



## PREPARING YOUR RESPONSE

### **Submission Format**

1. The Response to the Visit Report(s) must be submitted as **one seamless Portable Document Format (.pdf) file** to the corresponding ABHES DropBox listed at [ABHES Submission Requirements](#). Instructions on how to create a seamless pdf can be found later in this document.
2. The one file should include a narrative for each citation immediately followed by the exhibits for that citation (i.e., first cited standard number and language, narrative response, and exhibits for the 1<sup>st</sup> standard, second cited standard number and language, narrative response, and exhibits for the 2<sup>nd</sup> standard, third cited standard...).
3. Please ensure that the .pdf is optimized for web and email and **has a file size limit of 50mb or less**.

Follow the general “rules” below when creating file and folder names:

- a) Use hyphens (dashes) or underscores instead of spaces to separate words in a file and in a folder name. **Do not use:** periods, commas, numbers signs (#) or other punctuation marks in a file name or folder name [other than a hyphen (-) or underscore (\_)]; and
- b) Choose single words or short phrases and use commonly understood abbreviations.

**Failure to adhere to these instructions will result in the return of the submission to the institution and a late fee assessed per Appendix G of the *Accreditation Manual*.**

4. The response must be labeled with the ABHES ID# for currently accredited schools or initial\_name of school\_city/state if an initial applicant, RSP to TYPE OF RESPONSE, and date of submission (ex: I-100\_RSP to Visit\_102020 or initial\_ABC\_Coll\_DowntownTX\_RSP to Visit\_102020).

### **Presentation**

Prepare the .pdf file using Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Standards (or higher version) software. Any security features in the PDF document must be disabled. **Other file formats will not be accepted.**

Responses must be professional in appearance and legible. To facilitate review, the requirements set forth below must be followed for the submission of the response.

Minimally, responses include:

1. A **cover letter** that identifies the document as the response to the Visitation Report or Commission Action letter, with specific date reference.
2. The exact wording of the cited **accreditation standard(s)** including the narrative explanation from the Evaluation Visit Report or Commission Action Letter.
3. A detailed **narrative explanation** for each cited standard that describes the institutional changes made to correct the area of noncompliance.
4. **Identified exhibits\*** (e.g., Exhibit 3 staff\_mtg\_min\_32020) to support the narrative explanation using **electronic bookmarks\*\*** placed within the document in a manner that facilitates review of the response document.

\*referencing an exhibit with a number only is not sufficient identification

\*\*A Response that includes exhibits that are not electronically bookmarked will not be accepted. Later in this document, you can see how to format bookmarks.

5. A **table of contents** for the document, which includes the electronic bookmarks.

***PLEASE SEE THE SAMPLE RESPONSE FOLLOWING THESE INSTRUCTIONS.***

### Documentation is Critical

Documentation to support the institution's or program's explanations and to demonstrate that the institution or program is in compliance with the accreditation standard(s) cited is required. Failure to provide adequate documentation to evidence correction of each deficiency may result in a deferral or denial of the institution's or program's application, or the issuance of a show-cause directive or withdrawal of the current grant of accreditation.

Submissions to validate the response narrative(s) may include documents such as the following examples:

- Evidence of faculty professional growth
- Student surveys and analysis indicating increased satisfaction
- Record of graduate placements
- Minutes of meetings held since the on-site evaluation (i.e., faculty, staff, advisory board)

The required documentation will depend on the specific reason the accreditation standard was cited as a violation.

**Important Note:** Always resubmit any documentation that you request be reviewed again when responding to a Commission Action letter and make the fact that this is a resubmission known in the narrative. Do not request the Commission reference the documentation that was included in a previously submitted response.

