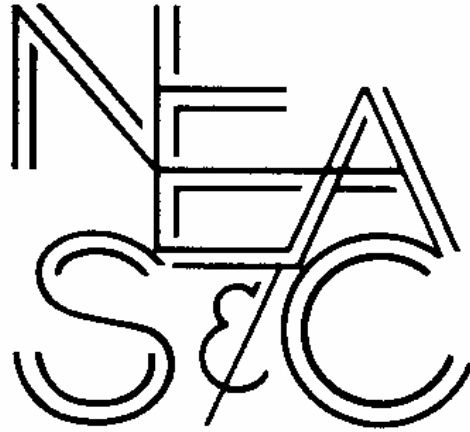


# Focused Visit Guide



**NON-DEGREE  
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
AT THE  
TECHNICAL OR CAREER LEVEL**

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# MATERIALS

## THE FOLLOWING COMMISSION DOCUMENTS WILL BE NECESSARY FOR COMPLETING A FOCUSED VISIT REPORT:

- Focused Visit Guide
- Most recent edition of the Non-Degree Postsecondary Accreditation Handbook containing
  - Commission's Policies and Procedures
  - Standards of Membership
- Most recent decennial evaluation report
- Reports and letters of notification since the most recent decennial evaluation

# FOCUSED VISIT GUIDE

## NON-DEGREE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AT THE TECHNICAL OR CAREER LEVEL

The Commission on Technical and Career Institutions mandates as a matter of policy that all of its accredited Institutions at the secondary and postsecondary level must undergo a focused visit no later than five years following a decennial or initial accreditation visit.

The institution bears the responsibility for preparing a focused visit report to be distributed to the Commission office and to members of the focused visit team no later than 30 calendar days prior to the date of the on-site visit by the team.

The **purpose** of the Focused Visit Report and the ensuing site visit is to inform the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions of significant developments and progress made by the institution since its most recent decennial on-site visit to include any progress reports or other actions required of the institution by Commission policy or specific action.

The institution's Focused Visit Report should be organized in the following manner:

### PART ONE

The staff and administration are requested to report on the continuing substantial compliance of the institution with the Commission's **Standards of Membership** as they are stated when the report is written. The institution should note any significant changes that may have occurred since the last accreditation review. Additionally, the institution should review the Commission's **Substantive Change Policy** and report any such changes.

### PART TWO

The institution must respond to those **Areas of Concern and/or Recommendations** identified in its most recent decennial accreditation evaluation report. The staff of the institution is to comment directly and in detail on action taken concerning each area identified and any plans that exist for future action. We suggest that a grid format should be prepared which clearly states each area of concern and/or recommendation and the action taken or planned for the future in sufficient detail to assure the visiting team and the Commission that progress is being made.

### PART THREE

The institution responds specifically and in detail to the recommendations made by the Commission in its one or more letters of notification to the institution since its last decennial visit and as a result of Commission deliberations on the accredited status of the institution. It is not necessary to duplicate the institution's response to those recommendations and concerns dealt with in Part Two. However, the institution should clearly state the location of the response if it appears in Part Two.

## **SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

Copies of the most recent school publications describing the institution and its programs; an organizational chart listing both positions and the names of those in the positions. The institution should feel free to provide any additional supporting material to Parts 1-3 as it sees fit.

## **COPIES**

A copy of both the institution's focused visit report and supporting material should be sent to the chairperson of the visiting team, to all team members, and one copy to the Commission Director no later than 30 calendar days prior to the focused site visit.

## **COST**

A fee will be charged to the institution in anticipation of the focused visit. That fee will be calculated at half the cost of the visited institution's annual Association dues as set for the year of the visit. The fee will be in addition to the dues. Additionally, the institution will be expected to pay the costs of travel, room and board incurred by the visiting team and calculated at rates set by the Association's Board of Trustees. The institution will reimburse team members directly unless prior arrangements with the Commission have been made.

## **TEAM SIZE**

Commission experience shows that a focused visit should be as long as two and one-half days. The team could be as small as three members but could be as large as five depending upon the complexity of the report and the visit. The Commission will consider requests for a larger team only for exceptional reasons.

## **PART TWO**

### **STATUS OF VISITING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**NOTE: Begin each Standard or Educational Component on a new page.**

**Standard: Mission**

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

## **PART THREE**

**NOTE: The following “sample” recommendations are taken from the recommendations included in the sample notification letter on pages 6-8.**

### **RESPONSES TO COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. There is a need to assure college-wide support for the College’s planning and assessment process. We recommend that the College create an infrastructure to assure that the planning and assessment process is professionally implemented and managed.

