
Policy on Professional and Ethical Responsibilities of Commission Members

June 2021

Purposes of the Commission

ACCJC is a nonprofit, public benefit corporation organized under the law of the State of California for public and charitable purposes. Guided by its bylaws, mission to advance quality education, and a set of core values founded on the philosophical principles underlying peer review, ACCJC Commissioners support and uphold the ACCJC's Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies.

Commission Responsibilities

The Commission as a whole:

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

The Commission convenes regular meetings to make institutional decisions. It also convenes meetings in the capacity of a Board of Directors to conduct agency business to consider matters pertaining to legal issues, budget, personnel or financial issues, its bylaws, and internal policies.

Professional Responsibilities of Commission Members

Whether acting in the capacity of a Commissioner or ACCJC Board member, a Commissioner:

- Participates in all Commission and Board of Directors' meetings and attends them for their entire duration;
- Studies documents as assigned prior to the meetings;
- Serves as an in-depth reader of peer review team 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;
- Participates in self-evaluation and evaluation of the Commission;
- Participates in Commission planning efforts;

- Shows courtesy and respect to all institutional representatives, members of the public, fellow peers, Commissioners, and Commission staff, without regard to race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation or identity;
- Refers all media inquiries or requests for information concerning ACCJC business, to the Commission President or Commission Chair who serve as the official spokespersons for the ACCJC; and
- Maintains confidentiality of Commission and ACCJC Board matters.

Ethical Responsibilities of Commission Members

Whether acting in the capacity of a Commissioner or ACCJC Board member, 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, including material financial interests or material voting power including directorships with organizations with which the ACCJC may do corporate business, 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;
- Respectfully refuses gifts of more than a nominal value from eligible, candidate, or accredited institutions or affiliated persons, or any vendors, in order to avoid any inferred conflict of interest; and
- Notifies the Commission President or Commission Chair if s/he is unable to perform the duties and carry out the responsibilities of a Commissioner.

The Commission has a zero-tolerance policy for instances of unprofessional or unethical conduct, including instance of substance abuse or any form of harassment.

Responsibilities of Commissioner Confidentiality in Reviewing Institutions and Conducting Board Business

Whether acting in the capacity of a Commissioner or ACCJC Board member, 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 ACCJC Board members 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;

- Permanently delete and/or dispose of documents when they are no longer needed for the matter under consideration; and
- Adhere to the ACCJC *Statement On the Process for Preserving Confidentiality of Documents Related to Institutional Evaluations*.

Adopted January 2001; Edited June 2001, June 2003, June 2005; Revised June 2013, June 2021

- - - end - - -