

The logo for the American Board for Accreditation in Psychoanalysis (ABAP) features the acronym 'ABAP' in a large, bold, dark blue serif font.

American Board
for Accreditation
in Psychoanalysis

GUIDE TO WRITING THE SELF-STUDY (2025 EDITION)

Aligned with the 2024 ABAP Standards for Accreditation

ABAP Guide to Writing the Self-Study

Purpose of the Self-Study

The self-study is a rigorous and collaborative process through which an institute evaluates its compliance with the ABAP Standards for Accreditation (2024), identifies strengths and weaknesses, and develops plans for continuous improvement. It provides both a **mechanism for institutional self-evaluation** and a **basis for external peer review** by the Committee on Accreditation (COA) and the ABAP Board of Trustees.

Institutes should approach this process as an opportunity for organizational learning and strategic development. The self-study should be candid, evidence-based, and integrative, drawing upon feedback from faculty, administration, students, alumni, and governing boards.

Format and Organization

Each section of the Self-Study corresponds to one of the ten ABAP Standards and each of their sub-points. Within each section, include three subsections:

- **Description** – What exists in relation to the standard.
- **Assessment** – An evaluation of adequacy, strengths, and areas for improvement.
- **Planning** – Plans to address deficiencies and strengthen areas of compliance.

Each Standard concludes with a list of **Supporting Documents** to be appended.

Overview (2–4 pages)

The overview introduces the institute and summarizes major developments since the previous accreditation cycle, including institutional changes, leadership transitions, and educational innovations.

Describe how the self-study was conducted, who participated, and what process was followed. Summarize the program’s main conclusions, highlighting key areas of strength, growth, and continued development.

Standard One: Mission, Organization, and Governance

Description

Describe how the institute's mission and governance structure align with its psychoanalytic training objectives and ABAP's expectations.

Standards:

1-1. The program seeking accreditation has a published mission statement that describes its goals for psychoanalytic training, is consistent with the overall institution's mission statement, and is endorsed by the institution's governing board.

1-2. The educational institution offering the program has legal authority to operate in its jurisdiction, whether through a charter, formal authority, or incorporation from a state Department of Education or other established component of a state or governmental agency. The program is in compliance with state, local, and federal, licensing, educational, and clinical practice requirements.

1-3. The program has been in existence for a minimum of two (2) years, is organized to train students in the practice of psychoanalysis and has demonstrated alignment with the accreditation standards.

1-4. The institution has a governing board, a president or chief executive officer, and other officers needed to carry out its functions.

1-5. The institution appoints certified psychoanalysts to leadership positions in the psychoanalytic training program.

1-6. The psychoanalytic training program has reasonable and sufficient autonomy within the institution, is in alignment with its mission statement, and has adequate representation of its policy- and decision-making bodies within the institution.

1-7. The governing board of the institution demonstrates sufficient independence to ensure it can act in the public's best interest, including the following:

- (a.) Board membership includes at least one public member. It is recommended that board membership include one public member for every six board members.
- (b.) Board membership includes certified psychoanalysts.
- (c.) The board maintains and upholds conflict-of-interest policies that protect against business, market enterprises, or other arrangements that might benefit private interests of officers, directors, board members, and other governors of the institution.

1-8. The composition of the board and its policy- and decision-making bodies reflects the areas of competence needed to fulfill its responsibilities, including appropriate legal, financial, and other relevant expertise.

1-9. The authority, responsibilities, and relationships among the governing board, program administration, program faculty, and staff are clearly described in the institution's bylaws, or an equivalent document, and in an organizational chart that displays the working order of the institution.

1-10. The institution maintains a Corporate Care Policy that ensures the board, administration, staff, and faculty understand and fulfill their respective roles as set forth in official documents, job descriptions, and agreements and are provided with the appropriate resources to undertake their respective roles.

1-11. Board members act as trustees of the organization's assets and exercise due diligence and oversight to ensure that the organization is well managed and that its financial situation remains sound.

1-12. The institution maintains adequate written affiliation and articulation agreements with other institutions that participate in the preparation of its candidates.

1-13. The institution maintains adequate risk management policies, including Directors and Officers insurance, worker's compensation, and liability insurance.

Assessment

Evaluate the effectiveness of governance in supporting institutional integrity and mission fulfillment. Address the independence and expertise of the governing board, adequacy of bylaws and role definitions, and communication between governance and faculty.

Planning

Outline plans for improving governance, leadership development, and board diversity. Include timelines for any policy or bylaw updates.

