



## **ACCREDITATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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# **1. Eligibility Requirements for Programs Seeking TAPAC Accreditation**

## *1.1. Definition of Program*

A program offers a sequenced curriculum of apparel, textile and related area coursework that results in an associate or baccalaureate degree. The curriculum may include more than one option, concentration or other sub-specialization.

## *1.2. Multiple Programs in an Institution*

The TAPAC Board of Commissioners (BOC) reserves the right to determine whether an institution has multiple textile, apparel, and related area programs that potentially require separate applications and fees for eligibility status and accreditation. This determination guides how the programs should proceed with the eligibility application and review process. The decision will be based on how similar or different the program's curricula, faculty, facilities and resources are (how big is the overlap between the programs).

- 1.2.1. If an institution has more than one apparel, textile or related-area program located in different academic units (i.e., departments, colleges, schools), programs should apply for eligibility status and will be reviewed for accreditation separately.
- 1.2.2. If an institution has more than one apparel, textile or related-area program, and these programs are located within the same academic department, then the TAPAC BOC will determine the procedure for eligibility and accreditation applications.

## *1.3. Eligibility Requirements*

Each program applying for TAPAC accreditation must demonstrate that it satisfies each of the requirements listed below. Taken together, these requirements define eligibility for the TAPAC review process and remain part of the eligibility criteria throughout the accreditation period.

The program:

- A. Must be part of an educational institution accredited by a regional or national accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- B. Offers postsecondary educational instruction leading to a baccalaureate degree in the textiles and apparel-related field.
- C. Must have institutional approval for courses and degree(s) offered.
- D. Has a formally designated program coordinator or director. (see [www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents](http://www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents) ).
- E. Has operated continually for at least five (5) years by the time of review.

- F. Has a minimum of two full-time teaching faculty assigned to the program with at least two Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) assigned to teaching textile and apparel-related courses. All teaching faculty shall hold a masters' degree or higher, and a bachelors' degree or higher in apparel or textiles or a related field.
- G. Has instructors with competence and credentials in the subject matter for which they are responsible.
- H. Makes publicly available a description of the program.
- I. Maintain TAPAC Affiliate or Accredited Program Member status throughout the Accreditation application, review and decision process.

#### *1.4. Affiliate Program Status*

Affiliate program membership is recommended for programs that are preparing for or considering applying for the TAPAC accreditation. Refer to current TAPAC Fees for Affiliate Program Membership ([www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents](http://www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents)). The Affiliate Program Membership Application form is found at ([www.tapacaccreditation.org/affiliate-members](http://www.tapacaccreditation.org/affiliate-members)). Affiliate program member status grants the following privileges for participating programs:

- A. Participating in special accreditation information and training sessions at a reduced rate for member programs
- B. Consultation(s) with TAPAC Executive Director (ED)
- C. Attendance at the annual Assembly of Delegates (AOD) meeting
- D. Voting rights in the AOD (e.g., bylaws changes, election of members of the BOC and standing committees)

## **2. The Accreditation Process**

The accreditation process consists of these major phases:

- A. Submission of Application for Accreditation Eligibility and Eligibility Application Fee.
- B. Preparation and submission of a programmatic self-analysis (Self-Study Report and associated documents) along with the Self-Study Administrative Fee and the Accreditation Team Visit Expenses. See TAPAC Accreditation and Membership Fees ([www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents](http://www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents)) or contact TAPAC ED for current fees and multiple program costs.
- C. Evaluation by professional colleagues (accreditation team review of self-study documents and site visit).
- D. Review and decision by the TAPAC BOC, conducted at semiannual meetings.

## *2.1 Application for Accreditation*

- A. Programs applying for accreditation must be a TAPAC Affiliate or Accredited Program member at the time of Application for Accreditation Eligibility. They must maintain TAPAC membership throughout the accreditation review and decision process. The program seeking TAPAC accreditation should send the completed Application for Accreditation Eligibility to the TAPAC office with the initial nonrefundable Eligibility Application Fee (refer to [www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents](http://www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents) for Application Form and fees).

The program should appoint an accreditation liaison to communicate with the TAPAC office, typically the Program Representative or unit administrator of the program seeking accreditation.

