

ARC/STSA Requirements for Submission

Effective May 1, 2018, the ARC/STSA has issued updated guidelines and protocol for the submission and format of all program responses and documents, including but not limited to: applications (i.e. Self-Study), reports (i.e. Progress Reports), program changes (i.e. faculty or curriculum), and ARC/STSA or CAAHEP Findings Letter responses. The consistency and uniform organization of electronic documents submitted to the ARC/STSA facilitates a more efficient collection and review of program information to determine compliance with the **Standards**.

ARC/STSA's requirements for electronic submission include:

- ✦ All documents must be submitted as one single, seamless Portable Document Format (PDF) file which has a .pdf extension as part of the file name. **Word documents will not be accepted. Paper submissions will not be accepted.**
- ✦ An acceptable PDF file is one that includes the compilation of all the materials and documents into one single, seamless file and not a series of separate files. All electronic documents are to be submitted as **one continuous PDF document**, with all pages upright/facing the same direction.
- ✦ **All program changes must be submitted to the ARC/STSA by the individual programs.**
- ✦ **All submissions to the ARC/STSA greater than one page in length must contain electronic bookmarks.**
 - 📌 Electronic bookmarks placed within the PDF should identify all forms and documents contained within the file. Bookmarking should be done in a manner that facilitates an easy and intuitive navigation and review of the file.
 - 📌 Bookmarks should identify each form requested or required as they correspond to the **Standards**. Clearly label each bookmark so the reader will easily understand which document or form is linked to the given bookmark – refer to the bookmark titles and abbreviations at the end of this document.
 - 📌 In a response to an ARC/STSA Findings letter; bookmark the cover letter, Findings letter, table of contents, and each Standard cited. Use sub-level bookmarks under the Standard cited for the program's narrative response to each item and any additional documentation provided to evidence compliance (see example at the end of this guide).
 - 📌 In a Self-Study submission; bookmark the Self-Study Report itself, then each additional required document as indicated in the Self-Study Report, as shown in the example at the end of this guide.
- ✦ Only documents **fewer than 50 pages in length** may be submitted via email to info@arcstsa.org as a single seamless PDF attachment that has been electronically bookmarked. The electronic submission must be attached to an email that includes the submission date, sponsoring institution, program name, address, and an explanation of the content and the title of the

document(s) included in the PDF. This information must be incorporated into a cover letter, which should be the first page in the final PDF as well.

- ✦ Any submission to the ARC/STSA **more than 50 pages in length**, please contact the ARC/STSA at info@arcstsa.org for submission instructions. The program submission must be submitted as a single seamless bookmarked PDF document, to include the submission date, sponsoring institution, program name, address, and an explanation of the content and the title of the document(s) included in the PDF. This information must be incorporated into a cover letter, which should be the first page in the final PDF as well.
- ✦ Whenever possible, directly convert documents to PDF as opposed to scanning and creating PDFs from printed documents. The direct conversion of documents to PDF format allows for far greater readability. For example, complete the narrative response using word processing software (e.g., Microsoft Word), convert the Word document directly to a PDF file, and then combine the converted file with other converted or scanned documents into a single seamless PDF document.
- ✦ Any security features in the PDF document must be disabled.
- ✦ The ARC/STSA does **not** accept documentation that includes confidential personal identification information [e.g. – Social Security numbers] or personal health information. Please **delete** or **black out** all confidential personal identification information or confidential personal health information on documentation prior to submission. Documentation submitted with confidential personal identification information or personal health information will be returned to the program **without** ARC/STSA review.
- ✦ Failure to adhere to these instructions may result in the return of the electronic document submission to the program and the assessment of a \$300 late fee.

Organizing the Electronic Submission

As it is the school's responsibility to demonstrate program compliance with the **Standards**, all submissions to the ARC/STSA should include documentation to support the school's position and should be organized in an intuitive manner so that the ARC/STSA can easily navigate the document to verify compliance.

The following guide provides an overview and some suggestions on how to prepare and organize an electronic submission for ARC/STSA review and includes:

- ✦ Converting Microsoft Word or Excel documents to PDF – **page 3**
- ✦ Compiling documents into one seamless PDF document – **page 4**
- ✦ Bookmarking – **page 7**
- ✦ Inserting pages – **page 9**
- ✦ Samples of an appropriately prepared electronic submission – **pages 12-14**

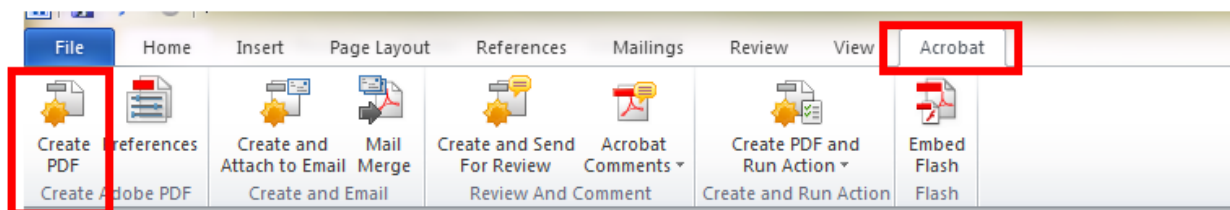
Converting Microsoft Word or Excel Documents to PDF

Directly convert documents to PDF as opposed to scanning and creating PDFs from paper documents. The direct conversion of documents allows for far greater readability. If an item does need to be scanned, ensure the scanned page is a standard paper size (8.5" x 11").