Supporting Documents May Include:

- Mission statement(s) and evidence of dissemination
- Articles of incorporation or charter
- Bylaws and organizational chart
- Job descriptions for key positions
- Lists of boards and committees and their members
- Board meeting minutes
- Conflict of interest forms
- Corporate Care Policy
- Risk management and insurance documents
- Strategic plan or board minutes referencing long-term goals

Standard Two: Financial Resources

Description

Describe how the institute ensures sound fiscal management, stability, and transparency in the use of funds.

Standards:

2-1. The institution has adequate financial resources to carry out its operations and sustain programmatic quality going forward, as demonstrated by three years of financial statements that have been reviewed or audited by a certified public accountant, as well as a three-year projected operating budget.

2-2. Individuals responsible for administering the financial system at the institution or program are qualified by education and/or experience to carry out their fiduciary responsibilities.

Assessment

Evaluate the adequacy and stability of institutional finances, including trends in income, expenses, and reserves. Identify strengths, weaknesses, and long-term risks.

Planning

Summarize plans for improving financial sustainability, such as developing new revenue streams, enhancing fundraising, or strengthening internal controls.

Supporting Documents May Include

- Audited financial statements or CPA review reports
- Annual operating budgets (three years)
- Budget and finance policies
- Board Finance Committee minutes
- Fundraising and donor policies
- Grant or restricted fund documentation
- Financial aid and tuition refund policies

Standard Three: Library Resources

Description

Describe how the institute provides students and faculty access to adequate, current psychoanalytic and related scholarly resources.

Standards:

3-1. The institution makes available to all students and faculty readily accessible and current library and information resources, including books, periodicals, reference materials, and electronic resources, which support the evolving instructional and research needs of the psychoanalytic training program.

Assessment

Evaluate sufficiency, currency, and accessibility of library holdings. Identify strengths, gaps, and usage patterns.

Planning

Outline plans for enhancing library access, digital collections, or partnerships with external libraries.

Supporting Documents May Include

- Library catalog or holdings list
 - Budget for library and database subscriptions
 - Access agreements with universities or consortia
 - Library use statistics
 - Library policies on collection development and access
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Standard Four: Physical and Technological Resources

Description

Describe the institute's facilities, technology infrastructure, and systems for data and record management.

Standards:

4-1. The institution has adequate facilities, space, equipment, and technological resources to carry out its educational, clinical, and research programs.

4-2. The institution has mechanisms in place to effectively monitor and implement technological advances as needed to support program learning objectives and safeguard data.

Assessment

Evaluate the adequacy of facilities and technology to meet educational and administrative needs. Address safety, accessibility, and reliability.

Planning

Summarize short- and long-term plans for facility improvements, technology upgrades, and compliance with security standards.

Supporting Documents May Include

- Facility descriptions and photographs
 - Lease or ownership documentation
 - IT policies and security plans
 - Equipment inventory
 - Technology support contracts or agreements
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Standard Five: Student Support Resources

Description

Describe how the institute provides effective academic, clinical, and personal support to students throughout their training.

Standards:

5-1. The institution provides sufficient student support services, such as academic advising, placement services for supervision, internships, or clinical work, and career guidance on the practice of psychoanalysis.

5-2. Personnel who advise students are knowledgeable of the program and graduation requirements, including curricular, supervisory and clinical components, as well as practice regulations for the local and other relevant jurisdictions.

5-3. Administrative and training personnel who have contact with students are trained to support and evaluate students on a regular basis relevant to their roles within the Institute.

Assessment

Evaluate the adequacy and accessibility of student support services, including advising, supervision, and grievance handling.

Planning

Outline improvements for advising systems, supervision processes, and other student services.

Supporting Documents May Include

- Student handbook
- Advising and supervision policies
- Grievance and appeals policies
- Student surveys and feedback summaries
- Orientation and mentoring program materials

Standard Six: Training Program Personnel, Resources, and Corporate Care

Description

Describe the qualifications, responsibilities, and evaluation procedures for faculty, supervisors, and administrative staff. Explain how personnel resources and the Corporate Care Policy support institutional well-being.

