

Policies Related to CEPH Accreditation Activities Outside of the United States

CEPH addresses the willingness to conduct accreditation activities outside of the United States in its [Accreditation Procedures](#). The adopted procedures state that “CEPH will consider applicant institutions located outside the United States; however, due to the variable nature and scope of international accreditation activities, such activity will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis. All applications from units outside the United States must be invited by the Council...”

Philosophy for Initial Accreditation and Reaccreditation outside the United States

CEPH has developed a time-tested model of successful peer reviews, predicated on the sense that an in-person visit by CEPH staff and/or volunteers is the most effective method for conducting CEPH's accreditation work. In specific circumstances, the Council may recommend other visit formats, including program/school travel to the US (in the case of a consultation visit), teleconference, or videoconference.

In the interest of preserving CEPH's successful model of accreditation reviews, which depends heavily on on-site interactions between CEPH and the program/school, such distance-based procedures should be undertaken extremely rarely. Typically, video- and teleconferences should only be undertaken when:

- 1) There is not sufficient confidence that an in-person visit would be prudent at the time in question; and
- 2) The timeframe for the visit is not flexible (i.e., reaccreditation); and
- 3) There is confidence that in-person visits will be possible within a reasonable timeframe to begin and sustain requirements for accreditation and that the school or program will be able to adhere to typical CEPH review practices in the foreseeable future.

When the Council agrees to allow a staff consultation visit and then to invite a full accreditation application, it is agreeing, in principle, to develop and make an effort to sustain a relationship with the university and its school or program in public health. Thus, decisions are not made without serious consideration of all factors including congruence of the public health school or program's organization, offerings, and philosophy on public health professional education with CEPH accreditation criteria as well as practical factors such as safety of its staff and volunteers.

Process Overview for Initial Accreditation

The procedures further specify additional steps that must be undertaken by schools and programs outside the US pursuing initial accreditation:

- 1) submission of a written request for an initial consultation
 - a. CEPH's Procedures Manual defines specific information that must be included in the written request. See the Procedures section on Initial Accreditation.
 - b. Because of CEPH's longstanding relationship with Canada and because consultation visits and site visits have already been conducted at several Canadian institutions, units in Canada may schedule the initial consultation visit without submission and acceptance of a written request. Universities in Canada may proceed directly to step 3.

- 2) Council or Executive Committee (EC) acceptance of the request for initial consultation
 - a. See this policy's section on 'Decision making on undertaking a visit' for a description of the information presented for review.
 - b. The Council or EC will communicate its decision regarding the request in writing after the next Council or EC meeting
- 3) Conduct of an on-site consultation visit by CEPH staff
 - a. This policy statement contains additional information on the required logistics for this visit. See this policy's section on 'Visit logistics.'
 - b. Unless exceptional circumstances exist, the consultation visit must occur within three years of the Council or EC's acceptance of the request.
 - c. During the consultation visit, the staff member will explore issues including, but not limited to, the information submitted in the written request for consultation and will validate the university's quality assurance processes to assure that such processes have sufficient equivalence to US-based institutional accreditation.
 - d. During the consultation visit, the staff member will also provide information on CEPH criteria and procedures and will answer questions from faculty and staff, as appropriate. The purpose of this information exchange is to allow the unit to make an informed decision about proceeding with CEPH accreditation, if the Council or EC invites the unit to advance.
- 4) Council or EC review the staff member's summary of the consultation visit.
- 5) Council or EC invite the unit to undertake the IAS process, as described in the Procedures Manual's section on Initial Accreditation.
- 6) From this point forward, the school or program adheres to the same criteria and procedures as US-based institutions, though some adjustments to logistics are required. See this policy's section on visit logistics for information on the logistical differences for units outside of the United States.

Decision Making on Undertaking a Visit

For the initial consultation visit, staff prepares a recommendation that includes the following:

1. An assessment of security risks, including factors such as terrorism and street crime. This assessment is based on reliable information, including State Department information and information obtained from program/school faculty at the location of proposed travel.
2. An assessment of health risks, including documentation of any vaccinations that are required or recommended.
3. Information on visa or other bureaucratic requirements for entry into the country, including information on the amount of advance time needed for such paperwork.
4. Information, if available, on interest/willingness of specific staff or CEPH volunteers who have explicitly indicated interest in such travel.
5. A yes/no staff opinion on whether CEPH should undertake the visit, based on the information above.

