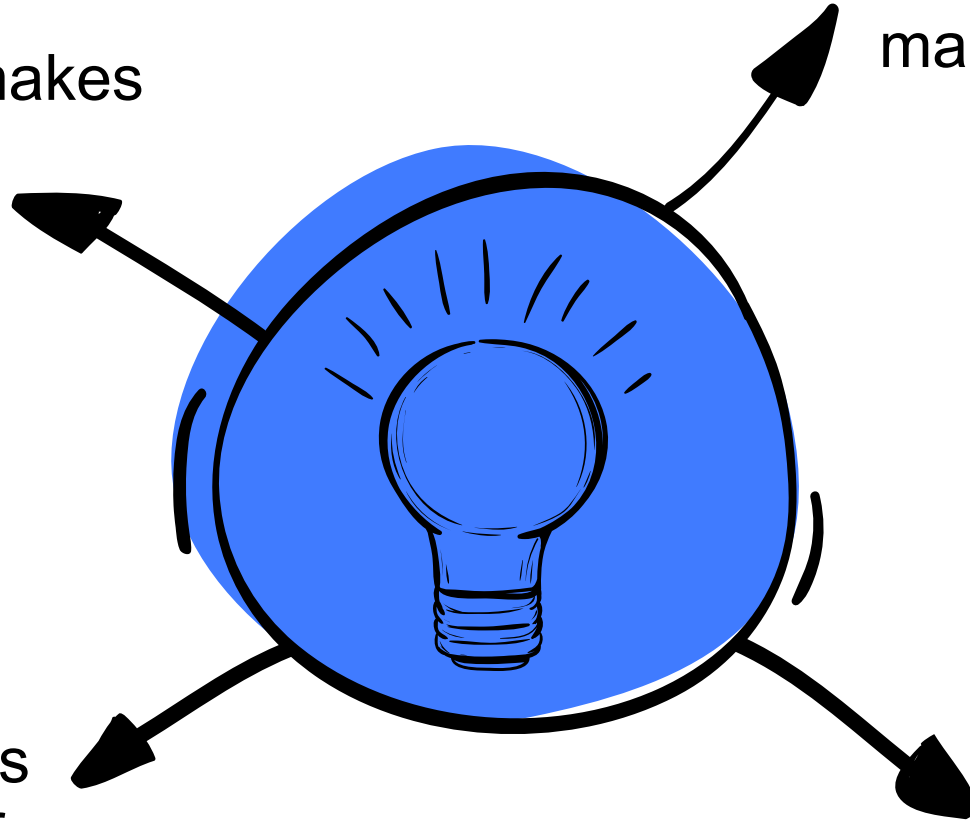


# Responding to Challenging Standards

Virginia Regional Accreditation Symposium  
May 2022



Consider what makes these standards complicated



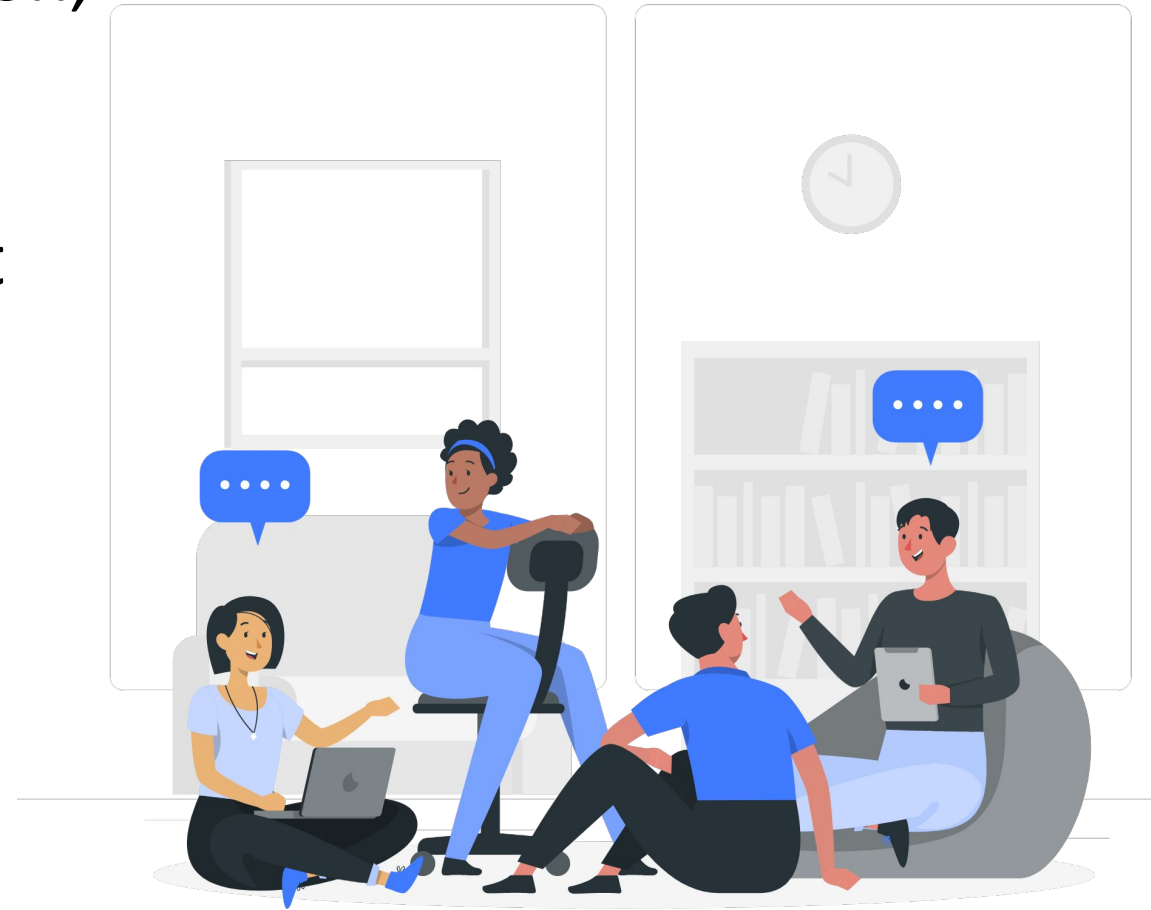
Discuss common mistakes that are made

Offer tips and tricks that have worked for others

Provide considerations when responding the to standard

# Presenters

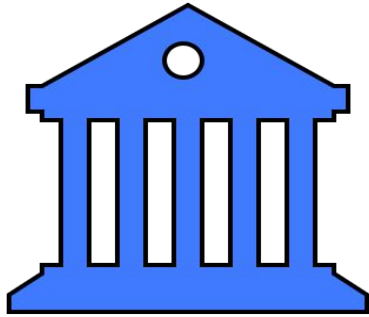
- Linda Birtley, Accreditation Liaison, Union Presbyterian Seminary
- Rachel Smith, formerly Assistant Director of Assessment and Compliance, Regent University
- Tisha M. Paredes, formerly Assistant Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, Old Dominion University



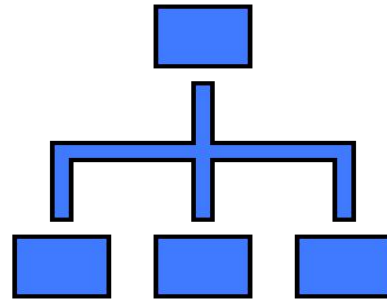
# Most Frequently Cited Principles in Decennial Reaffirmation Reviews: Class of 2021 [N=80]

