

*Accreditation Commission for Programs*

*In Hospitality Administration*

**MANUAL FOR TEAM CHAIRS CONDUCTING A SITE VISIT**

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**INTRODUCTION**

In the evaluation process, the interaction between the Commission on Accreditation and a hospitality administration/management program can be summarized as follows.

1. The Program looks at itself and speaks to the Commission through its Self-Study Report.
2. A team of experienced peers, appointed by the Commission, appraises and advises the Program through an evaluation site visit team report.
3. The Program replies to the Site Visit Team Report in a written response addressed to the Commission.
4. The Commission, after considering the information derived from the preceding three steps, determines accreditation status. The Commission alone makes accreditation decisions.
5. The Program, as part of its ongoing evaluation and planning process, continues to consider and act on the results of its own Self-Study Report and the advice it has received.

Through this process, the Commission on Accreditation places primary emphasis on improving the quality of hospitality administration/management programs and emphasizes evaluation in terms of the objectives of each program considered.

In seeking accredited status, then, the Program accepts the obligation of engaging in a rigorous self-study process to clarify its specific objectives, to assess realistically its success in attaining them, and to develop means of increasing its educational effectiveness. A team of experienced colleagues visits the Program for an on-site evaluation based on the Self-Study Report. The Chair is a member of the team.

The team visit to the Program is important for two reasons.

1. It provides an opportunity to verify the information submitted in the Self-Study Report. The team members can derive additional data clarifying the written report, which enables them to probe more deeply on some issues and inquire about areas in programmatic life not adequately covered in the Self-Study Report.
2. It aims to stimulate growth and development in the Program. The awareness that a team of peers is going to be on-site to verify the Self-Study Report often induces a more critical self-examination. Further, the interchange of information and viewpoints and the raising of important questions and issues in interviews should inspire insights and encouragement in reassessing what has been done and in consideration of ideas that may enhance the Program.

Accreditation is measuring all programs by a uniform set of standards by making responsible judgments about the effectiveness of how educational programs meet these uniform set of standards. Your service as a team member will contribute significantly to this important work.

Your job as team chair, with the assistance of your fellow visiting team members, is to ensure that the Program visited receives the kind of educational audit that will:

1. Identify areas for constructive action by the Program;
2. Serve as a sound basis for a recommendation concerning accredited status to the Commission on Accreditation; and
3. Provide further validity for the evaluation and accreditation process.

Your responsibilities in this process begin well in advance of the team visit and extend beyond it. Both the Program’s and the Commission's accountability to the public depend upon the validity of the judgments your team makes based on these criteria, and your work as chair is a major factor in ensuring this validity. The Commission relies heavily on the work that you and your team members are about to undertake.

**BEFORE THE VISIT**

**I. Responsibilities**

1. Ensure that all team members complete the [ACPHA Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form](https://drive.google.com/open?id=12fFnjUmafGc2JSRx1o3FAQjCjvECFnO9). The form should be signed, scanned and sent to the ACPHA office at [info@acphacommission.org](mailto:info@acphacommission.org).
2. Introduce yourself to the Program via email and/or phone and confirm dates of the site visit.
3. Introduce yourself and make initial contact with team members.
4. Coordinate travel and lodging for team members.
5. Coordinate the itinerary for the accreditation visit.
6. Review and assign sections of the Self-Study Report to team members.
7. Request any additional information from the Program.
8. Coordinate work room location, documents, and technology needed.
9. Send team members the Site Visit Report template and any final or revised documents such as the finalized itinerary.