- B. The TAPAC ED reviews the program's Application for Accreditation Eligibility and determines whether the necessary information and the Eligibility Application Fee are submitted such that the program is eligible to be considered for accreditation. In a special circumstance, the Executive Committee (EC) of the BOC may be consulted to determine eligibility. Program eligibility will be determined no later than four (4) weeks after receipt of the application and fee.
- C. The program will receive a letter from the TAPAC ED indicating its eligibility for the accreditation process and outlining next steps for the program.

## *2.2 Preparation for Accreditation*

- A. The Application for Accreditation Eligibility and its associated fee must be submitted at least three (3) months in advance of submission of the Self-Study and related fees. Accreditation Eligibility is effective for one (1) year from date of approval of eligibility. If the self-study is submitted more than one (1) year after approval of eligibility, the program will have to reapply for Accreditation Eligibility and pay the Eligibility Application Fee again.
- B. The program completes and submits its Self-Study Report to the TAPAC office. One (1) hard copy and an electronic copy of the Self-Study Report plus five (5) flash drives containing the Self-Study and related documents must be submitted. A non-refundable Self-Study Administrative Fee and the Accreditation Team Visit Expense Fee must be submitted with the Self-Study Report. See [www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents](http://www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents) for TAPAC Accreditation documents and fees.
  - For Fall Semester accreditation review site visit (September - December), the program must submit the Application for Accreditation Eligibility and associated fee by March 1 and the Self-Study Report and associated fees to the TAPAC office no later than June 1,

- For Spring semester accreditation review visit (January-May), the program has two options for submission:
  - a) Submit the Application for Accreditation Eligibility and associated fee by July 1 and the Self-Study Report and associated fees to the TAPAC office no later than October 1
  - OR**
  - b) Submit the Application for Accreditation Eligibility by October 15 and the Self-Study Report and associated fees no later than January 15.
- C. Upon receiving the program's Self-Study Report and associated fees, the TAPAC ED reviews the Self-Study and supporting documents to determine that the required questions have been addressed. The ED may confer with the EC if there are questions about adequacy of information submitted. If all is in order, the ED sends the Program Representative a letter indicating that an Accreditation Review is approved and next steps are outlined. A request is made for a calendar for the semester of the site visit, including beginning and end dates of the term, holidays, and any dates that the administrative team or program faculty will not be available to meet with the team. Alternatively, the ED may request additional information that is needed before a review can be approved.
- D. Once approval to proceed with an Accreditation Review is granted, the ED, with EC approval, selects the Accreditation Review Team and appoints the chair within 30 calendar days. The ED shares the names, contact information, and CVs of the Accreditation Review Team with the Program Representative. All communication from the program to the Accreditation Review Team is to be directed to the team chair. The team chair and Program Representative are directed to copy the ED on all accreditation-related communication to provide a backup record.
- E. Accreditation reviewers are textile and apparel professionals trained by TAPAC. The Accreditation Review Team typically consists of three (3) members, including the chair. The number of reviewers for an accreditation review site visit can be increased based on the number of majors/concentrations in the program and complexity of the unit/department (e.g., multiple programs at the same institution). The chair of the Accreditation Review Team must have experience with accreditation and/or program reviews. When appointing accreditation reviewers, TAPAC takes into account specialization(s) of the program seeking accreditation (e.g., design, product development, merchandising) so the composition of the Accreditation Review Team matches the focus of the program whenever possible. All Accreditation Review Team members must sign a Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Form prior to receiving any of the program's self-study documents. Section 5 of this Policies and Procedures document contains additional information about Ethical Procedures related to the Accreditation Review.
- F. Using the semester schedule provided by the program, the Accreditation Review Team determines possible dates for the accreditation review visit. The team chair then confirms with the TAPAC Program Representative the dates for the accreditation review visit.

Working together, the Accreditation Review Team chair and the Program Representative develop a schedule for the visit. The ED is to be copied on all communication between the team chair and the Program Representative.

- G. The Accreditation Review Team receives the program's Self-Study Report including Appendices, as soon as all of the team members are confirmed. They are asked to review the self-study documents, TAPAC Accreditation Standards, Accreditation Policies and Procedures, and the Reviewer Handbook prior to the site visit. If information is missing or if the team desires additional information to evaluate an accreditation standard, the team chair can request that it be forwarded to the team prior to the site visit, or if necessary, provided on-site when the team arrives.
- H. The program is responsible for reimbursing team members within a month of the site visit for all expenses incurred when the review team is in the home city of the program, including but not limited to transportation, lodging, meals ("wheels down to wheels up"). Other review team expenses for travel-related expenses to and from the home city of the program being reviewed are covered by the Accreditation Team Visit Expense Fee submitted to TAPAC at the time the Self-Study is submitted. Accreditation Review Team members do not receive an honorarium for serving on the review team.

