“Expectations & Accountability: the Role of the Peer Reviewer”

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What Happens Between Today and June?

Why is this process important for a team member to know?

Evaluators Workshop (Sept / Dec)

Team Visit (Spring)

Team Telephone Meeting(s) Jan – Feb

Chair Pre-visit

Team Receives External Reviewer Compliance Report

Chair Off Site visit(s) (if app.)

Committee on Evaluation Reports
Team Chair reports (June)

Consent & Discussion Agenda

Commission Meeting (March, June, & Nov)

Inform the Institution
Before the Meeting:

• Find out
  – Availability of the Self Study from the Institution
  – Team / Individual responsibilities
    Voice “Standard” preferences prior to assignment

• Communications with the Institution
• PREPARE!!

Why critical?
• Establish a participative culture early
• Promotes “calibration”
• Scheduling requests - the earlier the better!

Common Agenda topics:
• Chair’s Preliminary visit
• Compliance report
• Team visit schedule
  – 1st draft / requests
• Draft report format and timeline
• Strengths and areas of concerns
  Conduct a comprehensive self study review
Compliance report (externally reviewed):  
- Student identity verification - Distance education and correspondence education  
- Transfer of credit and articulation agreements  
- Assignment of credit hours  
- Title IV program responsibilities  

“Higher education is getting a lot of heat these days for its rising costs, bloated administration, and sluggish movement towards innovation. Those who work in the sector point to at least one cause: having to devote staff members to a vast regulatory regime of hundreds of rules from dozens of state and federal agencies with the reams of required paperwork.“

“Tangled in Red Tape,“ The Chronicle of Higher Education, 7/21/14
Our Role as Peer Reviewers

• The Higher Education Act (HEA) - 1965
  o Governs the administration of federal student aid programs.
• The federal government does not have the capacity nor the expertise to evaluate schools.
  – Subsequent reauthorization in 2008 (HEOA) named the regional accreditors as gatekeepers for institutional access to federal funding (over 150 billion).
  – Stakeholders are demanding more accountability
• Through the peer review process, accrediting agencies provide a cost-effective means for insuring that institutions are regularly evaluated.
Preparation for the day...

- Updates on each standard
  - Strengths and areas of concerns
  - Needed information
  - Changes to schedule
- Writing locations
- PREPARATION PAYS OFF

Team Discussion & Consensus

Discussing and writing in the PM...

“I wish I did a better job on my draft before the visit!”

“Where did John and Jerry go??!”
CHAIRS:
• Don’t over schedule - be prepared to troubleshoot
• Prepare Team report including all major findings
• Prepare and deliver the oral exit report
  – DO NOT mention the Team’s proposal for Commission action

Individual / team preparation
≠
equate to early hotel evenings
=
Quality visit and report
Team Visit

After the Visit

Committee on Evaluation Reports
Team Chair reports (June)

Consent & Discussion Agenda

Commission Meeting (March, June, & Nov)

Inform the Institution

Post Visit

TEAM MEMBERS:
• Review final Team Report
• Submit evaluation of Team chair

CHAIRS:
• Submit paperwork and meet deadlines
  – Team report
  – Evaluations of Team members
  – Confidential Brief (only to MSCHE)

The differences between the team report and the confidential team report:
• Institutional follow-up?
• Progress / monitoring report?
• If applicable, required dates

• Presents and participates at the Committee on Evaluation Reports
What can you expect from the Commission?

• Your voices are heard through the Team Chair
• Team reports are read carefully and help MSCHE at the next levels of review
• Input from numerous and diverse experience -- CONSISTENCY

Commissioners (4) + Team Chairs (10) + Staff (8)
Holistic Review of a Standard

Standard 7 Institutional Assessment
The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.

Fundamental Element: ... “periodic evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the institution’s assessment process;”

Total: 179
# FEs
• Std 7, FE 1: “An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate... a documented, organized, and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve the total range of programs and services...”

and in other FEs...”planned, effective, systematic, and communicated”

○ What do these words mean?
○ Are they related, and if so, how?
○ To which standards do they apply?
### Chair Comments
- Timeliness
- Avoids external distractions
- Preparation
- Engages in debate about interpretation of the standards
  - Listens carefully, asks meaningful, balanced questions
  - Professional, courteous, and collegial
- Supports / assists fellow team members
- Does not get mired in the weeds
- Respects the chair's leadership but willing to take a different position if needed

### Commission Expectations
- Integrity
- Respect for the Mission of the host institution
- Collegiality and flexibility
- Team reports based firmly on MSCHE Standards
- Evidence-based decisions
- Professional (and holistic) judgment
**Key Takeaways**

- **Evaluators Workshop (Sept)**
- **Telephonic Meeting(s) Jan – Feb**
- **Team Visit Approx. 10 (Spring)**
- **Committee on Evaluation Reports Team Chair reports 14+ Staff (June)**
- **Commission Meeting 26 Commissioners + Staff (March, June, & Nov)**

Diagram:
- Chair Pre visit
- Chair Off Site visit
- Team Receives External Reviewer Report
- Team Report
- Consent & Discussion Agenda
- Inform the Institution

Institutional Effectiveness Process:
- Plan
- Improve
- Assess
- Implement

Continuous Improvement:
- Goals & Assessment
- Culture
- Structure

Momentum
Thank you for your service to peer evaluation in the Middle States region.
Questions / Comments?
• Your Team colleagues
• MSCHE publications (Characteristics of Excellence, Team Visits)
• Host institution’s MSCHE liaison
• MSCHE website: www.msche.org