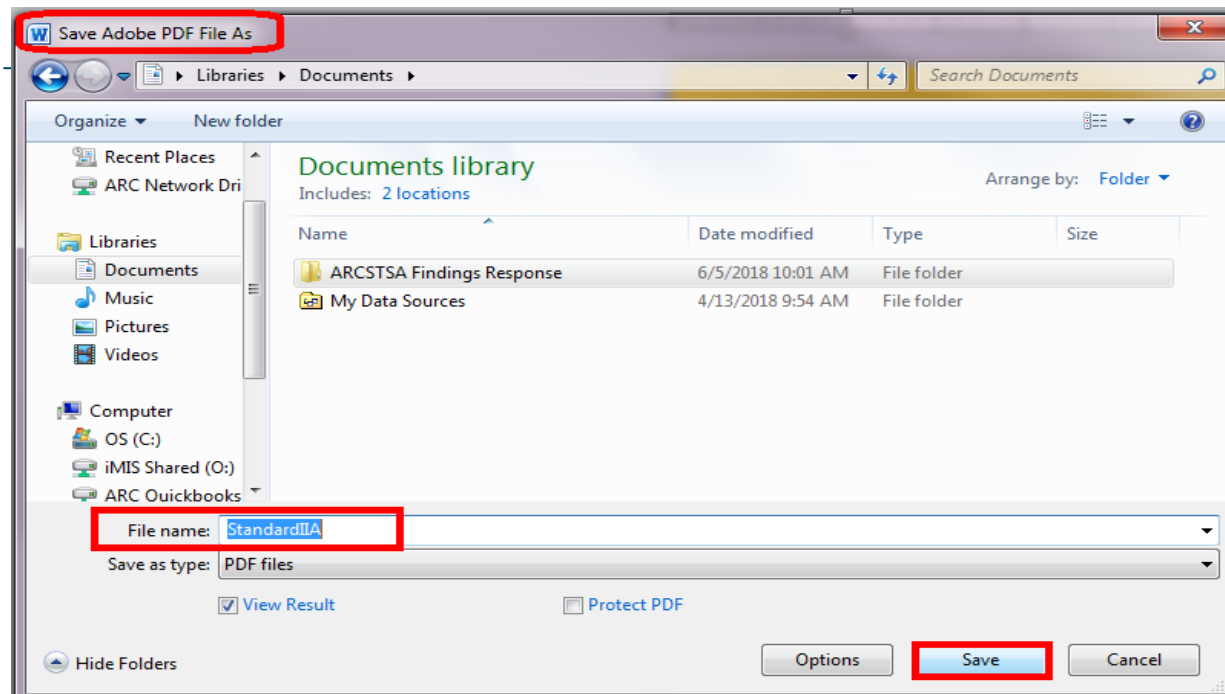
Once all Word and/or Excel documents are finalized and saved, convert the document to a PDF document using Adobe Acrobat. This will allow the addition of electronic bookmarks utilizing the Bookmarking Tool available in Adobe. This also ensures the formatting, text, and graphics of the original document will be retained.

Step 1: Beginning in Microsoft Word or Excel, select the "Acrobat" tab on the ribbon. *

Step 2: Click on "Create PDF"



Step 3: Name the newly created PDF and save in the designated location.

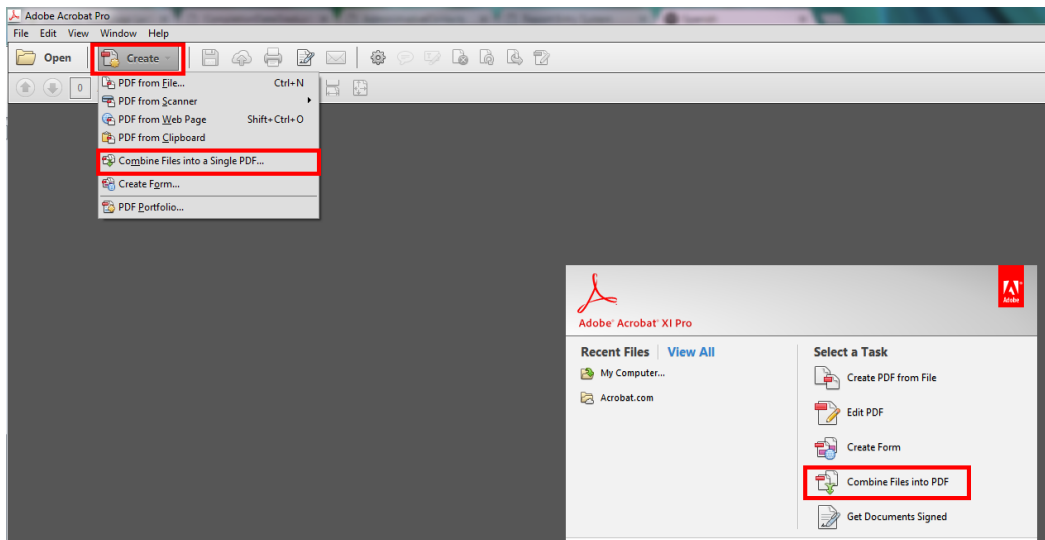


*If there is no Acrobat tab on the ribbon, click on File→Save As→and from the "Save as type" drop-down menu select "PDF", then continue to Step 3.

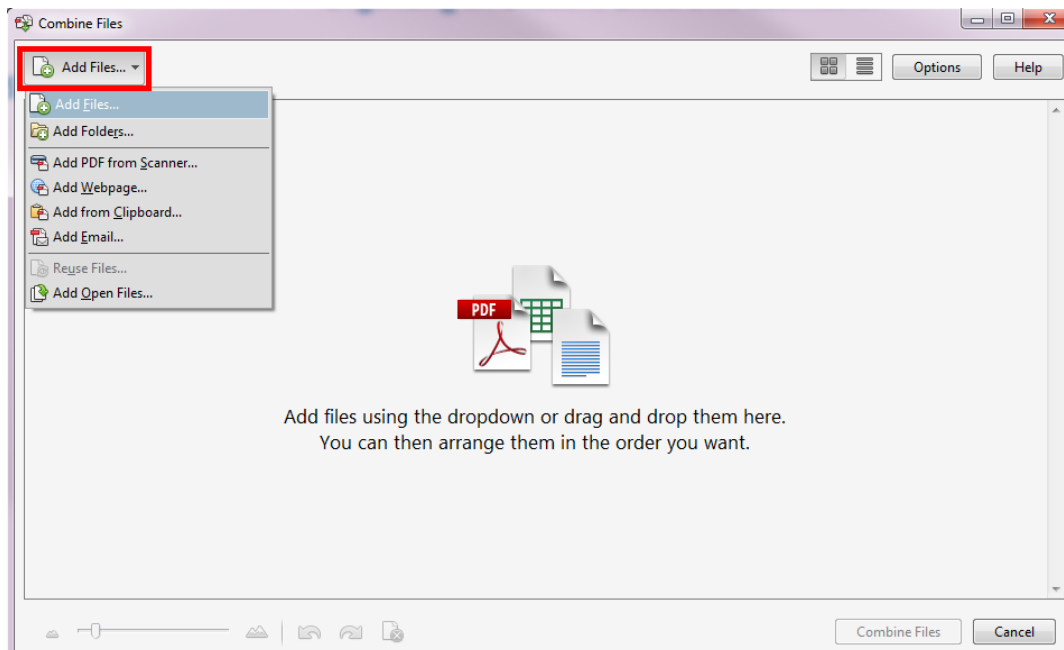
Compiling Documents into One Seamless PDF Document

