Accreditation Team Leader Certification

Part 1B

2021 COE Annual Meeting | Sandy Elliott and Myra West

In this Session.......

- Let’s Talk Programs
- Conducting the Team Visit
- Team Report
- Final Tasks for the Team Leader
Let’s Talk Programs

Occupational Programs

An “occupational program” is one that prepares a student for employment or job advancement. Occupational programs can be of any length, from a 40-hour phlebotomy program to a 2,000-hour dental hygiene program. The term “short program” has no meaning with COE. Whether the school calls it a “course” or a “program”, if it imparts job knowledge and skills and prepares the student for employment or job advancement, it is an “occupational program” in the eyes of the Council. This includes “job upgrade training”—educational activities or experiences that are designed to enhance existing knowledge and skills and that are offered with the goal of providing persons in specific occupations with the credentials, knowledge and skills needed for career advancement.

All occupational programs at the institution that have enrolled adult students within the past 12-month period must be listed on the Postsecondary Educational Programs chart in the COE Candidate Application. If students are enrolled in the XYZ Program at 600 clock hours, the Postsecondary Educational Programs chart must show the XYZ Program at 600 clock hours. Public institutions that offer high school programs should also include on the Postsecondary Educational Programs chart any program in which an adult student may be enrolled.

The list of occupational programs appearing on the Postsecondary Educational Programs chart is in no way related to federal (Title IV) student financial aid. It does not matter if a program is or is not Title IV-eligible; if it is an adult occupational program—of any length—it is included on the Postsecondary Educational Programs chart.

What programs are NOT occupational programs? Adult literacy or GED prep; ESL (although Vocational ESL programs are considered occupational programs); industry contract training; “life-enrichment” courses unrelated to a specific occupation; licensure or certification test preparation courses; and individual courses that may impart a specific skill or knowledge, but not enough to prepare the student for employment (such as Microsoft Word, or Turbo-Tax). It also does not include “continuing occupational education”—educational activities or experiences designed to assist in the development of knowledge and skills with the goal of maintaining one’s current professional occupation. Participants in continuing education are assumed to have previously attained a basic level of education, training or experience in the occupational area in which they are enrolling.

Still uncertain if a program is occupational? Ask yourself: “If a student successfully completes this program, will he or she be eligible for employment or job advancement based on the skills and knowledge learned in the program?” If the answer is “yes” it is an occupational program.
More on Programs: Modes of Delivery

Instructional Delivery Methods

- DISTANCE EDUCATION: a formal educational process in which instruction occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place; may be synchronous or asynchronous; may employ correspondence study, audio, video or computer technologies.
  - Traditional Programs: all bricks and mortar
  - Hybrid Programs: less than 50% of coursework available via distance
  - Distance Education Programs: 50% or more of required instruction available via distance education delivery methods

*An institution must utilize a campus-based instructional delivery system with at least 50% of the institution’s total FTE being derived from enrollments in traditional (bricks and mortar) programs.

More on Programs: Work-Based Activities

Structured learning activities conducted in supervised work settings external to the institution or in a setting that involves the public (for example: clients who are served by the institution in cosmetology clinical or automotive technology settings) that are components of educational programs (e.g., externships, internships, clinical experiences, industrial cooperative education, and similar activities. These activities must be planned with at least two objectives:

- To provide students with the opportunity to develop and apply a “real-world” work experience using the knowledge and skills they attained in their program of study; and

- To provide the institution with objective input from potential employers or customers of program graduates.
Designating Course Prep (Homework) Hours to Supplement Federal Financial Aid

In 2011 the U.S. Department of Education (ED) developed a method for supplementing a student’s financial aid award by counting unsupervised out-of-class homework (or “course prep”) hours and thereby increasing a program’s financial aid credit hours. To qualify for this additional financial aid award, an institution must submit a Program Modification application to the Council for each program it desires to be eligible. The Program Modification application shows the course prep work assigned for each course in a designated program and estimates the number of hours the assigned homework will require. The Council staff will review the application, approve the proposed homework hours, and add the “course prep” hours to the program’s listing on the institution’s Approved Programs List in MyCouncil. According to the ED, the assigned homework must support the learning objectives of the course; the homework must be performed out-of-class and submitted to the instructor for evaluation; the homework must be graded and comprise a portion of the student’s final grade for the course; and the institution must regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the course prep work in achieving the program’s learning objectives.

To be approved by the Council for course prep hours, the program must be a non-degree program listed in credit hours. Associate degree programs and programs approved by the Commission in “clock hours” are not eligible for program modification according to federal regulations. While the institution may assign as many homework hours for a course that it determines to be appropriate, the ED will allow no more than 25% of a course’s in-class hours to be counted as course prep hours.

Once the Council has approved a Program Modification application and designated COE-approved course prep hours, the institution is responsible for retaining records of the graded homework. The Council suggests that homework be saved at least through quarter or semester following the term in which the homework was performed. In other words, the school should retain homework records for a course taken in Fall Semester 2017 at least through Spring Semester 2018.