# CREATING ONE PORTABLE DOCUMENT FORMAT (.PDF) FILE



## Part 1: Creating One Seamless PDF

### Description

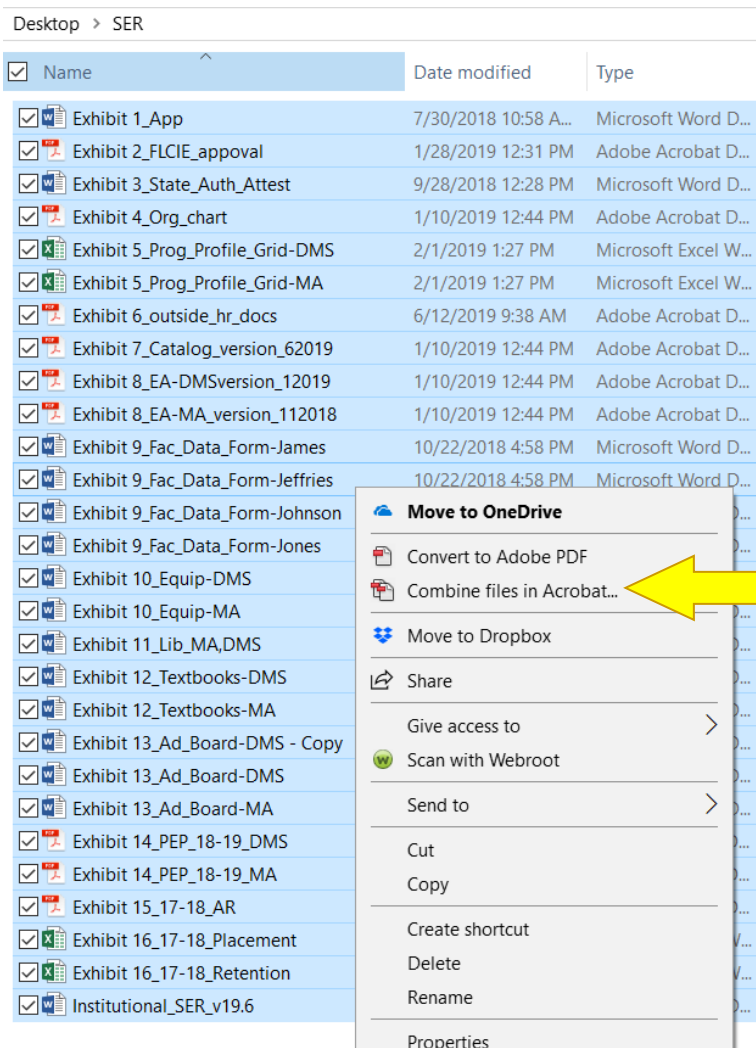
You can quickly merge multiple documents into a single PDF file, with the documents appearing in the order you choose.

### Method

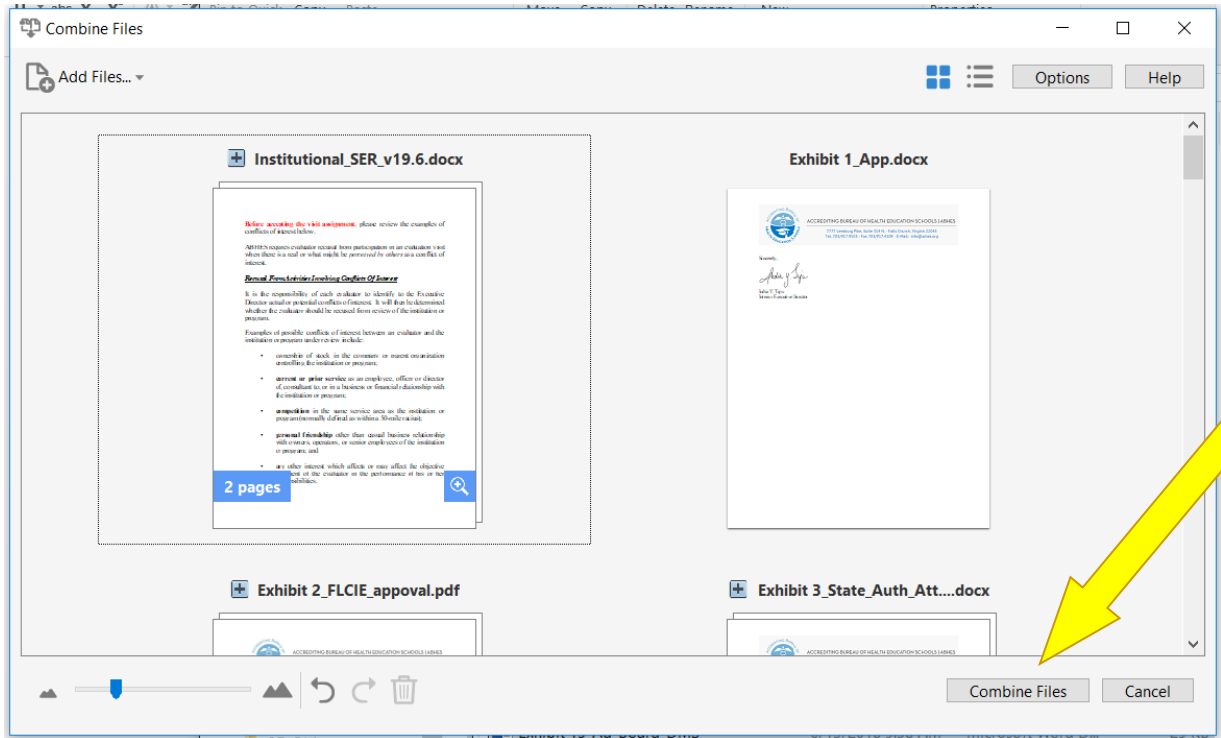
#### Combining multiple documents into one PDF file (Shown using Adobe® Acrobat Pro XI®)

