



Volunteer Position Description

CAEP Site Visitor / Visit Team Leads

About CAEP

CAEP's mission is to advance excellence in educator preparation through evidence-based accreditation that assures quality and supports continuous improvement to strengthen P-12 student learning.

Volunteer Impact

Professional accreditation is the bedrock upon which professions such as architecture, engineering, medicine, and law have built their reputations. It assures that those entering the field have been suitably prepared to practice through assimilation of a body of knowledge and pre-service practice in the profession. When an educator preparation provider (EPP) is CAEP accredited, the public can be assured that the EPP has met national standards set by the education field at large and has undergone rigorous external and impartial review by professionals, policymakers, and representatives of the public. By establishing the accreditation process as a volunteer-based, expert-review process, education professionals who serve as site visitors have a direct impact in ensuring that EPPs prepare highly effective future P-12 educators.

Benefits

Benefits of being a site visitor include:

- Training and professional development on model quality assurance and accreditation processes grounded in evidence-based standards
- Networking opportunities with experts and professionals in the field
- Exposure to new and innovative methods of teacher preparation
- Contributing your expertise as the crux of an expert review based process of accreditation
- Opportunity to observe other EPPs and community contexts
- Certificate of service upon completion of site visitor term
- For higher education volunteers: an endorsement letter supporting the work of a site visitor as the scholarship of application

Responsibilities and Duties

The site visitor's primary responsibilities are to assess how well the EPP is meeting each of the standards, based on evidence provided by the EPP and by conducting an offsite review and onsite visit to the EPP.

Site visitors will be specifically responsible for:

- Evaluating evidence, asking probing questions to understand the extent to which it supports the claims that the EPP satisfies the standards
- Assessing arguments for logic and reasoning
- Understanding and interpreting data
- Applying rubrics to assess an EPP's performance
- Conducting meaningful interviews with stakeholders
- Writing clear and cogent arguments on whether an EPP provides sufficiency of the evidence

- Communicating effectively and appropriately with the EPPs
- Working effectively on a team with differing opinions

There are three key steps in the review process, including the formative review, onsite visit, and report writing. During the formative review, site visitors read the EPP's full self-study report (SSR) and assess the evidence against each standard, participate in a team discussion of the self-study (via webinar/teleconference), write a report (formative feedback or auditability), and plan the onsite visit. During the on-site visit, site visitors check the authenticity of the evidence, conduct interviews with stakeholders, validate and probe data, and identify strengths and weaknesses. During the report development process, site visitors write site-visit and case-analysis reports for the Accreditation Council.

Onsite visits are conducted by a team of 3 – 6 volunteers, and the responsibility for the visit and report writing process is shared among the team members. After the on-site visit, a summative report is written with contributions from the entire team, with the audiences being the EPP considered for accreditation and the CAEP Accreditation Council, which reviews the EPP's case and makes the accreditation decision.

Some visitors will need to cover specialist activities on the team. These roles include data/assessment specialists, site team leads, and site team assistant leads.

- **Data/assessment specialists** will examine the assessments and data instruments within the evidence for alignment with CAEP and state standards, taking note of the optional prior assessment review. They will also help the visitor team leverage program review data in the analysis of the overall EPP.
- **Site team leads** will be responsible for convening the team, synthesizing the view of the team members in the reports, moderating and resolving debates, and coordinating logistics for on-site visits.
- **Site team assistant leads** will act as a stand-in for the Lead (should it be needed), participate in coordination of logistics, and take notes during conference calls.

Volunteer Qualifications

- Demonstrated expertise in the field of professional education, educator preparation, teaching, research, and/or evaluation
- Excellent analytical and evaluation skills including the interpretation and analysis of data, use of rubrics and assessments, interviewing and observation techniques, and analysis of written information
- Ability to clearly and concisely convey observations and findings in writing
- Ability to make unbiased conclusions about EPPs based on the application of national standards
- Ability to interact with team members and EPP personnel in a courteous and collegial manner and the ability to work toward consensus in team deliberations
- Skill in the use of computer technology, including accessing the Internet, using email, navigating websites, reviewing documents online, and word processing
- A laptop computer to bring to any training sessions or site visits, as needed

Training and Professional Development

Each person that is selected as a site visitor is required to go through an intensive training session in the application of the standards and in the conduct of an accreditation review. In-person training will take

place over three days in the summer, and will be complemented by online training, which volunteers can complete on their own schedule prior to the in-person session. Following the in-person training, site visitors are required to complete a summative assessment on the CAEP Standards and analyzing evidence. Successful completion of the training and assessment will recommend a trainee to become a member of a site team.

Commitment Required

Following successful completion of training, site visitors are initially appointed to three-year terms, which can be renewed based on favorable performance evaluations. Site visitors are expected to participate in at least one visit per year to remain in good standing.

Potential site visitors should be aware that, on average, an estimated 70 hours of work are involved before, during, and after each site visit, and should be fully prepared to participate in all events related to their assigned visit. Onsite visits typically last 2.5 days. Site visitors are expected to stay for the entire duration of the visit and are expected to participate actively in planned interviews and meetings, as assigned by the site team lead. Since site visits are held nationally (and occasionally, internationally), travel time will also need to be factored. After the site visit has been conducted, a site visitor must complete their section of the site visit reports (as applicable), and stay in contact with the lead site visitor throughout the report writing process.

As onsite visits are intensive and often involve long hours, site visitors should have the time and energy to participate fully. A site visitor should assure that his/her employer is willing to grant the appropriate time (e.g., release, contractual, professional) to take site visit assignments.

Volunteer Work Location

Site visitors are assigned to participate on site teams to educator preparation providers (EPPs) across the nation (and internationally). The specific location will depend on the individual assignment. Most work prior to the visit is conducted virtually or via videoconference.

Contact Information

For questions on the CAEP Site Visitor application, contact Cole Bowers, Accreditation Associate for Site Visits, at [Cole.Bowers@caepnet.org].