Standards:

- 6-1. The program has sufficient faculty and supervisors, qualified by education and experience, to implement the instructional program to sustain academic quality.
- 6-2. The institution has sufficient administrative and support personnel to achieve program goals.
- 6-3. Faculty members teaching courses in theory and practice of psychoanalysis are certified psychoanalysts or highly qualified in a specific content area.
- 6-4. Faculty teaching clinical courses must be certified psychoanalysts.
- 6-5. Supervisors must be certified psychoanalysts with a minimum of three years of experience in the practice of psychoanalysis post certification and/or licensure and legally qualified to supervise in their jurisdiction.
- 6-6. The program has well-defined policies and procedures to recruit, appoint, evaluate, and promote faculty and supervisors, as appropriate.
- 6-7. The institution maintains up-to-date job descriptions for each training and administrative position. Contracts and/or letters of appointment based on the job description are executed for all personnel.
- 6-8. The institution employs a documented and systematic evaluation of training and administrative personnel based on their job descriptions. These procedures include direct feedback gathered from relevant stakeholders about performance and allow for growth and development of instruction, and supervisory skills, or dismissal, when appropriately based on the guidelines and expectations.
- 6-9. Faculty and supervisors are afforded opportunities to have a substantive voice in matters of educational programs and other aspects of institutional policy that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise.

Assessment

Evaluate the adequacy of personnel and institutional support for faculty, supervisors, and staff. Assess clarity of roles, evaluation procedures, and faculty development.

Planning

Outline plans to strengthen human resource systems, faculty development, and the implementation of the Corporate Care Policy.

Supporting Documents May Include

- Faculty and staff rosters with credentials and psychoanalytic certification
- Faculty and supervisor evaluation policies
- Job descriptions for key administrative and instructional roles
- Corporate Care Policy and related communications
- Professional development records or training materials
- Minutes from faculty or staff meetings

Standard Seven: Public Disclosure and Institutional Integrity

Description

Describe how the institute ensures accuracy, transparency, and ethical integrity in all communications with students, faculty, and the public.

Standards:

7-1. The institution publishes accurate, clear, complete, and timely information about itself. Such information is readily accessible on the Institution's website.

7-2. The institution publishes:

- (a.) A program mission statement with a commitment to training psychoanalysts;
- (b.) A description of the ownership, control, and type of legal organization of the institution; including a declaration of its corporate registration status.
- (c.) The names and affiliations of members of its governing board, policy- and decision-making bodies, and principal administrative personnel;
- (d.) The names and credentials of its faculty and supervisors;
- (e.) An admissions policy and procedures;
- (f.) A non-discrimination policy;
- (g.) A description of the program(s) and the requirements for progression through various levels of training in the program(s) leading to graduation;
- (h.) The procedures and criteria utilized in arriving at decisions regarding the advancement of candidates and graduation;
- (i) The training curriculum;
- (j.) A description of the educational and student support resources available;
- (k.) Grievance and appeal policies and procedures for faculty, staff, and students for presenting grievances to the institution;
- (l.) A tuition and fee schedule including refund policies;
- (m.) A policy for academic credit transfer;
- (n.) A records release policy;
- (o.) A records retention policy;
- (p.) A description of program delivery modalities (e.g. face-to-face, online, hybrid, synchronous, asynchronous);
- (q.) All physical location(s) including the phone number(s) and email address(es) of the administrative and clinical offices;
- (r.) A statement that the institute is fully compliant with local, state, and federal guidelines for education and clinical practices, and;
- (s.) A statement that accreditation by the American Board for Accreditation in Psychoanalysis is eligible for all psychoanalytic programs within and not beyond US boundaries and territories.

7-3. The institution does not discriminate with regard to race, color, national origin, ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, age, religion, or employment status in any aspect of its psychoanalytic programs, including the selection and assignment of faculty and administrative staff, student admissions, class and field placement, and referral services.

7-4. The institution is guided by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), with respect to the release of information regarding a student and the student's rights to inspect, review, and amend his or her record. The institution has policies regarding the kinds of information that will be included in the permanent record of students. The institution has policies regarding the release, retention, safety, security, and disposal of student records. Its information-retention and release policies respect the rights of individual privacy, the confidentiality of records, the best interests of students, the institution, including local jurisdiction, and applicable laws.

7-5. The institution understands and complies with legal requirements regarding medical records, e.g. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and is in compliance with the local jurisdiction.

7-6. The institution applies its standards, policies, and procedures fairly; its evaluations are conducted, and decisions rendered under conditions that ensure impartial and objective judgments.

7-7. The institution has published procedures for the review of complaints by faculty, staff, and students pertaining to its program and practices. Such procedures are adequate to treat complaints in a manner that is fair and equitable to the complainant as well as to the institution. The complaint procedures include an appeals process. Institutions and programs retain the records of all complaints and how they were adjudicated and make them available for inspection by site visitors in a way that respects the confidentiality and privacy of those involved.

7-8. The institution safeguards the rights of students in that:

- (a.) Prior to any adverse action, a statement of the reason(s) for the action is provided.
- (b.) A formal response to the adverse action, to be incorporated into the record, may be made by the student.
- (c.) An appeal of the decision may be made by the student.
- (d.) An impartial appeal procedure is published and includes the right to a hearing.

