurate information for accreditation evaluation as purposes of the Self-Study.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

The **Self-Study Guide** and the **Self-Study Report** are two different documents.

Self-Study Guide

The Self-Study Guide explains:

- What the Self-Study is.
- Why the institution must complete it.
- How to organize the Self-Study.
- What information should be provided.
- What evidence should be included.
- How the report should be reviewed and submitted.

Self-Study Report

The Self-Study Report is the institution's completed evaluation.

It contains:

- Institutional information.
- Institutional responses.
- Academic information.
- Faculty information.
- Student information.
- Financial and administrative information.
- Self-assessment against IABE standards.
- Evidence and supporting documentation.
- Institutional strengths and improvement areas.
- Institutional declaration and approval.

The Self-Study Report serves as a principal document for the IABE accreditation evaluation process.

4. PREPARING FOR THE SELF-STUDY

Before beginning the Self-Study Report, the institution should establish an organized process for gathering information and preparing the report.

The institution should:

1. Appoint a Self-Study Committee or responsible team.
2. Review the current IABE Accreditation Manual.
3. Review the IABE Standards of Accreditation.
4. Review the Self-Study Report template.

5. Establish an internal timetable.
6. Collect institutional records and supporting evidence.
7. Review academic programs and curriculum.
8. Review faculty qualifications and responsibilities.
9. Review student admission and records procedures.
10. Review library and learning resources.
11. Review facilities and technology.
12. Review financial systems and sustainability.
13. Review ethical and doctrinal policies.
14. Review quality assurance and improvement processes.
15. Identify strengths and areas requiring improvement.
16. Prepare and review the final report.
17. Obtain appropriate institutional approval.
18. Submit the report and supporting documents to IABE.

Institutions should begin collecting evidence early rather than waiting until the end of the Self-Study process.

5. SELF-STUDY COMMITTEE

The institution should appoint a Self-Study Committee or responsible team to coordinate preparation of the report.

The IABE Accreditation Manual indicates that the committee may include:

- Institutional Head or President
- Academic Dean
- Faculty representatives
- Administrative staff
- Quality Assurance Coordinator
- Governing Board representative, where applicable

The committee should encourage participation from appropriate areas of the institution.

Responsibilities of the Self-Study Committee

The committee should:

- Coordinate the Self-Study process.
- Assign responsibilities for different sections.
- Gather institutional information.
- Review relevant policies and records.
- Coordinate evidence collection.
- Consult faculty and administrative personnel.
- Identify institutional strengths.
- Identify areas requiring improvement.
- Review the completed report for consistency and accuracy.
- Ensure supporting documentation is properly organized.

- Present the final report to the appropriate institutional authority for approval.

The committee should ensure that the report represents the institution as a whole rather than the opinion of only one individual.

6. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING THE REPORT

The institution should prepare the Self-Study Report carefully and systematically.

6.1 Accuracy

All information should be accurate, current, and verifiable.

Institutions should avoid:

- Inaccurate statistics.
- Outdated faculty information.
- Unverified claims.
- Inconsistent information between sections.
- Unsupported statements.

6.2 Completeness

All applicable sections should be completed.

If a particular requirement does not apply to the institution, the institution should clearly state:

"Not Applicable"

and provide a brief explanation.

6.3 Evidence-Based Responses

Responses should be supported by appropriate documentation.

For example:

Statement:

"The institution has a formal faculty evaluation process."

Evidence:

Faculty Evaluation Policy, Faculty Handbook, or completed evaluation records.

6.4 Clear Writing

Responses should be:

- Clear.
- Direct.
- Factual.
- Organized.
- Professional.
- Relevant to the question.

Institutions should avoid unnecessarily lengthy responses that do not provide useful information.

6.5 Transparency

Institutions should honestly identify both strengths and areas requiring improvement.

Identifying an area for improvement does not necessarily indicate failure. A clear improvement plan can demonstrate institutional self-awareness and commitment to continuous improvement.

6.6 Consistency

Information should be consistent throughout the report and supporting documents.