**II. Initial Communication with the Program**

1. As soon as a team has been selected, a letter will be sent from the Commission to the Program Administrator indicating the composition of the team and indicating that you as Team Chair will be calling to discuss arrangements for the visit. In conferring with the Program Administrator, take the opportunity to see that he/she understands how the team will operate and what it will need to work effectively. No elaborate or expensive arrangements should be made including welcome receptions or extravagant dinners. Plan carefully and keep things simple.
2. If during the initial communication with the Program concerns develop over the preparations for the visit, the Team Chair should immediately contact the Commission’s Executive Director to discuss the issue(s).
3. A workroom available for the team's use on the campus is required. Experience has shown that it is preferable to have the workroom in a secured location within the academic building where the Program being evaluated is housed. The workroom should be private, with adequate security for confidential documents of the team, and should have office supplies such as pads, pens, a stapler, paper clips, post it notes etc. for use by the team members. All supporting documents as stated in the Self-Study Report should also be located in this workroom unless the team agrees that some or all of the hardcopies are not necessary. It is best to have these supporting documents organized by each section of the Self-Study Report. Provisions should also be made for technical support including laptop computers with internet connectivity, though team members are welcome to bring their own device. At least one of the laptop computers should have access to a printer located in the workroom. Team members should also have access to a nearby copier.
4. Travel arrangements also need to be discussed with the Program Administrator. The Program should work with their travel agency to coordinate the travel of the visiting team. The cost of travel should be paid for directly by the Program. It is important to coordinate a plan that would have the least financial impact on the Program. Standard coach travel applies except when travel is over eight (8) hours in duration, then the program will be required to fly team members in business class. In addition, airport transportation and transportation between the hotel and the campus needs to be coordinated. It is most helpful if all team members can be at the host hotel by 3:00 pm on Sunday. Please note that these arrangements can fluctuate for international visits.
5. Arrangements for housing and meals are the responsibility of the Host Program. Each team member’s room and tax should be directly billed to the Program. In addition, the Team Chair should work with the Program to minimize out-of-pocket expenses to team members for meals. For example, if the hotel has a restaurant, team members should eat there so the charges can be directly billed to the Program.
6. The Team Chair and the Program Administrator jointly develop the site visit itinerary based on the [ACPHA Itinerary For Accreditation Visit Template](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1UkPMOpkmCRdrAWAVNj7MSzjv2jcG9tNu). It is crucial that the Team Chair ensure that the team is able to meet all constituencies in the Program and that no team member has scheduling conflicts. It is also important for the Team Chair to wrap up meetings by 4:00 pm each day to allow the team time for consultation with each other and to develop the evaluation report.
7. The Team Chair needs to request from the Program the following documentation:
   1. The completed Self-Study Report in Word format.
   2. All appendices referred to in the Self-Study.
   3. Support documentation that provides evidence of compliance with each standard area such as the Strategic Plan, Curriculum Development Plan, Assessment Plan, etc.
   4. All core course syllabi that are used to meet ACPHA Curriculum requirements.
8. All information provided must be in English. Information should be put into a cloud-based repository such as Dropbox, One Drive, Google Drive, etc. and all team members need to be given access.

**III. Initial Communication with the Site Visit Team**

1. As soon as you have adequate information about practical arrangements for the visit, you should communicate the details with your team members. This initial communication should provide them with an understanding of where they will be housed, how they will get there, the time and place of the first meeting, when they can expect to complete their work, and whatever other practical items you believe will be of help to them.
2. You should, at this time, begin to analyze the make-up of your team. Some may have previous experience as evaluators, while others may be serving as team members for the first time. All will have had some orientation, but levels of familiarity with Commission policies and procedures will vary. Therefore it is critical that you are thoroughly familiar with all ACPHA policies and materials. The Team Chair should assign sections of the Site Visit Report based on the team members areas of expertise and experience. Special consideration needs to be given to the sections of Planning, Curriculum, Assurance of Student Learning, and Instructional Resources as these areas are extremely comprehensive and challenging to evaluate. These sections, in particular, should be assigned to more experienced evaluators who have a thorough understanding of the content in these sections.
3. The Team Chair should keep an ongoing dialogue with the team members to ensure they are comfortable with their assigned sections and preliminary analysis of how the Program is meeting the standards.

