WRITE LIKE A COMPLIANCE SPECIALIST

Industry Best Practices for Minimum Findings

AGENDA

- **Introduction**   **5 min**

- **"Pre-test"**   **10 min**

- **Best Practices**   **10 min**

- **Review "Pre-test"**   **10 min**

- **Practice Using AI**   **10 min**

- **Open Discussion & Thank you!**   **10 min**

INTRODUCTION

CHLOE ROYTEN

Accreditation & Compliance Coordinator
Educational Advisors

- B.A. from UW–Madison
- Elementary School Teacher
- Program Director
- Director of Education
- Accreditation & Compliance Coordinator

Good writing is rewriting.
—Truman Capote

EDUCATIONAL ADVISORS
EA
2000 2025
25 YEARS STRONG

WHY FOCUS ON WRITING?

- The nature of this industry is that private postsecondary institutions are subject to extensive regulation, accreditation, and oftentimes both.

- To obtain and maintain approvals, institutions are required to tell their story through the written word.

- Writing your story well can be the difference between minimal or extensive findings from your regulators.

One of the easiest mistakes to make is submitting a response that is unclear and unsupported by evidence.

"VIGOROUS WRITING IS CONCISE.

A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts."

— *Strunk & White, The Elements of Style*

"PRE-TEST"

"PRE-TEST" TIME

- Read through 2 sample responses to Institutional Accreditors and BPPE.

- What can be improved? Scan the QR code to enter your answers.

- We will review responses as a group after the Best Practices Presentation.

Please note that the sample below has been made up for the purposes of this presentation.

Sample Finding:

A review of the Program Effectiveness Plan was conducted; however, the backup documentation for the external clinical affiliate survey was not provided. The survey submitted, titled "Student Evaluation of Clinical Site," did not include the required content. Furthermore, it was distributed to students rather than to external clinical affiliates.

Sample Response:

Institution X recognizes the oversight of not submitting the external clinical affiliate surveys in time for the accreditation team's review. We do want to state that the surveys were available during the visit and were included with the information that was used to complete the Program Effectiveness Plan. They were unfortunately not submitted in time for the team to review, and we regret that the external clinical affiliate surveys were not provided in a timely way.

Following the ABHES Team's recommendations, we reviewed the "Student Evaluation of Clinical Site" survey that was provided to check that it matches the requirements for external clinical affiliate surveys. We have made revisions so it will be given to external clinical affiliates going forward.

Please note that the sample below has been made up for the purposes of this presentation.

Sample Question:

How does the institution set (and communicate to students) clear standards for satisfactory academic progress?

Sample Response:

Assessment/Engagement Tools:

Assessment tools, such as assignments and activities, are important because they allow you, the teacher, to see whether you are on track to finish a module or not. They also show you the areas where improvement is needed. Engagement tools, including surveys, activities, chats, and more, can help increase your motivation and keep you focused, as well as give you the chance to have your questions answered and your ideas heard by the instructor and other students.

Grading:

- Class Participation in Tasks and Activities – 50%
- Final Project – 50%

To pass the course, students must achieve a minimum average of 70%, a C grade (GPA of 2.0).
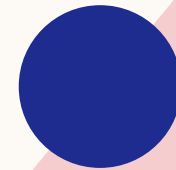
Attendance Requirement:

Students are required to attend 85% of the total course hours. There is no make-up option for missed class time.
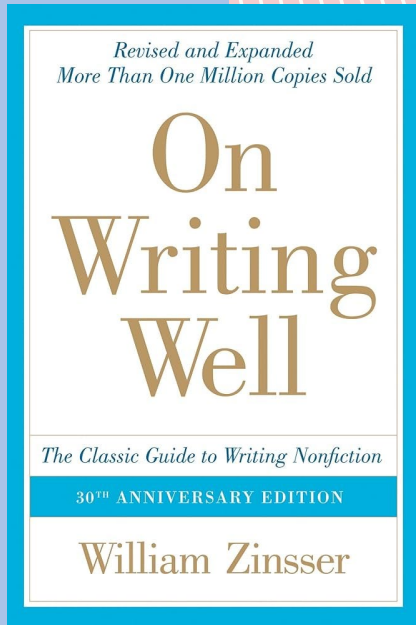
HOW'D I DO?

Don't Worry!

We will review responses as a group after the Best Practices Presentation.