Review Stage I: OFF-Site Committee			Review Stage II: ON-Site Committee		
Rank	Requirement/Standard	% of Institutions in Non-Compliance	Rank	Requirement/Standard	% of Institutions in Non-Compliance
1.	<b>6.2.a</b> (Faculty Qualifications)	<b>94%</b>	1.	<b>7.2</b> (Quality Enhancement Plan)	<b>43%</b>
2.	<b>13.2</b> (Financial Documents)	<b>46%</b>	2.	<b>6.2.a</b> (Faculty Qualifications)	<b>21%</b>
3.	<b>8.1</b> (Student Achievement)	<b>45%</b>	3.	<b>13.3</b> (Financial Responsibility)	<b>14%</b>
4.	<b>6.3</b> (Faculty Appointment & Evaluation)	<b>43%</b>	4.	<b>8.2.b</b> (Student Outcomes: Gen Ed)	<b>8%</b>
5.	<b>6.2.b</b> (Program Faculty)	<b>41%</b>	5.	<b>13.1</b> (Financial Resources)	
6.	<b>8.2.a</b> (Student Outcomes: Ed Programs)	<b>36%</b>	6.	<b>11.2</b> (Library & LIR Staff)	<b>6%</b>
7.	<b>13.7</b> (Physical Resources)	<b>35%</b>	7.	<b>6.2.b</b> (Program Faculty)	
8.	<b>13.8</b> (Institutional Environment)		8.	<b>6.2.c</b> (Program Coordination)	<b>5%</b>
9.	<b>8.2.b</b> (Student Outcomes: Gen Ed)	<b>34%</b>	9.	<b>8.2.a</b> (Student Outcomes: Ed Programs)	
10.	<b>12.4</b> (Student Complaints)		<b>&lt;5%</b>		

# Other “Challenging” Standards



Institutional  
Planning  
(7.1)



Administrative  
Effectiveness  
(7.3)



Board  
Self-Evaluation  
(4.2.g)

# Board Self-Evaluation (4.2.g)

- Common Mistakes
  - Board does not conduct self-evaluation or regular self-evaluation
  - Board conducts self-evaluations but there is no policy
  - Board conducts self-evaluations but there is no evidence of distribution or use of the results
- Thoughts to Consider
  - Is there a policy? Does it state that there is regular evaluation of the board?
  - Who or which office oversees the administration and reporting of the board's self-evaluation?
  - What cycle has been followed and what instrument has been used?
- Tips and Tricks
  - Use language from bylaws (if possible) and institutional practice to create a formal policy approved as section in bylaws or as a separate policy
  - Review Board bylaws, retreat & other Board meeting minutes for evidence of policy, instrument administration, results of evaluation being discussed and used
  - Include trustee and committee responsibilities in narrative (and evidence)