**IV. Review of the Self-Study Report and Supporting Documentation**

1. The Program will forward to each team member no later than four weeks prior to the visit a hard copy of its completed Self-Study Report and other relevant descriptive materials. When you receive this material:
2. Read, analyze, and think about it right away. It is your primary source material and the focal point of discussions during the evaluation visit.
3. Please call the Commission office if you find the completed Self-Study Report seriously weak or shallow, or if you judge sections to be inadequate. There is no point in conducting the evaluation visit if the Program is not thoroughly prepared; the Commission relies on your judgment here, but the Commission Executive Director will make the final decision as to whether to proceed with or postpone the evaluation.
4. The completed Self-Study Report should provide a comprehensive description and a thorough in depth assessment of all aspects of the Program. As you study it, prepare a checklist for your use during the visit. Here are some guiding questions:
5. What else do you need to know about the Program?
6. At what points does the completed Self-Study Report need further clarification or interpretation?
7. Are there inconsistencies within the completed Self-Study that will need to be explored?
8. What are the apparent strengths and weaknesses of the Program? Is evidence about "outcomes" solid enough to support a judgment concerning the effectiveness of the Program in achieving its objectives?
9. Who are the people you will wish to interview?

* Please refer to the [ACPHA Itinerary For Accreditation Visit Template](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1UkPMOpkmCRdrAWAVNj7MSzjv2jcG9tNu) and the [List of Potential Questions](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Jbxnw676KmeJK-f2KURKn0ToAVPoG4mC/view?usp=sharing) that will give you some topics to discuss with constituents in the Program to obtain information for each of the nine standard areas.
* Remember there are nine standard areas that have criteria that must be evaluated to determine compliance.

1. Communicate with your team members again, confirming with them the sections of the Self-Study Report assigned and any special attention, but stressing the obligation of each to study the entire completed Self-Study Report thoroughly and thoughtfully.
2. Ask each team member to send electronically their sections written out in draft report format (Times New Roman 12 font) based on the documentation submitted by the Program to the Team Chair prior to the visit. Please stress with your team that there is very little time to write in the three day visit. Editing can be done on site based on the meetings with the Program’s constituents. First impressions can be modified or confirmed from the materials submitted in advance and validated through Program interaction while on site.

**DURING THE VISIT**

**V. Activities during the Site Visit**

* Initial on-site team meeting

1. The site team usually arrives on a Sunday afternoon as most visits begin on a Monday morning. The initial team meeting is pre-determined by the Team Chair and is typically held over dinner somewhere in close proximity to the accommodations of the site team.

2. This meeting allows for the site team to discuss their preliminary thoughts on the Program’s Self-Study Report and devise the strategy of their visit over the following three days. This meeting is solely for the team members and should not include members of the Program being visited.

* Program Meet and Greet

1. In the morning of the first day of the site visit, the team will have the opportunity to meet all of the key constituents involved with the Program.

* Interviews with College/University Administration

1. The entire site team will typically meet with either the President/Chancellor and/or Academic Provost regarding the program and the accreditation process.

1. The site team will typically meet with the Dean/Associate Dean of the School or College where the Program is housed regarding the Program and the accreditation process.
2. These meetings give the opportunity for collegial exchange regarding the Institution’s philosophy for the Program and the ACPHA accreditation process. This also allows administration to find out more about ACPHA and its processes.