For example, the number of faculty members listed in the Self-Study should correspond with the official faculty list and institutional data submitted to IABE.

7. INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

The Institutional Profile provides the basic context necessary for understanding the institution.

The institution should describe:

- History and background.
- Founding and development.
- Mission.
- Vision.
- Institutional objectives.
- Statement of Faith.
- Legal status.
- Governance structure.
- Administrative structure.
- Institutional leadership.
- Organizational chart.

- Institutional location and facilities.
- Modes of educational delivery.

The institution should explain how its mission and objectives guide its educational programs and ministry.

IABE's Self-Study requirements specifically include mission, vision, objectives, Statement of Faith, legal status, and governance structure.

8. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND CURRICULUM

The institution should provide a clear description of its academic programs.

For each program, provide applicable information such as:

- Program name.
- Award or degree.
- Program objectives.
- Admission requirements.
- Duration.
- Credit or course requirements.
- Curriculum structure.
- Course sequence.
- Learning outcomes.
- Mode of study.
- Assessment methods.
- Graduation requirements.

The institution should explain how its curriculum supports its mission and biblical and theological objectives.

Curriculum Review

The institution should describe:

- How curriculum is developed.
- Who approves curriculum changes.
- How often curriculum is reviewed.
- How faculty participate in curriculum development.
- How student learning is assessed.
- How program effectiveness is evaluated.
- How improvements are implemented.

The IABE Manual specifically calls for program descriptions, learning outcomes, course sequencing, curriculum review, and evidence of program effectiveness.

9. FACULTY AND ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

The institution should demonstrate that faculty members are appropriately qualified for their teaching responsibilities.

Provide:

- Current faculty list.
- Academic qualifications.
- Professional qualifications where applicable.
- Teaching assignments.
- Areas of specialization.
- Full-time/part-time status.
- Faculty responsibilities.
- Faculty development activities.

The institution should explain how faculty qualifications are matched to the subjects they teach.

Faculty Development

Describe opportunities for:

- Continuing education.
- Academic development.
- Theological development.
- Professional development.
- Research.
- Teaching improvement.
- Ministry development.

Academic Leadership

Describe:

- Academic leadership positions.
- Responsibilities of academic leaders.
- Academic decision-making.
- Program oversight.
- Faculty supervision.
- Academic quality assurance.

IABE's current standards identify faculty qualifications as an accreditation consideration, and the Self-Study requirements specifically request faculty qualifications, teaching assignments, professional development, and leadership responsibilities.

10. STUDENT ADMISSION, RECORDS, AND SUPPORT

The institution should explain how students are admitted, supported, evaluated, and recorded.

Admission

Describe:

- Admission requirements.
- Application procedures.
- Admission criteria.
- Transfer policies, if applicable.
- Recognition of prior learning, if applicable.

Student Records

Describe how the institution maintains:

- Student applications.
- Enrollment records.
- Academic records.
- Course results.
- Transcripts.
- Graduation records.
- Certificates or awards.

The institution should explain how student records are protected and maintained accurately.

Student Support

Describe:

- Academic advising.
- Mentoring.
- Counseling.
- Spiritual formation.
- Student communication.
- Student grievance procedures.
- Other support services.

IABE's Self-Study requirements specifically include admission criteria and processes and student records, transcripts, and certification procedures.

11. LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES

The institution should demonstrate that students and faculty have access to appropriate learning resources.

Describe:

- Physical library resources.
- Digital library resources.
- Books and reference materials.
- Journals and periodicals.
- Online resources.
- Research resources.
- Access arrangements.
- Library management.
- Resources supporting biblical and theological study.

Institutions offering online or distance education should explain how students access learning resources remotely.

IABE's standards identify resource adequacy and library resources as important areas of institutional evaluation.

12. FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Describe the physical and technological environment supporting the institution's educational mission.

Where applicable, include:

- Classrooms.
- Offices.
- Library.
- Worship or chapel facilities.
- Student facilities.
- Administrative facilities.
- Internet access.
- Computer facilities.
- Online learning platforms.
- Educational technology.
- Safety arrangements.
- Accessibility arrangements.
- Maintenance procedures.