Quickly merge multiple documents into one seamless PDF file with the documents in the order of your choosing.

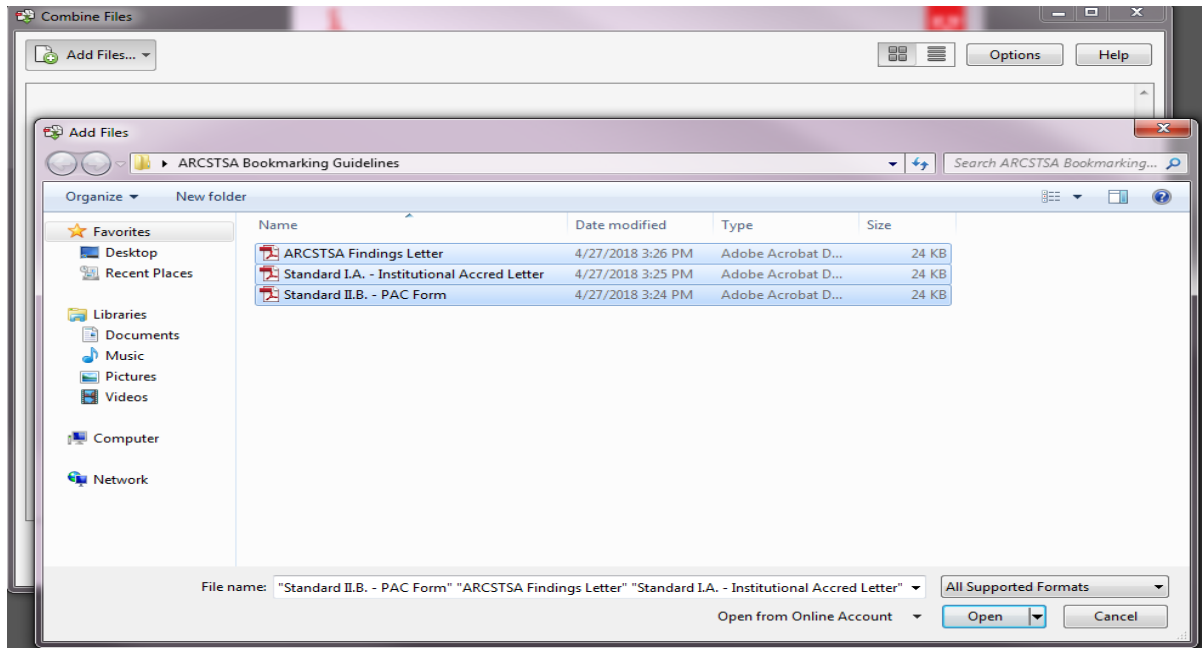
Step 1: Open Adobe Acrobat. Under the “Create” tab, select “Combine Files into a Single PDF” or from the main screen, select “Combine Files into PDF”.



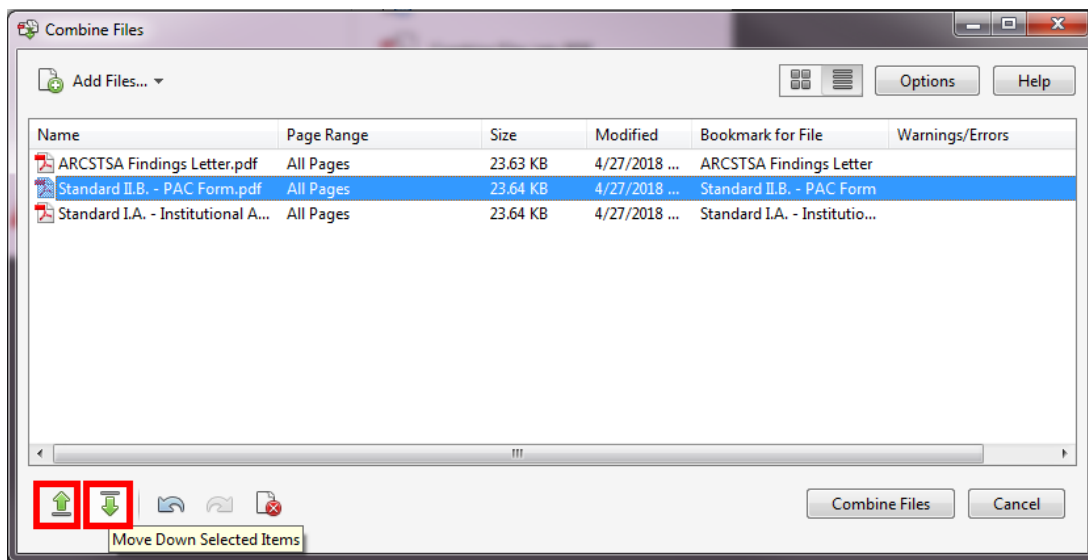
Step 2: Click on “Add Files” or drag and drop files to add them.