* Interviews with all constituency groups that impact the Program. These individuals are clearly outlined in the [ACPHA Itinerary For Accreditation Visit Template](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1UkPMOpkmCRdrAWAVNj7MSzjv2jcG9tNu).
  1. Normally, every staff member associated with the Program should be interviewed and as many students as time permits. Group interviews may, under some circumstances, be both productive and timesaving. Conferences with graduates, employers, and other constituencies will be on a small sample basis. Further follow-up to larger numbers may be used to supplement findings from small samples, should the team members find this essential.
  2. The substance and form of interviews are, of course, matters of choice. One of the strengths of the evaluation process is the variety of approaches, backgrounds, and experience brought to it by team members. The Commission, however, expects that you will conduct your inquiries in the spirit of a professional peer rather than as an inquisitor. The visit should be an educational experience for both the Program staff and the visiting team. Even though all aspects of the Program are examined, the visit is not an investigation or a censorious inspection. No team member should start with an assumption that something must be found wrong with the Program. Instead, because the process is not only designed to ascertain whether the Program meets the standards of the Commission but also to help enhance the quality of the educational program, both the team and the staff should be interested in finding better solutions to problems the Program may have or alternatives that may improve the Program.
  3. Keep in mind as you talk with Program personnel that the Commission evaluates programs in terms of a reasonable measure of demonstrated achievement of their own stated objectives. Thus, the central question you must seek to answer is "Does it work?" That is, does a given procedure, curriculum, etc., function effectively to achieve the Program's objectives. Resist the natural tendency to compare the situation you are observing with one at your own institution or with what you have assumed to be "proper" because the norm is more familiar. This is particularly true with international programs as their educational system may vary in comparison to the United States Higher Education model. While your hosts may be interested in hearing about other patterns that are working well at your institution or others, their concern and yours is to concentrate on the local context and what is "working" there.
  4. It is important also not to let yourselves be drawn into debates on the relative merits of specific approaches to certain problems. As a representative of the Commission, you should be ready to make it clear that the Commission takes no position on such issues as class size, teaching load, etc., but is concerned about the central issue, the impact on the quality and effectiveness of a program's educational work with whatever arrangements or patterns have been adopted. This allows the team to take a more holistic versus prescriptive approach.
  5. Remember, in the course of your work, that a fair evaluation assesses strengths as well as weaknesses. Do not hesitate to praise noteworthy achievements and/or special potential you may see. In fact, if you should inadvertently give the impression that your only purpose is to uncover weaknesses, you can do more harm than good. The Program expects and deserves the assistance of honest constructive criticism, but to neglect the positive side of an evaluation can diminish both the usefulness and the validity of negative observations.
  6. As you pursue your responsibilities, leave time in your schedule to follow leads, collect impressions widely, check and recheck information adequately, and compare perceptions and patterns from and with all concerned. Keep careful notes, since before leaving the Institution the team will be required to develop their written evaluation report to present to the Program.
* Data Collection and Evidence Review
  1. The primary purpose of the site visit is to verify and confirm what is documented in the written Self-Study Report.
  2. Team members will actively engage in data collection and evidence review throughout the visit via the interview and meetings, classroom visits, and review of workroom material.
* Team Conferencing
  1. To whatever extent possible, team discussions during the visit can play a key role. In these discussions, you can pool your resources, stimulate and question each other, share impressions, and search and debate until the issues become clear and a team point of view emerges. By this method, rather than by voting, a team reaches consensus on major issues. Consensus does not, of course, preclude the possibility of significant differences of opinion on some points. Such differences will have to be included in an accurate report of the team's point of view. However, the Team Chair will make the final determination of all comments in the report.
  2. At the end of days one and two the site team should conference to assure that all aspects of the Program have been covered in relationship to the ACPHA Standards and to clarify the substance of the written evaluation report. At this meeting the Team Chair will review his/her summary of the team's major findings and suggestions to make sure that these are clearly and accurately stated. It is at this session that the team members agree on the major strengths and weaknesses of the Program. Your comments at this meeting will be of critical assistance in the development of the evaluation report.