The Council's decision will be informed by information contained in the staff recommendation. The Council will pay particular attention to information that relates to the likelihood of changes over time. The Council should have reasonable assurance that it will be possible to continue with subsequent visits when it approves each visit. This will help to prevent, as much as possible, programs and schools from investing resources in an accreditation process that will not be possible to continue.

When approving an initial consultation visit, the Council may ask that the visit be conducted by CEPH staff, by a CEPH volunteer, or by some combination of the two. Councilors may recommend CEPH volunteers whom they believe or know to be qualified and willing to participate in the visit.

Though the Council's decision to approve a visit should be based on its confidence that appropriate staff and/or volunteers can be identified, final visit approval is contingent on the willingness of appropriate staff and/or volunteers to travel. No staff member or volunteer will be required to travel on the visit. The CEPH executive director, in consultation with the EC, may cancel the visit at any time due to lack of available personnel or emerging events in the country that would change the conditions that existed at the time of the Council's original decision to conduct the visit.

Visit Logistics

The following procedures apply to any type of CEPH visit outside the United States, including consultation visits, site visits, focused review visits, etc.

The staff coordinator will establish contacts with faculty and staff at the program/school as soon as possible. This contact should occur at least six months before the proposed visit, if possible.

- 1) The on-site contact will make hotel reservations, but the staff member must approve the accommodations before reservations are finalized.
- 2) Depending on flight schedules to the location, the contact must make reservations for one to two nights before the visit begins and for the night the visit ends.
- 3) The on-site contact and staff coordinator will agree on a protocol for airline reservations. In some cases, the contact may recommend specific airlines and/or travel routes and ask that each traveler make his/her own reservation. In other cases, the on-site contact may directly purchase and pay for airline tickets. If the on-site contact purchases the tickets, each traveler must approve his/her itinerary before tickets are purchased.
 - a. For overnight flights longer than four hours or any flights longer than eight hours, the program/school must pay for business-class tickets.
- 4) The on-site contact will arrange transportation from the airport to the hotel and will provide contact information for the driver or service, if applicable.
- 5) The on-site contact must provide phone numbers for multiple in-country contacts. Staff will provide this information to any other travelers and will also ensure that all travelers have 24-hour contact information for the CEPH executive director.

- 6) The staff coordinator will ensure that each CEPH traveler will have access to a telephone capable of making international calls.
 - a. After the visit, the program/school will reimburse the cost of any phone calls required for the visit, if applicable. The program/school will also reimburse one personal call of up to five minutes per day.
- 7) The staff coordinator will work with the on-site contact to negotiate and ensure that that appropriate security measures are provided by the program/school. All reasonable requests for security measures must be accommodated by the program/school.
- 8) The staff coordinator will work with the on-site contact to gather information on required visas or any other necessary papers. The staff coordinator will facilitate this process for any CEPH volunteer involved, but each volunteer is ultimately responsible for his/her own documents. The program/school is responsible for reimbursing the cost of such documents.
- 9) The staff coordinator will ensure that the whereabouts of all staff/volunteers are registered with the embassy or consulate in the country of travel.
- 10) The staff coordinator will coordinate receipt of any needed vaccinations. Staff and volunteers will be expected to assume responsibility for their own vaccinations. If vaccinations are not covered by volunteers' or staff members' insurance, they may provide the CEPH executive director with an advance cost estimate. If approved by CEPH, CEPH will reimburse the volunteer or staff member for vaccination expenses and will bill the program/school.
- 11) At least two months prior to the trip, the on-site contact will provide the staff coordinator with any salient information regarding business or personal customs, conventions regarding dress, etc., and the staff coordinator will provide this information to all travelers.

Liability

All volunteers traveling outside North America must sign a release of liability for overseas travel.

Council on Education for Public Health
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