Institutions using online or distance education should explain how technology supports teaching, communication, assessment, and student support.

IABE's Accreditation Manual identifies facilities, infrastructure, technology, and safety as areas for review.

13. FINANCIAL STABILITY AND INTEGRITY

The institution should demonstrate responsible financial management and appropriate financial stability.

Describe:

- Sources of institutional funding.
- Budgeting processes.
- Financial management.
- Financial oversight.
- Internal controls.
- Financial reporting.
- Financial accountability.
- Sustainability planning.

Where requested, provide appropriate financial documentation.

The institution should demonstrate that financial practices support its educational mission and institutional responsibilities.

IABE's Self-Study requirements include budgets, financial statements, revenue sources, internal controls, and sustainability measures.

14. ETHICAL AND DOCTRINAL INTEGRITY

Biblical and theological education requires clear attention to both doctrinal integrity and ethical conduct.

The institution should provide:

- Statement of Faith.
- Doctrinal policies, where applicable.
- Faculty expectations.
- Codes of conduct.
- Ethical policies.
- Procedures for addressing violations.
- Academic integrity policies.
- Policies addressing conflicts of interest or misconduct, where applicable.

The institution should explain how its Statement of Faith is reflected in:

- Institutional mission.
- Curriculum.
- Faculty teaching.

- Student formation.
- Institutional practices.

IABE's Manual describes doctrinal consistency as alignment between the institution's Statement of Faith, curriculum, faculty teaching, and institutional practices.

15. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The institution should demonstrate that it has processes for evaluating its effectiveness and improving its educational and administrative practices.

Describe:

- Institutional evaluation.
- Program evaluation.
- Student feedback.
- Faculty evaluation.
- Academic assessment.
- Quality assurance policies.
- Internal review processes.
- Strategic planning.
- Improvement planning.
- Monitoring of institutional goals.

Improvement Planning

Institutions should identify:

1. Area requiring improvement.
2. Reason for improvement.
3. Action to be taken.
4. Person or office responsible.
5. Target date.
6. Evidence of completion.
7. Method of evaluating effectiveness.

IABE identifies quality assurance and continuous improvement as one of its accreditation standards and expects evidence of assessment, feedback mechanisms, monitoring, evaluation, and improvement plans.

16. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

The Self-Study should include a balanced institutional assessment.

Strengths

Identify areas in which the institution demonstrates particular strength.

Examples may include:

- Strong biblical foundation.
- Effective academic programs.
- Qualified faculty.
- Effective student support.
- Strong governance.
- Appropriate learning resources.
- Effective ministry preparation.
- Quality assurance practices.

Challenges

Identify areas where the institution faces limitations or challenges.

Examples may include:

- Faculty development needs.
- Library development.
- Technology needs.
- Administrative development.
- Student support development.
- Financial planning.
- Curriculum development.

Improvement Priorities

For each significant improvement area, describe the action the institution plans to take.

A clear improvement plan demonstrates institutional self-awareness and commitment to continuous improvement.

17. EVIDENCE AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The Self-Study Report should be supported by appropriate evidence.

Possible supporting documents include:

- Institutional catalog or prospectus.
- Constitution or bylaws.
- Legal registration documents.
- Organizational chart.
- Statement of Faith.
- Academic policies.
- Academic catalog.
- Program curricula.
- Course syllabi.
- Faculty CVs.
- Faculty qualification records.
- Faculty development records.
- Student admission policies.
- Student records policies.
- Student statistics.
- Library information.
- Technology information.
- Financial statements.
- Financial policies.
- Quality assurance policies.
- Evaluation reports.
- Strategic plans.
- Improvement plans.
- Other relevant institutional policies and records.

The current IABE Manual specifically identifies institutional catalogs, organizational charts, faculty CVs, course syllabi, financial statements, policy manuals, and student records/statistics as examples of supporting evidence.