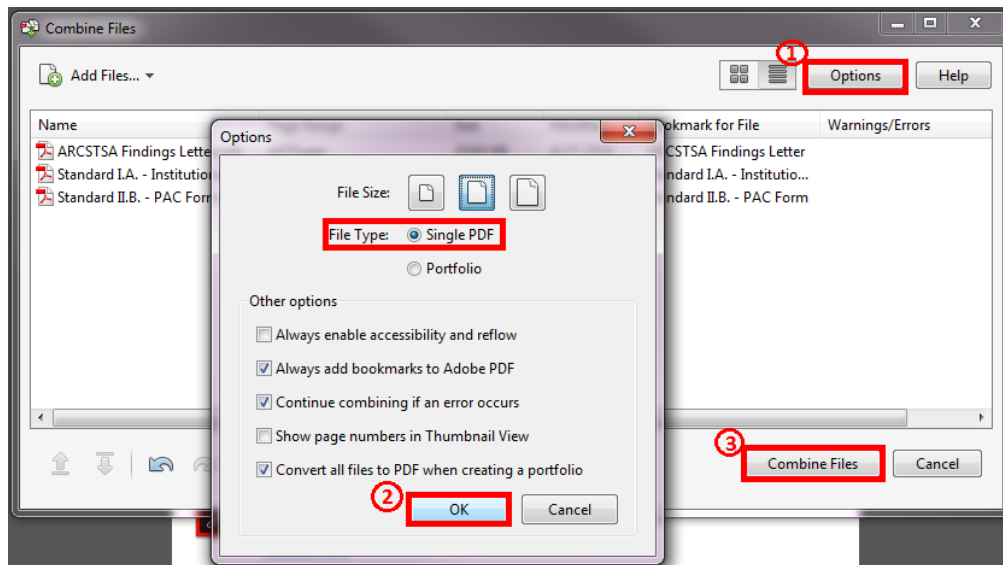
Step 3: In the “Add Files” dialog box, select the files from the designated folder(s). To select more than one file, hold the Ctrl button and select additional files. Once all files have been selected, click “Open”.



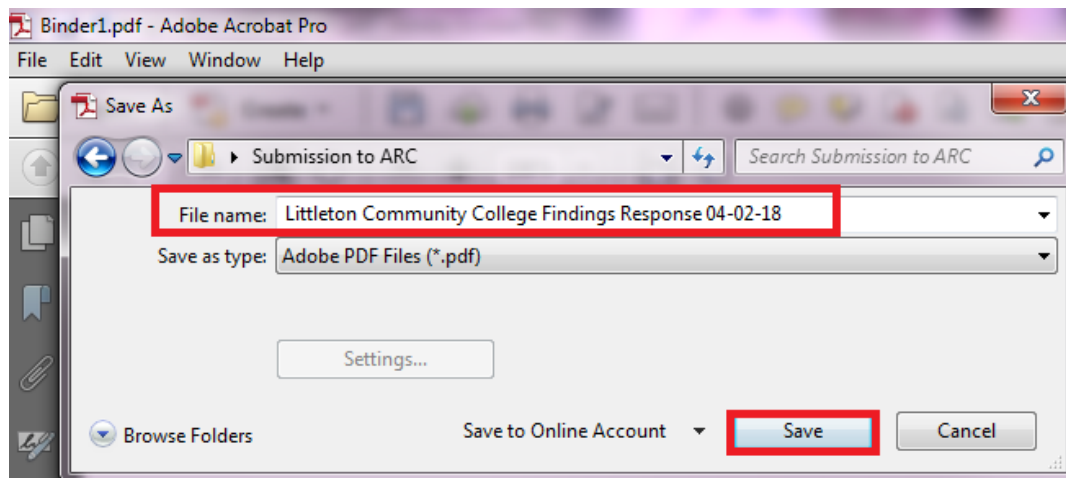
Step 4: Using the “Move Up” and “Move Down” arrows, rearrange the order of the documents. See **Order of Documents** on p.12 of this guide for more information.



Step 5: Once the order of the documents is ready and in the desired order for submission, select “Combine Files”. Make sure the “Single PDF” option is selected within the Options submenu.



Step 6: Save your newly created seamless PDF with an appropriate file name.



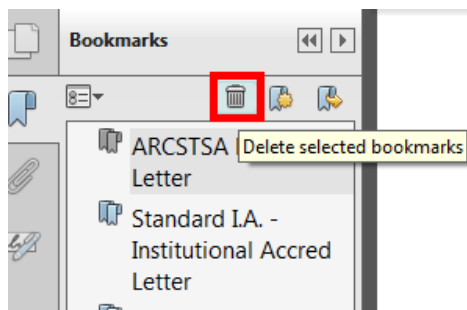
Creating Bookmarks

Adding bookmarks to a PDF document increases the functionality and accessibility of lengthy documents. Bookmarks help the reader navigate a document much the same they would a website: with a simple click. Proper bookmarking ensures that all requested documentation is included in the submission and can be easily located. Submission organization is the responsibility of the program to demonstrate compliance so that the ARC/STSA Board of Directors may complete a comprehensive and detailed review of the program's submission and confirm compliance with the Standards.

Follow the steps below to begin the easy, intuitive process of creating electronic bookmarks.

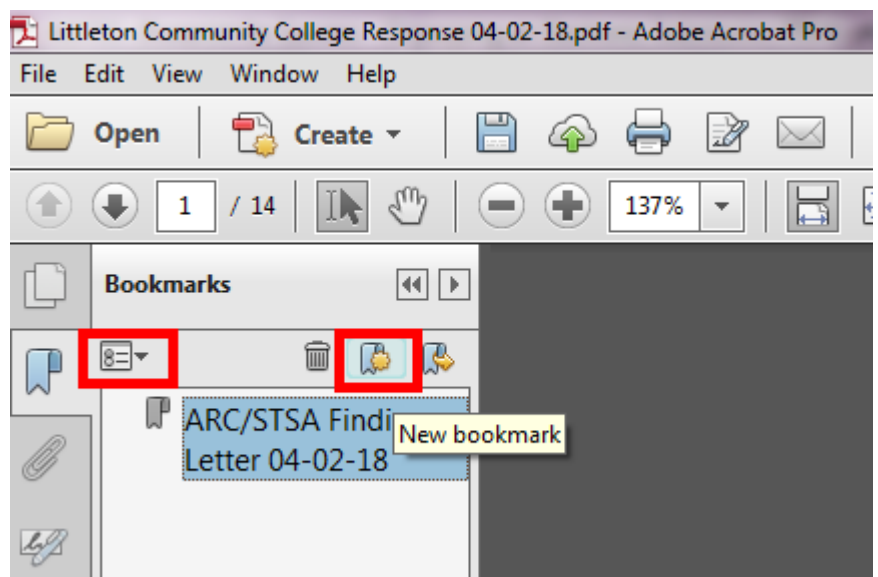
When a PDF is compiled from many separate documents into one seamless document, bookmarks are auto created based on the file names of the original documents. For ease and continuity in bookmarking the document, these auto-created bookmarks should be deleted.

