

Council on Education for Public Health Site Visitor

Background:

The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) is an independent agency recognized by the US Department of Education to accredit schools of public health and public health programs offered in other university settings. These schools and programs prepare students for entry into careers in public health. The primary professional degree is the Master of Public Health (MPH) but baccalaureate, masters and doctoral degrees are offered as well.

Accreditation is a voluntary, non-governmental process of self-study and external review intended to evaluate, enhance and publicly recognize quality in programs of public health and schools of public health. One of the steps required for accreditation is a site visit during which peer evaluators validate the information that schools and programs provide to CEPH in a "self-study document." The peer evaluators' written report from the site visit provides a unique perspective about the program or school: the report's direct observations provide important information for ultimate decisions on accreditation.

Site visitors serve on a voluntary basis as CEPH representatives and share their time, effort and expertise.¹

Site Visitor Qualifications:

- Be a senior academician (eg, dean, associate dean, department chair or program director).
- Should have experience as an academic administrator/leader in addition to scholarly experience.

OR

- Be a senior public health practitioner (primarily employed by a public health department, non-profit organization, healthcare organization, etc. with preferably at least 10 years of experience in public health).

AND

- Have at least a masters degree (practitioners) or a doctoral degree (academicians).
- Possess strong writing, communication and analytical skills.

Site Visitor Time Commitment:

Site visitors must attend a one-day training workshop to learn the process and criteria. Site visitors participate in approximately one site visit a year. Visits are scheduled based on site visitors' availability, and requests for participation typically come to visitors 6-12 months before a site visit. They must devote approximately 8-16 hours to preparatory work in the two months immediately preceding the site visit (eg, self-study review, drafting of site report sections, reading correspondence from the CEPH coordinator, arranging flights/train travel.) Site visitors must travel and work on-site at a program or school for a period of 3-4 days, which includes attendance at a 6pm Executive Session the night prior to a site visit. Site visitors must remain present until the conclusion of the visit.

¹ CEPH does not pay honoraria for the services of team members but does reimburse actual costs.

Site Visitor Responsibilities:

- Identify and disclose actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest and avoid the impact that such conflicts of interest may create in the accreditation process when accepting a site visit invitation.
- Maintain confidentiality of information and observations during the site visit process and accreditation status of the site.
- Assess compliance of criteria, make judgment about criteria and provide evidence for judgment.
- Be present, attentive and participatory in all site visit interviews, meeting and Executive Session team meetings.
- Avoid comparisons or advice giving while on site at program or school.
- Adhere to the site visit agenda.
- Maintain collegial interactions, but refrain from personal interactions with school/program faculty and administrators while on site.
- Debate and agree on team judgments to formulate consensus in accreditation findings.
- Revise draft sections of site report during the site visit and submit them to the CEPH site visit coordinator on the last day of the visit.
- Review draft site report and send comments back promptly to CEPH site visit coordinator post the site visit.
- Complete online evaluation and submit travel expenses post the site visit.