BEST PRACTICES for MINIMUM FINDINGS
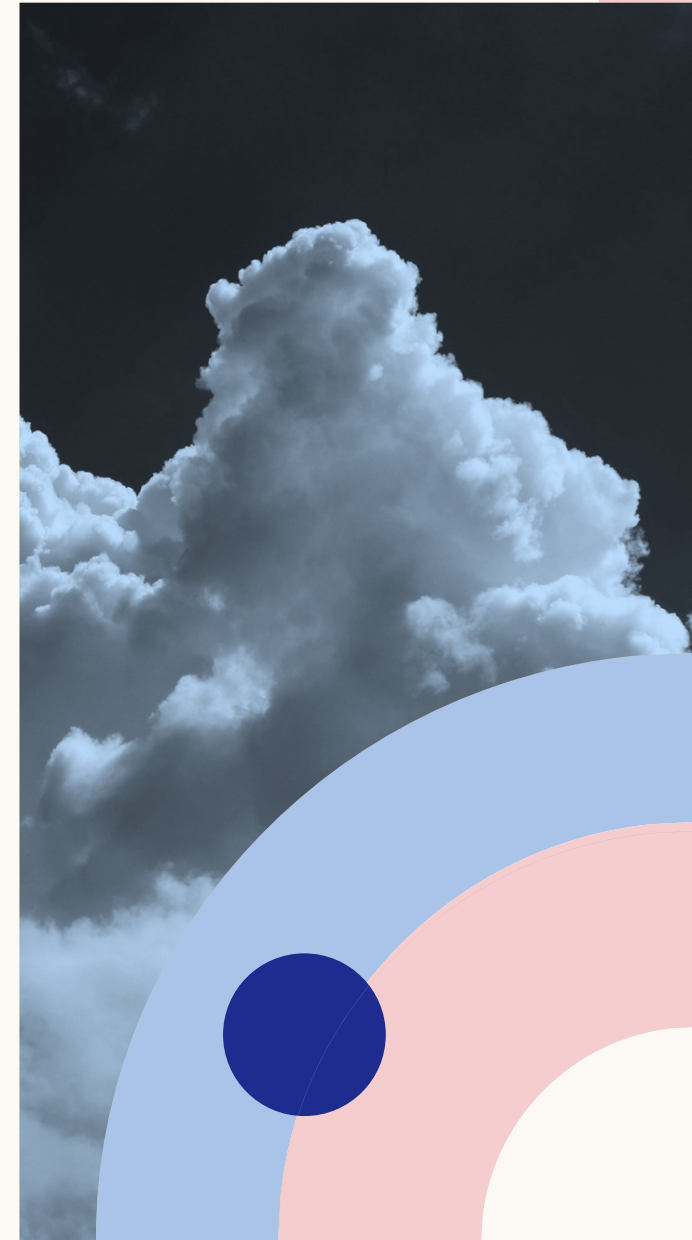
"EXAMINE EVERY WORD YOU PUT ON PAPER.
You'll find a surprising number that don't serve any purpose."
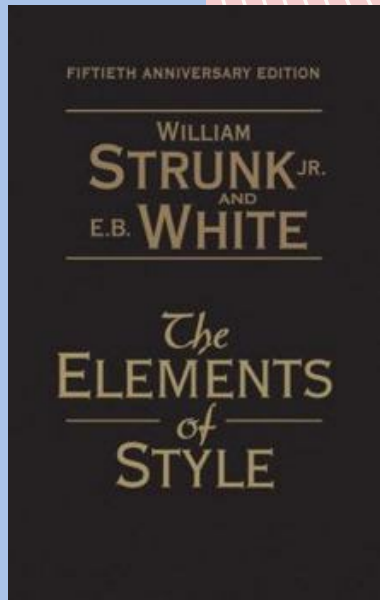
— *William Zinsser, On Writing Well*

TAKE OUT THE FLUFF

- **ONLY** answer the question that was asked:

  If the question asks about admissions policies, don't talk about student services or faculty resources.

- **DON'T** use subjective descriptions:

  Best

  Great

  Industry-leading

  Etc. (don't use etc.)

If you can't qualify it, don't include it.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

WILLIAM
STRUNK JR.
AND
E.B. WHITE

The
ELEMENTS
of
STYLE

"WHEN A SENTENCE IS MADE STRONGER, IT USUALLY BECOMES SHORTER.

Thus, brevity is a by-product of vigor."

— *Strunk & White, The Elements of Style*

ANSWER THE WHOLE QUESTION

- Identify each element within a question and make sure to answer it.
    What might look like one question might actually be three questions.

- If something doesn't apply, then make note of it.
    If it's not immediately obvious why something is not applicable, then explain it.

TAKE OUT THE GUESS WORK

- Don't expect the reviewer to make inferences or assumptions.

    Don't make references to institutional documents, policies, or procedures without including them or explaining them.

    Don't make references to other sections of the document. If it's applicable to the question, then it's okay to explain it again.

- Spell it all out.