Step 1: Click on the bookmarks tab within Adobe Acrobat. Highlight each individual bookmark and click



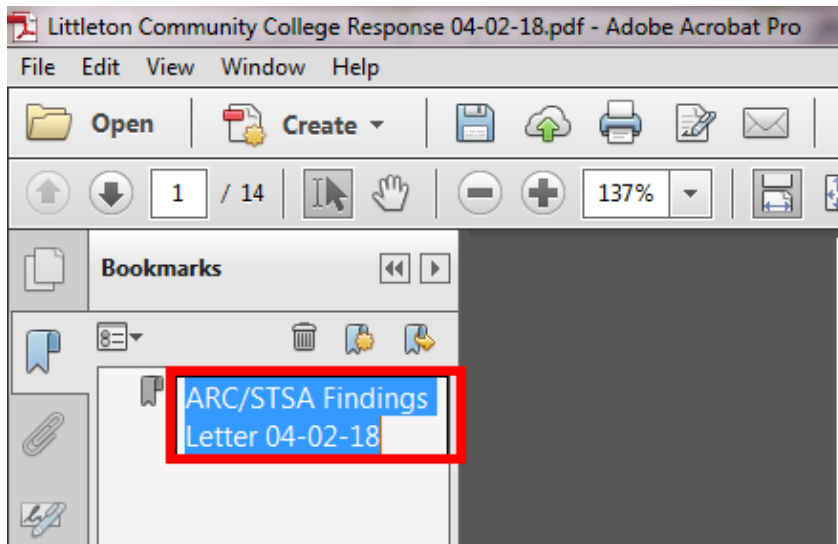
the “trashcan” icon to clear all auto-created bookmarks out.

Step 2: Go to the page within the seamless document to be bookmarked (e.g. each Standard response item, ARC/STSA forms, etc.). Click on “Options” icon, then “New Bookmark,” or click the “New Bookmark” icon to create bookmark.



Step 3:

To create a name for the bookmark, double click on the bookmark text or right-click while the bookmark is highlighted and select “Rename.” Enter the desired text (name the bookmark) and press “Enter/Return” on your keyboard.



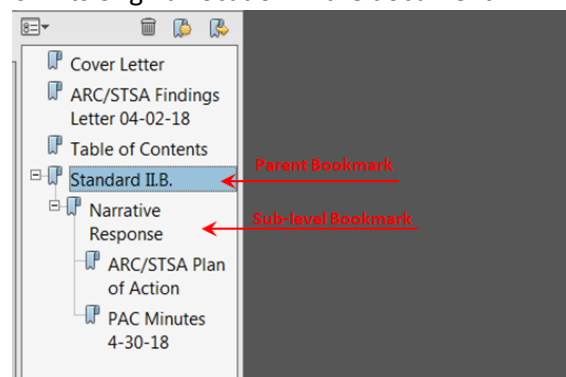
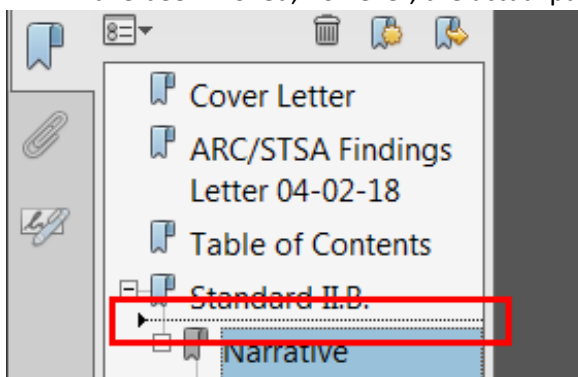
Building Better Bookmarks

- ✓ Provide a clear and descriptive name for the bookmark.
Examples:
“Clin Case Log – Jane Doe”
“Syllabi – ST101 Anatomy & Physiology I”
- ✓ Do not use generic names such as “Log 1” or “Syllabi 1.”
- ✓ Refer to the examples of document names and approved abbreviations at the end of this document.

Step 4:

To create sub-level bookmark, select the bookmark to be “nested” under the parent bookmark. Drag the bookmark underneath and slightly to the right of the parent bookmark.

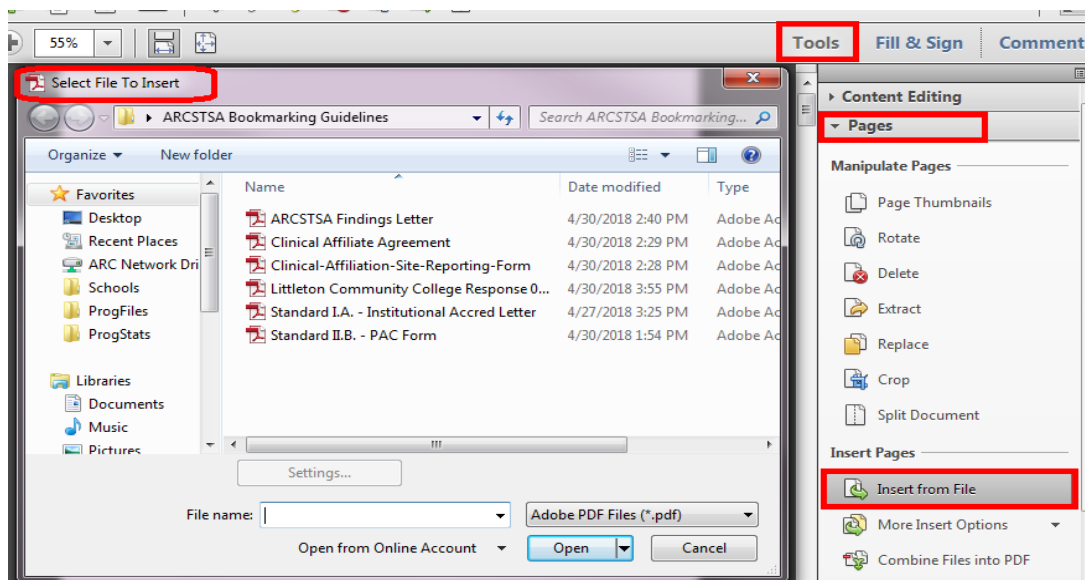
The Line icon “▶” shows the position of the bookmark or bookmarks. When the bookmark is nested, a minus icon appears next to the parent bookmark indicating the sub-level bookmarks have been moved; however, the actual page remains in its original location in the document.



