Guidelines for Accreditation Visiting Teams

2023 Edition

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Preface

The intent of this handbook is to familiarize visiting team members and team leaders with those details necessary to conduct an evaluation of an institution hosting an accreditation visiting team. These guidelines were developed for the purpose of implementing evaluation procedures of occupational institutions. They have been revised and are subject to be revised in the future. Team members and team leaders are requested to suggest needed changes to the Executive Director of the Commission of the Council on Occupational Education for inclusion in later editions.

Team leaders, in the absence of a Commission representative, have the responsibility to make all decisions necessary to ensure an effective evaluation. In the event of a need to contact the Council office, the telephone number is (800) 917-2081.

Changes to this publication are highlighted in green.

This publication is also available on the COE website (www.council.org).

GUIDELINES FOR ACCREDITATION VISITING TEAMS

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THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE VISITING TEAM

A. TEAM MEMBER/LEADER CERTIFICATION

Anyone interested in participating in Commission team visits must be certified to do so. Certification is accomplished through attendance at Commission-sponsored workshops for the training of team members or team leaders, and usage of team reporting software. Team member and team leader workshops are offered at each Summer Conference and Annual Meetings of the Council. As needed, virtual team member and team leader training is also provided bi-annually by COE staff. Certification for team member or leader training must be renewed every three years.

Also, all team members and leaders must sign the Commission's Conflict of Interest statement before participating in site visits. (See Appendices for Conflict-of-Interest policy and statement.)

B. PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY

The primary responsibility of the visiting team is to determine if the institution is in compliance with the policies, rules, standards and conditions of the Commission. The team will use check sheets (in hard copy or electronic formats) to document whether policies, rules, standards, and conditions are being met. As needed, the team will write findings of non-compliance for every criterion not met on the check sheets.

C. COMMISSION MAKES FINAL DECISION

Accreditation cannot be granted by the visiting team. The Commission makes the final decision about the accredited status of an institution and only after reviewing the Self-Study Report, Team Report, and the Institutional Response Report to determine if the institution is in compliance with the policies, rules, standards, and conditions. The Commission either grants accreditation, defers action and requests additional documentation, or denies accreditation.

D. TEAM MEMBERS AS EVALUATORS

The team members are evaluators, not inspectors. As evaluators, they study the quality of the institution in the light of its stated mission using the policies, rules, standards, and conditions as the evaluation criteria. Through information obtained from interviews and documents, the team considers the (1) strengths, (2) weaknesses, and (3) approaches to the solution of any problems. The Self-Study Report is a primary source of information, but the team also examines the supporting documents (exhibits) used in compiling the Self-Study Report. The approach of the team to the evaluation should be objective and not biased or affected by practice at the home institutions of the team members or by personal prejudice. Throughout the visit, the team has the responsibility of assisting the institution in its growth and development.

NOTE: The Commission is not the enforcer of all legal obligations imposed by governments and their agencies. *Example*: The team will evaluate safety criteria applicable to the institution; however, the team will not determine if the institution follows the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act. Nonetheless, if the institution has been cited for not meeting a COE requirement, the team is to evaluate the institution as to meeting the part of the act for which the institution was cited.

E. CONFIDENTIALITY

Team members are to respect the confidentiality of the Self-Study Report and all other institutional documents. The information contained in these documents is to be discussed only with team members or a Commission representative for official Commission purposes. Team members must not discuss the team visit or any findings with anyone other than team members or a Commission representative nor make any comments about the team visit or findings except in an official meeting with the staff of the institution.

The team should carefully avoid any statement in the Team Report or in the oral report to the chief administrator which predicts accreditation. Team members are not to prescribe solutions to deficiencies, only identify deficiencies in the findings of non-compliance.

F. GIFTS

Team members must not accept gifts, favors, or services from the institution. Souvenirs are permissible but should be restricted to inexpensive items representative of the institution or its geographic area.

TEAM MEMBER PROCEDURES

A. PREPARATION FOR THE TEAM VISIT

1. Receive Materials and Access through MyCouncil

Team members will normally receive the Self-Study Report, catalogs, and other materials at least two weeks prior to the visit. Supplementary materials will be available on the campus for use by the team. Before arriving at the campus, members of the team should read the total Self-Study Report, other information provided by the institution, the *Handbook of Accreditation*, and the *Guidelines for Accreditation Visiting Teams*. Team members should give special attention to their specific assignments made in advance by the Commission staff or team leader through the team report software in MyCouncil and corresponding sections of the standards of the Commission.

2. Make Travel Arrangements

Before the visit, team members will receive information from the team leader and Commission staff with information about the schedule, transportation, time of the initial and final conferences, and a team roster that identifies assignments. Much of this information is available in the team report software. Team members must make their own travel arrangements (see Team Member Finances section of this manual). Team members must notify the chief administrator, team leader, and the COE staff of their plans via email.

Important: Do not make travel arrangements until you receive notice from the team leader.

B. TEAM VISIT

1. **Team Conferences**

Team conferences will be scheduled by the team leader during the visit so that the members can share their findings and observations. An outline of the schedule is also available in the team report software. Through these exchanges, team members can confirm their impressions and determine additional areas that should be evaluated. The team will begin its visit with an initial conference, at which time the team leader will present an outline of activities for the entire visit. Customarily, there is also a brief conference of the team with the institution's chief administrator and/or staff members selected by the chief administrator at the beginning of the visit.

2. **Check Sheets**

In order to provide consistency in the evaluation process, check will be used in evaluating or determining the institution's compliance with the standards, conditions, and criteria. Items on the Conditions Check Sheet cover requirements in Sections II-V of the *Handbook of Accreditation*. Items on the Standards Check Sheet cover the criteria in Section VI of the *Handbook of Accreditation*. Every team member should be familiar with the *Handbook of Accreditation*.

Either **YES, NO, or N/A** must be checked for each statement on the check sheets. In appropriate cases, **N/A** may be checked where the criterion is not applicable to the institution.

Check sheets are available on the Council website (https://council.org/applications- and-forms/) to reference in conjunction with the COE Team Report Software, as needed. Any data collected on the check sheets must then be entered into the team report software.

YES Items

For all items marked YES on the check sheets or directly within the team report software, the team member must have institutional documentation to verify compliance. The criterion having a "YES" response does not have a finding of Non-compliance written, however, the team may want to write suggestions or commendations applicable to the criterion (see examples in "Example Visiting Team Report"). The team is encouraged to provide consultative assistance by writing suggestions. Justification for any suggestion must be specific and applicable.

NO Items

For all items marked 'NO' on the check sheets or directly within the team report software, the team member must have found no institutional documentation or inadequate documentation to verify compliance. Findings of non-compliance MUST be written for any item marked NO. Before any findings are written, the team must determine that the institution is in violation of a policy, rule, standard, or condition and that the necessary documentation has not been overlooked. When documentation cannot be found, the team must request the documentation from the institution's staff member responsible for the area in question. Findings must be written in narrative form to describe the institution's non-compliance with the criterion on the check sheet or directly within the team report software. This provides a clear rationale for any findings of non-compliance. When writing a finding, make use of the terminology associated with the criterion on the check sheets (see examples in "Example Visiting Team Report"). Make sure the finding clearly relates to the item marked NO. Normally, there will be one finding of non-compliance written for each NO on the check sheet.

Compound Statements (Multi-Part Criteria)

Some criterion noted on the check sheets are compound statements. These are also known as 'multi-part' criteria. If the institution is not in compliance with any part of the statement, 'NO' must be checked. Only that part of the statement with which the institution is not in compliance will be addressed in the findings of non-compliance.

Standard 2

One individual set of check sheets will be completed for each educational program at the main campus and each educational program at all other sites. The assistant team leader will consolidate all Standard 2 individual program check sheets and put the information on the composite program check sheet to be included in the team report (see examples in "Example Visiting Team Report"). The individual program check sheets will not be included as part of the official team report but will be included in the software and transmitted to COE once the team report is complete.

3. **Definitions**

A ***finding of non-compliance*** is a statement by the team that describes the circumstances during a site visit that indicate the institution is in violation of a policy, rule, standard, or condition. Findings of non-compliance require that the institution address the violation and submit documentation assuring the Commission that the violation has been corrected.

A ***suggestion*** is defined as a statement written by the team pointing out improvements that might be made in an educational program or in the operation of some part of the institution to promote educational improvement. It is highly encouraged that the institution responds to suggestions; however, is not required to do so.

4. **Examining Institutional Documentation**

Team members should prepare a list of materials and records that must be examined after arriving at the school. They must examine all documents which support each policy, rule, standard, condition, and each educational program. Documentation will be in the form of exhibits prepared by the school for viewing by the team. Exhibits must be provided in electronic format. Student and personnel records in the school files, curriculum materials used by instructors, and any other documentation not exhibited may be requested in order to determine compliance with the policies, rules, standards, and conditions. Consider time constraints in governing the amount of time spent examining documentation; however, be thorough enough to be fair to the institution and to do a credible job as a team member.

5. **Interviews**

Team members must plan carefully because site visit time is limited. Prepare a list of people to be interviewed.

a. Mingle and talk with (1) students; (2) instructional staff; (3) administration; and (4) non-instructional staff of the institution *(see Suggested Techniques for Effective Interviewing)*.
b. Keep accurate notes.
c. Keep a list of people interviewed (correct spelling of names and titles).
d. Be professional and friendly.
e. Avoid providing updates to the institution regarding the status of the visit.
f. Should any critical problems arise, discuss them with the team leader or Commission representative.
g. Avoid discussing the team's activities with anyone other than team members. (Questions from the news media should be referred to the team leader.)
h. Avoid, "Where I come from, we do it like this."
i. Be a good listener.

6. **Team Report**

An official team report is compiled to inform the staff of the institution and the Commission about the status of the institution as measured against its mission and the policies, rules, standards, and conditions of accreditation set by the Commission.

The introduction to the report and any findings of non-compliance shall be written in narrative form and be as clear and concise as possible. Complete sentences should be used in every instance.

Names and the personal pronoun 'I' should not be used in the report. The report must be considered a report of the entire team and receive concurrence of the entire team before it is considered complete. Remember, the report is a TEAM report.

Each team member must complete the parts of the report he/she is assigned by the team leader which may include:

a. Completed Conditions and/or Standards Check Sheets
b. Completed Standard 2 Educational Program Check Sheets

c. Appropriate findings of non-compliance and suggestions
d. Personal Interview sheets *(see form in Appendices section)*
e. Documentation upload, if applicable. In some cases, the report may warrant adding documents and/or photos.

7. **Visiting Team Evaluation of the Institution's Self-Study Report**

The team leader shall complete the Visiting Team Evaluation of the Institution's Self- Study Report *(see evaluation form in Appendices section)* with input from the team members during a team conference. The completed evaluation shall be included as part of the team report.

8. **Exit Report**

The team will make an informal oral report to the chief administrator and/or key personnel at the end of the visit. The team must avoid any suggestions or predictions about accreditation.

C. TEAM MEMBER FINANCES

Expenses incurred by team members are reimbursed by the Council on Occupational Education. Team members must make their own travel arrangements and must be financially prepared to pay for travel, food, and lodging for the duration of the visit. The actual expenses of each team member are reimbursed in accordance with the Council on Occupational Education Reimbursement Policy.

1. **Original Receipts**

Original receipts are required. Scan and submit all receipts for airline travel, car rentals, hotel bills, meals, and all other expenditures incurred during the visit.

2. **Transportation**

Travel by common carrier (airplane, train, bus, boat, etc.) will be reimbursed at the normal economy rate or actual cost, whichever is less, plus the necessary expense to and from the place of departure of the common carrier. Plane reservations should be made at the earliest date possible in an attempt to obtain the lowest priced ticket available. While a few team members are scheduled only a day or two before they actually travel, most are scheduled weeks in advance. **Note**: Travel arrangements are made after the team leader's preliminary visit and once the team leader determines that the institution is prepared to host a visit. If issues or concerns arise, then the team leader will consult with COE staff.

Important: Do not make any arrangements until the team leader verifies the visit is on schedule.

3. **Personal Auto and Car Rental**

Team leaders and members should contact COE staff to request approval to drive to the team visit. Personal automobile usage is authorized at the current IRS-approved rate by the most direct route. The maximum allowable reimbursement, including enroute expenses, may not exceed the published economy air fare to and from the site of the meeting. When the economy air fare is less than the amount requested on an expense voucher from use of a personal automobile, the difference will be subtracted from the requested amount. All documentation used to determine the cost of travel should be included with the *COE Expense Voucher*, which can be found at https://council.org/applications-and-forms/.