7-9. Changes in Requirements:

- (a.) The institution provides advance notice of revised requirements to students and allows adequate opportunity for comment on the requirements, prior to adoption.
- (b.) Continuously enrolled students are permitted to adhere to the requirements of the catalog under which they matriculated.

7-10. The program allows students to practice psychoanalysis for training purposes only under qualified supervision.

7-11. The institution maintains an equitable student tuition refund policy.

7-12. The institution maintains an equitable transfer of academic credit policy.

7-13. The institution maintains a records release and retention policy.

7-14. The institution graduates only students who meet its published requirements for graduation.

7-15. Faculty, trustees, administrators, and students of an accredited program are governed by a Code of Ethics that reflects best practices in the field of psychoanalysis represented by the NAAP Code of Ethics.

7-16. The institution has a contingency plan to assure that currently enrolled candidates will have an opportunity to complete their training should the program, for any reason, cease to function.

Assessment

Evaluate the accuracy and accessibility of published information and transparency in institutional practices. Assess how ethical standards are communicated and enforced.

Planning

Outline plans to strengthen communication practices, update website materials, and ensure continuing compliance with ethical and legal requirements.

Supporting Documents May Include

- Institutional website or catalog
- Admissions and tuition policies
- Refund and withdrawal procedures
- Ethical codes and grievance policies
- Records retention and privacy policies
- Public Disclosure Checklist

Standard Eight: Education and Training Program

Description

Describe the psychoanalytic curriculum, clinical training, and requirements for personal psychoanalysis and supervision.

Standards:

8-1. Admission

- (a.) The program's admission policies and procedures are clear and consistent with its mission.
- (b.) Admitted students are demonstrably qualified for advanced academic study; specifically, the program requires that students possess a master's degree or higher from an accredited institution. The master's degree must be completed before entering the clinical component of training.
- (c.) Admitted students demonstrate their suitability for psychoanalytic training through interviews and other procedures determined by the program.
- (d.) The institution conforms to the reporting and disclosure requirements as outlined in federal law.

8-2. The psychoanalytic training program is organized to prepare students to attain psychoanalytic competencies as represented by the ABAP Core Competencies and meets the following educational goals:

- (a.) To understand the theory and practice of psychoanalysis through classroom instruction, case conferences, and seminars;
- (b.) To engage in psychoanalytic self-awareness through a personal psychoanalysis;
- (c.) To develop proficiency in the technique of psychoanalysis, including assessments, diagnosis, and treatment, through supervised clinical experience;
- (d.) To cultivate and apply ethical standards of professional practice.

8-3. The program requires the student to complete the following requirements prior to graduation:

- (a.) A minimum of thirty-six (36) credit hours (450 clock hours) of post-master's level coursework in psychoanalytic studies. Typical coursework includes personality development; socio-cultural influences on growth and psychopathology; psychopathology, diagnosis, and treatment; practice techniques (including use of dreams and symbolic processes, work with resistance, transference, and countertransference); case seminars; clinical practica; professional development; and psychoanalytic research methodology.
- (b.) A minimum of fifteen hundred (1,500) hours of clinical experience including the following:
 - (i) A personal psychoanalysis of a minimum of three hundred (300) hours with a certified psychoanalyst(s).
 - (ii) At least two hundred (200) hours of individual psychoanalytic supervision with a minimum of 3 psychoanalyst supervisors, of which at least fifty (50) hours shall be with one psychoanalyst supervisor working on one case, and at least fifty (50) hours shall be with a second psychoanalyst supervisor working on an additional one or more cases. The program requires that a supervisor may not have been and may not currently be one's personal analyst.
 - (iii) At least one thousand (1000) hours of supervised clinical experience with a variety of patients within the full spectrum of psychological disorders, of which two hundred fifty (250) hours of experience may consist of group supervision, case conference supervision, and continuing clinical education experience.

8-4. The program includes evaluations of students at designated points throughout the training cycle that support incremental professional development with meaningful feedback to students at each stage. The evaluations and outcomes must be documented.

8-5. The program has policies and mechanisms in place to address situations in which a student does not meet program requirements and for terminating a student who fails to meet program requirements. These outcomes are reviewed by the administration and faculty for the purpose of program improvement by instituting curricular and programmatic changes.

8-6. The institution provides a means for comprehensive systematic self-evaluation of its requirements, curriculum, faculty, supervisors and other training personnel, standards, policies, and procedures, to determine how well it is meeting its stated educational outcomes.