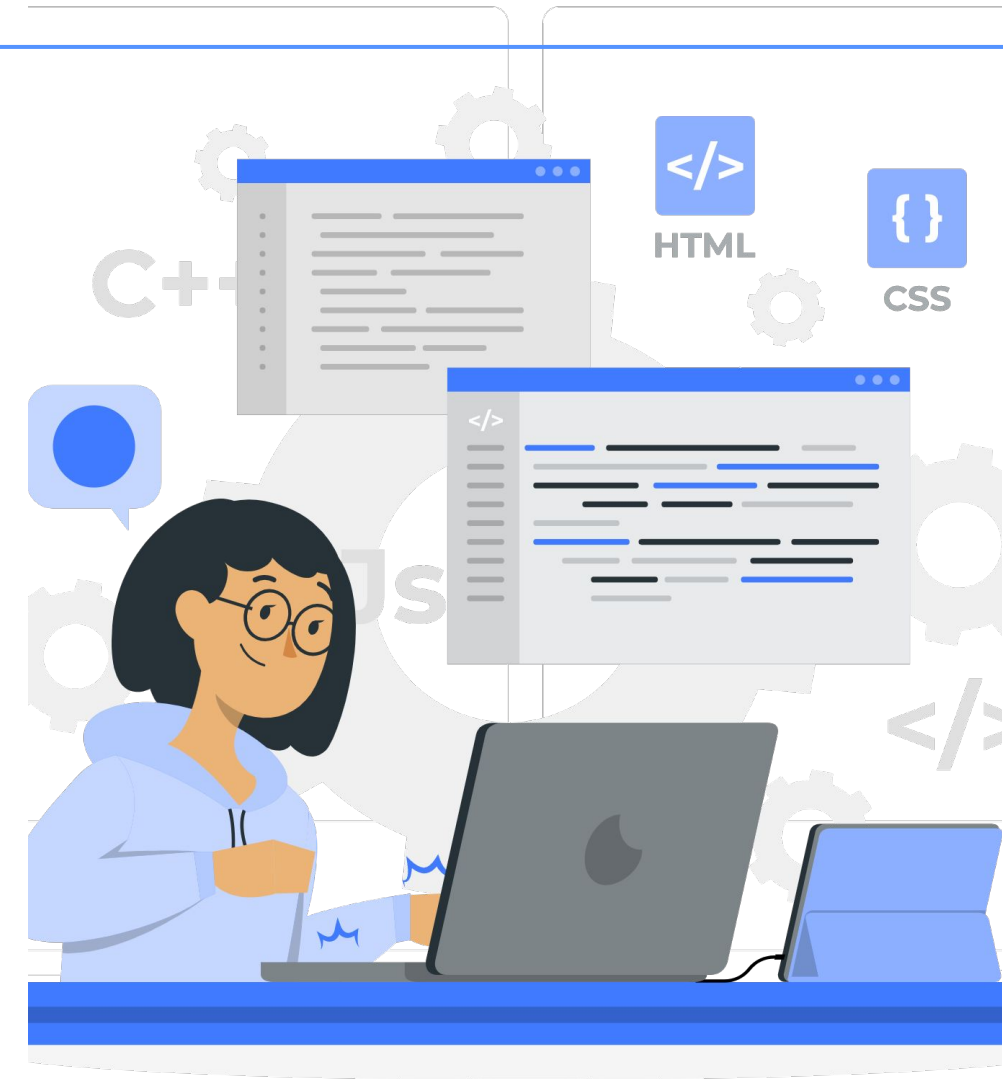


# Faculty Qualifications (6.2.a)

- Common Mistakes
  - Terminal degree is not aligned, the degree field or the experiences to the discipline are not linked
    - ‘Other qualifications’ are not included for faculty who lack the expected terminal degree
  - Course titles and descriptions do not reflect the actual course content for which faculty member is credentialed appropriately
  - Failure to mention or clearly describe the following: team-taught courses, master classes overseen by credentialed faculty, and other formats
- Thoughts to Consider
  - Ask faculty to help you align their qualifications or experiences to the discipline
    - Have you appropriately explained how courses are delivered and by whom (e.g., master class)?
- Tips and Tricks
  - Update the institutional faculty qualifications table annually or add new hires to system or a table (annual audits)
  - Ensure that those making faculty hiring decisions are familiar with the standard
  - Determine who is the “keeper” of up-to-date records of transcripts and CVs



# Institution Planning (7.1)



- Common Mistakes
  - Lacking a strategic plan or clear assessment of the plan
  - Failure to demonstrate the engagement of key stakeholders in development
- Thoughts to Consider
  - Is there an institutional document that can substitute for the strategic plan?
  - Can you plan appropriately to advocate for updating the plan prior to submission of self-study?
- Tips and Tricks
  - “Recycle” other standards that support 7.1
  - Ensure you have an historical file on the plan’s development and implementation
  - Ensure the strategic plan has metrics that can be assessed, and that assessment is assigned to appropriate positions/offices