Organizing Evidence

Evidence should be clearly labeled and organized.

For example:

Appendix A — Legal Registration

Appendix B — Constitution / Bylaws

Appendix C — Organizational Chart

Appendix D — Faculty List and CVs

Appendix E — Academic Programs and Curriculum

Appendix F — Financial Documentation

The institution should cross-reference evidence in the Self-Study Report.

Example:

"The institution conducts an annual faculty evaluation. See Appendix F, Faculty Evaluation Policy."

18. REVIEWING AND APPROVING THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

Before submission, the institution should conduct a final internal review.

The review should confirm:

- All applicable sections are completed.
- Information is accurate.
- Statistics are current.
- Faculty information is current.
- Program information is consistent.
- Evidence is properly referenced.
- Appendices are complete.
- Institutional strengths and challenges are accurately presented.
- Improvement plans are realistic.
- The report is professionally formatted.
- The institution has approved the final report.

The IABE Accreditation Manual states that the Self-Study Report must be completed by the institution and approved by its governing body.

19. SUBMISSION OF THE SELF-STUDY REPORT TO IABE

The completed Self-Study Report should be submitted according to the instructions provided by IABE.

The institution should submit:

1. Completed Self-Study Report.
2. Supporting documentation.
3. Required institutional forms.
4. Other documents requested by IABE.

The Self-Study Report should be submitted in the format specified by IABE. The current IABE Manual states that the report may be submitted digitally or in print as specified by IABE, while the Self-Study Guidelines identify electronic PDF submission unless otherwise requested.

Recommended electronic submission

For electronic submission, institutions should:

- Complete the fillable Self-Study Report.
- Save the completed report.
- Convert/save it as PDF if required.
- Organize supporting documentation clearly.
- Use consistent file names.
- Ensure all pages are readable.
- Verify that all required attachments are included.

20. IABE EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

After the Self-Study Report is submitted, IABE evaluates the institution and its documentation.

The evaluation may include:

1. Review of the Self-Study Report.
2. Review of supporting documentation.
3. Requests for clarification or additional information.
4. Evaluation of institutional compliance with IABE standards.
5. Interviews with institutional leadership.
6. Meetings with faculty, staff, and students where applicable.
7. Review of facilities and resources.
8. Evaluation visit or virtual evaluation, where applicable.
9. Preparation of an evaluation report.

IABE's current evaluation guidance states that evaluation visits may be used to verify information in the Self-Study Report and assess compliance with standards.

The IABE Accreditation Manual identifies evaluation areas including governance, academic programs, faculty, student services, resources, financial stability, ethical integrity, and quality assurance.

21. INSTITUTIONAL PREPARATION FOR THE EVALUATION VISIT

Where an evaluation visit or virtual evaluation is scheduled, the institution should ensure that appropriate personnel and documentation are available.

The institution should be prepared to provide access to:

- Institutional leadership.
- Academic leadership.
- Faculty.

- Administrative personnel.
- Students, where applicable.
- Academic records.
- Institutional policies.
- Financial documentation.
- Library resources.
- Facilities.
- Online learning systems.
- Other evidence requested by the evaluation team.

The institution should ensure that the information presented during the evaluation is consistent with the Self-Study Report.

IABE's evaluation guidance indicates that evaluation activities may include document review, meetings with faculty, staff and students, observations of classes and facilities, and preparation of a written report and recommendations.

22. AFTER THE EVALUATION

Following evaluation, IABE may communicate findings, recommendations, requests for clarification, or areas requiring corrective action.

The institution should:

- Carefully review IABE communications.
- Respond within the requested timeframe.
- Provide additional documentation when requested.
- Address identified areas for improvement.
- Prepare corrective actions where applicable.
- Maintain communication with IABE.

The Self-Study process should be viewed as part of an ongoing institutional quality-improvement process rather than as a one-time exercise.

23. CONTINUING INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Accreditation is an ongoing responsibility.

Accredited institutions are expected to maintain compliance with applicable IABE standards and policies throughout the accreditation period.