* The [Site Visit Report](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_FQ8iUo9Fo8p9krKZ3Ce_Vn2OYdXogt2/view?usp=sharing)
  1. Each site team member will be responsible for writing the response to the standards in their assigned section.
  2. It is important that each team member write in clear and non-prescriptive manner. The Team Chair will give each team member instructions on flow and use of consistent verbiage, voice, and terminology. Responses must be thorough and clearly demonstrate the evidence of how the Program is or is not meeting each standard.
  3. The team must have a rough draft of the Site Visit Report for review at the conclusion of day two of the site visit. The full report is regarded as the product of the entire team and not any particular team member.
  4. Throughout your visit you will be noting strengths and weaknesses of the Program you are evaluating. At the final site team meeting, a consensus should be reached concerning the strengths and weaknesses that will be communicated to the Program and to the Commission.
  5. Avoid rhetorical questions, e.g., “The organization of the school requires the Program head to make all of the decisions. Is this really satisfactory?” Either raise direct concerns about the Program that seem troubling, e.g., “The organizational plan of the Program does not appear to provide for day-by-day decisions to be made by those who have this responsibility," or make a clear suggestion for change, e.g., “We suggest that the Program review its plan of organization to ensure that areas of responsibility and lines of authority are ordered in manageable and effective ways.”
  6. Avoid comments or suggestions related to personalities within the Program or Institution, e.g., 'The administrative style of the Program head is interesting and unconventional.” Avoid such comments even if they incorporate praise, e.g., "Professor X is doing an excellent job." The short period of the site visit does not allow for the team member(s) to arrive at any full knowledge of the activities of individuals within the Program or the institution, and assessment of individuals is in any event a difficult task. Comments and suggestions are best related to organizational elements, e.g., “There is good rapport between students and the school's administrative staff.”
  7. Avoid prescribing (as opposed to suggesting) specific solutions to problems, e.g., “The Program head is overworked and an associate should be appointed.” It is quite appropriate to identify problems, but the specific solution must be left to the Program or the Institution itself. Further, such specific prescriptions are the elements of advice most often confused with official recommendations and mistakenly interpreted by program or institutional personnel to be accreditation requirements.
  8. Do not forget that the identification of strengths is fully as important as pointing out things that have caused the team to have concerns. Unless both are taken into account in the Site Visit Report, it is easy for a program to make a change to meet a concern of the team and Commission only to find that the change has eroded an area of strength.
  9. Remember that the evaluation report is addressed to the Program, not to the Commission, so speak to and write for the Program. In doing so, remember also that you are writing for a large audience. Not only will faculty and administrative staffofthe Program be reading it, but other members of the faculty and administration within the Institution will be reading it as well.
  10. Further, in an era of heightened public interest and growing concern for consumer protection through transparency, it is likely that your report will be read and referred to by lay as well as professional parties unknown to the team or the Commission. The report should be scrupulously fair and factually accurate in describing the Program and its operations as they were observed by the team during its visit. Do not name individuals either in praise or in blame; if necessary, comment on the office, not the officeholder.
  11. Write the introductory section with particular care, using it to emphasize again the rationale of the entire evaluation process. The introduction is the place to bring the purposes of the site visit and the nature of the team’s recommendations into sharp focus. Among points you may wish to make or comment upon are: the quality and thoroughness of the Program’s Self-Study Report; its value, along with your team’s report, as a reference document and basis for ongoing self-study, planning, and development; the importance of the Program exercising its own judgment and initiative in responding to the team’s recommendations, which are offered in the spirit of helpfulness and not as panaceas; the opportunity that remains for the Program to respond to your report as a further dimension of the evaluation process.
  12. In the body of the report, assess the Program’s concept and understanding of its task, the extent to which it is meeting its responsibilities, the solidity of the evidence it has presented regarding its achievement of its objectives, and the probability of its being able to continue to achieve them. Be scrupulously fair and balanced in praise as well as in criticism, and do not forget to mention what the Program is doing well. A good evaluation acknowledges both strengths and weaknesses.

