

Overview

In the TEAC accreditation process, the program's self-study document is either an *Inquiry Brief* (for those pursuing accreditation) or an *Inquiry Brief Proposal* (for those pursuing preaccreditation or new program accreditation). TEAC accredits a program on the basis of its evidence that it produces graduates who are competent, caring, and qualified educators, and that the program has the capacity to offer quality. The program presents this evidence in the *Brief*.

The whole point of the TEAC accreditation process is to test the claims that the program faculty makes in its *Inquiry Brief* or *Inquiry Brief Proposal*. TEAC verifies the evidence presented in the *Inquiry Brief* or *Inquiry Brief Proposal* and evaluates whether or not the evidence supports the program's claim that it prepares competent, caring, and qualified educators. The quality of evidence and the quality of the system that produced it are the two key factors in the TEAC accreditation decision.

The *Brief* is in essence a research monograph (or, in the case of the *Inquiry Brief Proposal*, a plan for such a monograph), and should be focused on what the program faculty wants and needs to know about the program's performance. It should run about 50 pages, and it should be based primarily on existing documents, such as reports of ongoing inquiry, other accreditation reports, institutional research, and other publications.

The *Inquiry Brief* or *Inquiry Brief Proposal* should be meaningful to the program and contain information necessary to properly and responsibly administer and improve the program. It should be brief, and it should be about inquiry. Producing the *Brief* should be a seamless part of the program faculty's normal, collective activity to improve the program.

The program faculty members should work together to produce the *Brief*. All faculty members of the programs represented in the *Brief* should contribute to the process, and TEAC requires that all faculty members in the program review and approve the final *Brief* before it is submitted for audit.

TEAC reviews drafts of the *Brief* and works with the program faculty, providing feedback and guidance, until the *Brief* is accepted for audit.

The time it takes a program faculty to prepare a *Brief* varies, depending on local circumstances, such as program structure, available documentation, state context, and the institution's commitment to the process. Generally, it takes the same amount of time as needed to produce a solid research article.

To produce the *Brief*, TEAC recommends that program faculty follow the steps described at the end of this section. In doing so, the faculty members will develop a comprehensive understanding of their program necessary to writing the *Brief*. They will also be well prepared for the audit.