Response:

2. There are apparently gender-equity concerns regarding the student population, as well as in promotion and hiring, particularly in administrative positions. Thus the College should undertake a review of such matters and take whatever action seems appropriate to resolve such issues.

Response:

3. A review of policies and procedures dealing with off-campus programs should be ongoing. Concerns include: academic quality control, student support services, and the quality standards of facilities.

Response:

4. There is a lack of clarity in the College’s organizational chart as to how it relates to its Board of Trustees, its President and its Advisory Council. We recommend that some description of the respective responsibilities of each party be codified.

Response:

5. The College needs to develop a mechanism to ensure that publications consistently provide accurate, complete and clear information regarding program objectives.

Response:

## **SAMPLE NOTIFICATION LETTER**

DATE

INSTITUTION

I write to inform you of deliberations of the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions at its \_\_\_\_\_, 2007 meeting, at which time the Commission reviewed the report of its decennial visiting committee dated \_\_\_\_\_, 2006, and voted continued accreditation for \_\_\_\_\_ with a Five-Year Focused Visit in the Fall 2011. The Commission's decision to continue accreditation confirms substantial compliance with the accreditation standards and does not require further action by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges Board of Trustees.

The 2007 New England Association of Schools and Colleges Membership Roster indicates 19\_\_ as the date of initial accreditation and 2006 as the date of the most recent comprehensive review.

The Commission noted, during its deliberations, the following commendations:

1. The College prepared a model self-study.
2. The College has enjoyed considerable growth, both physically and programmatically, since the last decennial visit. The hard work by the administration and faculty, which resulted in such growth, is commendable.
3. The well constructed, well designed and well maintained campus.
4. The students at the College benefit from being taught by a dedicated and well-qualified faculty.

The Commission referred to many other commendations in the evaluation report during its deliberations. It found a healthy college on the verge of excellence, with faculty, administrative staff and students working well together to the benefit of students.

The Commission focused on several visiting committee recommendations that are of particular concern and to which the college should pay particular attention as it strives to reach excellence. These recommendations are:

(INSTITUTION)

Date

Page \_\_\_

1. There is a need to assure college-wide support for the College's planning and assessment process. We recommend that the College create an infrastructure to assure that the planning and assessment process is professionally implemented and managed.
2. There are apparently gender-equity concerns regarding the student population, as well as in promotion and hiring, particularly in administrative positions. Thus the College should undertake a review of such matters and take whatever action seems appropriate to resolve such issues.
3. A review of policies and procedures dealing with off-campus programs should be ongoing. Concerns include: academic quality control, student support services, and the quality standards of facilities.
4. There is a lack of clarity in the College's organizational chart as to how it relates to its Board of Trustees, its President and its Advisory Council. We recommend that some description of the respective responsibilities of each party be codified.
5. The College needs to develop a mechanism to ensure that publications consistently provide accurate, complete and clear information regarding program objectives.

The previous is an attempt to highlight points of discussion during Commission deliberations and no way subordinates other valid visiting committee recommendations contained in the Report of the Visiting Committee. The evaluation report contains many other suggestions that could improve the quality of programs offered by \_\_\_\_\_ and should also give the faculty and administration clear insight as to how others perceive the total operation of the college and the quality of the educational process.

The next scheduled evaluation for \_\_\_\_\_ is the mandated Fifth-Year Focused Visit. The \_\_\_\_\_ staff and administration should prepare for that focused visit in the Fall 2011. The college should file its focused visit report with the Commission office by September 15, 2011, but no later than 30 days prior to the evaluation. Enclosed for your information is the Commission's current document developed as a procedural guide for fifth-year focused visits. Should you have questions on this review procedure, do not hesitate to contact this office.

There are costs associated with any focused visit; currently those costs include a fee calculated at half your institution's dues at the time of the visit. It is also expected that the institution will assume all costs in support of the focused visiting committee as you do for any

(INSTITUTION)

Date

Page \_\_\_

visiting committee. It is anticipated that the focused visiting committee will consist of no more than 3 or 4 people and last 2½ days.

We sincerely hope that our continuing accreditation relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ assists you in improving your institution's ability to serve its students and its region with strong and effective educational programming.

Sincerely,

Paul Bento

PB/co

Enclosures

c: \_\_\_\_\_, Commission Chair  
\_\_\_\_\_, Visiting Committee Chair