During a COE accreditation visit, a team may request to review the homework records for programs where course prep hours have been awarded. In these cases, the team may request a copy of the Program Modification application submitted to the Council for a program. The application will indicate the homework assignments approved for the program. However, a copy of the application may not be necessary. The COE team members should verify that: (1) the homework supports the learning objectives of the course; (2) the homework is graded; (3) the homework grade is a component of the student’s final grade for the course; and (4) the institution regularly evaluates course prep assignments and their effectiveness in achieving a program’s goals and objectives.

Vocational English-As-A-Second-Language Program

A Vocational English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) Program is a stand-alone program that is limited to persons already possessing occupational competencies who would be employable if they could demonstrate adequate English language skills. The program consists solely of English as a second language courses and must meet the following requirements:

a. The program must meet the objectives and criteria required of all COE-approved educational programs.

b. The institution must admit only students who need instruction in English to be able to use the knowledge and skills that they already possess in order to obtain employment.

c. The institution must demonstrate that students enrolled in the ESL program possess job skills, as evidenced by documentation such as credentials, test scores, job experience, or verification of skill competencies by a third party.

d. The institution accepts the responsibility for placement assistance upon graduation in compliance with COE placement requirements.

e. The institution must submit student achievement data to verify completion rates, placement rates, and, if applicable, licensure exam pass rates, for all students enrolled in Vocational ESL programs.

Vocational English-As-A-Second-Language Programs must be included on the list of programs.

Conversely, ‘Avocational’ English-As-A-Second-Language programs (or ‘stand-alone’ ESL programs) are those English language programs that enroll members of the community who are interested in learning the language for purposes other than seeking employment. Avocational English-As-A-Second-Language Programs are not included in the Council’s scope of accreditation and are not included on the list of programs. Institutions offering any avocational programs must specify that the programs are not accredited by the Council and do not qualify for Title IV financial aid assistance in appropriate publications and brochures.

More on Programs: ESL/VESL

IMPORTANT: COE does not approve/accredit ESL programs, only VESL programs. If the institution is offering ESL programs, the school must clearly delineate in all advertising materials that the offering is not accredited by the Council.

Vocational English-As-A-Second-Language Program

Reference: Policies and Rules of the Commission
Leading During the Team Visit

**Monday**
- Team Arrives at Hotel
- First Team Meeting
- Welcome Reception by Institution

**Tuesday**
- Team arrives at Institution
- Meet w/CAO & Tour and Review Programs Standard 2
- Lunch - Working
- Return to Hotel
- Dinner w/ Institutional selected staff

**Wednesday**
- Review Program Findings
- Review All Standards & Conditions
- Lunch - working
- Recap Standards & Conditions
- Draft Team Report

**Thursday**
- Collect Data & Complete Team Report
- Run Audit on TRS
- Team Leader w/CAO – Institutional Response
- Complete Evaluations & Reports
- Oral Team Report – Presentation to Institution

*Sample Schedule*
Day 1: Team Travel and Initial Meeting with the Visiting Team

- Team Travels and Arrives at Hotel
- Initial Team Meeting in the afternoon
  - Introductions
  - Gather Team Member Information (Room Numbers, Cell Numbers, Flights)
  - Discuss assignments
  - Review team schedule
  - Generally—review conditions, standards and criteria for questions, etc.
  - Verify that appropriate version of check sheets are being used (based on type of institution and edition)

Day 1: Welcome Event

- Team Leader Introductory Remarks
  - “Assuring Quality and Integrity in Career and Technical Education”
  - COE Scope, Demographics and Student Outcomes
  - Core Values

- Introduction of Team Members
  - Team members introduce themselves:
    - Name
    - Occupation
    - City and state/county
    - Standards and programs they are evaluating
DAY 2 – Programs Review

- CAO addresses the visiting team
- School tour
- IT person explains format of exhibits and log in information
- Assistant team leader assumes the responsibility for the review of Standard 2 (Programs)
- Visit programs and interview Faculty and students
- Complete Individual program check sheets in Team Report Software
- Make plans to visit night classes (if held)
- Schedule visits to work-based sites (Remember ALL COE-approved sites must be visited; e.g., clinical, internship, apprenticeship, co-op, etc.)
- Review the progress of the evaluation of programs
- Beware of compound statements within the criteria (often separated by commas)

DAY 3 – Standards Review

Review Standard 2 Program Findings from Day 2

Review of Standards and interview staff and administration

Here are all the written plans:
- Work-based Activities Training
- Job Placement/Follow-up
- Strategic Plan
- Operation and Maintenance
- Default Management
- Effectiveness of Student Services
- Effectiveness of Student Retention
- Placement Services
- Physical Facilities and Technical Infrastructure
- Media Services

