

It is a requirement of the Department of Education that an on-site review is conducted for each accredited program, regardless of whether a program is offered onsite or online. This document provides considerations and expectations for program reviewers when they are assigned to review a program that offers any amount of distance education. By clearly communicating the needs of the review team when planning for the site visit, the review team lays the foundation for a well-run site visit.

Important considerations when conducting a site visit for a program offering distance education:

- ☐ **Program Director access to support:** If the program director holds a fully remote position, they may not be as familiar with the resources at the sponsoring institution. When planning the site visit schedule, come in with the understanding that the program director may not have a lot of physical support during the on-site visit. Early planning between the lead review and program director will give the program director time to identify resources and help ensure a seamless and supportive review process.
- ☐ **Technology equipment on site:** Communicate IT needs to the program director well in advance. For example, if the review team does not plan to utilize personal computers for virtual meetings with program constituents, request that the program director have laptops available on site that are accessible to the review team. Do not assume that the program director will automatically have laptops available. If the team wishes to be able to print materials during the on-site review, please request access to a printer in advance so the program director can coordinate this with their IT department.
- ☐ **On-site evidence:** Clarify the modality in which on-site evidence will be available for the review team. Online programs may not have any physical documents as on-site evidence. In addition, the program director may not have the ability to print for you while on site.
- ☐ **Access:** If the program needs to grant the review team access to a Learning Management System, cloud-based document storage system, and documents via protected links, suggest that this access be granted at least a week prior to the on-site visit so the review team can test their access at home. This can help ensure any access issues are resolved prior to the team arriving on site.
- ☐ **Meetings:** Confirm meeting modality (in-person or virtual) when creating the site visit schedule. The program director may be the only in-person meeting you have during the on-site review. It is possible that all other meetings, including those with administrators, will take place virtually.
- ☐ **Impartiality:** The modality in which a program is offered should not bias a review team as to the quality of a program. The program should be reviewed for compliance to the Accreditation Standards. If the program offers distance education or is seeking approval to offer distance education, then the team must ensure the program has adequately addressed those Standards and Required Elements that are applicable to distance education. Recommendations from the team should relate to standards compliance. Refrain from making best practice suggestions or comments related to experience that are not applicable to programs offering distance education.

Please direct any questions you have regarding conducting a review of a program offering distance education to ACEND staff.