13. The team’s response to each standard in the Site Visit Report should always use the following terms:

* **Strengths** – A program should be commended for those aspects of its life that are considered by the team to be especially valuable and that need to be emphasized both to commend and to make clear that these are things that should not be permitted to weaken as changes occur. ***A strength may be used only when a standard has been met.***
* **Suggestions** – A suggestion is one that offers, for consideration by the Program, a course of action the team believes would contribute to the improvement of educational quality, even though such action is not necessary to comply with the commission’s standards. It must be understood that these suggestions are advisory only. ***A suggestion may be used only when a standard has been met.***
* **Concerns** – Concerns are aspects of a program life that the team believes requires major attention. Some of these may currently be affecting adversely the quality of the educational program. Others may have the potential for adverse effects. ***A concern must be used when a standard has not been met.***
* **Recommendations** – Recommendations are developed from the team’s concerns. A recommendation indicates that in the team’s professional judgment that certain conditions so affect the Program’s ability to meet the standards that these conditions must be changed. Recommendations to alter such conditions are not just advice because they bear substantively on the issue of accredited status. ***A recommendation must be used when a standard has not been met.***

14. It is important to note that when the team believes there is no evidence to support a standard, the team must clearly use the term **“*Concerns”*** followed by a clearly worded response as to why the Program is not meeting the standard. Next, the team must also use the term ***“Recommendations”*** followed by a clearly, non-prescriptive response as to how the Program can meet the standard.

15. The terms “***Strengths***” and “***Suggestions***” can be used in the team’s response throughout the report as needed and appropriate where standards are met. The same applies: state the term and then the team’s response.

16. The format and order for the response **MUST** be as follows:

* **Standard is stated.**
  + Team response to how the Program is or is not meeting the standard is stated. Make sure to state the evidence you found to support your response.
  + **Strengths**: State the strength(s) that the team found for the Program within the particular standard if needed.
  + **Suggestions**: State the suggestion(s) that the team is giving the Program within the particular standard if needed.
  + **Concerns**: If a standard is not met, state why the Program is not meeting the standard.
  + **Recommendations**: When a standard is not met, offer non-prescriptive options on how the Program could meet the standard.
  + Team **MUST** state either:
  + **Standard met**
  + **Standard not met**

17. Check your report to make sure that it:

* Responds to the Self-Study Report. Your report may touch upon matters not included in the Self-Study Report, but under no circumstances should a program be able to say that the evaluation team paid little or no attention to the Self-Study Report.
* Concentrates on fundamentals. The Site Visit Report needs not touch on every aspect of the Program. Use your report for discussion of significant achievements and critical problems; do not nitpick.
* Gives full recognition to the fact that a program knows its own problems and has solutions on the way. It is unfair to the Program not to recognize actions already taken to strengthen itself.

18. Check your report also to be sure that you have **not**:

* Written in a highly prescriptive tone. Team recommendations are suggestions offered by colleagues, not directives or prescriptive solutions to problems.
* Named individuals, either in praise or in blame.
* Cited the formulas or requirements of other accrediting agencies, either in praise or in criticism.
* Advanced as solutions to problems based on your own educational theories or those of other team members.

19. Although each member of the team is responsible for preparing a draft of the Site Visit Report dealing with his/her areas of responsibility during the visit, you are not limited by their written reports. Your job is neither an editorial nor a cut-and-paste task; your responsibility is to produce a well-organized, coherent document. Be sure to include all major points made in your oral report. You must honestly reflect the views of the team, indicating any significant differences of opinion, including your own, but do not identify individuals.

* The Exit Briefing

1. It is imperative that the tone and content of the oral version of the team’s Site Visit Report be consistent with the written version that will be later sent to the Program. The oral report should leave no doubt about what standards were met and not met. It may be beneficial to provide a list of the standards by section for those attending the briefing as it will save time and will allow those attending to focus on what is being said. It also allows those in attendance to take notes and for clarification purposes.
2. The oral Site Visit Report may be interactive in nature. You may draw attention to the strengths of the Program and be specific on the standards that were not met and why they were not met. The Program may ask questions as to how to go about meeting the standards, and the team can choose to offer collegial recommendations. The Program needs to understand what they need to do in order to be in compliance with ACPHA standards. They will have full opportunity later to respond to the Site Visit Report before it is considered by the Commission.