8-7. The institution has a plan for program improvement that includes measures of student achievement, such as student progression, meeting learning objectives, graduation rates, licensure and certification rates, and other accomplishments.

8-8. The institution provides for student input for suggesting enhancements of its educational program.

8-9. The institution provides for student participation in accreditation self-studies and site visits of the institution.

Assessment

Evaluate the coherence and effectiveness of the curriculum, clinical training, and assessment procedures. Discuss student feedback, learning outcomes, and program review results.

Planning

Outline revisions or improvements to curriculum design, supervision processes, or competency-based evaluation systems.

Supporting Documents May Include

- Course catalog and syllabi
- Program learning outcomes and competencies matrix
- Supervision and personal analysis requirements
- Student evaluation policies and sample forms
- Clinical case tracking records
- Program review reports

Standard Nine: Distance Education

Description

Describe how the institute delivers psychoanalytic training through online or hybrid modalities while maintaining quality and compliance with ABAP Standards.

Standards:

9-1. ABAP recognizes that institutes may elect to provide distance psychoanalytic training. In that case, distance education meets all ABAP standards for all three components of the psychoanalytic training: coursework, supervised clinical experience, and personal analysis.

9-2. Distance education programs have established a policy and process for complying with local, state, and federal regulations for education and clinical practices and for establishing a student program participation agreement with out-of-state students prior to admission.

9-3. The program ensures that distance-learning students and in-person students receive the same quality of training.

9-4. Faculty, supervisors, and other training personnel are competent in distance learning pedagogical methods.

9-5. Faculty, supervisors, and other training personnel have resources available to maintain quality distance education modalities in the format(s) offered (e.g. face-to-face, online, hybrid, synchronous, asynchronous).

9-6. Distance training programs provide technology and IT support, including adequate training for personnel, for effective distance learning.

9-7. The program makes equivalent resources (e.g. library, registration, advisement) available to distance learners. The quality and quantity of the online resources is robust.

9-8. The program has clear policies and guidelines concerning the virtual clinical experience:

- (a.) Program guidelines designate what proportion of the clinical experience must take place in person.
- (b.) Program guidelines delineate the acceptable venues for virtual clinical experience—e.g., via telephone, video, or other technologies.
- (c.) The program ensures that any virtual clinical experience adheres to HIPAA guidelines.
- (d.) The program ensures that any virtual clinical experience adheres to local, state, and federal regulations for clinical practice.

Assessment

Evaluate the quality and consistency of distance education relative to on-site instruction. Assess accessibility, technological adequacy, and student outcomes.

Planning

Outline strategies to strengthen online teaching, supervision, and regulatory compliance.

Supporting Documents May Include

- Distance education policy
- Learning management system overview
- Faculty training materials for online teaching
- State authorization documentation
- Technology and data security policies
- Student evaluations of online learning

Standard Ten: Equity and Inclusion

Description

Describe the institute's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in governance, faculty composition, curriculum, and student experience.

Standards:

10-1. The institution employs policies and practices that reflect contemporary understanding of issues that impact diversity, equity, and inclusion within institute organization and governance as they impact students, faculty, and staff.

10-2. The institution critically evaluates historical biases related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of psychoanalysis and within its institution.

10-3. The institution actively encourages an open environment for feedback from students, faculty, and supervisors related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in its goals for program and institutional improvement.

10-4. The institution upholds processes that support efforts to reconcile unanticipated consequences of integrating equity and inclusion measures.

Assessment

Evaluate the effectiveness of current DEI initiatives and identify areas for improvement in representation, training, and organizational culture.

Planning

Outline short- and long-term plans for advancing equity and inclusion within all institutional structures and educational programs.

Supporting Documents May Include

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (DEI) Policy
 - DEI strategic plan or action framework
 - Data on faculty and student demographics
 - Reports of DEI-related events, training, and climate surveys
 - Recruitment and retention initiatives
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Summary List of Supporting Documents

The following list summarizes the types of documents typically included with a Self-Study submission. This list is illustrative, not exhaustive. Additional materials may be required by the Committee on Accreditation or the site visit team.

- Preliminary Fact Sheet
- Institutional Mission and Bylaws
- Organizational Chart and Governance Documents
- Strategic Plan
- Financial Statements and Budgets
- Faculty and Supervisor Lists
- Student Handbook
- Course Catalog and Syllabi
- Corporate Care and DEI Policies
- Library and IT Access Agreements
- Public Disclosure Checklist
- Evaluation Reports and Surveys
- State Licensure or Authorization Documents
- Distance Education Compliance Policies