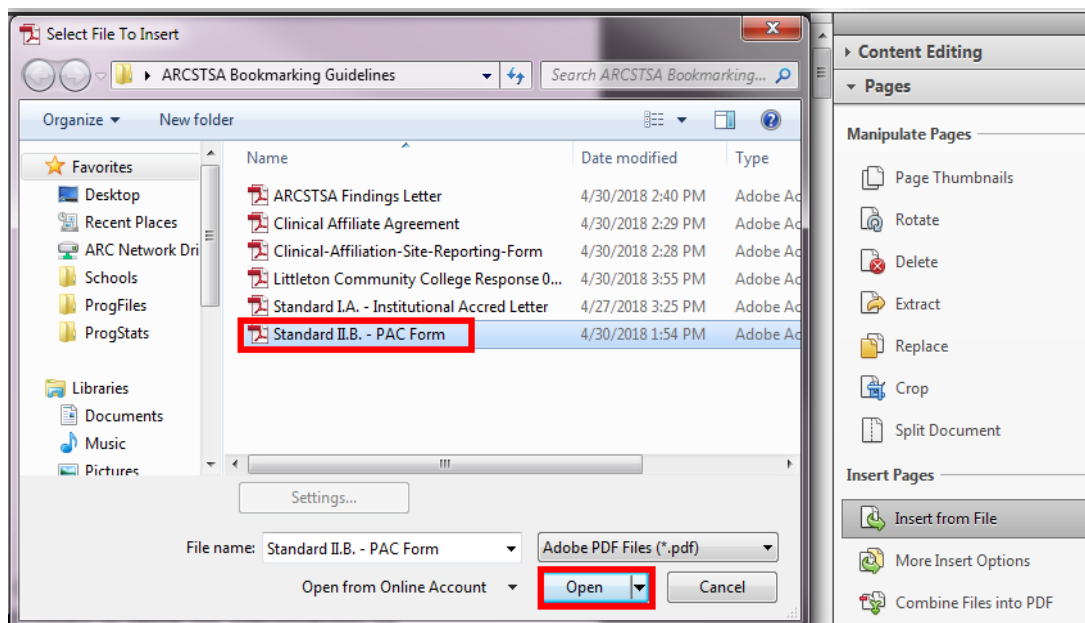
Inserting Pages into a Seamless PDF Document

It is best to convert all pages together, but if necessary, pages and supporting documentation may be inserted into the seamless PDF file after it has been created. The pages/documentation to be added will need to have been previously scanned and converted to PDF and saved on the school's network or designated computer (see "Compiling Documents into One Continuous PDF Document").

Step 1: Click on "Tools", then "Pages" and choose "Insert from File" from the Insert Pages menu – the "Select File to Insert" dialog box will open.



Step 2: Open the appropriate folder where the documents have been previously saved and select the file to be inserted, and click the "Open" button. The "Insert Pages" dialog box will open.



Step 3:

In the “Insert Pages” dialog box underneath the “Page” heading, click one of the following radio buttons:

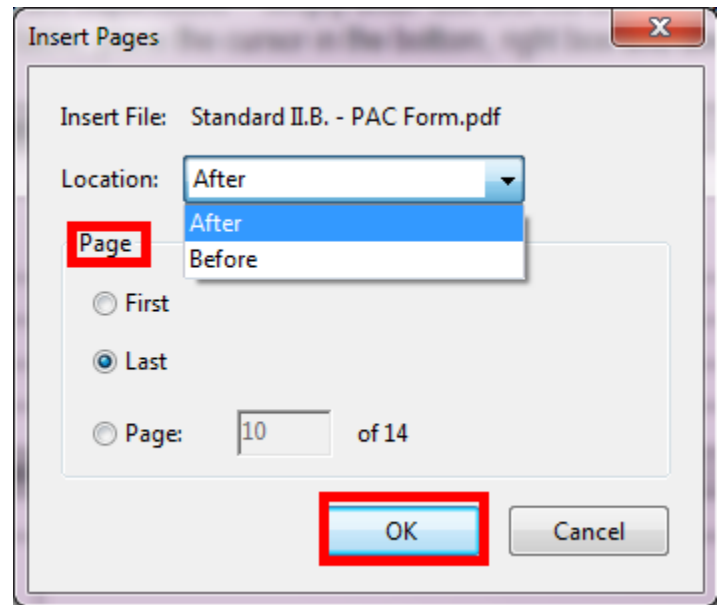
- First: Inserts the pages at the beginning of the compiled PDF document, either before or after the first page.
- Last: Inserts the pages at the end of the compiled PDF document, either before or after the last page.
- Page: Inserts the pages either before or after the page number designated in the associated text box.

Step 4:

Click the OK button to have Adobe insert the pages from the selected file.

Step 5:

Repeat these steps for all remaining pages/documentation to be added. Remember to Bookmark any inserted pages/documentation.



EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENT NAMES AND APPROVED ABBREVIATIONS

Standard I.A.

- Institutional Accredited Letter/Award/Certificate

Standard II.A.

- Clin Suff Survey Form [Clinical Sufficiency Survey Form]
- MEC [Maximum Enrollment Capacity] Attestation Form

Standard II.B.