4. **Non-reimbursable Expenses**

Non-reimbursable expenses include items not directly related to Commission business, such as, telephone calls, lodging and meals for family members and guests, movies, entertainment, etc. If you are authorized to sign the hotel bill upon check-out, pay for non-reimbursable expenses at that time, and have the hotel deduct this from the final bill sent to the Council. In other cases, non- reimbursable expenses are to be deducted from the total of expenses on the *COE Expense Voucher*.

5. **Accommodations**

It should be the host institution's choice as to where team members stay, provided the facilities are clean and safe. Team members do not have the option of choosing more expensive quarters unless they are willing to pay the difference.

6. **Guests**

While it is sometimes appropriate for a spouse or other family or friends to accompany a team member on a visit, these individuals must not participate in team activities, nor should any of their expenses be included on the *COE Expense Voucher*. The team member should assure the host that guest expenses are being paid separately.

TEAM LEADER PROCEDURES

A. PRELIMINARY VISIT

IMPORTANT: Prior to the preliminary visit the institution must submit the Self-Study Report to the team leader no later than 60 days prior to the accreditation team visit. The team leader will work in conjunction with COE staff to determine if the Self-Study Report indicates the institution is prepared to host a visiting team.

If the team leader determines that the Self-Study Report is not correct or complete or if the document has not been submitted within 60 days prior to the accreditation team visit, the team leader will contact COE staff.

The team leader shall make a preliminary visit to the institution 30-45 days before the dates of the team visit. The purpose of the preliminary visit is to review with the school officials the responsibilities of the school and the team and to ensure that preparations are complete *(see Preliminary Visit Worksheet)*. The team leader will share the results of the preliminary visit with the team members.

1. **Contact School**

The team leader will contact the school regarding the preliminary visit (at least 60 days before team visit) and discuss the following:

a. Date of preliminary visit (at least 30 days before team visit).
b. If the Self-Study Report was not previously mailed, an overnight visit may be in order to provide time to review the Self-Study Report.
c. Means of travel, accommodations, and transportation while at the school.
d. Exhibits and other documents and materials will be needed at the time of the preliminary visit.
e. Whether the on-site administrator or other full-time employee at the main campus attended the Commission-sponsored workshops for the preparation of the Self-Study Report and workshops for submitting the Annual Report within six (6) to (18) months prior to hosting the accreditation visiting team. If not, check with COE staff for instructions.
f. What the school can expect during the preliminary visit.

Confirm the items above in written correspondence.

2. **The Preliminary Visit (*at least 30 days prior to scheduled date of team visit*)**

a. Tour facilities with policies, rules, standards, conditions and criteria in mind.
   (1) Check for current license (non-public)
   (2) Spot check supplies, equipment, and physical facilities
   (3) Be introduced to faculty and staff (random and informal)
   (4) Check out media services
   (5) Check student permanent records
   (6) Make sure preserving and protecting student coursework, testing, and records are provided by the use of storage devices, duplicate physical or digital records, security files, or other measures that ensure both the preservation and security of the records from fire, theft, vandalism, and other adverse actions.
   (7) Check files for advisory committee meetings
   (8) Become familiar with the layout of the campus and location of all extension facilities and branches

b. Review Documents Related to the Team Visit
   (1) Discuss deficiencies, if any, and encourage rewriting of the Self-Study Report before mailing to the team.
   (2) Review all supporting exhibits and the manner in which they will be made available to the visiting team. Suggest the development of any additional documents or materials which may be of further assistance to the team or to the institution. *(See Self-Study Exhibit Preparation.)*
   (3) Use the most recent COE Approved Program List to verify programs currently being offered. Contact the COE office if discrepancies exist.
   (4) Ask for copies of the attendance certificates for the Commission-sponsored workshops for the preparation of the Self-Study Report and workshops for submitting the Annual Report to confirm that the on-site administrator or other full-time employee at the main campus attended these workshops within 6 to 18 months prior to hosting the accreditation visiting team. (If the institution has failed to meet this requirement, notify COE staff immediately.)
   (5) Review the institution's permanent accreditation file.
   (6) Review the team assignments with the chief administrator of the institution. If team assignments need to be changed, contact the COE office for revisions.

c. Examine Financial Statements
   (1) Non-public institutions seeking initial accreditation must submit audited financial statements for the two most recent fiscal years at least 60 days prior to hosting an initial accreditation visiting team. The first of those two years may be the audited financial statement submitted with the institution's candidate application and the second audited financial statement must represent activity while the institution is in candidate status. Both audited financial statements must demonstrate compliance with the Commission's financial stability requirements as stated in Standard 7-Financial Resources.
   (2) Compare to standard requirements.

d. Work Room

   The visiting team will need a secure room in which they will review exhibits, hold team conferences, write reports, and take periodic breaks. This room should be as centrally located as possible, well-lit, and large enough to accommodate the team. The room should be clearly identified as the "Teamwork Room" and should be considered off limits to school personnel during the team visit.

   The following list of materials, supplies and equipment should be in the room:
   - Tables, shelves, or other means to display documents, if necessary. (Exhibits must be available for the team's review in digital format.)
   - Conference table(s), chairs and/or a workstation for each team member, observer, and COE staff member.
   - Computers and printer(s)
   - Internet access
   - Paper shredder
   - Copy machine
   - Computer paper and sticky notes
   - Lined writing pads, staplers, and paper clips
   - Pencils, highlighters, and ballpoint pens
   - Pencil sharpener
   - Wastebasket

e. Schedule and Agenda

The team leader should work in conjunction with the institution's leadership to create and distribute an agenda for the accreditation site visit.

Review and plan the team schedule and agenda *(see Visiting Team Information)* considering:

(1) Institutions that operate only in the afternoon or at night
(2) Institutions that have full-time educational programs offered in morning, afternoon, and at night
(3) Institutions that have off-campus facilities (distance and time factors must be considered.)

f. Information provided to team members

(1) Visiting Team Information *(see form in Appendices section)*
(2) With chief administrator, jointly draft an email to team members *(see Sample Email from Team Leader to Team Members)*.
(3) Determine the date the Self-Study Report and other materials will be transmitted by the school to the team members. This material might include:
   - The Self-Study Report
   - Faculty Handbook
   - School Catalog
   - Student Handbook

The team leader may wish to offer team members the opportunity to request additional documents for advance study.

g. Disposition of Self-Study Report and Other Materials

Discuss the chief administrator's wishes concerning the team members' copies of the Self-Study Report and materials relative to their disposition at the conclusion of the visit.

h. Accommodations

(1) Discuss and plan housing, transportation, and meal arrangements for the team visit.
(2) Hotel billing. It is preferable to have hotel charges billed directly to the institution.
(3) Team leader's room should be large enough to accommodate team meetings, or a separate meeting room should be arranged.

i. Media Notice of Application for Accreditation

In order to provide the public an opportunity to comment on an institution's qualifications for status with the Commission, an institution being considered for candidate for accreditation, initial accreditation, or reaffirmation of accreditation must give notice at least sixty (60) days prior to hosting the candidate or accreditation team visit. The notice must be posted on the home page of the institution's website and on at least one social media platform until accreditation is granted or reaffirmed. The notice must state that the institution is applying to become a candidate for accreditation or for initial or reaffirmation of accreditation with the Commission of the Council on Occupational Education. In addition, it must state that persons wishing to make comments should either write to the Executive

Director of the Commission, Council on Occupational Education, 7840 Roswell Road, Building 300, Suite 325, Atlanta, Georgia 30350, or submit their comments through the Council's website (www.council.org). Persons making comments must provide their names and mailing addresses.

B. PREPARATION FOR THE TEAM VISIT

1. Team Leader Information

Information for the team leader, including team report software access, Commission publications, check sheets, and other information forms will be made available to the team leader by Council staff.

Advise all team members to notify the chief administrator, team leader, and COE staff of their travel plans via email or telephone.

2. Team Member Information

All persons who participate in team visits must have an active account in the COE MyCouncil accreditation management system. This system provides access to the team report software for each institution visited. A link to the team report software file for the institution to be visited is placed in the MyCouncil account of each team member under the 'Applications' tab. Information for the team visit, team roster, travel instructions, lodging information, special events, etc. are provided within each team report file. The team report file link is provided when all members on the team roster have been confirmed and the roster is complete. Additional information will be provided by COE, the team leader, and the institution.

3. Schedule

The schools being evaluated have spent many months preparing for the team visit. The number of team members has been selected in proportion to the size and complexity of the school. The amount of time noted within the following section (C. Team Visit) is the very minimum required for a comprehensive compliance evaluation.

No effort should be made to accelerate the accreditation visit schedule. Should the team leader feel that the length of the team visit should be changed, the team leader should contact COE staff.

C. TEAM VISIT

1. Day One of Team Visit

First Conference of the Team at the hotel (Arrival Day: conference time suggested is approximately 4:00 p.m.; however, the first conference can be at any time after noon of the arrival day.)

a. Introduce each team member.
   (1) Record team member room numbers and cell phone numbers
   (2) Note departure time of each member
   (3) Make sure all team members have name tags
   (4) Introduce Assistant Team Leader

b. Review team member assignments and make any necessary rearrangements. Discuss

the team schedule and work to be performed by the team.
(1) Encourage each member to develop a work plan and schedule
(2) Discuss transportation needs and schedule visits to off-campus facilities
(3) When possible, plan to have meals as a group and discuss business during meals

c. Brief the team members about the institution and the Commission's policies, rules, standards, conditions and criteria as if they have never been on a visit.
(1) Remind team members to review all materials; such as,
(A) Institution's Self-Study Report
(B) Handbook of Accreditation
(C) Guidelines for Accreditation Visiting Teams
(D) Exhibits
(2) Review check sheets and procedures for writing findings of non-compliance
(3) Emphasize that team members are not to discuss findings with school personnel (advise members to be careful of statements that might leave an impression of accreditation or non-accreditation)
(4) Distribute Personal Interview sheets and review interviewing techniques
(A) Mingle with school personnel and students
(B) Make certain all school personnel are interviewed by at least one team member
(C) Make a list of the names (spelled correctly) and titles of each person interviewed
(D) Record names and titles in the team report software
(5) Establish team leader's office hours
(6) Explain how meals and room expenses will be reimbursed

2. Social Functions (Optional)

Members of the institution's staff should become acquainted with the members of the visiting team as soon as possible. This task may be accomplished by way of several methods:
- A dinner (a more formal event);
- A reception (a more casual event with beverages and snack items available);
- A breakfast (buffet or continental); or
- An opening meeting of the institution staff and team members.

These methods are merely suggestions. In no way does the Commission prefer one method over another, nor does it encourage the institution to incur excessive expense for this event. The event should take place early in the team visit. The Commission does, however, discourage the serving of alcoholic beverages at this event.

The team leader should encourage the institution to introduce the team to all special guest or dignitaries attending this event.

It is not uncommon for the team to have working meals. Therefore, the institution should not make plans to entertain the team every night of the visit.

If a formal event is agreed upon by the institution and the team leader, planning for the event should include the following:

a. Seating
(1) Team leader should become aware of any visitors such as board members, state staff, or senior officers attending the dinner conference
(2) Team leader and Commission representative should dine with or very near the

chief administrator of the institution

b. Introductions
   (1) Introduce team members or have team members introduce themselves including a brief statement of experience
   (2) Team leader and/or Commission representative should make a few remarks
      (A) Express appreciation for effort expended
      (B) Express shared interest in importance of occupational education
      (C) Briefly review accreditation process and what to expect
      (D) Charge all personnel with ensuring a comprehensive and mutually rewarding visit

After the event, the team leader should be available to talk with team members.

3. Day Two of Team Visit – Programs

a. Morning
   (1) Review procedures, work responsibility, assignments
   (2) Review schedule
      (A) Set team conference times to share findings and observations
      (B) Determine schedule for night classes
   (3) Allow chief administrator to address the team briefly
   (4) School tour

b. Mid-morning

   Institution Evaluation (Team starts work on evaluating accreditation standards)

   Program Check Sheets
   (1) One set of individual program check sheets should be completed for each program at each campus
   (2) The assistant team leader is responsible for coordinating with the team members to ensure that they enter program data and that the team collaborates to write any findings of non-compliance, suggestions or commendations. It is the responsibility of the assistant team leader to consolidate any program finding(s) into the team report.
   (3) Programs with work-based activities that include structured learning events that occur outside the classroom and involves the public (e.g., clients who are served by the institution in cosmetology clinical or automotive technology settings), which are components of the educational program(s) (e.g., externships, internships, clinical experiences, industrial cooperative education, and similar activities) must be evaluated by the team.

c. End of the Day
   (1) Review the progress and restructure assignments if necessary
   (2) Remind team of schedule for team members returning if the institution has night classes
   (3) Have team members enter data collected on program check sheets into team report software
   (4) Determine if a private session with the chief administrator is necessary

4. Day Three of Team Visit – Standards

a. Recap Programs

Review any findings of non-compliance written for programs and ensure that the team concurs on the report. A finding of non-compliance is only written once for a standard violation, however, that violation may occur in multiple programs.

b. Standards

(1) A check sheet must be completed for each standard.