    Imagine the person reading your response is completely unfamiliar with your institution and your programs.

    Would an outside person ask: "What does this mean?"

PROVIDE EVIDENCE, EVIDENCE, AND MORE EVIDENCE.

- Exhibits are your best friend.

- If your narrative is saying: "Look we did this thing!" then SHOW you did it by providing an exhibit.

Man's Best Friend

Exhibits

ENDURANCE AND CONSISTENCY

- Don't change up your responses.

- Repetition is a good thing!

  Don't make references to other sections of the document. If it's applicable to the question, then it's okay to explain it again.

- Copy and paste is the peanut butter to your jelly.

TONE

- Confident

    You know what you're talking about, so don't be afraid to sound like it!

    The clearer and more concise your sentences are, the more confident you will sound.

- Respectful

    Remember who your audience is and be appreciative of the time they are giving you.

- Deferential

    The reviewer is in a position of power. Try not to tell them their organization is wrong. If you disagree with them, do it respectfully.

GRAMMAR

- Spelling

    Don't ignore spell check!

- Capitalization

    Decide right away if you will capitalize position titles, and stick with it!

    Use acronyms consistently (and only after spelling out the entire name).

- Sentence structure can make all the difference.

LET'S EAT GRANDMA.
LET'S EAT, GRANDMA.
COMMAS SAVE LIVES

USING GENERATIVE AI

GREAT FOR:

- Idea generation

- Rough drafts

- Refining language

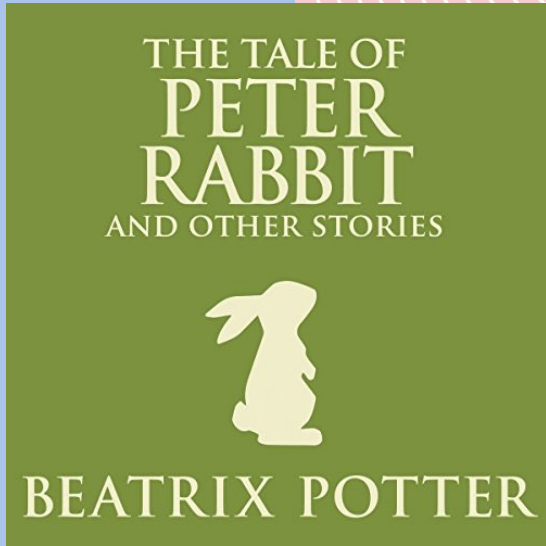**NOT** a one-stop-shop

MAKE SURE TO:

- Review and edit

- Fact-check EVERYTHING

- Match institutional standards

- Add supporting documentation

ChatGPT

AI KEY REMINDERS

- AI is **NOT** a substitute for compliance expertise

- Accountability - responsibility stays with staff

- Protect student confidentiality (FERPA)

"THE SHORTER AND THE PLAINER THE BETTER."

— *Beatrix Potter*

"PRE-TEST" REVIEW

Example #1: ABHES Response

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LET'S SHARE YOUR ANSWERS!

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Pink
- Contradictory information. Was the back-up documentation available or not?
- Take ownership for the error, apologize, if necessary, explain what measures have been taken to ensure it doesn't happen again, and move on.
- Include the missing back-up documentation as an exhibit.

Green
- Was the survey updated? If so, what updates were made?
- What measures have been taken to ensure it doesn't happen again?
- Include the new/updated survey as an exhibit.

Turquoise
- What revisions have been made? How will Institution X ensure surveys are distributed correctly in the future?
- Include a new/updated Survey Policy as an exhibit.

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Turquoise

- Incomplete response - How is SAP communicated to students? Not answered.

Green

- GRAMMAR ALERT!
  - Who is the intended audience of this paragraph? Is it meant for the teacher?
  - Run-on sentences lose their meaning. This needs to be broken up or shortened.

Yellow

- FLUFF ALERT! This question is not asking about the advantages of engagement activities.

Pink

- Incomplete response - SAP Policies should include:
  - Qualitative and quantitative measures:
    - Grading system (grade, score, meaning)
    - Attendance policy
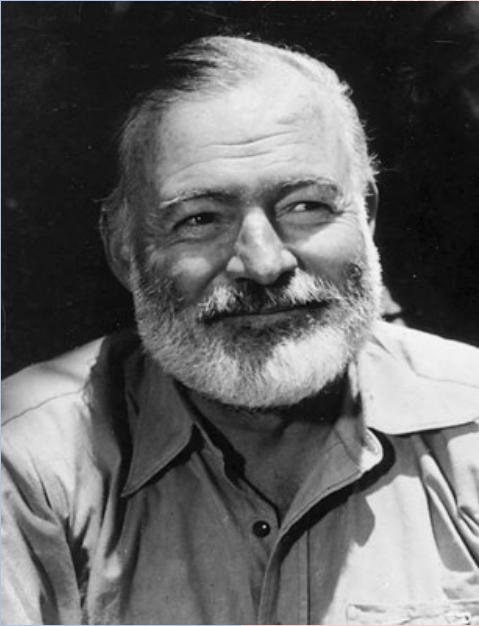 - Warning, probation, and dismissal policies.