- PAC Form
- PAC Agenda
- PAC Minutes – (date)

Standard II.C.

- Program Goals

Standard III.A. – Resources – Type and Amount

- Blueprint
- Budget – (year)
- Clin Affil Attest Form – (Name of Affiliate)
- Clin Affil Report Form
 - Agreement: (Name of Facility)
 - Slot Verification Letter – (Name of Affiliate)
- Clin Roster
- Clin Tracking Form
- Comp Res [Computer Resources]
- Classroom Instr Ref Mat [Instructional Reference Materials]
- Inst Inv [Instrument Inventory]
- Instr Ref [Instructional References]
- Lab Equip [Laboratory Equipment Inventory]
- Lab Supply Inv [Laboratory Supply Inventory]
- Lib Res [Library Resources]
- POA – Prof Dev (Name) [Plan of Action – Professional Development]
- Prof Dev Docs (Name) [Professional Development documents]

Standard III.B.

- PPDF – PD/CC/Core Inst/Dean/Pres [ARC/STSA Program Personnel Data Form]
- CST/CSFA/CSA – (Name)
- Proof of Associate Degree or greater [PD only]
 - Proficiency Docs [PD only – proof of instructional methods, curriculum design, and program planning]

Standard III.C. – Curriculum

- C-1 Curric Seq Form [Curriculum Sequencing Form]
- Master Curric List [usually a page from school's catalog]
- Syllabi
- Course # and name [ST101 – Introduction to Surgical Technology]
- Curric Attest Form [ARC/STSA Curriculum Attestation Form]
- Core Curric Outline Compare Form [Core Curriculum Outline Comparison Form]

Standard III.C. – Clinical Case Requirement

- Clin Case Log
 - Log: (student name)

Standard III.D.

- Resource Assessment Plan
- PEP [Program Effectiveness Plan]

Standard IV.A.1 and/or IV.A.2.

- Didactic Exams
- Lab Skills Assessments
- Clinical Assessments

Standard IV.B.1. [indicate applicable abbreviation after Std – RET, OAE, GP, ES, GS]

- OTT – (dates) [Outcomes Tracking Tool]
- NBSTSA (CST/CSFA/CSA) Exam Results – (dates)
- Grad Placement (may be on OTT)
- ES – (date) [Employer Surveys]
- GS – (date) [Graduate Surveys]

Standard V.A.1. or V.A.2. or V.A.3.

- Catalog pg – [describe]
- Fair Prac Form [Fair Practices Form]

Standard V.A.3. & V.C.

- Student Work Pol

Standard V.D.

- Student Record Verif Sheet

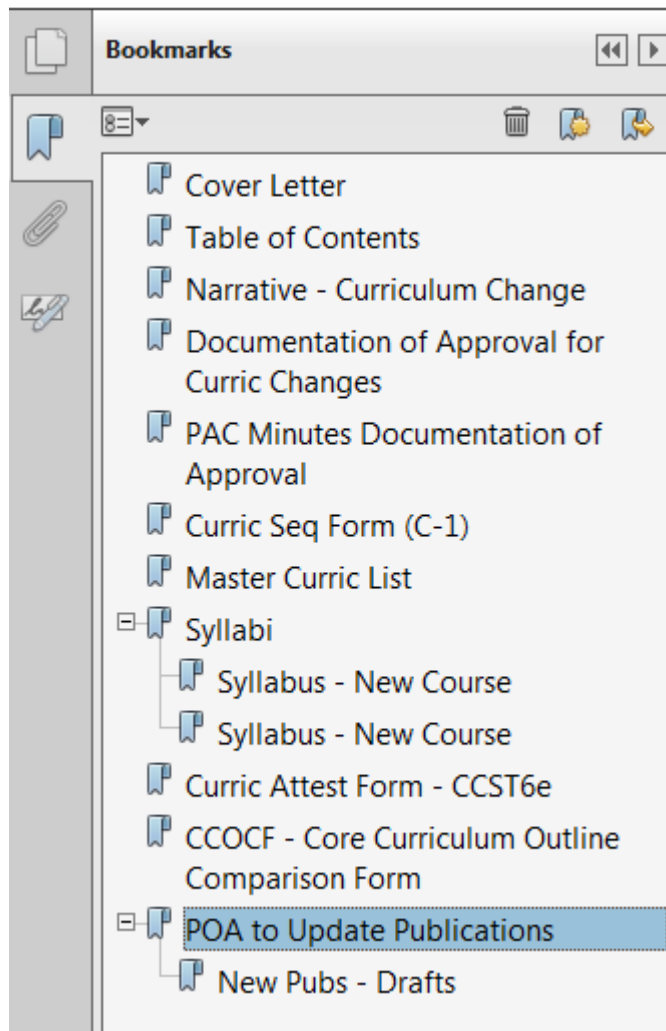
Standard V.E.

Standard V.F.

- Clinical Agreement: (Name of Facility)
- Clin Affil Attest Form – (Name of Affiliate)

Examples of an Appropriately Bookmarked Electronic Submission

Curriculum Change



Findings Response

Order of Documents

When compiling documents into a single seamless PDF for an ARC/STSA or CAAHEP Findings Letter response, the order of the documents should follow the order of the Standards and be as follows:

1. Cover letter with the name of the date of the submission, sponsoring institution, program name, address, and an explanation of the content and the title of the document(s) included in the PDF.
2. ARC/STSA Findings Letter
3. Bookmarked table of contents
4. Program's Narrative Response bookmarked by Standard [including number i.e. Standard III.A.]. Bookmark each Standard cited in the Findings Letter, then add sub-level bookmarks for documentation to demonstrate compliance [see step 4 under the Creating Bookmarks section of this document]. Sub-level bookmarks for supporting documentation should be labeled under each Standard.

See pg. 50 of the *Standards Interpretive Guide (SIG)* for more information.