(2) Remind team members that if there is an area of concern, they **should** request additional documentation from the school. The institution **should** be provided with a reasonable amount of time to retrieve the documentation; however, at the time of the site visit, the institution is providing a snapshot in time. **Therefore, no changes, modifications, additions, or deletions can be made to the institution's documentation**.

(3) Emphasize to team members that any plan must be written, evaluated and in use.

(A) Must see written plan—not verbal explanation.

(B) Plan must be individualized for off-campus sites.

(C) Must see evidence that plans are in operation and that procedures are currently being followed.

(4) Make sure that the team member assigned Standard 3 (Program Outcomes) verifies accuracy of completion and placement and licensure exam statistics reported. For completion, see backup documentation (names and transcripts). For placement, acquire names and phone numbers of a sampling of employers of students placed and call the employers. For licensure, review reports from the state licensure exam agencies and school records.
Note: Benchmarks for minimally-acceptable percentages of completion, placement, and licensure exam pass rates can be found within the Council's annual report software and on the Council's website – www.council.org.)

(5) Make sure that the team member assigned Standard 7 (Financial Resources) examines the financial statements carefully to assure that the school meets each of the criteria for financial stability. If there is a question, discuss with team leader and/or contact a COE staff person for guidance.

(6) The team member assigned Standard 7 must also examine the refund policy to assure that the school is in compliance with the COE refund policy or meets one of the conditions for deviation from COE's refund policy. A minimum of 25 student financial records must be selected by the team member for review. The number of records reviewed must be recorded on the check sheet. (NOTE: This item is a requirement in order for the Commission to meet Federal regulations.)

(7) Make sure that the team member assigned Standard 8 (Human Resources) verifies state requirements for teacher certification and randomly checks personnel files to make sure instructors meet those requirements. If applicable, verify that all instructors in associate degree programs meet COE requirements.

(8) Make sure that the team member assigned Standard 10 (Student Services and Activities) verifies that student records are maintained at the main campus for all locations and that the information contained in the records is complete (see Handbook of Accreditation, Standard 10). A minimum of 25 student records must be selected by the team member for review. The number of records reviewed must be recorded on the check sheet. (NOTE: This item is a requirement in order for the Commission to meet Federal regulations.)

(9) Make sure that the team member assigned Standard 10 (Student Services and Activities) reviews the list of student complaints filed in accordance with the

institution's student grievance policy since the most recent accreditation team visit. The team member should also review the files on these complaints to determine whether the complaints raise questions about the quality of the educational programs offered by the institution.

(10) When evaluating a distance education or hybrid program, remember that the institution is **not** required to offer the same program on campus in the traditional format. The program may be offered only in a distance education format.

(11) Estimate the time for the final meeting with the chief administrator.

(12) At the end of the day, read and discuss the draft copy of the Team Report.

(13) Determine if a private session with the chief administrator is necessary.

5. Day Four of Team Visit

a. Conclude Report Preparation

(1) Finish any part of the Team Report that is still incomplete and have a final review of the report by the team. Be sure to include evening programs

(2) Make sure data entry into the team report software is complete

(3) Print a rough draft for the team to use during the exit report and for backup purposes

(4) Erase any computer files regarding the Team Report on computers at the school

b. Plan Oral Exit Report

Discuss and determine with the team members the nature, method, and time of presentation of the oral report; caution the team members not to speak in the first person during the oral exit report.

c. Complete Visiting Team Evaluation of Institution's Self-Study Report

d. Collect and Shred Materials from Team Members that include but not limited to:

(1) Interview sheets

(2) All check sheets

(3) All notes and ancillary materials

(4) Team leader shall retain a copy of the Self-Study Report and Team Report should they be needed for future reference

e. Discuss completion and submission of *COE Expense Voucher* with the team members. Electronically submit the completed *COE Expense Voucher* to Cliff Owen (cliff.owen@council.org) along with appropriate receipts, within 14 days after the last day of the team visit.

f. Exit Report

(1) The final meeting of the team is with the chief administrator (meeting time is determined by the team leader and the institution.)

(2) Prior to giving the exit report, each team member may give a brief summary of their experiences during the site visit. This may be done at the team leaders' discretion.

(3) Exit Report: The oral report is an overview of the findings of non- compliance, suggestions and commendations. The draft of the team's report should be read verbatim. The team is not allowed to discuss the outcome of the Team Report nor provide assistance on how the institution should respond. The institution is not allowed to discuss or debate the outcome of the report.

(4) The team leader should brief the institution about the Team Report and

institutional response timelines. The team leader shall discuss the Institutional Response Report and Format *(see Appendices)* with the chief administrator and should advise the chief administrator that the official Team Report will be sent to the school by the Commission Executive Director.

g. At the conclusion of the Exit Briefing, leave the campus immediately.

6. News Media

During the visit, if the team leader is confronted by the news media, the following is a sample of what might be said:

"Considering the institutions mission, as well as accreditation conditions and ten standards of the Commission of the Council on Occupational Education, the staff of the institution has completed a self-study and written its findings describing the strengths and weaknesses of the institution. The visiting team evaluates and writes a report to inform the staff of the institution and the Commission as to the status of the institution as measured against its mission and the standards, conditions, and criteria of the Commission. If the visiting team finds any deficiencies, the Commission will notify the institution of the deficiencies, and the institution will be given an opportunity to make the necessary changes, as well as submit a documented response to the Commission on the action taken. The twenty-member Commission will act at a future meeting and may either grant accreditation, defer action and request additional documentation, or deny accreditation. The total process is confidential in nature until the Commission has taken final action."

D. AFTER THE TEAM VISIT

1. Prepare Team Report

a. Complete the Evaluation by the Team Leader (under Team Leader folder) in the team report software. (Information is confidential.)

b. Write email to team members thanking them for their work and telling them that the final Team Report has been submitted to the Commission.

c. Edit and compile the Team Report into a unified document, rewriting the various sections as necessary.

(1) Wording in the Team Report should be consistent throughout

(2) Delete words such as seems, appears, and feels

(3) Review any finding of non-compliance to ensure there is rational for the proposed violations of any policy, rule, standard, condition or criterion

(4) Ensure that all findings of non-compliance are clearly stated and not duplicated in any other standard

(5) While it is usually not necessary for the final draft of the Team Report to be reviewed by the team members, the team leader may ask the team members to review the document, if necessary

2. Format for Visiting Team Report

The team report software will create the final version of the Team Report, which will include the following:

a. Cover page
b. Table of contents
c. Introduction (by team leader)
d. Summaries of Findings of Non-Compliance, Suggestions, and Commendations
e. Visiting Team Evaluation of the Institution’s Self-Study Report
f. Conditions Check Sheet
g. Check sheets for Standards 1 through 10

3. Submission of Team Report to COE

Submit to COE no later than 30 calendar days following the team visit:

a. Final Team Report: This is accomplished by supplying all required data in the team report software, auditing the data, clearing all error messages reported by the audit, and submitting the Team Report electronically to the Commission through the software.
b. Worksheets for branch and extension campuses

NOTE: Under no circumstances should the Team Report be sent to the institution by the team leader, or its contents revealed to unauthorized persons.

The Team Report will be reviewed by COE staff and a copy sent to the chief administrator of the institution.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: The verification forms for graduates, placements, and licensure exams must be left at the institution to become part of the institution’s accreditation file

APPENDICES

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

PRELIMINARY VISIT WORKSHEET

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of the Conflict-of-interest policy is to protect the Council on Occupational Education's interest when it is carrying out its mission of assuring quality and integrity in career and technical education. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to the Council on Occupational Education as a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Georgia.

Policy

No member of the board of commissioners of the Council on Occupational Education, ("COE" or "the Council") or any of its committee members, site visit team members, appeal panel members, or staff shall derive any personal profit or gain, directly or indirectly, by reason of his or her participation with the Council.

Each individual shall disclose to the Council any personal interest which he or she may have in any matter pending before the Council and shall refrain from participation in any decision on such matter. Any member of the board, committee, site visit team, appeal panel or staff who is an officer, board member, committee member or staff of an institution that is accredited, a candidate for accreditation or seeking accreditation from the Council shall identify his or her affiliation with the institution and shall not participate in any decision affecting that institution by the Council.

Annual Statements for Board, Committee, Appeal Panel and Staff Members

Each member of the board, committee, appeal panel or staff with board delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms that such person:

a. has received a copy of the conflict-of-interest policy,
b. has read and understands the policy, and
c. has agreed to comply with the policy.

Statements for Site Visit Team Members

Each member of site visit teams shall sign a statement before participation in each site visit which affirms that such person:

a. has received a copy of the conflict-of-interest policy,
b. has read and understands the policy, and
c. has agreed to comply with the policy.

Violations of the Conflict-of-Interest Policy

If the Board has reasonable cause to believe that a board, committee, site visit team, appeal panel or staff member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the individual of the basis for such belief and afford the individual an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

If after hearing the response of the individual and undertaking such further investigation as may be warranted under the circumstances, the board determines that the individual has in fact failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate action consistent with the by-laws of the Council on Occupational Education.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Name of Institution
Hosting Site Visit: ____

At this time, I am a board member, committee member or an employee of the following organizations:

____

____

I________________________hereby affirm that I have received a copy of the Council on Occupational Education's Conflict-of-Interest Policy and that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the policy. I also affirm that except as described below, I am not now nor at any time during the past year have I been:

1. A participant, directly or indirectly, in any arrangement, agreement, investment, or other activity with the institution to be visited that is accredited by the Council or is an applicant or candidate for accreditation by the Council which has resulted or could result in personal benefit to me.

2. A recipient, directly or indirectly, of any salary payments or loans or gifts of any kind or any free service or discounts or other fees from or on behalf of the institution to be visited that is accredited by the Council or is an applicant or candidate for accreditation by the Council.

Any exceptions to 1 or 2 above are stated below with a full description of the interest, whether direct or indirect, which I have or have had during the past year involving institutions that I have visited that are accredited, applicants for accreditation or candidates for accreditation by the Council.

____

____

Date: ____________________ Name: ____________________

Signature: ____

PLEASE COMPLETE:
In the event there is an emergency, please contact:

Name of Person:________________________Relationship:____________

Phone Number: ________________________

PRELIMINARY VISIT WORKSHEET
for Accreditation Visiting Teams 2023 Edition

Campus Name: ____

Main Campus Address: ____

Date of Preliminary Visit: ________________ ______________________________________

Campus Contact Name and Number: ____

Travel Info:

Arrival:	Departure:

Transportation from the airport to the hotel:

____

Hotel Address and phone:

____

***New Requirement: Once the Preliminary Visit concludes, upload this document to the council.org school documents**. Copy Dr. Robert Carrigan (Robert.carrigan@council.org), Ms. Sandra Sacrestano (Sandra.sacrestano@council.org) and Ms. Monique Campbell (Monique.campbell@council.org)*

A. Once you have confirmed you can serve as the Team Leader and returned the Conflict-of-Interest Form:

	Yes	No	N/A
Review the appropriate current Handbooks: (e.g., Handbook of Accreditation for Public and Non-Public Institutions, Federal Handbook, Apprenticeship Handbook, etc. as well as the Policies and Rules of the Commission, Check Sheets, etc. before your preliminary visit.			
Contact the Chief Academic Officer at the school to schedule a conference call. to discuss the preliminary and team visits. A Preliminary Visit should occur 60 days prior to the Team Visit.			