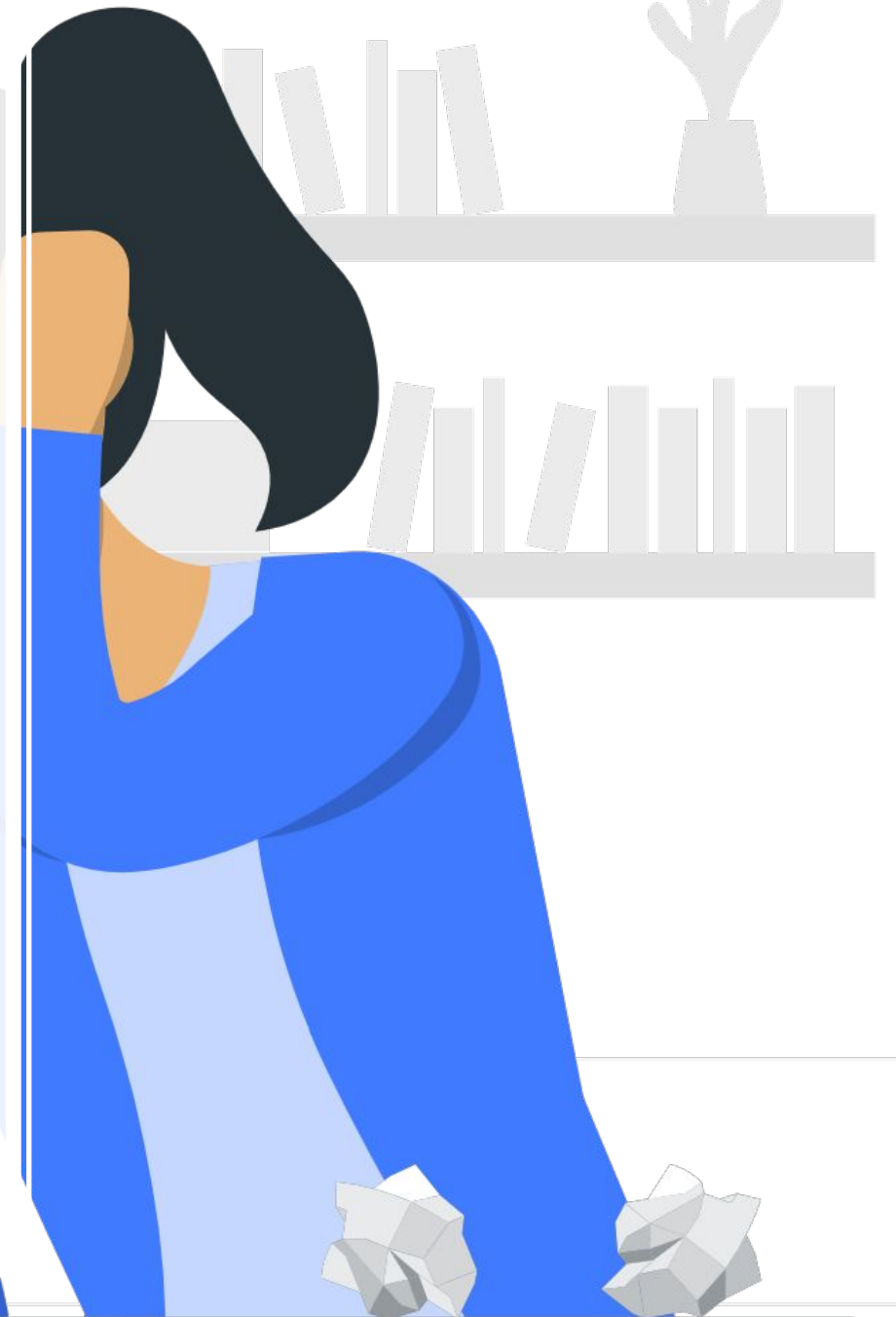
# Administrative Effectiveness (7.3)

