

Policy on the Assignment of Primary and Secondary Readers

Key to Changes: **Delete**, **Add**, **Explanation**

Proposed changes align with previously adopted changes in the *Policy on Conflicts of Interest*.

Cases to be considered by the Commission on Accreditation (COA) as a whole will be assigned to both a primary and a secondary reader. This procedure enables a division of labor and assures objectivity. It also provides for thoroughness, the opportunity for a second opinion, and a backup, given the unforeseen absence of the primary reader.

To assure objectivity, enhance fairness, and avoid conflicts of interest, primary and secondary readers will not be assigned to a particular institution in the following circumstances:

- Current service at an institution with the same denominational/fellowship affiliation
- Current service at an institution with the same geographical base of constituency
- Previous employment as faculty or staff within the past ten years
- Previous service as a board member within the past ten years
- Previous service as a ~~consultant or team member~~ **team evaluator** within the past five years
- **Previous service as an independent consultant within the past five years**
- Previous service as a reader (primary or secondary) for a meeting of the full COA within a two-year period
- Acceptance of substantive gifts or honoraria for self or spouse apart from scheduled fees during the accreditation process, including any appeals processes
- Previous attendance at or graduation from the institution being considered
- Submission of an application for employment to the institution within the past five years
- Any situation that could affect an individual's ability to be impartial

Commissioners will further agree to recuse themselves from consideration of any institution where they are aware of a potential conflict of interest. Recusal means that the Commissioner will declare a recusal before discussion begins, leave the table, and avoid participating in any discussion related to the institution or the decision that the COA makes relative to the institution under consideration. Only one reader will be assigned to committee deliberations.

Revised October 1990, October 1992, June 2014, **PROPOSED January 2023**