B. Conference Call:

	Yes	No	N/A
Discuss the purpose of COE's visit			
Request the institution's Self Study NLT 30 days before your preliminary visit.			
Verify with the institution the Check Sheets being used for the visit. (e.g., 2024 visit will use 2023 Check sheets) **Note**: Some schools may be using an older version, if unsure, check with COE staff.			
Confirm the type of schedule the campus uses- semesters, quarters, or trimesters.			
Verify, the institution has placed the notice. For initial accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation, the institution has placed a notice on the home page of the institution's website and on at least one social media platform that is circulated within the service area of EACH campus of the institution. This notice must be placed at least sixty (60) days prior to hosting the accreditation visit and must state that the institution is applying for initial accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation with the Commission of COE in compliance with Commission criteria.			
Accurate information about the institution's ownership status has been filed with the Council. Any changes in ownership information that have not been reported to the Commission must be given a finding of non-compliance written under Conditions of Accreditation, criterion 13.			
For institutions applying for initial accreditation- The institution has had students continuously in attendance for a minimum of two years, except for regularly scheduled breaks, holidays, and vacation periods.			
Verify that the institution has a record of attendance (e.g., email) showing completion of required workshops for Candidate Academy, Self-Study, and Annual Report training sessions. Records must show completion of workshops within 6-18 months prior to hosting the visiting team.			
Verify programs offered at the institution are listed correctly on the COE List of Approved Programs (name, length, mode of delivery, etc.). The programs are also listed identically (name, length, mode of delivery, etc.) by state, federal, or other oversight agencies. Any inconsistencies in these listings must be given a singular finding of non-compliance written. under Conditions of Accreditation, criterion 13, reflecting the program(s) to which the finding of non-compliance applies. (NOT APPLICABLE for Federal Agency)			
Discuss any off-campus sites- locations, types, how many. Accurate information about the status of the institution's campuses has been filed with the Council.			
All campus and location addresses are identical to the addresses reflected in the COE record. Any inconsistencies in these listings must be given a singular finding of noncompliance			
Note if the school has added or deleted programs since the last visit			
Request the school send you All Campus Plans (Student Retention, Health, and Safety, etc.) for review during the Preliminary Visit			
Request the school send you the School Catalog, Student Handbook, Staff Handbook, Brochures, Websites, and any publications used for recruitment. Electronic access is acceptable			
Is the institution approved Course Prep Hours?			
Remind the institution to retrieve and use the most current versions of the documents from the COE website.			
Remind the institution that all plans and procedures must be written,			

Explain you will complete the Conditions Sheet during the preliminary visit. The campus should have Conditions exhibits ready for review.			
Confirm the logistics of your preliminary visit-dates, hotel, transportation, etc.			

C. After the initial call AND before the preliminary visit:

	Yes	No	NA
Contact COE if you have any issues that may stop the visit (no exhibits, no self-study, etc.) you discovered during the conference call			
Review the documents the school sent you- Self Study, Student Handbook, Staff Handbook, Brochures, Websites, and Plans.			
Develop Agenda for the Preliminary Visit (samples in the Appendix)			
Contact team members to confirm their availability to serve on the Team; HOWEVER, stress for them not to make travel plans until you have returned from the preliminary visit.			

D. During the Preliminary Visit:

	Yes	No	NA
Complete the Conditions Check Sheet (***See Appendix***)			
SELF-STUDY REPORT DISCUSSION Discuss any issues of the Self-study and any final details of the final copy, if necessary. Spot Check Documentation The team leader reminds the institution to submit the report to the team members and to the appropriate COE staff members no later than 20 days prior to the accreditation team visit.			
CONDITIONS AND STANDARDS Review electronic documentation for Standards 1, 9, and one program. (see Appendix for Check Sheets)			
Discuss the process of reviewing student records, refunds, and grievances during the visit. It helps to get the names of the campus contacts for Standards 7, 10, and 3.			
Did the campus use a consultant? If the institution employs a consultant, ensure that the institution has contacted COE Staff. Discuss the role of the consultant before and during the accreditation visit, reminding the institution that the consultant cannot be on site during the preliminary or the accreditation visit. (See the current versions of the Handbook of Accreditation and Policies and Rules of the Commission)			
PROGRAMS The institution has demonstrated that appropriate documentation relative to VESL programs is available for review by the visiting team. (See the Handbook of Accreditation and the Policies and Rules of the Commission)			
Programs not enrolling students for the past 365 days have been deleted from the approved program list.			
Request a list of when each program started at the institution.			
The institution has demonstrated that appropriate documentation relative to program modification hours (course prep/homework hours) are available for review by the visiting team. (Federal financial aid eligibility)			
Copy of the last accreditation visiting team report and all other team reports since the last accreditation visiting team.			

Copy of the institution's response report for the last accreditation team (if applicable) and all other response reports to visiting teams since the last accreditation visiting team.			
Copy of all substantive change applications since the last accreditation visiting team- new programs, deleted programs,			
The institution has demonstrated that appropriate documentation relative to program modification hours (course prep/homework hours) are available for review by the visiting team.			
The institution has demonstrated that appropriate documentation relative to VESL programs is available for review by the visiting team. (See the Handbook of Accreditation and the Policies and Rules of the Commission)			
For Non-public institutions: Copies of all annual audited financial reports since the last accreditation visiting team, if applicable (REMINDER: the institution demonstrates financial stability through submission of the most recent audited financial statements that reflect a minimum, unrounded score of 1.5) (Not Applicable to Federal Institutions)			
Copies of all annual reports (including all supporting documentation) since the last accreditation visiting team, if applicable.			
Campus Tour: • Tour the Main Campus and, if time permits, any other locations. • Meet other staff members. • All required licenses are current. • In general, does the facility operate in a safe environment (e.g., exit signage, posted evacuation routes, etc.), equipment (e.g., Reasonable accessibility to up to date first aid kits, fire extinguishers, eye-wash stations (if stations are mandated)? • Are media services available? • Records available (Standard 10: Spot check the structure for preserving and protecting student coursework. Ensure testing material and records are secured using storage devices, duplicate physical or digital records, security files, or other measures that ensure both the preservation and security of the records from fire, theft, vandalism, and other adverse actions) • Request the campus have campus maps available for the visits. • Request that the Work Room has a photo directory of all employees.			
Team member assignments have been reviewed with the institution's Chief Administrator (CA).			
OTHER: Share with the institution's CA suggestions for any other documentation which may help the team during the visit.			
Check the notice: For initial accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation, the institution has placed a notice on the home page of the institution's web site and within at least one print media sources that is circulated within the service area of EACH campus of the institution. This notice must be placed at least sixty (60) days prior to hosting the accreditation visit and must state that the institution is applying for initial accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation with the Commission of COE in compliance with Commission criteria.			
Self-study and all exhibit documentation must be in English.			
Workroom Quiet and Private area (Make sure the room is large enough for the team to work comfortably with Tables and Chairs.			
The workroom is off-limits to faculty and staff during the visit.			
Room should be cleaned after the team leaves each day			

Will we have onsite technical assistance, if needed?			
Office supplies such as writing pads, post-it notes, Printer/Copier; Shredder, Trash cans, Paper, pens, staplers, paper clips, etc.			
Individual computer (two monitors, if possible) and internet access for each team member, and software requirements for team report software (e.g., Firefox internet access)			
Ensure that the workroom does not use cameras or any other recording devices during the time of the preliminary or the accreditation visit to record any team interactions or team activities in the workroom or in any space.			
Directory or listing of institutional faculty, staff, and administration to assist team in identifying school contacts. Last Self Study and Campus Response to the last Team Visit			

E. Planning the Team Visit with the school:

	Yes	No	NA
Discuss the hotel for the visit			
Discuss billing- direct bill or individual's pay			
Discuss food eaten at the hotel - charged to room?			
Confirm who the campus contact is for the team member travels			
Meeting room at the hotel for the first team visit			
Transportation: To and From the Airport transportation accommodations To and From the School transportation accommodations Off-campus site visits Any clinical sites to be visited.			
First-night activity* (Some team members may need to come in on Sunday night or leave on Friday due to travel and schedules) Time Location Attire Agenda			
Meal Options: Breakfast at the hotel or campus Working Lunches Dinner Meals			

Remember, a comprehensive preliminary visit will help to make a smooth team visit; don't rush the visit.

F. After a successful Preliminary Visit, Confirm the visit with COE and Send Out Team Correspondence:

	Yes	No	NA
Contact COE and confirm the campus is ready for a visit			
SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO TEAM: • Dates • Suggested means of travel. • Travel from airport to hotel • Campus Contact for their travel information • Hotel name and location with contact info • Remind them to access their MyCouncil account			
Discuss food eaten at the hotel- charged to room			
Meeting room at the hotel for the first team visit			
First-night activity* (Some team members may need to come in on Sunday night or leave on Friday due to travel and schedules) • Time • Location • Attire • Agenda			

CONDITIONS CHECK SHEET
Generic Version – 2023 Edition

CONDITIONS	YES	NO	N/A
Item 1: Visiting Teams complete the Worksheet for Confirming Compliance with Eligibility Requirements before responding to this item.			
1. The institution continues to demonstrate that it satisfies each of the eligibility requirements for Candidate for Accreditation. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pgs. 7-8)			
Item 2: The Visiting Team, at the conclusion of its visit, must determine its response to the following condition after reviewing institutional documentation, conducting interviews with administration, staff, and faculty, and completing all applicable parts of Conditions and Standards check sheets:			
2. The institution conducts its affairs with acceptable standards of honesty and integrity. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 32*)*			
3. The institution meets all lawful obligations imposed by state and federal agencies. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 32*)*			
4. The institution has notified the Commission of any individual affiliated with the institution who has been debarred by a government agency or another accrediting agency or was an owner, an administrator, or a governing-board member of a COE-affiliated institution that was denied accreditation, was dropped from accreditation, or closed without providing a teach-out or refunds to currently enrolled students. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pgs. 32-33*)*			
5. The institution occupies its own physical facilities and is not co-located with another institution. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 10*)*			
6. The institution maintains a permanent accreditation file which contains items set forth in the Commission conditions. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 26)			
Non-Public Institutions Only 7. (If required to operate.) The institution has an original current license for the main campus and each branch and/or extension. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 7*)*			
Item 8: This item is to be completed by Visiting Teams during accreditation visits.			
Non-Public Institutions Only: 8. List ID numbers and expiration dates of licenses for all campuses:			
9. The on-site administrator or other full-time employee at the main campus attended the Commission-sponsored workshops for the preparation of the Self-Study Report and workshops for submitting the Annual Report within six to eighteen months prior to hosting the accreditation visiting team. (For initial accreditation, the institution must also have an official confirmation of attendance for having attended the Candidate Academy.) (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 13)			
10. For initial accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation, the institution has posted a notice on the home page of the institution's website and on at least one social media platform until accreditation is granted or reaffirmed. This notice must be placed at least sixty (60) days prior to hosting the accreditation visit and must state that the institution is applying for initial accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation with the Commission of the Council on Occupational Education. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 54)			
Item 11: This item is to be completed by Visiting Teams during accreditation visits.			
11. Date notice was published:			
12. The institution has submitted an evaluation of Standards form from one of its occupational advisory committees within 12 months of the institution's scheduled visit, but prior to the preliminary visit. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 54*)*			
13. The institution has informed the Commission of all planned and unplanned substantive changes. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pgs. 35-39*)*			
14. Innovative or experimental programs operated at variance with the standards have received Commission concurrence prior to implementation. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 6*)*			
15. Documents the institution has filed with the Commission accurately represent the status of the institution. (NOTE: If this statement is checked "NO", documentation which demonstrates the institution's misrepresentation must be submitted with the team report.) (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 32*)*			
Accredited Institutions Only 16. The institution's use of the accreditation seal complies with Commission conditions. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 27)			
17. The institution adheres to the Commission's condition on the monitoring of institutional growth and has notified the Commission of increases in total Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) that equal or exceed 25% of the established baseline, and for non-public institutions, increases in gross revenue of 100% or more from the previous year have been reported to the Commission. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 49)			

CONDITIONS CHECK SHEET:
Generic Version – 2023 Edition, Page 2

CONDITIONS (continued)	YES	NO	N/A
Items 18 and 19: Visiting Teams complete the Worksheet for Confirming Compliance with Recruiting/Advertising Requirements before responding to these items.			
18. Student recruitment activities used by the institution are truthful and avoid any false or misleading impressions of the institution, its programs and services, or employment, and are in compliance with all other Commission conditions governing recruitment. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pgs. 49-50)			
19. Media used by the institution for advertising purposes is truthful and presented with dignity to avoid any false or misleading impressions of the institution, its programs and services, or employment, and are in compliance with all other Commission conditions governing advertising. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 50-51)			
Item 20: Visiting Teams complete the Criteria for Publications Worksheet before responding to this item.			
20. A website and other official informational documents which are made available through various media (hard copy or online) to provide the information specified in the *Handbook of Accreditation* must be readily available to students, prospective students, and other constituents. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pgs. 94-95)			
21. If the institution employed a consultant for the purpose of assisting in the accreditation process, it has submitted a copy of the consultant's resume to the Council within seven days after employment was secured, and it can demonstrate that the terms of the consultant's contract meet Commission conditions stated in the Handbook of Accreditation. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 15)			
22. The role of contractors hired by candidate/accredited institutions (if any) must exclude the authority to make official decisions for the institution or to serve in the role of accreditation liaison officer for the institution. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 51)			
23. If the institution participates in Title IV Financial Aid programs, it does not contract more than 25% of the instruction of one or more of its programs with an external entity. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 52)			
24. Clear indication must exist that the faculty and staff were responsible for preparing, revising and editing any documents required in the accreditation process. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 15)			
25. The institution has named an accreditation liaison officer who is a staff member located at the main campus. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 25)			
Status with Other Agencies: A "YES" response for statements #1-8 signifies that the institution is in compliance with the Commission's Conditions.			
1. The institution is not the subject of an interim action by a state or federal agency potentially leading to the suspension, revocation, withdrawal, or termination of the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in any state in which it operates. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 53)			
2. The institution has not had its state license suspended, revoked, withdrawn, or terminated, even if the required due process procedures have not been completed within any state in which it operates. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 53)			
3. The institution has not voluntarily withdrawn its candidacy or accreditation while not in good standing from a nationally recognized accrediting agency. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 53)			
4. The institution has not had its candidacy or accreditation withdrawn or been placed on public probation by a nationally recognized accrediting agency. (See *Handbook of Accreditation,* pg. 53)			
5. The institution is not the subject of an interim action by another accrediting agency potentially leading to the suspension, revocation, or withdrawal of candidacy or accreditation. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 53)			
6. The institution has not been notified of the loss of any agency's accreditation even if the due process procedures have not been completed. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 53)			
7. The institution describes itself in identical terms with regard to identity (i.e., main campus, branch campus, branch campus to main campus relationship), mission, governance, programs, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituents to all federal, state, and other agencies, including accrediting agencies. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 53)			
8. Institutions seeking dual accreditation have submitted the reasons for wanting dual accreditation to each accrediting agency and to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, and the institution has designated which agency's accreditation is to be utilized in determining the institution's eligibility for program participation under the Higher Education Act. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 53)			