**VI**. **Management of the Site Visit Team**

1. Your chief concern during the visit is with the team's understanding of its task, its concentration on things that matter, its attitude, and its unity. It is critical that the Team Chair as well as the team members are properly groomed and dress in business attire. Keep the team relaxed and informal in their relations with each other and with Program personnel. You may have to take over a particular section in an emergency or quietly supplement the work of a team member who proves inadequate, but keep yourself free for your main function: to help your group function as a team, each assuming special responsibilities but contributing to the formation of a final team judgment on the Program as a whole.
2. Be sure that the team is, and remains, properly oriented. They must approach their task as colleagues, fair and responsible observers, not as "inspectors.” They must avoid the trivial and remember that a fair evaluation notes strengths as well as weaknesses. If their aim is only to find faults and weaknesses or to compare everything with their own programs or institutions, they will do more harm than good. You must keep team discussions firmly in the context of your major task: looking for solid evidence of the degree to which the particular program is achieving ACPHA standards. If the evidence is not there, try to discover why and discuss what can be done about it.
3. A preliminary informal meeting with your team (usually at the hotel) should be held prior to any meeting with program representatives. This meeting enables you to get acquainted with your colleagues, to emphasize the need for approaching their work as guests and colleagues, to discourage dogmatic attitudes and/or the tendency to compare what they find with “things back home” or “the way we do it at my university is ...” Remind the team of the confidential nature of all evaluation materials, conferences, and conclusions.
4. A major strength of the evaluative process is the work of the team, pooling resources, stimulating and questioning each other, searching and arguing until points are clear rather than reaching decisions individually or by vote. Most teams work informally and reach decisions by consensus. It will pay for you to spend considerable time in team conferences. Be careful, however, not to let team meetings last beyond a reasonable hour at night. Set a closing hour for evening sessions and stick to it.

**VII**. **Management of the Process**

1. During the site visit, talk with as many people as you can to get the feel of the Program and the Institution. All team members should be present at the initial meet and greet, meeting with the administration, the wrap-up meeting with the Dean/Program Director, and the exit briefing. For all other meetings, individual team members will individually meet necessary constituents for their assigned sections. During all meetings, try to get a cross-sectional view of the Program. Take careful notes continually, for you are going to write a report that many people will read with close attention.
2. Organize team conferences carefully knowing in advance what you want to accomplish each time. Do not dominate discussion, but give firm leadership. Call for brief reports and observations from each team member and encourage discussion, but insist that everyone stick to the point.
3. Ideally, there should be consensus on all major issues. At the final team session, review the proposed content of the entire Site Visit Report. Summarize your view of the team's findings and recommendations; make sure you understand each other. Insist that no team member leave before this summary conference. Getting the team's first report is of primary importance because you must meet the deadline for completing the Site Visit Report. Emphasize again at this time the confidential nature of all evaluation materials, conferences, and conclusions. The team should understand clearly that its recommendation regarding accreditation action is not to be communicated to the Program.
4. During the site visit exit interview, you will present an oral preview of the Site Visit Report. You may present the entire oral preview yourself, or you may call on team members to address certain sections in it according to your preference. The entire report should be read to the Program during the site visit exit interview. You should allow for some time after the presentation of the evaluation report for clarification, questions, and discussion. The purpose of this time is not for the Program to debate, but rather understand the site team findings. As Team Chair it is your role to defend and support the team findings as stated in the evaluation report. The team is under no obligation to change any of comments that the Program may dispute. You will find the site visit exit briefing one of the toughest and yet most important aspects of your job as Team Chair. It is not a simple courtesy call. You must present an exact summary of the Site Visit Report you have developed.
5. It is imperative that the tone and content of the oral version of the team’s Site Visit Report be consistent with the written version of the evaluation report that will be later sent to the Program. The oral Site Visit Report should leave no doubt about what standards were met and not met. It may be beneficial to provide a list of the standards by section for those attending the briefing as it will save time and will allow those attending to focus on what is being said. It also allows those in attendance to take notes and for clarification purposes.
6. The oral report may be interactive in nature. You may draw attention to the strengths of the Program and be specific on the standards that were not met and why they were not met. The Program may ask questions as to how to go about meeting the standards, and the team can choose to offer collegial recommendations. The Program needs to understand what they need to do in order to be in compliance with ACPHA standards.

