

Selection of Chairpersons and Evaluators

The Commission staff is responsible for composing evaluation teams and assigning chairpersons, always in the light of each institution's specific situation and needs. The general requirements for the team will be discussed with the officers of the institution (by members of the staff and the chairperson) at the time of the preliminary visits.

An evaluation team (most of whom will have previous team experience) includes both academic and administrative personnel among whom will typically be:

1. At least one experienced administrator.
2. Specialists whose expertise is related to the known areas of concern of the institution, (e.g. library and learning resources, student personnel, finance, facilities, etc.).
3. Some persons from institutions of the type to be evaluated, (e.g. community college, four-year liberal arts institution, large university).
4. At least one faculty member, who typically will represent one of the types of teaching disciplines at the institution being visited.

Selection of Chairpersons

The role of the chairperson is a central factor in the success of the accreditation process. The chairperson must be of sufficient professional stature to command the respect of the institution, be prepared by experience to understand its objectives, and be able to represent the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education properly. The primary responsibility of one who chairs an evaluation team is to keep all team members aware that they must look at the institution as a whole, and thus must work as a team, pooling resources and insights, stimulating and questioning each other, searching and discussing until issues are clear and a consensus emerges.

Approximately one year before an evaluation is scheduled to take place, Commission staff will provide the name of a proposed team chairperson to the institution soliciting appropriate comments or observations. Final determination of the team chairperson will be made by Commission staff.

Selection of Team Members

The institution will have been visited by a member of the Commission staff to determine the institutional, administrative and service areas which will need representation on the committee. The Commission maintains an active file of about 1,000 evaluators who participate in the evaluation and consultative activities of the Commission. These individuals are usually recommended by the heads of institutions, colleagues who have themselves participated in the evaluation process, Commission members, and the Commission staff. The Commission relies on the personal and professional integrity of individuals to refuse any assignment where even the slightest potential for conflict of interest exists.

From this file of evaluators, and with the help of the chairperson who will also have made a preliminary visit to the institution, the Commission staff will select a prospective team. The list of members is then sent to the chief executive officer of the institution and to the chairperson of the team for any comments or observations they may choose to make concerning the proposed team. The final determination of the team membership will then be made by the Commission staff who will issue an invitation to the proposed members, enclosing information concerning the nature of the proposed evaluation. Because it is sometimes necessary to make changes in the team, the chairperson will not proceed with arrangements for the visit until notified by Commission staff that all members of the team have accepted their assignments.

November, 1998
September, 2001
Editorial changes March, 2014