CONDITIONS CHECK SHEET:
Generic Version - 2023 Edition, Page 3

Non-Main Campus Sites: General	YES	NO	N/A
Visiting Teams complete the Worksheet for Non-Main Campus Sites before responding to the following criteria.			
1. Ownership of all non-main campus sites is the same (same governance, entity, proprietorship or partnership, or the same corporation) as the main campus. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pgs. 8, 38-42)			
2. The Commission has approved every instance where the names of non-main campus sites have been expanded to clearly identify different locations or specific programs. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pgs. 8, 38-42)			
3. The complete name of the main campus is identified in all publications and advertisements when referring to a non-main campus site. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pgs. 8, 38-42)			
4. Duplicate records on personnel, financial matters, student attendance, and student educational progress and outcomes data for non-main campus sites are kept at the main campus. (NOTE: Institutions capable of maintaining and accessing records electronically may keep all records previously mentioned at the main campus.) (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pgs. 8, 38-42)			
5. Programs offered at non-main campus sites are approved by the Commission and are described in the main campus catalog (or catalog supplements for branch campuses). (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pgs. 8, 38-42)			
6. Non-main campus sites comply with Criteria identified on the Worksheet for Non-Main Campus Sites.			
7. Instruction provided at non-main campus sites maintains the educational integrity of the institution and must not endanger its compliance with the Standards, Criteria, and Conditions adopted by the Council.			
Non-Main Campus Sites: Branch Campuses	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
Visiting Teams complete the Worksheet for Non-Main Campus Sites before responding to the following criteria.			
1. Each branch campus operates under the supervision of a full-time, on-site administrator who reports to the chief administrator at the main campus. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 42)			
2. Each branch campus complies with all Criteria identified on the Worksheet for Non-Main Campus Sites.			
Non-Main Campus Sites: Extension Campuses	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
Visiting Teams complete the Worksheet for Non-Main Campus Sites before responding to the following criteria.			
1. Extensions are located within a fifty-mile radius of the main campus. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 42)			
2. Each extension campus complies with Criteria for non-main campus sites as identified on the Worksheet for Non-Main Campus Sites.			
Non-Main Campus Sites: Extended Classrooms	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
Visiting Teams complete the Worksheet for Non-Main Campus Sites before responding to the following criteria.			
1. Extended classrooms must be located within two miles of a **main** or **branch** campus. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 43)			
2. Extended classrooms must be supervised by the chief administrator of the **main** or **branch** campus. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 43)			
3. Each extended classroom complies with Criteria for non-main campus sites as identified on the Worksheet for Non-Main Campus Sites.			
Non-Main Campus Sites: Instructional Service Centers	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
Visiting Teams complete the Worksheet for Non-Main Campus Sites before responding to the following criteria.			
1. Program instruction at instructional service centers is under the direct control of the main campus and located within the geographic service area designated by the governing board of the institution. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 43)			
2. All student services are available on-site at the instructional service center and the full range of student services is made accessible to participating students at the main campus. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 43)			
3. Instructional service centers are a joint venture between the institution and an employer or another educational agency. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 43)			
4. Each instructional service center complies with Criteria for non-main campus sites as identified on the Worksheet for Non-Main Campus Sites.			
Non-Main Campus Sites: Additional Space	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
Visiting Teams complete the Worksheet for Non-Main Campus Sites before responding to the following criterion.			
1. Additional space acquired for instructional, or student services purposes must be located within one quarter of a mile from a **main** campus or **branch** campus. (See *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 43)			

Highlighted areas indicate changes from the previous edition.

Intentionally left Blank

Worksheet for Confirming
Compliance with Eligibility Requirements

This form is to be completed by Visiting Teams during accreditation visits.

Institutions must continuously demonstrate that they satisfy each of the eligibility requirements for candidacy for accreditation.

A 'NO' response on this worksheet must be carried over to the Conditions check sheet (Condition #1) and a Finding of Non-Compliance must be written which specifies the requirement the institution fails to meet.

		YES	NO	N/A
To be eligible for consideration by the Commission for candidacy for accreditation (pre-accreditation status), an institution **must**:				
1.	Meet the Council's definition of "institution" as described in the *Handbook of Accreditation*			
2.	Offer postsecondary instruction exclusively in career and technical education at all campuses on a continuous basis			
3.	Offer credentials no higher than an applied associate degree			
4.	Demonstrate the institutional capacity to ensure the following: staffing for administrative and faculty needs, responsible financial and facilities management, and support for the institution's programs and services			
5.	Have produced a graduate from the longest program offered by the institution where the graduate has completed 100% of the program's required hours at the institution (no hours transferred in and no CLEP hours awarded)			
6.	Utilize a campus-based instructional delivery system with at least 25% of the institution's total Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) being derived from enrollments in traditional (bricks and mortar) instruction			
7.	Maintain at least 50% FTE enrollment at each campus in non-VESL programs			
8.	Have an institutional enrollment of no fewer than 10 FTE			
9.	Be legally authorized to operate within the jurisdiction in which it is located for a minimum of one year			
10.	Have been in possession of current and applicable licensure/authorization for a minimum of one year			
11.	Have been in continuous operation and providing instruction at the main campus and under the same ownership for a minimum of one year			
12.	Have the on-site administrator or other full-time employee at the main campus attend the Candidate Academy within 12 months prior to submitting an application for candidate status			
13.	Demonstrate that it meets the financial stability requirements for the most recent completed fiscal year (covering 12 months of student class attendance) as stated in Standard 7 – Financial Resources			
14.	Be in compliance with Federal requirements applicable to accreditation (See the latest *Handbook of Accreditation, Requirements Applicable to Applicants for Candidacy or Accreditation*, pgs. 49-50.)			
15.	Agree to comply with all requirements of the Council			
16.	Occupy its own physical facilities and not be co-located with another institution. (Co-Location may include, but is not limited to, the sharing of administration, faculty, staff, websites, links to websites, telephone numbers, and/or physical facilities. See definition in the *Handbook of Accreditation*, pg. 84 for a complete description.)			

Non-Main Campus Site Requirements	YES	NO	N/A
Institutions with non-main campus sites must demonstrate continuous compliance with the following eligibility requirements:			
1. That the ownership of all branches and extensions is identical to that of the main campus			
2. That the local administrators of all non-main campus sites report to the chief administrator of the main campus			
3. That duplicate records on personnel, financial matters, student attendance, and educational progress for all non-main campus sites are kept at the main campus (NOTE: Institutions capable of maintaining and accessing records electronically may keep all records previously mentioned at the main campus.)			
4. That names of non-main campus sites are identical to that of the main campus (Names of non-main campus sites may be expanded, with Commission approval, to identify different locations or specific programs.)			
5. That all non-main campus sites, and their respective program offerings, are described in the main campus catalog and that this description cites the campus' relationship to the main campus			

Additional Information for Accreditation Visiting Teams

The Council **does not** accredit institutions that demonstrate the following activities:

a. Offer instruction via correspondence education [See *Section VII. Definitions – Correspondence Education* of the *Handbook of Accreditation*.].
b. Operate virtual campuses. That is, all campuses accredited by the Council must offer at least one traditional program or hybrid program that includes at least 50% traditional instruction - which demonstrates continuous enrollment - along with any others offered via distance education.
c. Offer degree credentials of any type other than the applied associate degree.

Worksheet for Confirming
Compliance with Recruiting/Advertising Requirements

This form is to be completed by Visiting Teams during accreditation visits.

These requirements are published in the Conditions section of the *Handbooks of Accreditation* under the heading: *2. Institution's Relationships with Other Constituencies*, *a. Transfer of Credit*, *b. Requirements Applicable to Institutional Recruitment Activities* and *c. Requirements Applicable to Advertising*.

A 'YES' response to all items indicates compliance. A 'NO' response on this worksheet must be carried over to the Conditions check sheet (**Conditions 18 and 19**) and a Finding of Non-Compliance must be written which specifies the requirement the institution fails to meet.

TRANSFER OF CREDIT	YES	NO	N/A
1. Institutions that elect to accept credit earned from other sources must verify that the source of the credit accepted is accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or whose acceptance is required by a state or federal approving agency.			

RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES	YES	NO	N/A
Candidate and accredited institutions must demonstrate compliance with the following requirements for recruitment activities for all programs:			
1. Recruitment activities are truthful and avoid any false or misleading impressions of the institution, its programs and services, or employment.			
2. Recruiting practices ensure that policies and procedures for admission to programs are made available to prospective students prior to enrollment and communicated within a time frame that is sensitive to deadlines for enrollment and completion of programs should changes to the information occur.			
3. Materials used in recruitment activities include a policy regarding the transfer of students between programs within the institution and the transfer of students from other institutions that is clearly defined and published, and this information is available to prospective students prior to enrollment.			
4. Materials used in recruitment activities include a policy regarding the transfer of credits that includes a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at other institutions that is clearly defined and published, and this information is available to prospective students prior to enrollment.			
5. Recruitment practices ensure that prospective students are informed of the			
a. costs,			
b. equipment,			
c. services,			
d. time, and			
e. technical competencies, if any, required by its programs, including (if applicable), personal data collection and processes, and charges associated with verification of student identity, prior to enrollment.			

Worksheet for Confirming Compliance with Recruiting/Advertising Requirements Page 2

RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES (continued)	YES	NO	N/A
6. Materials used in recruitment activities accurately describe the			
a. mission of the institution,			
b. instructional outcomes,			
c. student performance expectations, and			
d. completion requirements of programs.			
7. State and/or Federal licensure requirements for employment in specific occupational fields, if required, are provided to prospective students prior to enrollment.			

The following practices in student recruitment activities **are prohibited**:
1. Guaranteeing employment
2. Misrepresenting job placement, employment opportunities, or potential salaries for completers
3. Misrepresenting program costs
4. Misrepresenting abilities required to complete intended programs
5. Misrepresenting recruiting personnel as career counselors
6. Misrepresenting transfer of credit to or from another institution
7. Misrepresenting its accreditation status

ADVERTISING	YES	NO	N/A
1. Candidate and accredited institutions must demonstrate compliance with the following requirements for advertising for all programs:			
2. Media used by an institution is truthful and presented with dignity to avoid any false or misleading impressions of the institution, its programs and services, or employment.			
3. The institution is emphasized more than the accreditation status in all promotional and institutional materials.			
4. Advertising seeking prospective students that is placed by the institution, its representatives, or third parties appears under "instruction," "education," "training," or a similarly titled classification and is **not** published under any "help wanted" or "employment" classification.			
5. Advertisements seeking prospective students that are placed by the institution or its representatives through direct mail, radio, television, internet, or directories clearly indicate that education is being offered, and do **not**, either by actual statement, commission, or intimation, imply that prospective employees are being sought.			
6. Media comments do not imply that the institution guarantees employment.			
7. Media comments do not criticize other institutions.			
8. Printed bulletins or other promotional information are specific with respect to the			
a. prerequisites for admission to the institution's programs,			
b. curricula,			
c. content of courses, and			
d. graduation and employment requirements.			

ADVERTISING (continued)	YES	NO	N/A
9. The institution's physical facilities and educational programs are accurately portrayed in all websites, bulletins, and other publications, whether printed or online.			
10. A record or copy of all promotional and advertising material is kept on file for three years.			
11. Full responsibility for all representations made by its recruiting personnel or other employees in recruiting students on its behalf is assumed by the candidate or accredited institution.			

Criteria for Publications Worksheet

This form is to be completed by Visiting Teams during accreditation visits.

