

Peer Evaluators Procedures

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v. 2018-06-22, DRAFT FOR MEMBER BALLOT*

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I. Purpose

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (herein after MSCHE or the Commission) seeks to ensure that institutions are reviewed by peer evaluators who are competent, knowledgeable, qualified, trained, and adhere to a code of conduct. The purpose of these procedures is to implement the Commission's *Peer Evaluators Policy* regarding the recruitment, training, and assignment of peer evaluators.

II. Procedures for the Recruitment of Peer Evaluators

- A. Individuals may be identified by staff, recommended by colleagues, or self-identified. The Commission may recruit individuals from outside the region as necessary to ensure appropriate expertise.
- B. Interested individuals must submit an Evaluator Data Form (EDF). In certain circumstances, the Commission may accept a current curriculum vitae, resume or other information demonstrating the individual's qualifications in lieu of the Evaluator Data Form (EDF).
- C. Commission staff will review and accept qualified individuals into the pool. The Commission's criteria for selecting peer evaluators include but are not limited to individuals with three or more year of experience in higher education, individuals with identified areas of expertise, breadth of experience, specific expertise or experience based on short and long-term forecasting of needs, institutional type identified as needed, and diversity (racial / ethnic, gender).

III. Procedures for Training Peer Evaluators

- A. Commission staff will maintain a comprehensive, systematic and structured training program for peer evaluators, which will be offered in a variety of modalities. Training will cover the application and interpretation of accreditation standards, policies and procedures, as well as the roles and responsibilities associated with accreditation activities (including responsibilities related to the review of distance education or correspondence education).
- B. Peer evaluators who accept an invitation to serve must participate in the Commission's training program.
- C. Commission staff will notify peer evaluators about training opportunities.
- D. Commission staff may require peer evaluators to complete additional training specific to a particular role or accreditation activity (including but not limited to compliance verification, distance education/correspondence education, substantive change, or appeals).
- E. Commission staff may make additional training available to peer evaluators to expand or

update skills.

IV. Procedures for Assignment of Peer Evaluators

- A. The final assignment of peer evaluators to conduct any accreditation activity rests with Commission staff.
- B. Commission staff will identify potential peer evaluators with the appropriate expertise and training to review the institution's specific programming and methods of delivery as well as the specific circumstances of the accreditation activity being conducted. The Commission shall take into consideration peer institutions and characteristics of peer evaluators deemed appropriate by the institution.
- C. Commission staff will invite potential peer evaluators who, in order to serve, must accept the invitation thereby certifying that they agree to the Statement of Ethical Conduct. Peer evaluators should not accept the invitation if they are unavailable or will not agree to the Statement of Ethical Conduct.
- D. Commission staff will provide the proposed team roster to the institution's president and the Chair of the team to affirm that there is no conflict of interest as defined in the Commission's *Conflict of Interest: Commission Representatives* policy.
 - i. The President must notify the Commission of a perceived or actual conflict of interest within five calendar days.
 - ii. If the Commission agrees that an actual conflict of interest exists, Commission staff will identify a new peer evaluator and provide a revised team roster to the institution's president and the Chair of the team.
- E. The Commission staff will finalize team assignments with no known conflicts of interest.
- F. Previously undisclosed conflicts may arise, without notice, through accreditation processes. In those cases, the Commission staff must be informed within 5 business days by any party who has knowledge of an actual conflict so that Commission staff can work with the parties to maintain the integrity of the evaluation process and adherence to the Commission's policy *Conflict of Interest: Commission Representatives*.
- G. Upon completion of accreditation activities, Commission staff will conduct appropriate assessments, including at a minimum an assessment by the team chair for each team member and by team members of the team chair. The information collected is used internally to inform the content of future training and the assignment of peer evaluators to future accreditation activities.

V. Procedures for Statement of Ethical Conduct

- A. The Commission has developed a Statement of Ethical Conduct for peer evaluators.
- B. Peer evaluators will accept the invitation thereby certifying that they agree to the Statement of Ethical Conduct. Other individuals participating in the accreditation activity but not serving as a peer evaluator (observers, assistants, etc.) will also accept the invitation thereby certifying that they agree to the Statement of Ethical Conduct.
- C. The Commission's Statement of Ethical Conduct requires that peer evaluators agree to the following:
 1. Uphold expectations for conduct and behavior;
 2. Decline any gifts;
 3. Uphold the *Communication in the Accreditation Process* policy;
 4. Uphold the *Conflict of Interest: Commission Representatives* policy;



5. Abide by the *Travel Policy*; and
6. Honor all Commission policy and procedures.

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Related Documents: *Peer Evaluators Policy; Conflict of Interest: Commission Representatives;*

Federal Regulations: 34 CFR Part §602.15(a)(2) Competent and knowledgeable individuals and §602.15(a)(3) Academic and administrative personnel

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