

FOCUSED VISIT REVIEWS

ROLE OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND EVALUATORS

The leadership of the chairperson for a focused visit is of the same critical importance as that expected during a comprehensive review.

In many respects, the policies and procedures governing a focused visit are similar to those governing comprehensive evaluations. There are, however, a number of significant differences, including the following:

- The size of the team.
- Focused evaluations are two and one-half days.
- The total institution is not evaluated; rather, progress is reviewed in terms of both the most recent on-site decennial visit and the Commission's letter(s) of notification.
- The preparation for the on-site visit is in the form of a focused visit report on issues identified during and subsequent to the last review, as well as a report on any recent developments. (See Commission document **Format for Focused Visit Reports**.)

It is recommended that the team chairperson visit the institution prior to the scheduled focused visit. It is his/her responsibility to contact the chief executive officer of the host institution to be sure that all appropriate arrangements have been made to include the following:

- hotel accommodations
- materials to be forwarded to each team member
- any unusual travel requirements
- the mailing of the focused visit report at least 30 calendar days prior to the team's arrival

The team chairperson should also write to team members to inform them of preliminary arrangements and receive from each team member an **Evaluator Experience Summary Form** identifying specific areas of competence and interest that should be an assistance in making assignments for the on-site visit.

It is expected that team members will carefully examine all materials prior to the on-site visit.

ORGANIZATION OF THE VISIT

Team members are expected to arrive during the late afternoon on the day prior to the two-day visit. It is expected that the team chairperson will inform members of the team as to the expected time of arrival and the scheduled time for an organizational meeting.

- The chairperson will review specific plans, establish final team assignments, and be certain that team members understand their responsibilities for writing the various

sections. Team members should be encouraged to approach their work informally and as colleagues rather than inspectors.

- The chairperson will also review in detail the most recent letter of notification and the Commission's expectations of progress. The chairperson may at that time wish to encourage an open exchange of preliminary reactions to the progress report, and team members may wish to share their analyses of materials forwarded. It is important, however, to guard against any prior conclusions and any attempt to write the report prior to the on-site visit.
- The chairperson should make clear that the Commission does not take a position on certain issues unless they affect compliance with **Standards of Membership** or adherence to the **Eligibility Requirements**. Included among these issues might be the following:
 - Collective Bargaining
 - Academic Freedom
 - Due Process
 - Affirmative Action

Remember, team members are not charged with enforcing government regulations. The responsibilities of team members are to evaluate, to recommend, and to advise.

DURING THE VISIT

Because the team visit involves only two full days, team members should be careful to establish a tentative time table with individual interviews in mind. Every effort should be made to spend time with representative members of the faculty, students, and governing board.

Team members should schedule enough time to draft reports based on their individual assignments. While the team chairperson writes the final focused visit report, there is great reliance on comments, ideas, and rough drafts submitted by team members. Those who author the documents should remember that focused visit reports are intended for a large audience, to include the Commission, the affected institution, and any public use the institution may wish to make of the findings. The bottom line is, has the institution's staff addressed appropriately those Areas of Concern and Recommendations most recently identified by the Commission and/or its evaluators?