Institutions must demonstrate they satisfy each requirement for publications. A 'NO' response on this worksheet must be carried over to the Conditions check sheet (Condition #20) and a Finding of Non-Compliance must be written which specifies the requirement the institution fails to meet.

		YES	NO	N/A
Publications (e.g., the institution's website and other printed materials)—A website and other official informational documents which are made available through various media (hard copy or online) to provide the information specified below that must be readily available to students, prospective students, and other constituents: The publication(s) must contain and accurately depict the following information:				
1.	The institutional mission			
2.	Admission requirements and procedures			
3.	The institution's policy on the transfer of students between programs within the institution			
4.	The institution's policy on the transfer of students from other institutions			
5.	The institution's policy on the transfer of credits that includes a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution			
6.	Basic information on programs and courses, with any required sequences and frequency of course offerings explicitly stated			
7.	Program completion requirements, including length of time required to obtain certification of completion			
8.	Faculty (full-time and part-time listed separately) with degrees held and the conferring institution			
9.	A description of institutional facilities readily available for educational use			
10.	Rules and regulations for conduct			
11.	Tuition, fees, and other program costs			
12.	Opportunities and requirements for financial aid			
13.	Avocational programs/courses that are neither accredited by the Council, nor qualify students to receive Title IV financial aid (such as ESL programs)			
14.	Policies, procedures, and time frame for refunding fees and charges to students who withdraw from enrollment			
15.	National and/or state legal requirements for eligibility for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered			
16.	Any unique requirements for career paths or for employment and advancement opportunities in the profession or occupation described			
17.	The institution's grading system			
18.	The institution's academic/school calendar			
19.	The institution's attendance requirements			
20.	The street address and telephone number of each campus of the institution (main campus and each additional permanent site)			
21.	The institution's student grievance procedure which includes the Commission's mailing address, telephone number, and website address			
22.	Other publications that make any reference to the institution's status (candidacy or accredited) with the Commission must be accurate and must include the name, address, telephone number, and website address of the Commission. (In			

	lieu of reference to the Commission, the institution may use the following statement: "For information about national and program accreditation, contact the institution.")			
23.	The website is readily and publicly available to students, prospective students, and other constituents to provide current information as specified below:			
	a) The name of the institution exactly as approved by the Commission and the institution's authorizing agency			
	b) The name, email address, and telephone number of the institution's Chief Administrator			
	c) A list of programs that is consistent with those approved by the Commission and state/federal agencies			
	d) Photos (if used) that accurately depict the institution's physical facilities and Programs			

Worksheet for Non-Main Campus Sites

This form is to be completed by Visiting Teams during accreditation visits.

A 'NO' response on this worksheet must be carried over to the appropriate Standard(s) in the Team Report Software and a Finding of Non-Compliance must be written which specifies the campus to which the finding applies.

Name of Campus:________________________________ Address:________________________________

Type of Campus:

☐ Branch Campus ☐ Extension Campus (Distance from Main or Branch:)

☐ Instructional Service Center ☐ Extended Classroom (Distance from Main Campus:)

	The following criteria apply to ALL non-main campus sites:	**Yes**	**No**
1.	The institution's learning resources, including media services, technology, facilities, and materials, are comprehensive, current, selected with faculty input, and accessible to the faculty and students.		
2.	Relevant and up-to-date equipment is available to support the programs offered by the institution.		
3.	Instructional equipment meets appropriate and required safety standards.		
4.	Instructional supplies are available to support the programs offered by the institution.		
5.	Instructional supplies meet appropriate and required safety standards.		
6.	Physical facilities at all locations provide adequate, safe, and clean facilities with appropriate supporting utilities for classrooms, laboratories/shops, offices, restrooms, lounges, meeting rooms, parking, etc.		
7.	First aid supplies are readily available.		
8.	Preserving and protecting student coursework, testing, and records are provided by the use of storage devices, duplicate physical or digital records, security files, or other measures that ensure both the preservation and security of the records from fire, theft, vandalism, and other adverse actions.		
9.	The institution has a sufficient number of faculty members to fulfill its mission and operate its programs.		
10.	The institution has a sufficient number of administrative and supervisory personnel to fulfill its mission and to oversee the operation of its programs and services.		
11.	The institution has a sufficient number of instructional support staff members to fulfill its mission and deliver its programs.		
12.	Personnel are employed to maintain student and financial records; to assist in producing instructional materials; and to prepare correspondence, reports, and other documents as needed.		
13.	Custodial services are available to provide routine care and maintenance of facilities and grounds for the institution.		
14.	Preventative maintenance services ensure continued operation of the facilities.		
15.	The institution provides academic advisement services to assist students in planning for the occupational education programs they seek to pursue.		
16.	There is a student orientation program to acquaint new students with policies, functions, and personnel of the institution.		
17.	A designated staff member is responsible for maintaining official files and records of students.		
18.	The institution is responsible for any reasonable accommodation of students who are identified to have special needs.		
19.	The institution provides placement services for all program completers.		

The following criteria apply to BRANCH campuses only.

Standard 10 Criteria	YES	NO	N/A
1. Tests ***or*** other means of assessing the achievement and aptitudes of students for various occupations are appropriate and are used to provide personalized counseling and program admissions services to students.			
2. If the institution has processed Title IV loans or is currently processing Title IV loans, it has a default management plan that meets the requirements of the Commission for as long as required by the U.S. Department of Education.			
3. Written procedures are established for access to student coursework, testing, and records to ensure confidentiality, limiting access to authorized personnel only.			
4. Student records, including enrollment, financial, academic, and current educational progress, as well as program completion, program placement and, if applicable, licensure exam pass rate status, are available at the institution.			
5. The institution, upon request by students, provides transcripts or procedures for obtaining transcripts containing, at a minimum, the following information: the program of study, courses or units of study completed with corresponding grades, and period of enrollment.			
Item 6: This item is to be completed by Visiting Teams during accreditation visits.			
6. Number of student files reviewed (minimum of 25)			
7. The institution has published and implemented grievance policies for handling complaints from students.			
8. The institution includes the Commission's mailing address, telephone number, and website address within the grievance policy in case the grievance cannot be resolved at the institutional level.			
9. Institutional records reflect that program complaints and grievances receive due process and include evidence of resolution.			
10. The institution maintains records on student complaints that are filed in accordance with the institution's grievance policy to ensure acceptable quality in the educational programs offered by the institution.			
Item 11: This item is to be completed by Visiting Teams during accreditation visits.			
11. Number of complaints in file since last accreditation site visit. (All student complaints on file must be reviewed for compliance with the institution's grievance policy.)			
12. The institution has a written plan for determining the effectiveness of student services and ensures that the plan identifies responsibilities for coordination of student services, provides for the counseling of students, is evaluated on an annual basis, and addresses how evaluation results are shared with faculty and staff and used for continuous improvement.			
13. The institution demonstrates that it is following a written plan for placement services. **VISITING TEAMS: If NO is checked, leave items 14-20 blank and write one finding of non-compliance that specifies BOTH the requirement for a plan AND each criterion 14-20. (See instructions page.)**			**MULTI-PART CRITERIA**
The written plan for placement services includes the following elements: 14. Identification of responsibilities for coordination of placement services			
15. A communications network that exists between the person responsible for placement coordination, the staff, the faculty, and various businesses and industries of the service area			
16. A list of employers and employment opportunities			
17. Counseling of students			
18. Maintenance of placement records for completers as a means of measuring the success of the institution in achieving its mission			
19. Evaluation on an annual basis (and revised as necessary),			
20. A description of how evaluation results are shared with faculty and staff and used for continuous improvement			

Sample Team Correspondences:

Confirming the Team Members

Good evening Everyone:

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the ABC College reaffirmation team visit scheduled for ________, 2024. I am looking forward to meeting each of you and serving with you on this team. I am sure we will have a great week and visit.

I received the school's self-study and will do their preliminary visit on _________.   I will email everyone after the preliminary visit regarding travel details, the agenda for the week, and information about the visit**.   Please wait until I complete the preliminary visit before making any travel arrangements.**

Again, thank you for agreeing to serve, and I will be in touch next week. Have a wonderful evening.

Your Team Leader

Confirming the Preliminary Went Well, and Team Members need to Make Travel Arrangements:

EXAMPLE SCHOOL Team info:

Hello, I am excited to serve on this team with you! EXAMPLE SCHOOL has put in a lot of work to prepare for our visit. There is a main campus and two instructional service centers as part of this institution, we will have the opportunity to review how their school complies with the 10 standards of the Council on Occupational Education and review their 10 approved programs. I am confident we can do an effective and objective review of the institution's compliance with the standards, conditions, policies, and rules of the Commission.

The preliminary visit was held today, August 26, virtually for EXAMPLE SCHOOL, the school personnel are eager to host our team. The staff was very responsive to my requests. I have included several documents within this email to assist with the upcoming visit.

Team leader contact info

_____   Cell: 330-466-0482.   Office 330-669-7070 ext 1322

Contact at EXAMPLE SCHOOL

CAO NAME   333-333-3333 cell

Team Roster:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M9kz52XzBZSW2nbxJeQqRMTRDUv-YmhE/view?usp=sharing

Lodging:

https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/wooohhx-hampton-wooster/ --the school has booked our rooms for Sunday through Thursday..

School locations

EXAMPLE SCHOOL has a main campus located at Anystreet USA

Instructional Service Center located at: 2575 North USA—this center only has secondary students and will not be part of our review.

Branch Campus located at: 2595 South USA (this campus is 50 miles from the main campus)

Transportation:

Flights: Please plan to arrive at the hotel no later than 2:00 on Monday, Month and day. Plan for departure Thursday evening, Month and day.

The campus will pick us up at baggage claim.

EXAMPLE SCHOOL approved program lists:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_ZGNw7tUADEnLnRXYpyBLm1jDl0Hvw9eZdWPKfaf958/edit?usp=sharing

Sample 2:

Dear Team Members,

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a team member for the Council on Occupational Education reaffirmation visit to XYZ COLLEGE, 123 N. RED STREET, ANYWHERE, USA. I look forward to working with you on this assignment. I am confident we can do a very thorough and objective review of the institution's compliance with the Commission's standards, conditions, policies, and rules. I made the preliminary visit on August 23-25 and found the institution well-prepared to host their visit in October. They would like us to arrive on ___________.

Please check my council website (www.council.org) to review the Team Roster with the standards and programs you have been assigned to review. A full agenda and further details will be sent to you within the next couple of days, but I wanted to send this email out so you could make your plane reservations. Please fly into the _____ airport and be there by _____ on October 8. We will try and have a team meeting around ____ at the hotel. Please make your return flight arrangements for Thursday morning.

Please let me know if you have any scheduling issues. Once you have made your arrangements, please send a copy to me and to (campus rep), who is copied on this email. You will receive the self-study, access to the digital exhibits, and a survey from him to help you get started.

Looking forward to seeing you all!

Your Team Leader

SELF-STUDY EXHIBIT PREPARATION

Exhibits are electronic documentation which supports each condition and criterion, and must be made available for the team to review during the on-site visit. Exhibits are not transmitted to the team or to the Council office. Only the self-study document should be transmitted, and it should be sent to the team and the Council office twenty (20) days prior to the scheduled visit.

Exhibits should clearly demonstrate the institution's compliance with each of the conditions and criteria. All materials should be easily accessible to the team to ensure the documentation can be reviewed in its entirety. In some instances, the same exhibits can apply to more than one standard, therefore, documentation can be duplicated, as needed. Exhibits should be set up according to the latest version of the COE check sheets, which are available at the COE website—council.org/Resources/Applications and Forms.

Other than documents found in the permanent accreditation file, the following documentation must be kept on file from one accreditation team visit until the next. All documents will be prepared as exhibits.

1. Institutional Advisory Agendas and Minutes
2. Occupational Advisory Agendas and Exhibits
3. Strategic Plan and All Other Plans
4. Records of Student Refunds
5. Grievances
6. Default Management Plans
7. Financial Reports
8. Copies of Promotional and Advertising Material (must be kept on file for 3 years)

IMPORTANT: The Conditions check sheet and the check sheets for Standards 3, 7, and 10 contain items that should only be completed by the visiting team. The institution is not required to create exhibits for these items.

Exhibit Format

Exhibits must be made available to the team in electronic format.

It is imperative that the institution's exhibits are easily accessible by all team members on an intranet (a private, local network), or on the internet on a secure password-protected site, or in an electronic format, such as a CD or flash drive.

Organizing electronic exhibits can be accomplished as easily as setting up a folder on the institution's server and subfolders labeled for each standard.