**AFTER THE VISIT**

**VIII. Preparation of the Final Site Visit Report**

1. The Team Chair will send the draft of final report electronically to team members immediately after the exit interview for any final minor edits needed (should be mainly grammatical). The team returns any edits to the Chair in red within three days. The Team Chair keeps the updated copy of the report.
2. Once this is completed, the Team Chair will immediately send an electronic copy of the draft report to the ACPHA Office at [info@acphacommission.org](mailto:info@acphacommission.org). This should be completed no later than five business days from exit interview.
3. The ACPHA Executive Director will review the report and address any concerns regarding the site team report directly with the Team Chair within five business days. If necessary the Team Chair will address any of the concerns immediately and make any necessary revisions.
4. The Team Chair will complete and email a [letter](https://drive.google.com/file/d/150HuHBcbOO6_RdB6MNSzruOZSvVaIOGm/view?usp=sharing) to the Program Chair/Coordinator/Director to thank them for the visit. At this point, the team members have completed their work.
5. The Team Chair must inform team members that all documents provided by the program (i.e., self-study report, supporting documents, etc.) that have been used by the team during the evaluation process must be shredded. At this point, the Team Chair is officially finished with the site visit.
6. The ACPHA Office will email a letter outlining the next steps along with the final Site Visit Report to the Program. This should be completed no later than 14 days from the exit briefing.
7. The Program will respond to the Site Visit Report as explained in the formal response letter. This information should be sent electronically to the ACPHA office within the timeframe designated in the letter. Any questions should be directed to the Executive Director, not to the team.
8. The Program’s response becomes part of the official record to be considered along with the Site Visit Report during the Commission review.

**IX. Commission Follow-up**

1. Site visit reports are scheduled for review and discussion by the Commission at one of its regular meetings during the year.
2. Two Commission members who have been designated as reviewers take the responsibility for initiating the discussion of the site visitreport and its findings. They will have read your team’s Site Visit Report and the Program’s Response Report. All members of the Commission will have read your Site Visit Report. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Commission will go into executive session to make its decision on the Program under consideration. The Program Administrator will be notified (usually within two weeks of the Commission meeting) of the decision by a letter from the Chairperson of the Commission.
3. The Commission's action will be completed as follows:
4. The Program speaks to the visiting site team by means of its Self-Study Report.
5. The visiting site team, on behalf of the Commission, reacts to the Program through its Site Visit.
6. The Program responds to the Site Visit Report in a post-visit response report directed to the Commission.
7. The Commission then addresses the Program through its action regarding accreditation, basing its decision on information gained in the first three phases.
8. The Commission continues its interaction with the Program between full-scale evaluation visits. It requires annual reports, and it may request special reports at its discretion. In some instances, it may instruct the Commission staff to review a problem area with a program at stated intervals and to send special visitors through a focused site visit if appropriate. The Commission at times decides to defer action after a site visit and/or to require periodic progress reports on specific areas of concern. These reports may be followed in some cases by special visits focusing on designated issues or problem areas.
9. Once the Commission has rendered its decision on the Programs accredited status your responsibilities and those of your team have been fully discharged. If a program should have questions thereafter about any part of the evaluation process, they should be directed to the Commission office.

**X. Expenses**

1. Expenses for meals and lodging, and travel are borne by the Program, so please be mindful of your choices.
2. Out-of-pocket expenses should be entered on expense vouchers or on forms required by the Institution visited and forwarded to the Program Administrator.

**XI. Emergencies**

1. If emergencies arise at any time during your assignment, telephone a staff member at once. Be sure you have appropriate ACPHA contact information before departing for your site visit.