

Policy on Professional and Ethical Responsibilities of Commission Members

(Adopted January 2001; Edited June 2001, June 2003, June 2005; Revised June 2013)

Purposes of the Commission

ACCJC Commissioners are expected to accept and subscribe to the defined purposes of accreditation, and to support and uphold the ACCJC's purposes, Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, and processes.

The purposes of accreditation shall be the evaluation of member institutions to assure the educational community, the general public, and other organizations and agencies that an institution has clearly defined objectives appropriate to higher education; has established conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected; appears in fact to be accomplishing them substantially; is so organized, staffed, and supported that it can be expected to continue to do so; and demonstrates that it meets Commission standards. The Commission encourages and supports institutional development and improvement through self evaluation and periodic evaluation by qualified peer professionals¹.

Commission Responsibilities

The Commission as a whole:

- Establishes and periodically reviews Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, policies, and practices for member institutions;
- Serves as the primary decision-maker on accredited status of member institutions;
- Evaluates institutions in terms of their own stated purposes;
- Strives for consistency in determining accredited status of institutions;
- Assists in explaining broad purposes of accreditation and its intended impact on educational quality to the public served by the Commission.

Professional Responsibilities of Commission Members

A Commissioner:

- Participates in all Commission meetings and attends them for their entire duration;
- Studies documents as assigned prior to the meetings;
- Serves as an in-depth reader of evaluation visit materials as assigned;
- Votes according to his or her best professional judgment in accordance with existing policy and standards;
- Participates on Commission committees and in activities representing the Commission's interests as assigned;

¹ ACCJC Bylaws

- Attends and actively participates in Commission activities such as evaluation team visits and workshops;
- Participates in self evaluation and evaluation of the Commission;
- Participates in Commission planning efforts;
- Ensures that all functions of the Commission are executed responsibly through the Commission President;
- Refers all inquiries or requests for information concerning ACCJC business, member institutions, and accreditation practices to the Commission President or Commission Chair who serve as the official spokespersons for the ACCJC;
- Speaks on behalf of the Commission only when designated to do so by the Commission President or Commission Chair;
- Participates in the evaluation of the Commission President;
- Notifies the Commission Chair or Commission President in a timely manner if the Commissioner's position or status changes during a term so that the Commissioner no longer meets the requirement for the category to which appointed.

Ethical Responsibilities of Commission Members

A Commissioner:

- Respects the confidentiality of relationships between the Commission and the institutions it accredits.
- Avoids conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest, and subscribes to the Policy on Conflict of Interest for Commissioners, Evaluation Team Members, Consultants, Administrative Staff, and Other Commission Representatives.
- Is familiar with and adheres to established Commission bylaws and policies.
- Notifies the Commission President or Commission Chair if s/he is unable to perform the duties and carry out the responsibilities of a Commissioner.

Responsibilities of Commissioner Confidentiality in Reviewing Institutions

In reviewing institutions, a Commissioner will:

- Treat all institution-related documents as confidential unless they are explicitly identified to the contrary in writing, and refrain from discussing all such documents and related information except within their role as Commissioners with those who have a need for such information in the course of reviewing an institution.
- Protect all confidential documents provided to Commissioners in the course of ACCJC business, and refrain from discussing all such documents and related information except within their role as Commissioners and with those who have a need for such information in the courses of conducting Commission business.
- Take reasonable measures to assure the confidentiality of all documents in their possession by retaining those documents only on private electronic devices such as computers or ipads, or in private paper files.
- Return to the ACCJC or dispose of all documents, paper and electronic, when it is no longer necessary to retain them and when they are no longer needed for the matter

under consideration by destroying them, either by shredding them or permanently deleting them from all electronic files and devices.

- Adhere to the ACCJC "Statement On the Process for Preserving Confidentiality of Documents Related to Institutional Evaluations."