- Self-Study Exhibits
    - Conditions Of Accreditation
    - Standard 1 – Institutional Mission
    - Standard 2 – Educational Programs
    - Standard 3 – Program Outcomes
    - Standard 4 – Strategic Plan
    - Standard 5 – Educational Resources
    - Standard 6 – Physical Resources and Technical Infrastructure
    - Standard 7 – Financial Resources
    - Standard 8 – Human Resources
    - Standard 9 – Organizational Structure
    - Standard 10 – Student Services and Activities

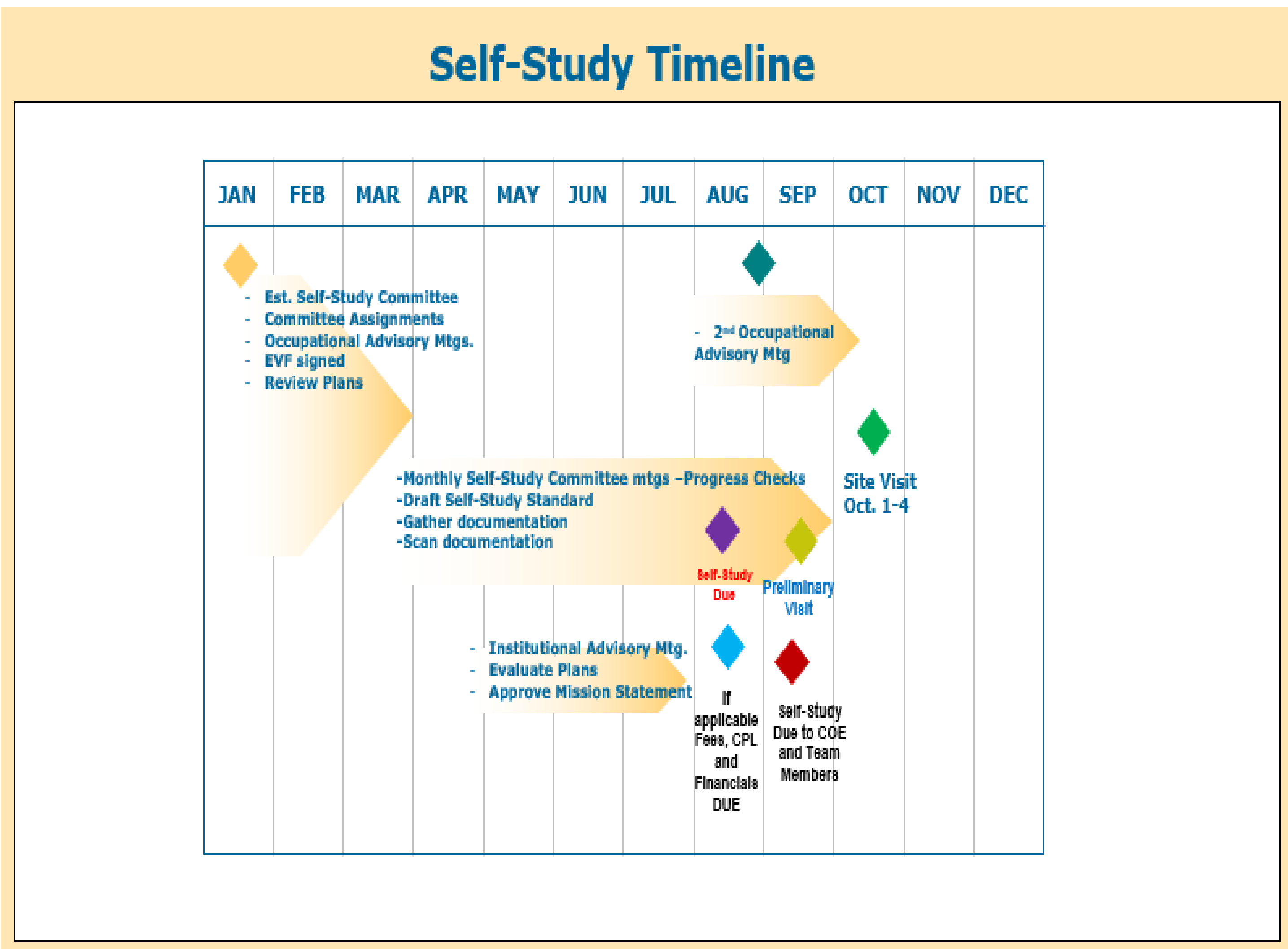
Clearly-labeled digital exhibit files can be placed within each subfolder that correspond to the criteria on the conditions and standards check sheets.

- Self-Study Exhibits
  - Conditions Of Accreditation
  - Condition 7 - Current License from State Approval Agency
  - Condition 8 - ID and Licensure Information for All Campuses
  - Condition 9 - COE Workshop Attendance Certificates
  - Condition 10 - Newspaper Notice Announcing Accreditation Team Visit

Digital files **must** be numbered to match the corresponding condition or criterion for which they demonstrate compliance. Not all folders will contain sequential numbering as the conditions requiring documentation may not be sequential.

Confidential Materials

The location and name of the person in charge of confidential exhibit materials, such as personnel evaluations, audited financial statements, budgets, etc., should be placed in an electronic folder appropriately identified by standard number.



VISITING TEAM INFORMATION

This information will be confirmed by the team leader at the time of the preliminary visit. It should be entered into the team reporting software and made available to all team members.

General Information			
1.	Institution Name:		
2.	Team Leader Name:		
3.	Dates of Team Visit:		
4.	Suggested means of transportation to the institution:		
Travel Plans			
5.	Will the institution provide transportation to and from airport?		
6.	Name(s), email, and telephone numbers of person(s) to whom team member(s) should send travel plans and request(s) for local transportation:		
Housing			
7.	Facility Name:		
8.	Address:		
9.	Telephone:		
10.	Fax:		
First Meeting of the Team			
11.	Time:		
12.	Place:		
13.	Estimated time of final meeting:		
Arrangements		**YES**	**NO**
14.	Determine where the conference room or workroom on campus will be located:		
15.	Will other work or conference rooms be available?		
16.	Are computers available for each team member? (Required to review digital exhibits)		
17.	Will the institution provide transportation to and from lodging accommodations?		
18.	Will the institution provide transportation to reach facilities located away from main campus?		
Additional Comments:			

SAMPLE EMAIL FROM TEAM LEADER TO TEAM MEMBERS

(Will be sent by the Team Leader approximately 3-4 weeks prior to the team visit)

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a team member for the Council on Occupational Education accreditation visit to_____________________ scheduled for _____________________.

I look forward to meeting and working with you on this assignment. I have completed the preliminary team leader visit to the institution and believe they are ready to host our team.

The institution's staff have put a lot of effort into preparation for the accreditation visit and are excited to show what they have accomplished.

Since you are receiving this email, the team roster is complete, and you should now have access to the institution's team visit report file in your COE MyCouncil account (https://my.council.org/) under the 'Applications' tab.

Be sure you review the Visiting Team Information section in the team report software for information about the time of the first meeting of the team and arrangements for lodging and, if appropriate, transportation. Also, please review your assignments as indicated on the completed roster. You can find the roster in the team report software by clicking on the Visiting Team Information section and then on the Team Roster menu option.

Please remember to email your travel itinerary to the COE coordinator, the institution's contact (found in the Visiting Team Information section of the team report software under the Travel Plans menu option) and to me (Team Leader). If you have any questions or problems, do not hesitate to contact me via email or cell.

You should prepare for the visit by reviewing the following:

- Handbook of Accreditation
- Guidelines for Accreditation Visiting Team Members
- The Self-Study Manual
- Institution's Website
- Accreditation Visiting Team Leader and Member Certification Part 2: Writing Findings of Non-Compliance, Suggestions, and Commendations PowerPoint Presentation

All COE-related documents are available at https://council.org/manuals/. Also, you can access additional documents on the Council's website that include the Check Sheets for Accreditation Visiting Teams (for the type of institution the team is evaluating) and the COE Expense Voucher (https://council.org/applications-and-forms/). The institution will email the Self-Study Report to you no later than 20 days prior to the team visit. If you do not receive it, please contact COE staff immediately.

If your contact information on the Team Roster is incorrect, please notify Monique Campbell at monique.campbell@council.org and me to provide the correct information.

Keep your original receipts for expenditures from the time you leave home and return. Travel Vouchers for reimbursement of your actual expenses will be reviewed during the visit, but receipts are required.

Thank you in advance for your participation. I am sure you will enjoy the visiting team experience with your peers.

Team Leader______________________________ Email/Cell________________ /________________

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Name of Institution ____

Team Member ______________________________ Date______________________

NAME	TITLE

SUGGESTED TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING

Interviews with students should be conducted in a space that does not include administrators, faculty or other institutional staff. Teacher or faculty interviews should not occur in the presence of administrators. The team should interview all institutional faculty, staff and affiliates.

A. PREPARATION FOR INTERVIEWS

1. Become knowledgeable about the standards assigned;
2. Review the school's self-study report and develop questions that need further clarification on how the school is meeting the various aspects of the standards;
3. Develop a list of the people who should be interviewed for information to verify the items included in the self-study report.

B. TECHNIQUES FOR CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

1. Start the interview by discussing a general topic and attempt to place the interviewee at ease;
2. Introduce yourself and explain the reason for conducting the interview;
3. Ask questions clearly and concisely; and
4. Allow the interviewee time to think and answer:
    a. Listen attentively;
    b. Do not interrupt the interviewee;
    c. Make notes but do not record;
    d. Keep the interview on track by re-stating the question, if necessary;
    e. Avoid asking "yes" or "no" questions, in many cases; begin questions with words such as "who," "where," "what," "why," "when", in an effort to solicit a narrative response
    f. Ask follow-up questions on comments made by the interviewee, if necessary
5. Express your appreciation

C. POST-INTERVIEWS

1. Immediately detail information or conclusions drawn from interview;
2. Follow-up on information concerning the institution based on the discussion with the interviewee, if necessary.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A. FOR INSTRUCTORS

1. What did you learn about your program as a result of working on the Self-Study Report?
2. What aspects of your program are you most proud of?
3. What areas of the program are most challenging?
4. What methods of teaching (lecture, demonstration, practice, OJT/Clinical, Distance Ed, etc.) do you use in presenting information to your students?
5. How do you perform assessments of student learning/performance?
6. What is your completion, placement, and licensure pass rate for students in your program?
7. How do you maintain student files (grades, attendance, progress, etc.)? Show me.
8. How do you incorporate the topic of work ethics in your program?

B. FOR STUDENTS

1. What program are you enrolled in? And for how long?
2. How do you know you are progressing in class and are on track for completion?
3. What happens if you fall behind?
4. What happens if you get ahead?
5. Why did you choose this school versus other available schools?
6. Do you feel you are getting your money's worth for the education you are receiving?
7. Do you feel supported by instructors and school staff?
8. How is the customer service at the school?
9. Do you feel your education and the equipment used in the program prepares you for the real-world work environment?
10. How is health and safety taught in your program?

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE REPORT AND FORMAT

(COMPLETE and FINAL response due 30 days after receipt of the team report, or by the due date stated on the official COE correspondence.)

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

IMPORTANT: An institution has up to twelve (12) months from the time it is first reviewed by the Commission to resolve all Findings of Non-Compliance.

Findings of Non-Compliance (FNC) (AKA Finding)
An institution MUST respond to all **Findings of Non-Compliance** in the visiting team report.

Suggestions
An institution is NOT required to respond to a **Suggestion** offered by the visiting team, but it is recommended that the institution do so. Schools electing to respond to a Suggestion should follow the same format as for a Finding of Non-Compliance (See page 2).

The response to a Suggestion should be included in the last part of the Institutional Response Report (Separated from and placed AFTER all responses to Findings of Non-Compliance).

No Findings or Suggestions
An institution that does not receive Findings of Non-Compliance or Suggestions should write a letter (on the institution's letterhead) to the Executive Director of the Commission, Dr. Kirk Nooks. Acknowledge that the school received no Findings of Non-Compliance or Suggestions. The letter should state that the institution is requesting initial accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation.

Email the correspondence to the assigned coordinator:

Robert Carrigan @ (robert.carrigan@council.org)

Sandra Sacrestano @ (sandra.sacresstano@council.org)

CC: Monique Campbell @ (monique.campbell@council.org)

IMPORTANT: The institution must provide a COMPLETE response, along with supporting documentation/pictures, when appropriate, reflecting that a Finding of Non-Compliance or Suggestion is now **RESOLVED**. **Therefore, it is critical that the institution corrects the condition BEFORE responding**. Providing promises that state what the institution WILL DO does not constitute resolution of a Finding of Non-Compliance, nor does it adequately address a Suggestion.

B. HOW TO SUBMIT DOCUMENTATION

FORMAT

Submit response(s) as an 8 ½ x 11 letter-sized documents in **Adobe PDF format**. Provide electronic documents/pictures. No hard copies are required.

