

The Accreditation Process from the CoA Perspective

Presented at the Accreditation Assembly

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By Ted Packard, PhD and LeAdelle Phelps, PhD

These notes were taken by staff of the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation. They are not intended as official documentation of the presentation; rather they represent a broad summary of the presentation and discussion.

Dr. Phelps presented a summary of the accreditation process, which is found in the *Accreditation Operating Procedures (AOP)*. She made note of several aspects of this process:

- Preliminary review is completed by staff members and is only a quantitative review. Staff members only determine whether the self-study contains adequate information with which to conduct a site visit. In no way does this step of the process constitute a qualitative review.
- When the program responds to any questions raised during preliminary review, staff members do not evaluate this information. It is simply filed with the program's materials for review by the CoA.
- The site visitors should not insert personal recommendations into the site visit report. Programs should not expect that following such recommendations automatically guarantees a favorable review by the CoA.
- Programs may feel that if no issues are raised at the preliminary review or site visit stages, they are guaranteed a favorable CoA review. Only the CoA will have the program's full record before it and may find discrepancies or areas that have been poorly addressed. This may create a disconnect between the site visit report and the CoA review and can lead to a deferral in making a decision on the program.

Dr. Packard discussed the panel process the CoA uses during its program review meetings. This brought up a number of questions, which Dr. Packard then addressed. Clarifications included:

- There are 2 reviewers for each program, who reach their recommendations separately.
- "Quick Reference Guides" are available on the accreditation website to all program directors, site visitors, and interested parties. These summarize the *Accreditation Guidelines and Principles (G&P)* and are aimed toward helping programs, site visitors, and the CoA address all aspects of the G&P in a consistent manner.
- Site visitors are asked to use the guides as a template in drafting reports and not to stray beyond the G&P.

- Implementing Regulations are available on the accreditation website, and they help to clarify interpretation of the G&P and AOP. The presenters encouraged doctoral programs to review regulations C-16 (Broad and General Training) and C-18 (Core Faculty), which both represent areas of common misunderstanding.
- The panelists also cited diversity recruitment, training in consultation, supervision, and evaluation, and the connection between expected competencies and outcome data as common areas for improvement across all programs.
- The CoA attempts to balance out the review panels based on experience and expertise so all program types are appropriately represented.
- Programs were encouraged to clearly reference materials in their self-study in order to avoid delays in the review process.