Q&A

or

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

PRACTICE USING AI

"THE FIRST DRAFT OF ANYTHING IS SH*T."

— Ernest Hemingway

COMMON AI INPUTS

Best Practice for Prompts

- Always give the AI **the exact policy text or handbook section** to ground the draft.

- Add instructions like *"use formal regulatory tone"*

Example Prompts:

- "Summarize our [Student Complaint Policy] in professional, regulator-facing language for BPPE."

- "Write a neutral summary of how our institution handles transfer credit requests, emphasizing required disclaimers."

- "Rewrite this response in a formal, factual tone suitable for a college accreditor."

- "Ensure this response avoids vague terms like 'great outcomes' and replaces them with compliance-focused phrasing."

EXAMPLE AI

Sample Question:

- How does the institution process and handle student complaints?

AI Input:

- "Regulator requests the college's process for handling student complaints. Write a response using the attached policy." – Includes copy of the policy.

AI Output:

- "The institution maintains a formal *Student Complaint and Grievance Policy (Policy 9.04)* that applies to complaints not already covered by another final appeal process (e.g., grade appeals, Title IX). Students are first encouraged to resolve concerns informally with the appropriate party. If unresolved, they may file a formal grievance through the Conduct, Policy, and Concern Report form. Complaints are reviewed by a Grievance Hearing Panel composed of Student Affairs, faculty, and staff representatives not involved in the matter. The panel reviews documentation, provides both parties the opportunity to present their case, and issues a written decision. Students may appeal under the institution's Appeals Policy. All complaints are handled confidentially under FERPA, and retaliation is strictly prohibited."

ADDITIONAL INPUTS?

Questions:

- What additional information or context could you provide to the Generative AI to improve the quality of this output?

- Before re-prompting the AI, what edits or adjustments would you make to the current draft yourself?
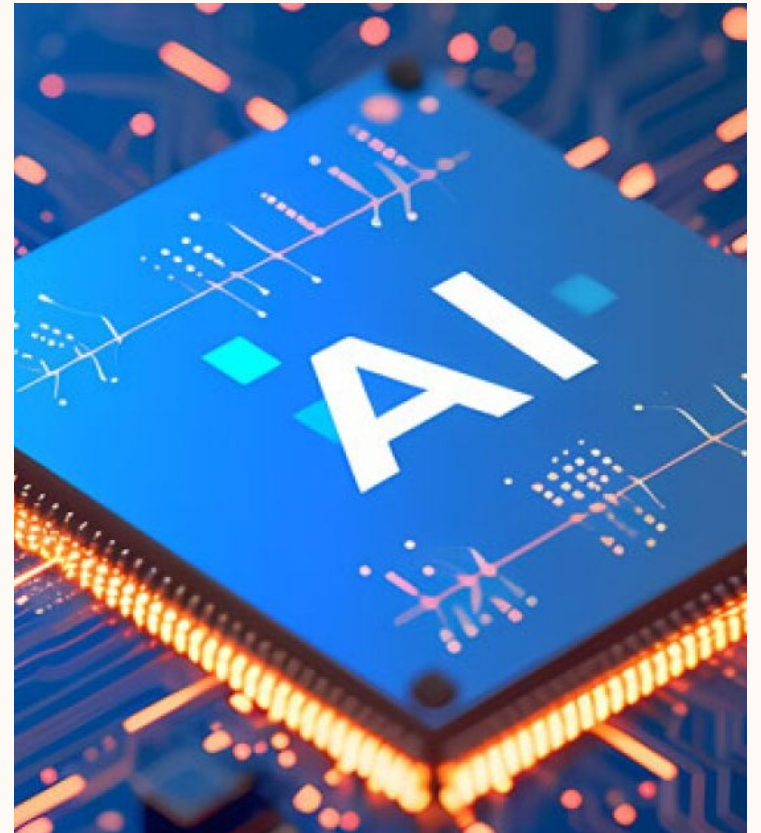
SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

How have you used generative AI in your professional or personal life?

THANK YOU!

We hope you enjoyed our presentation!

If you'd like to get in touch, contact us at:

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campus

https://campus.edu/

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THANK YOU!

Please scan the QR code and take a quick survey to share your feedback.