The screenshot shows a PDF viewer interface with a document titled "Littleton Community College Response to ARC/STSA April 2, 2018 Findings Letter". The document is dated May 30, 2018, and is page 5 of 25. The left sidebar displays a bookmarks panel with the following structure:

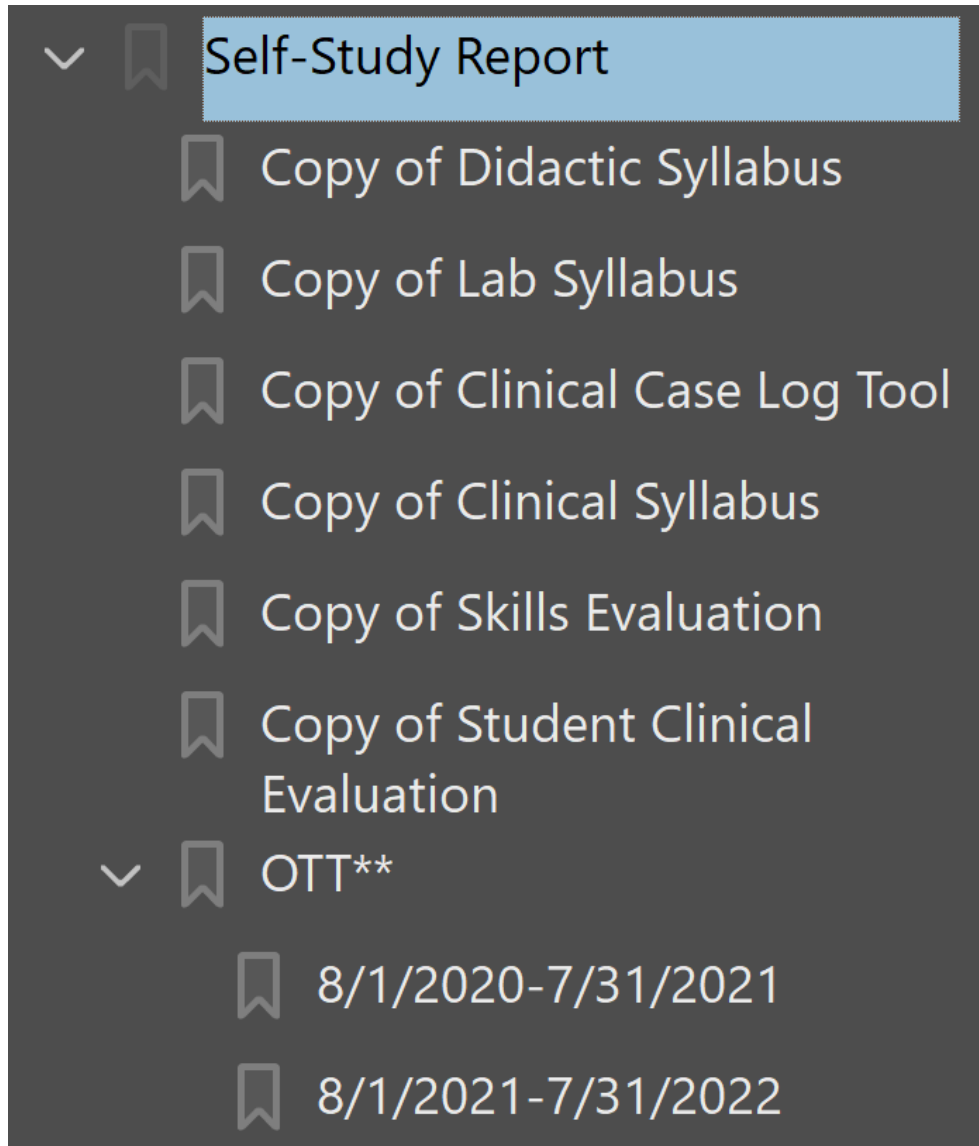
- Bookmarks
 - Cover Letter
 - ARC/STSA Findings Letter 04-02-18
 - Table of Contents
 - Standard II.B.
 - Narrative Response
 - ARC/STSA Plan of Action
 - PAC Minutes 4-30-18

Red annotations highlight specific parts of the document:

- A red box labeled "Bookmarks" points to the bookmarks sidebar.
- A red box labeled "Sub-Level Bookmarks" points to the "Narrative Response", "ARC/STSA Plan of Action", and "PAC Minutes 4-30-18" items.
- A red box labeled "Standard, Finding, and Request from Findings Letter" points to the "Standard II.B." section in the bookmarks sidebar.
- A red box labeled "Narrative Response" points to the "Narrative Response" item in the bookmarks sidebar.

The main content area shows the text of the findings letter, including the title, date, and page number. The text describes the program's response to the findings letter, mentioning the program's goals, learning domains, and the need for a detailed plan of action to increase attendance by all communities of interest. The text also mentions the ARC/STSA Plan of Action Form and the PAC Minutes from the Spring 2018 meeting.

Self-Study

A screenshot of a self-study report menu. The menu is displayed on a dark gray background. At the top, there is a blue header bar with the text "Self-Study Report". Below this, there is a list of items, each preceded by a bookmark icon. The items are: "Copy of Didactic Syllabus", "Copy of Lab Syllabus", "Copy of Clinical Case Log Tool", "Copy of Clinical Syllabus", "Copy of Skills Evaluation", "Copy of Student Clinical Evaluation", and "OTT**". The "OTT**" item is expanded, showing a sub-menu with two items: "8/1/2020-7/31/2021" and "8/1/2021-7/31/2022".

- Self-Study Report
 - Copy of Didactic Syllabus
 - Copy of Lab Syllabus
 - Copy of Clinical Case Log Tool
 - Copy of Clinical Syllabus
 - Copy of Skills Evaluation
 - Copy of Student Clinical Evaluation
 - OTT**
 - 8/1/2020-7/31/2021
 - 8/1/2021-7/31/2022

****If the program has multiple cohort anticipated completion dates during the Academic Year (AY) reporting period (8/1/20XX-7/31/20XX), bookmark each OTT using the cohort's anticipated completion date (i.e. Bookmark names for multiple cohorts: 8/1/2020, 9/8/2020, 1/22/2021, etc.)**

If only one cohort completion date per AY, use the AY for the bookmark name.