Institutions should continue to:

- Monitor academic quality.
- Maintain qualified faculty.
- Maintain appropriate student services.
- Maintain adequate learning resources.

- Maintain financial accountability.
- Maintain ethical and doctrinal integrity.
- Evaluate institutional effectiveness.
- Implement improvement plans.
- Submit required institutional reports.
- Report significant institutional changes to IABE when required.

The IABE Accreditation Manual establishes a five-year accreditation cycle and requires annual institutional reporting during the accreditation period.

24. SELF-STUDY PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Before submitting the Self-Study Report, the institution should confirm the following:

Institutional Information

- ☐ Institutional history and background completed.
- ☐ Mission and vision provided.
- ☐ Institutional objectives provided.
- ☐ Statement of Faith provided.
- ☐ Legal status documented.
- ☐ Governance structure documented.
- ☐ Organizational chart provided.

Academic Programs

- ☐ All academic programs listed.
- ☐ Program descriptions provided.
- ☐ Curriculum information provided.
- ☐ Learning outcomes provided.
- ☐ Course sequencing provided.
- ☐ Academic policies identified.
- ☐ Program review process explained.

Faculty and Leadership

- ☐ Current faculty list provided.
- ☐ Faculty qualifications documented.
- ☐ Teaching assignments provided.
- ☐ Faculty development described.
- ☐ Academic leadership responsibilities described.

Students

- ☐ Admission requirements described.
- ☐ Student records procedures described.
- ☐ Student support services described.
- ☐ Student spiritual formation/support described.
- ☐ Graduation and certification procedures described.

Library and Learning Resources

- ☐ Library resources described.
- ☐ Digital resources identified.
- ☐ Access arrangements explained.

Facilities and Technology

- ☐ Facilities described.
- ☐ Technology resources described.
- ☐ Online learning systems described, where applicable.
- ☐ Safety and accessibility addressed.

Financial Resources

- ☐ Sources of funding identified.

- ☐ Financial management described.
- ☐ Budgeting procedures described.
- ☐ Financial accountability addressed.
- ☐ Sustainability addressed.

Ethical and Doctrinal Integrity

- ☐ Statement of Faith included.
- ☐ Ethical policies identified.
- ☐ Academic integrity addressed.
- ☐ Doctrinal consistency addressed.
- ☐ Procedures for addressing violations described.

Quality Assurance

- ☐ Institutional evaluation described.
- ☐ Program evaluation described.
- ☐ Feedback mechanisms identified.
- ☐ Quality assurance processes described.
- ☐ Improvement plans provided.

Evidence

- ☐ Supporting documents organized.
- ☐ Appendices clearly labeled.
- ☐ Evidence referenced within the report.
- ☐ All documents are current and readable.

Final Review

- ☐ Report reviewed internally.

- ☐ Information verified.
- ☐ Report approved by appropriate institutional authority.
- ☐ Declaration completed.
- ☐ Required signatures obtained.
- ☐ Final PDF prepared.
- ☐ Supporting documents attached.
- ☐ Submission completed according to IABE instructions.

25. FINAL DECLARATION

The institution should confirm that the Self-Study Report has been prepared honestly and accurately.

The following declaration may be included in the completed Self-Study Report:

Institutional Declaration

We hereby declare that the information contained in this Self-Study Report and the accompanying documentation is, to the best of our knowledge, accurate, complete, and honestly presented.

We understand that the International Association for Biblical Education (IABE) may review and verify the information provided as part of its accreditation process.

We acknowledge our responsibility to maintain accurate institutional records and to comply with applicable IABE standards, policies, and requirements.

Institution Name: _____

Name of Authorized Representative: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Institutional Seal (if applicable): _____

26. CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions concerning the IABE Self-Study process, institutions may contact IABE.

International Association for Biblical Education (IABE)

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Institutions should always use the current IABE Accreditation Manual and current instructions published by IABE when preparing an accreditation submission. The current 2026 Accreditation Manual specifically states that institutions should refer to the current version for accreditation purposes.