



*Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097*

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN: LEAD EVALUATOR NOMINATION PROCESS

- Policy Statement -

An institution conducting its review leading to reaffirmation of accreditation is expected to nominate two candidates to serve on the On-Site Review Committee as lead evaluators for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Nominations of those from outside the Southern Association region are welcomed. Evaluators do not have to be employed by a college or university.

In order to protect the integrity of the process and of the institution, institutions nominating QEP lead evaluators should be particularly sensitive to even the potential appearance of impropriety that could result from personal or professional relationships between the nominee and institutional personnel, either past or present. A person nominated should have special expertise in relation to the QEP and have no conflict of interest in connection with the evaluation. The conflict of interest policy of the Commission on Colleges (excerpts at the end of this document) applies to nominating lead evaluators for the QEP.

A sitting Commissioner may not serve on a reaffirmation committee scheduled to visit an institution which employs another sitting Commissioner.

On-Site Review Committee members for reaffirmation, including the lead evaluators for the QEP, must not be called upon by the visited institution for advice or consultation in relation to any follow-up responses or reports submitted by the institution until final positive action has been taken on reaffirmation of accreditation. A committee member who violates this policy will be dropped from the evaluator registry. An institution is expected to respect the process by not engaging any team member as a consultant for this period of time.

In submitting nominations for evaluators, the following information must be provided to the staff of the Commission on Colleges for each nominee at least three months before the on-site reaffirmation visit:

- (1) Name and contact information
- (2) Title
- (3) Institution or organization
- (4) Experience and special expertise
- (5) Rationale for selection and explanation of how the nominee's expertise pertains to the QEP and its evaluation

After the list of evaluators has been approved by staff, the institution will contact its two choices to discuss the nature of the Quality Enhancement Plan and to determine each nominee's willingness to serve on the committee. At that time, the institution should also communicate the cautions concerning conflict of interest and future consulting.

After the institution has confirmed the willingness of the two evaluators to serve on the committee, the Commission staff member will invite them and will include a copy of the Commission's conflict of interest statement. In a positive response to the staff member's invitation, the evaluator will be asked to indicate that the statement was reviewed and that no conflict of interest exists for the institutional assignment. After the evaluators accept the assignment, the institution will be asked to provide them with the Executive Summary of the QEP included in the Summary Form that was part of the Compliance Certification.

The institution should develop a series of questions or issues concerning the QEP that should be forwarded to the staff of the Commission for review and then to the entire On-Site Review Committee for reaffirmation. The questions and issues should focus on those particular areas for which the institution requests the advice of the On-Site Review Committee. All of the issues and questions and suggested interviews should be sent to the Commission staff and to the committee members at least six weeks in advance of the on-site visit

All evaluators serving on On-Site Review Committees for reaffirmation receive the same nominal expense reimbursements from the Commission on Colleges (\$50 plus expenses). Evaluators may not receive additional compensation from the institution or from other sources in connection with the evaluation.

Excerpts Related to Visiting Committees from the Conflict of Interest Policy.

The Commission shall not knowingly assign a person as an evaluator on an institution's visiting committee if that evaluator

1. is employed within a state where the parent campus of the institution is located
2. has been—during the last ten years—a compensated consultant, an appointee or employee (e.g. a board member) of the institution, or recently has been a candidate for employment at the institution
3. is a graduate of the institution
4. has a close personal or familial relationship with persons at the institution or a strong bias regarding the institution
5. is a stockholder or board member of the institution
6. is a member of an association or professional activity that an impartial person might reasonably conclude would serve as an impediment to rendering an impartial, objective professional judgment regarding the accreditation of an institution.

Adopted: Commission on Colleges, June 2004