- Common Mistakes
  - Failure to describe which units are covered in 7.3 vs. 8.2.c
  - Failure to link goals and outcomes to the mission, institutional strategic plan, or the unit-level goals
  - Failure to have or explain the assessment schedule/process and archival for administrative units
- Thoughts to Consider
  - How to appropriately divide units' assessments between 7.3 and 8.2.c (some units might have different assessments in each); cross-reference
  - What sources of information/data exist for use in admin effectiveness assessment
- Tips and Tricks
  - Conduct an annual audit, internally, to ensure records are maintained and to ensure that the 'owners' or 'stewards' of the information are familiar with the standard
  - Retain copies of stewards' (e.g., committee, IE unit) meeting notes that demonstrate discussion of findings and use as well as changes to the assessment plan/schedule
  - For each unit, show text of SP goals & unit outcomes; show outcomes (text) to outcome report (links 3 yrs) in matrix



# Student Achievement (8.1)

- Common Mistakes
  - Not providing justification for why the indicators were selected, per the institutional mission, academic context, and student population
  - Accessibility of the public student achievement data is not detailed
  - Failure to identify thresholds/targets and/or describe how they were determined
  - Failure to maintain web-published student achievement data updated
  - Failure to disaggregate on key variables (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, campus), if appropriate
- Thoughts to Consider
  - Select indicators that align with SP or state requirements
  - Select indicators that align with specialized accrediting bodies
- Tips and Tricks
  - Conduct an annual audit, internally, to ensure records are maintained/published and to ensure that the 'owners' or 'stewards' of the information are familiar with the standard
  - Retain copies of 'stewards' (e.g., faculty committee, IE unit) meeting notes that demonstrate discussion of findings and impact as well as changes to the metrics



# Student Outcomes (8.2.a & 8.2.b)

- Common Mistakes
  - Unclear or not providing descriptions of improvements implemented following regular evaluation or description of the process of evaluating student outcomes
  - Not addressing all modalities of same degree program and/or campus locations
  - Unclear description of assessment process
  - Failure to employ and describe a sampling strategy for reports provided
- Thoughts to Consider
  - Is there an internal policy? An oversight committee? Turnover among key players?
  - Are all units participating in measurement and use of data, in good faith?
  - Consider highlighting a few programs that are using the data for improvement
- Tips and Tricks
  - Conduct an annual audit, internally, to ensure records are maintained & updated, that the 'owners' or 'stewards' of the information are familiar with the standard, and that the institution's policy and process are being followed
  - If possible, simplify your assessment process: it may be too complicated/confusing/inefficient, contributing to stakeholders' failure to follow through



