Comprehensive Accreditation Review

2023 ABHE Annual Meeting
THE COA REVIEW TIMELINE

• Submission of Self-Study Documents (Eight weeks prior to Visit)
• Team Visit (According to scheduled dates)
• Response to the Evaluation Visit Report (Six weeks to three months after receipt of the Team Report in COA Office)
• Interim Period before Review by the COA
• Interview with the COA
  • Institutions making a status change from Applicant-to-Candidate and Candidate-to-Initial Accreditation) will have representatives present
  • Established institutions that have a larger number of recommendations may also have representatives requested by the COA for interview
HOSTING A EVALUATION TEAM VISIT

• **Length of Team Visits**
  • Institutional = 2.5 days (with Team arriving night before Visit)
  • Programmatic = 1.5 days (with Team arriving night before Visit)

• **Most Team Visits occur on Tuesday-Thursday** (and this is our encouragement to all institutions) UNLESS it is simply not possible
## HOSTING A EVALUATION TEAM VISIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tues-Thurs Visit</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
<td>Team arrives, Executive session orientation (team only), Dinner with institution</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday</strong></td>
<td>Team arrives on campus in morning, Orientation to work room, Finalize interview schedule, Begin interviews, Review documents and files</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday pm</strong></td>
<td>Executive session to review initial findings, Plan adjustments for 2nd day of visit, Team group dinner on own, Writing in rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday</strong></td>
<td>Follow-up interviews, review of documents and files, writing in work room</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday pm</strong></td>
<td>Executive session to review findings, Formulate initial commendations, suggestions, recommendations, Team group dinner on own, Writing in rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday morning</strong></td>
<td>Team travels to campus, Final executive session in work room (optional), Team Chair and CSR meet with President, Team meets with administration for exit interview, Team departs for airport</td>
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HOSTING A EVALUATION TEAM VISIT

• **Areas of Evaluation (Usually one evaluator for each area of review)**
  - Administration (Standards 4, 5)
  - Academic (Standards 1, 2, 11)
  - Resources (Standards 3, 6)
  - Student Services (Standards 7, 8)
  - Faculty and Library (Standards 9, 10)

• **Group Meetings**
  - Administration (usually night before Visit start), Board, Faculty, Students, Public—all interviews (group and one-on-one) are determined by the Team (and the institution sets up meetings for the Team)
  - These meetings will have required no-shows (ie, no President with the Board; No Dean/CAO for the faculty, etc)
INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VISIT

• Transportation & Accommodations
  • Institution is responsible for arranging ground transportation, meals, and hotel stay
  • Ground Transportation
    • Rental van (normally)
  • Meals
    • Lunches = consider as working lunches (food at cafeteria or brought in); may be closed to all but Team
    • Evening meals (outside of meal with Administration) = Team only
  • Hotels
    • Business class hotel (or equivalent, depending on location of main campus) with billing to institution
      • Business Class = 3-star hotel with self-serve breakfast; onsite fitness (if possible)
    • Expectation/Requirement is a clean hotel room with a desk, internet, and private bath for each individual on the Team (i.e., six individual rooms)
INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VISIT

• Meeting Room(s)
  • Should plan for one room at the institution and one room at the hotel
    • Institutional meeting room = document library (if desired), internet, printer, shredder
• Amenities
  • A supply of snacks and beverages is usually recommended (in work room at institution and in hotel room)
    • Don’t underestimate how much water & coffee can be consumed by a Team (remember age dynamics of the Team)
    • Golden Rule approach is best one to use with this issue

• Financial Arrangements
  • Travel expenses are secured by the COA Office, and the Institution will receive the invoice from the COA Office (payment due in 30 days from receipt of invoice)
  • Flight to the institution are secured by each individual team member
  • Ground transportation and hotel expenses should be paid directly by the institution to the vendor
  • Hospitality Gifts = $50 maximum for whatever is given (college shirts, water bottles, mugs are most appropriate)
RESPONDING TO TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

• The overall document is known as the “Response to the Evaluation Visit Report” (RVR)

• The Evaluation Team Report addresses each Standard and each Essential Element
  • Executive Summary contains Commendations, Suggestions, and Recommendations
  • Recommendations MUST be addressed by the Institution with a written response
    • Read the narrative around the Recommendation(s) for clarity in determining concern of the Team
    • Do NOT underestimate the importance of this document (important document for the COA in making decisions related to status with the Commission)

• RVR
  • Should address each recommendation in writing (not including documentation)
  • Should anticipate 1-3 pages of narrative per recommendation (excluding documentation/exhibits)
RESPONDING TO TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **RVR Elements**
  - Identify and correct any factual errors in the Report (titles, dates, stats, statements of fact)
    - Opinion of the Team is not subject to a dispute of factual accuracy
  - Detail steps taken by the institution to eliminate the weaknesses/deficiencies identified by the Team as it relates to the Standards and/or Essential Elements (document with evidence)
  - Develop a detailed action plan (with a detailed timeline) where issues that remain unresolved will be brought into addressed/brought into compliance. Consider offering the answers to the “Interview Questions” (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How) as a good place to start!
  - Disputes with Team Findings = Produce the evidence that already exists and include that with the institution’s RVR
RESPONDING TO TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

• RVR Process
  • Commendations and Suggestions need not be addressed
  • RVR deadlines
    • Spring Visit = Due September 15
    • Fall Visit = Due six weeks after the Evaluation Visit Report is received in the COA Office
  • Evidence of completed task(s) and timelines for task(s) yet to be completed ARE major items leading to determinations by the COA
INTERVIEW WITH THE COA

• Who is to Interview?
  • Institutions seeking candidate status, initial accreditation, or when requested by the COA.

• Purpose
  • Update the Commission on progress made since the RVR submission (1-page summary update can be presented to the COA during the Interview)
  • Answer questions the COA may have regarding progress or action plans

• Specifics
  • CEO and two additional representatives may appear before the COA
    • Choose representatives that can provide clarity for the Commissioners (almost always related to the Recommendations in the Visit OR elements raised in the RVR; CFO for finance issues; CAO for faculty/assessment/curriculum issues; Board member for governance, etc.)
  • CEO offers brief opening statement (3-5 minutes)
    • Be factual; base statements in evidence provided (either in the RVR or in an update provided just before the interview)
  • Commissioners will ask questions specifically geared to issues of compliance/concern
KEEPING MOMENTUM FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

• Interim period of time between the submission of the RVR and the COA Interview/Review (which takes place each February at the COA Meetings)
  • Worthy strategy to continue to make improvements (keep a journal/list of improvements with the documentation to validate that the change has occurred and is placed in the Assessment Cycle)
  • Develop a spreadsheet of recommendations and the “fixes” that have been applied/still need to be applied
    • Items of concern should be included in the Institutional Planning Document and/or Institutional Assessment Document
      • If assessment data is able to be collected, that data should be presented to the COA at the interview
      • If no assessment data is available to demonstrate the improvement has been made and worked, it should be in the next Institutional Assessment Document
    • If there are elements still to be addressed, the answer to the “interview questions” should drive the information for the planned improvement(s)