**Step 1. Prepare the documents** – Make sure you’ve made final edits and saved the files you want to combine as a pdf.

**Step 2. Combine Files into a Single PDF** – Select your SER pdf and required exhibits in your File Explorer, right click, and select “Combine files in Acrobat...”



**Step 3.** Choose the order you want the files to be inserted into the response pdf binder by dragging and moving. Select Combine Files to merge them in the order selected.

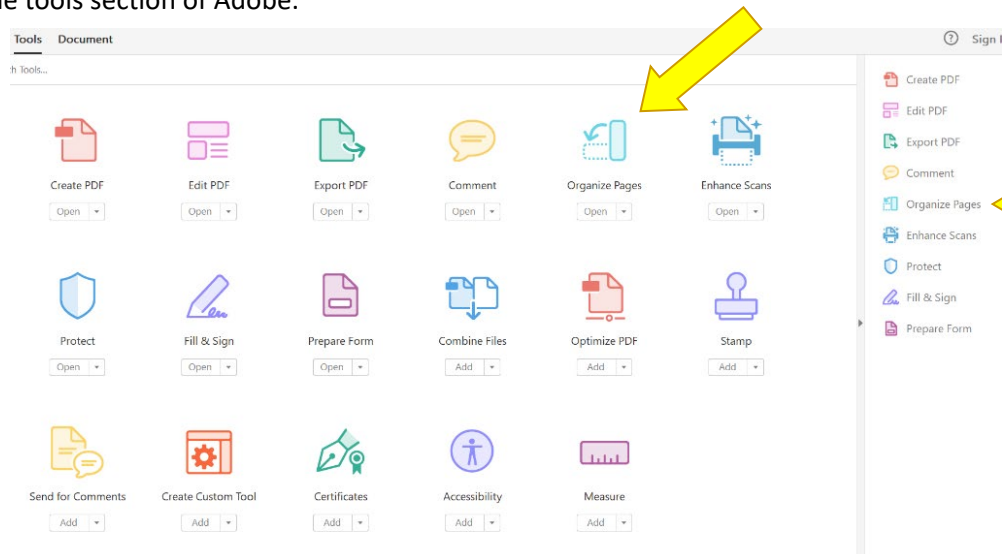


**Step 4.** Save the response – the response name should include:

- (1) ABHES ID number (Renewal Applicants Only)
- (1) Institution name (Initial Applicants Only) and City/State
- (2) title “RSP to Visit”
- (3) the date of submission (EX: 62019)

Examples: I-888\_RSP\_to\_Visit\_112019  
MA-777\_RSP\_to\_Visit\_52020  
ABC\_Coll\_MiamiFL\_RSP\_to\_Visit\_52020

**Step 5.** Organize the pages so that any blank pages are deleted and all pages are oriented the best way for viewing in the tools section of Adobe.



## Part 2: Bookmarking

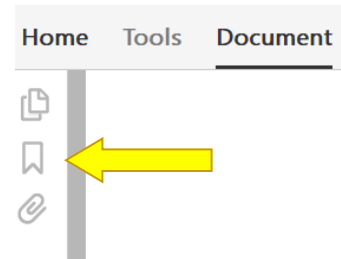
The intent of this technique is to make it possible for reviewers to quickly locate and navigate to content and exhibits using bookmarks. Bookmarks provide an overview of the document and act as a clickable table of contents.