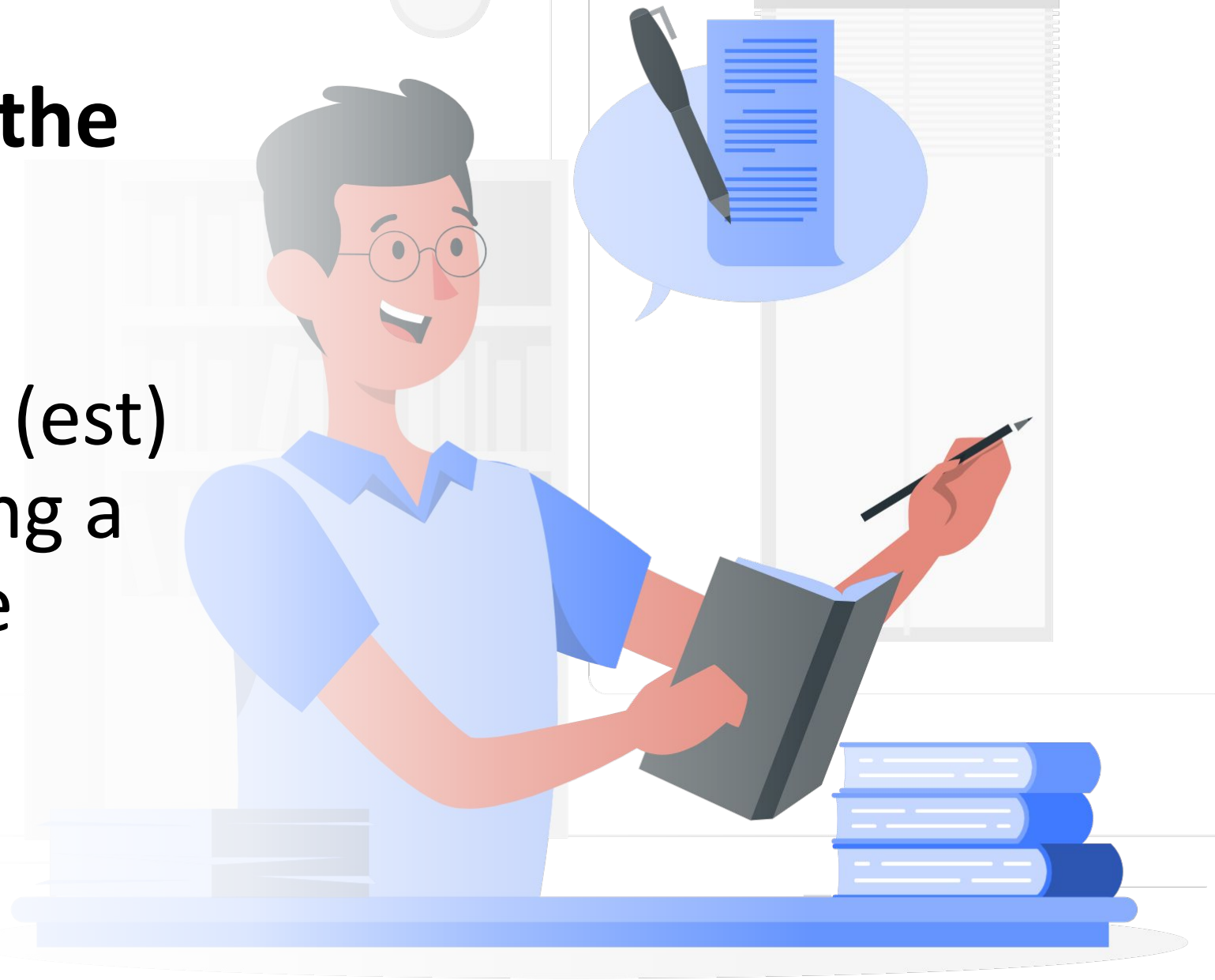


# Student Complaints (12.4)

- Common Mistakes
  - Not providing examples of policy and process
  - Not outlining the “elements” contained in each record
  - Unclear descriptions of stakeholders overseeing the process and record-keeping practices (decentralized or centralized)
  - Failure to keep the records updated
  - Not providing institutional definition of formal student complaints
- Thoughts to Consider
  - Walk the reviewers through a case from START to FINISH as outlined by the policy
  - Describe how information on student complaint processes are publicly disseminated
  - How many units handle student complaints and is there a uniform process?
- Tips and Tricks
  - Provide the institutional policy, with definition
  - Conduct an annual or periodic audit, internally, to ensure records are maintained and to ensure that the ‘owners’ or ‘stewards’ of the information are familiar with the standard

# How do you convey the information?

Please join us at 3:00 (est) to learn about writing a clear and concise narrative.



An illustration of a classroom scene. A teacher with white hair, wearing a blue shirt, white bowtie, and dark pants, stands on the right side, gesturing towards a blackboard. The blackboard features a white circle with a scalloped edge and some wavy lines. Two students are seated on blue chairs on the left, facing the teacher. The student on the left is wearing a blue shirt and dark pants, while the student on the right is wearing a blue shirt and blue pants. The background is light gray with some faint geometric shapes like a star and a hexagon.

Questions and Thoughts?

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Thank You!