REMEMBER: ALL plans must be evaluated AND in use
DAY 3 – End of Day

- Review all programs and standards
- Final draft of programs
- First draft of standards
- Review of all standards and FNCs, suggestions, and/or commendations
- Schedule a meeting with the CAO to ensure that missing documentation the team could not locate has not been overlooked

DAY 4

- Finalize all standards
- Team Report - DRAFT
  - Introduction to the Team Report
  - Ensure that all information has been entered into the Team Report Software (TRS)
  - Run the TRS audit
  - Finalize draft of oral team report
  - Meet with the CAO regarding the institutional response format (provided by COE) to address team’s findings
  - Remember, “DOCUMENTATION, NOT DISCOURSE”

IMPORTANT:
Use the introduction to detail any unusual situations or concerns that could not otherwise be captured in the team report
Completing the Team Report

Team Report Software
Team will complete check sheets electronically in the Team Report Software—both Conditions and Standards.

All check sheet questions must be answered.
Top Findings of Non-Compliance

- COE List of Approved Programs (Conditions)
  - The COE List of Approved Programs does not align with programs that the institution is offering
    - Write a finding of non-compliance (FNC) in Conditions #13; See handout regarding Program Inconsistencies
- Employer Verification Forms (Standard 2)
  - Outdated forms, forms not signed, or not signed by person in a position to make hiring decisions
- Advisory Committee Meetings
  - Institutional Advisory Committee (Standard 1)
- Occupational Advisory Committee (Standard 2)
- Follow-up Plan for Completion, Placement, and Licensure (Standard 3)
- Strategic Plan (Standard 4)
  - Beware of compound statements within the criteria (often separated by commas)

Top Findings of Non-Compliance

- Health and Safety Plan (Standard 6)
  - Institution does not have a plan that includes all the required elements found on the Standard 6 check sheet
- Annual evaluation of institutional employees (Standard 8)
- Plan for Professional Growth (Standard 8)
- Plan for Evaluation of Student Personnel Services (Standard 10)
- Plan for Placement Service (Standard 10)
  - Institution does not have a plan, or the plan does not include all required elements found on the Standard 10 check sheet
Team Leader Section of the Team Report

Team Leader Sections to be Completed in Team Report
Evaluation of the Self-Study

Evaluation by the Team Leader

1. How could the office of the Executive Director of the Commission of the Council on Occupational Education better plan for the team visit?

2. How could the institution have improved its arrangements for the team visit?

3. Is there anyone on the campus you visited that we could add to our prospective list of visiting team personnel? (Include suggestions made by members of your team)

4. Please give a frank appraisal of each member of your team. Would you recommend any of them to serve as a team leader or not serve on a future team? Give strong and weak points.
Introduction to the Team Report

Information to include in the Introduction of the Team Report

- Include the name of the school and campuses
- The number of team members and dates of visit
- Type of Institution—Public, Private, Federal, Job Corp, Apprenticeship
- Describe the service area
- Types of programs and delivery modes
- Any information that is unique about the visit that is not included is not reported in the Conditions and Standards
- General information about the visit and school

**REMEMBER—the team report gives the Commission a summary of the visit and the school.**
Team Report Audit and Final Submission

- Before you leave the school, be sure to run an audit of the team report.
- Correct any errors
- Collect all paper copies of report
- Proofread the report before submitting
- Submit the final report

Reminders

- The Self-Study Report must be completed and emailed to the Team Leader before the Preliminary Visit (60 calendar days before the team visit)
- Has the on-site administrator or other full-time employee at the main campus attended required workshop(s) within 6-18 months prior to hosting the accreditation visiting team.
- Consultants may not serve in the role of accreditation liaisons for an institution and should not contact the Council office for information on behalf of the institution.
Reminders

- Exhibits should be presented in electronic folders arranged in the exact order as the criteria on the COE Check Sheets

- Be familiar with the number of exhibits that should be provided for each criteria

- There should be exhibits for the conditions, for each standard, and for each occupational program

Reminders

- Team members will seek to verify that the Self-Study Report is an accurate description of activities taking place at the institution.

- The Composite is no longer required.

- Employer Verification Forms, financials and the Financial Questionnaire are no longer required in the Self-Study Report.

- Plans, policies and procedures must be evaluated and in use.
Final Tasks

- Team’s Evaluation of the Institution’s Self-Study
- Personnel Interview data in TRS
- Erase all computer files on the institution’s computers
- Shred all hand written notes and material
- Review Expense Voucher for consistency
- When the team leaves, contact with the institution ends

Workshop That You Can Use to Stay Up-to-Date

- Self-Study, Parts 1 and 2
- Occupational Advisory Committees: Moving from Compliance to Operational Excellence
- Annual Report for Beginners; The Annual Report: Reporting Completion, Placement, and Licensure Data
- Improving Student Achievement (Accreditation Maintenance Track)
- Annual Meeting: November 13-15, 2019 in Reno, NV
THANK YOU!

NEXT REQUIRED WORKSHOP....

Part 2 - Team Leader/Team Member Certification – Writing Findings of Non-Compliance