### Method

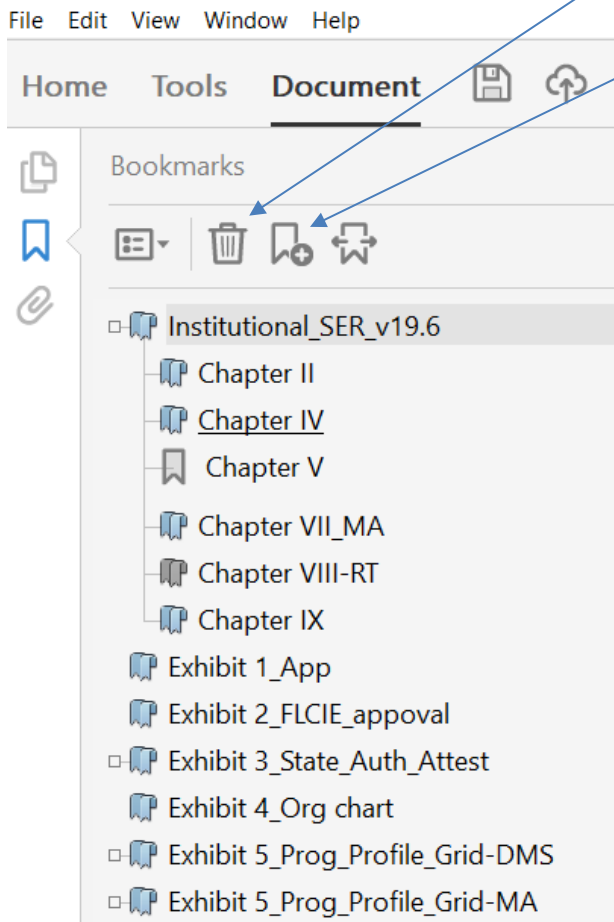
#### Creating bookmarks

**Step 1.** Open the response packet created in Part 1. By combining the files in that manner, bookmarks will automatically be created for each document.

**Step 2.** To edit bookmarks, open the bookmark pane by clicking here:



**Step 3.** Review in the bookmark pane to rearrange, delete, rename, create new, and edit as needed.



March 5, 2020

Ms. India Tips  
Executive Director  
ABHES  
7777 Leesburg Pike, Suite 314N  
Falls Church, VA22043

Re: I-555-01 ABC College – Falls Church, VA  
Response to February 12-13, 2020 Visit Reports

Dear Ms. Tips:

Following this letter is ABC College's response to the accreditation standards cited in the ABHES visit reports for the on-site evaluation conducted February 12-13, 2020.

Sincerely,

Penelope Brown  
Executive Director

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Cited Accreditation Standards

IV.J.2 citation & narrative response..... 1

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Exhibit 2 Orientation Agenda ..... 4

SAMPLE



## RESPONSE TO RENEWAL VISIT

ABC College – Falls Church Campus

### IV.J.2. CITATION

**IV.J.2. An institution has a written emergency preparedness plan that is available to all students and staff.**

The emergency preparedness plan includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Evacuation
- iii. Lockdown (if the danger is a threat to students on campus)
- iv. Communications (means of communicating with staff, students, and family members during, and immediately post, incident)
- v. Media (designated persons who may address the media and what information, minimally, that will be released)
- vi. Training (method and timeframe for orienting staff and students)

**Compliance Rating:**       Meets Standard       Violates Standard       Not Applicable

**Method of Assessment:** The institution does not have a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan in place.

### IV.J.2. RESPONSE

The lack of a written emergency preparedness plan (one document) for our institution was an oversight. We are grateful to the ABHES evaluation team for bringing this matter to our attention. Although we had written policies and procedures that addressed emergency evacuation and communication during emergencies, and what steps to follow if there was a sudden threat to students on campus, we admittedly did not have all these policies and procedures collectively in one streamlined, comprehensive document. The institution now has the Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) (**EXHIBIT 1**) that includes all the requirements. We are confident the Plan provides a sound and effective strategy to follow in case of emergency. The Plan is available for reference at the Reception desk in our lobby and has been placed on the instructor's desk in every classroom and is available as well in the student and faculty lounges. The Plan will now be provided to new staff and new students during their required orientations. **EXHIBIT 2** provides copies of the updated Student Orientation Agenda with the EPP noted as agenda item #5. The institution has not onboarded new faculty to document their orientation to the plan, but at the most recent staff meeting, the EPP was disseminated and discussed, per **EXHIBIT 3**.