The Institutional Response Report is comprised of three parts:

1. Document cover page – written by the Chief Administrative Officer of record with the Council, and addressed to Executive Director, Dr. Kirk Nooks.
2. Institution's Response to Findings of Non-Compliance
3. Institution's Response to Suggestions (if applicable)

Each Finding or Suggestion should be comprised of three parts:

1. Re-state Finding or Suggestion: At the top of the page, restate the Finding of Non-Compliance/Suggestion verbatim from the Team Report. Also, if addressing more than one Finding or Suggestion, assign numbers to each finding, beginning with "Finding of Non-Compliance #1", (followed by the re-stated finding) or "Suggestion #1". The next will be listed as "Finding of Non-Compliance #2" or "Suggestion #2", and so forth.
2. Response: Write a clear and concise narrative response to the Finding of Non-Compliance. Be sure that the response addresses how and when the violation depicted by the Finding of Non-Compliance was resolved.
3. Documentation: Provide documentation to reflect how the Finding or Suggestion was addressed. Types of documentation may include, but are not limited to, letters, memoranda, financials, purchase orders, work orders, and even photographs, if appropriate.

FINDINGS OR SUGGESTIONS AND THEIR CORRESPONDING DOCUMENTATION SHOULD BE PLACED TOGETHER. Place documentation for each particular Finding or Suggestion directly **BEHIND** the narrative portion of the Finding or Suggestion.

IMPORTANT: DO NOT PLACE ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION TOGETHER AT THE END OF THE INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE REPORT.

REPEAT STEPS 1-3 FOR EACH FINDING OF NON-COMPLIANCE OR SUGGESTION.

C. RESPONDING TO A FINDING: SAMPLE FORMAT

Finding of Non-Compliance #1 – Restate Finding or Suggestion as defined in the Team Report.

Response #2 **–** Institution's narrative to #1 Finding or Suggestion.

(**Note**: Provide documentation/picture(s) to reflect that #1 Finding or #1 Suggestion has been resolved). **Important**: Please be succinct in your response. To ensure your Institutional Response is reviewed in a timely manner, please limit responses and documentation/ picture(s) to no more than **10 pages** per finding. (Example: An institution with 40 FNC will provide a report to the Council of approximately 400 pages or less.)

D. HELPFUL HINTS

CONTENT

1. Ensure that response is typed and in English.
2. Start preparing for the institutional response as soon as possible.
3. Employ relevant staff members to assist in the creation of this document.

4. **Submit the COMPLETE response as ONE document**. If the electronic file is too large to send as a single document, it is acceptable to submit it as one document in one of two ways:
    a. Via cloud/on-line storage delivery system (e.g., Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.). Ensure that the institution provides COE staff with the appropriate access information by the 30-daydeadline, or by the due date stated on the official COE correspondence.
    b. Via flash drive - Mail to the attention of the COE staff person who coordinated the institution's team visit (Robert Carrigan, Sandra Sacrestano, or Monique Campbell). Ensure that the drive is submitted to the COE office by the 30-day deadline, or by the due date stated on the official COE correspondence.
5. Be specific in directly addressing the criterion in the narrative and corresponding documentation/picture(s). In other words, what action has the school NOW TAKEN to resolve the Finding of Non-Compliance or Suggestion given by the team?
6. Address EACH part of all multi-part Findings. If one component has not been addressed, or if a required process has not been implemented, the criterion will remain unresolved.
7. Ensure that ALL pages are easy to review. Do not submit illegible or poorly copied information or pictures, upside-down pages, or documents that are askew.
8. Test all digital files to ensure that they are not corrupted, can be opened, and that each page can be viewed.
9. Failure to submit a **COMPLETE** institutional response to the report within 30 days after receiving it or by the deadline stated on the official COE letter may adversely affect the institution's accreditation status.

FORMAT:

1. Carefully organize the institutional response document, ensuring that it is grammatically correct and will not be difficult to follow.
2. Number all pages of the institutional response.
3. Provide a table of contents listing each individual Finding of Non-Compliance and Suggestion. This helps to ensure that the information is easily accessible to those who will be reviewing it.

Contact Council staff (**Robert Carrigan, Sandra Sacrestano or Monique Campbell**) should you have questions relative to content or formatting.

E. AFTER THE SCHOOL SUBMITS A RESPONSE

Below is some additional information on the processes that occurs once the institution submits its response to the Team Report:

All documentation pertinent to the institution's Self-Study and Team Report are placed on the next available agenda for review by the COE Commission (Governing Board). Should you have questions about that timeframe, feel free to contact COE staff.

Commission readers review documentation, which includes:

- Institution’s Self-Study
- Visiting Team Report
- Institutional Response Report
- Other documentation, such as catalogs, websites, etc.

The Commission’s action is recorded, and the institution will be notified in writing of the Commission’s decision.

Commission readers are never from the same state as the institution (or any of its campuses) and are required to sign a conflict-of-interest statement to ensure that their reviews and resulting actions are as objective as possible.

NOTE: The Chief Administrative Officer or other representatives from the institution will not be present at the Commission’s review of the institution.

THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

1. Letter of intent to seek candidacy and to request application forms.
2. The on-site administrator or other full-time employee at the main campus must attend a Candidate Academy-Part 1 within 12 months prior to submitting an application for candidate status.
3. Submission of an application for candidacy.
4. Candidacy team visit.
5. Commission review of application and candidacy visit report. Approval of candidate status by Commission. If disapproved, appeal may be made to the Commission.
6. After acceptance as a candidate, an annual report is submitted each year for Commission review. The annual report while in candidate status is an update on the institution's status toward initial accreditation. Also, non-public institutions must submit an audited financial statement each year after acceptance as a candidate and throughout their term of membership with the Council. Audits must be submitted within 6 months of the end of the fiscal year and must be accompanied by a completed COE Financial Form. During candidate status, no substantive changes may be approved except for changes in existing programs. The earliest date that an institution can host an accreditation visiting team is six months after the date candidate status is approved and six months after a representative attends the COE Self-Study and Annual Report workshops (see below). The maximum time an institution may be in candidacy is three years. Candidate institutions must host an initial accreditation team visit within 24 months after being accepted as a candidate by the Commission.

<u>ACCREDITATION</u>

7. FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION: The on-site administrator or other full-time employee at the main cam- pus must attend the Candidate Academy-Part 2;

   OR,

   FOR REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION: The on-site administrator or other full-time employee at the main campus must attend Commission Self-Study and Annual Report Workshops within 6 to 18 months prior to hosting a visiting team for initial accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation.
8. A self-study should be initiated by the end of the first year as a candidate; or, for institutions seeking reaffirmation, at a time appropriate to the target date for hosting an accreditation visiting team.
9. For institutions seeking initial accreditation, an accreditation visit must be hosted no sooner than 6 months after attendance of Candidate Academy-Part 2, and no later than 24 months after acceptance as a candidate. Institutions seeking reaffirmation must submit a request for specific dates they wish to host an accreditation team visit. (Council staff initiates an inquiry to institutions scheduled to host visiting teams each year. Institutions work with Council staff to select the most appropriate dates for accreditation team visits.)
10. Visiting team appointed by Commission Staff.
11. A preliminary visit by the Visiting Team Leader is made approximately 30 days prior to team visit.
12. The team visit includes a review of all programs and activities of the school. An oral report is made to the school at the end of the visit.

13. The written team report is sent to the Executive Director by the team leader within 30 days of the visit.

14. The Commission Executive Director sends team report to the institution.

15. Institution makes changes necessary to meet standards.

16. The chief administrator writes a letter requesting accreditation and submits one electronic copy of institutional response, if required, to the team report within 30 days of the date of the COE Executive Director's transmission of the team report to the institution.

17. The Commission reviews the team report, institutional response report, self-study, and report of readers.

18. The Commission may defer action and request additional documentation, grant accreditation, or deny accreditation. If accreditation is granted (based on the self-study, team report, and institutional response report) the Commission will specify the number of years in the next reaffirmation cycle (two [2] to six [6] years). The year of reaffirmation may be changed for just cause.

19. An institution may appeal a negative action to the Commission.

Annual Review

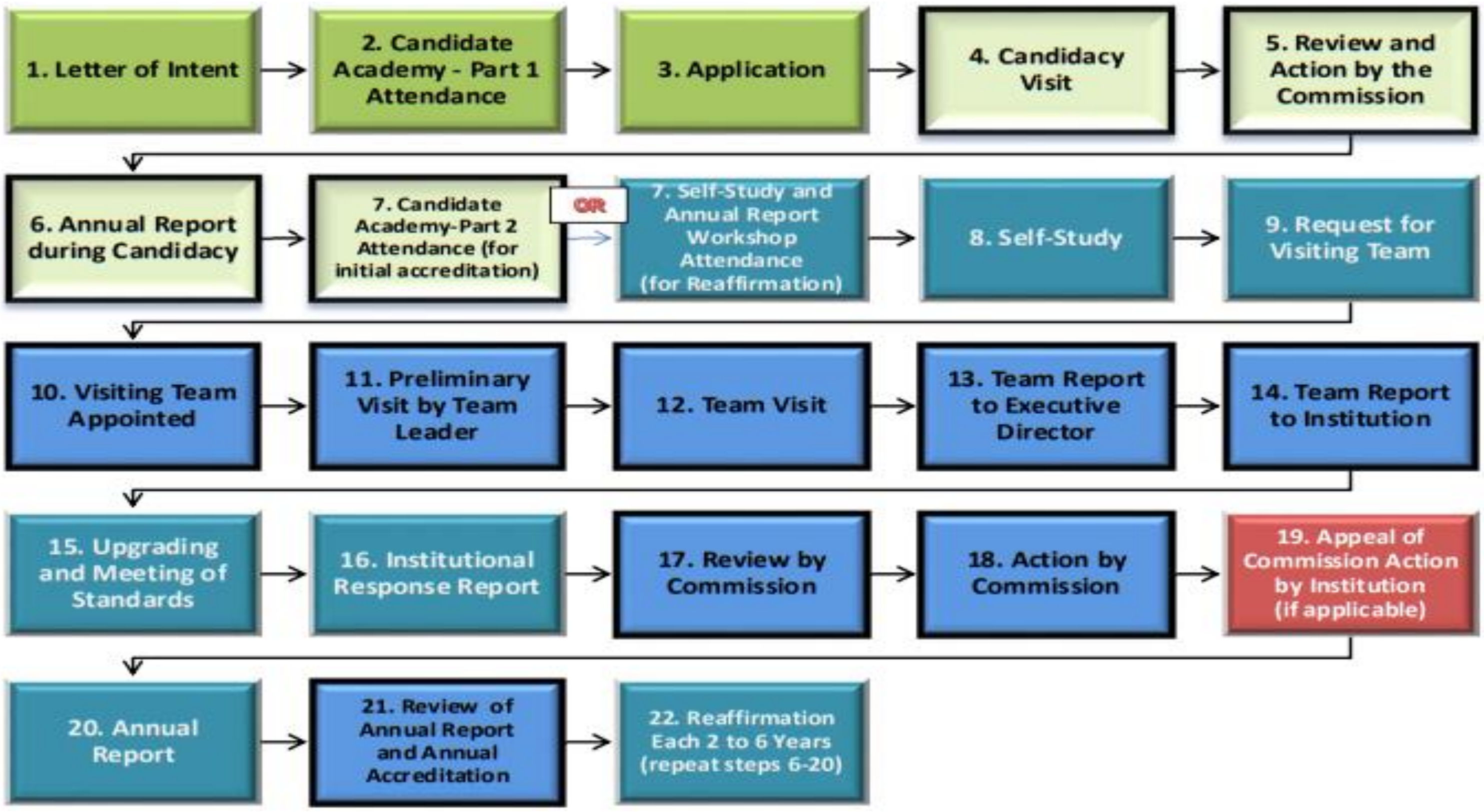
20. All candidate and accredited institutions must submit an annual report to the Commission.

21. Continued candidate status or accreditation is determined annually by Commission approval of annual reports.

22. During the year prior to the year that ends the reaffirmation period, a school must attend a self-study workshop, begin another self-study, and request another team visit. Teams for reaffirmation of accreditation are scheduled every 2 to 6 years. The Commission determines the reaffirmation schedule.

NOTE: Failure to submit an annual report or additional information regarding the annual report, if requested, by the due date established by the Commission shall be grounds for an institution to lose its candidacy status or accreditation.

Accreditation Process Flow



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Requests for additional information on the standards, conditions, and criteria of the Commission of the Council on Occupational Education should be addressed to:

Dr. Kirk Nooks

Executive Director

Council on Occupational Education

7840 Roswell Road, Building 300, Suite 325

Atlanta, Georgia 30350

Telephone: 770-396-3898, Ext.105 or

800-917-2081, Ext. 105

Website: www.council.org

NOTES

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