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## Exhibit 1 – EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

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### RISK ASSESSMENT

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### EVACUATION PLAN (ALSO SEE DIAGRAM ON PAGE 2)

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### INCLEMENT WEATHER PROTOCOL

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### LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES

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### COMMUNICATION PLAN

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### MEDIA PROTOCOL

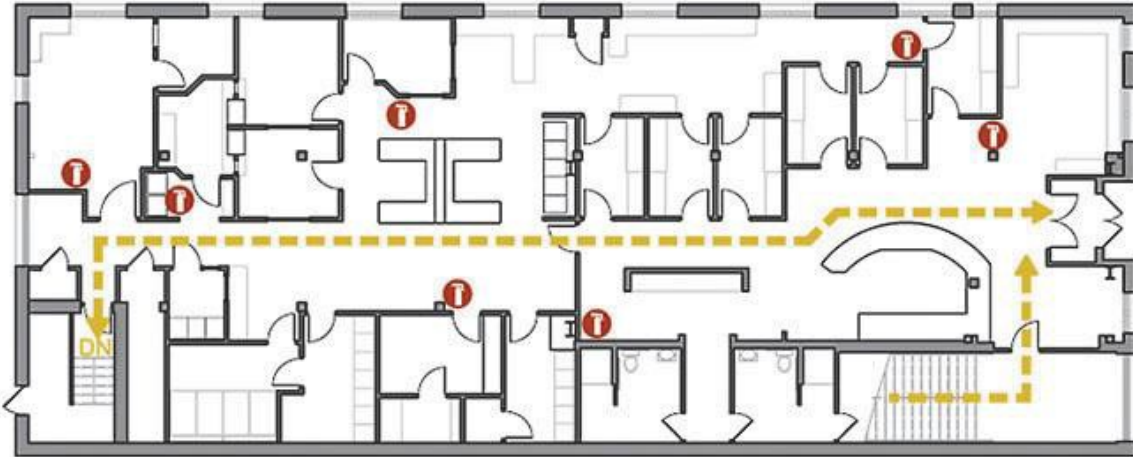
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# EMERGENCY PLAN

600 ALABAMA STREET  
GROUND FLOOR



--- EXIT PATH

→ EXIT

i FIRE EXTINGUISHER



POLICE, FIRE, AMBULANCE: **911**

BUILDING MANAGEMENT: (415) 401-9200

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:  
PROCEED TO STAIRWELL AND AWAIT HELP

SAM

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*Exhibit 2 – STUDENT ORIENTATION AGENDA*

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1. Fusce aliquet pede non pede. Suspendisse dapibus lorem pellentesque magna. Integer nulla.
2. Donec blandit feugiat ligula. Donec hendrerit, felis et imperdiet euismod, purus ipsum pretium metus, in lacinia nulla nisl eget sapien.
3. Proin nec augue. Quisque aliquam tempor magna.
4. Maecenas porttitor congue massa.
5. Emergency Preparedness Plan: Discussion of plan and location as well as hand out provided.

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*Exhibit 3 – March 2, 2020 Staff Meeting Minutes*

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Staff Meeting – March 2, 2020

Attendees: Liam, Noah, William, James, Logan, Benjamin, Mason, Elijah, Oliver, Jacob, Lucas, Emma, Olivia, Ava, Isabella, Sophia, Charlotte, Mia, Amelia, Harper, Evelyn

#### General Topics

1. Emergency Preparedness Plan: Discussion of plan and location as well as hand out provided.
2. Donec blandit feugiat ligula. Donec hendrerit, felis et imperdiet euismod, purus ipsum pretium metus, in lacinia nulla nisl eget sapien.
3. Donec blandit feugiat ligula. Donec hendrerit, felis et imperdiet euismod, purus ipsum pretium metus, in lacinia nulla nisl eget sapien.

#### On-Going Project Updates

1. Proin nec augue. Quisque aliquam tempor magna.
2. Maecenas porttitor congue massa.

#### Unfinished Business

1. Proin nec augue. Quisque aliquam tempor magna.
2. Maecenas porttitor congue massa.

Program-specific break outs (see separate faculty meeting minutes)