### *2.3. Accreditation Review Site Visit*

The accreditation review site visit is typically scheduled for two (2) full days. (See sample schedule in Appendix.) The Accreditation Review Team arrives on site the night before the accreditation visit. Classes must be in session during the review. The Accreditation Review Team must have an opportunity to meet with the program faculty, staff, students, administrators, and other appropriate stakeholders. The team must also have the opportunity to view student work. If it is determined that a virtual site visit review is to be conducted, the Program Representative and the Accreditation Review Team chair will work to develop a virtual review process that meets the approval of both the university and TAPAC BOC.

### *2.4. Accreditation Review Report*

- A. Following the accreditation review site visit, the Accreditation Review Team submits its Accreditation Report to the TAPAC office within 45 days of the conclusion of the visit exclusive of the ITAA annual meeting week. The ED forwards the Accreditation Report to the Program Representative and Administrators. The program seeking accreditation will have two weeks to read the Accreditation Report and submit "Factual Corrections Only" to the TAPAC office. The TAPAC ED forwards the program's response with any factual errors to the chair of the Accreditation Review Team. **Note:** Factual errors would include errors such as misstating discrete, identifiable information, e.g., the number of students or budget information. Factual errors do not include any information requiring a judgment as to its accuracy.

- B. Within two (2) weeks after receiving any factual error corrections from the program, the chair of the Accreditation Review Team submits an electronic copy of the final Accreditation Review Report to the TAPAC office. The ED shares the final Accreditation Review Report with the program.
- C. The program receives the final Accreditation Review Report from the TAPAC office and submits an official Response to the Report within 30 days of receipt of the electronic copy of the Report. The response should include a follow-up plan with a timeline to address any Concerns and/or Actions Required to Meet Compliance as indicated in the Accreditation Review Report. This response should be sent to the TAPAC office.
- D. After the program receives the final Accreditation Review Report from the TAPAC office, all questions and communications should be directed to the TAPAC ED, not the Accreditation Review Team chair. The program response to the Accreditation Review Report becomes part of the official record, along with the Self-Study Report and the Accreditation Review Report. All the documents are presented to the TAPAC BOC to make the final accreditation decision.

## *2.5. Accreditation Decision*

- A. The TAPAC BOC meets twice each year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring, to consider pending TAPAC Accreditation decisions. The TAPAC BOC makes final accreditation decisions as follows:
  - **Accreditation awarded**
  - **Provisional status** is granted when a program shows evidence that specified deficiencies can be met within a specific period of time defined by the BOC.
  - **Accreditation denied** when a program fails to comply with the standards.

Programs that are denied accreditation must wait one (1) year before reapplying.

- B. The program will receive an Accreditation Decision letter within two (2) weeks after the conclusion of the TAPAC BOC Accreditation Decision meeting. The letter may include concerns that need attention but do not interfere with a decision to grant accreditation. An Accreditation Certificate will be mailed to programs approved for accreditation.

If a program is granted Provisional status the letter will include (a) the reason(s) for the Provisional decision, (b) a timeline and format by which Actions Required to Meet Compliance must be completed and communicated to the ED, (c) the amount and due date of the Provisional Accreditation Administrative Fee, and (d) information about requirements for a Provisional Review Site Visit, if needed. See [www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents](http://www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents) for information on fees. The program must be a TAPAC Affiliate or Accredited Program at the time the Provisional Accreditation Response Report is submitted and maintain TAPAC membership throughout the accreditation review and decision process. The BOC will review the information provided by the program at its next Accreditation Decision meeting to determine whether



the program now meets all TAPAC Accreditation Standards and can be granted Accredited status.

If a program is denied accreditation, the Accreditation Decision letter will include the reasons for denial, a description of the appeal process and applicable fees, and if the program decides to appeal, the timeline for appeal or reapplication for TAPAC accreditation.

Accreditation Review Team Members are copied on the Accreditation Decision letter sent to the program. They are then directed to destroy all documents and records related to the accreditation review. Official records of the accreditation review documents, communication, decisions, responses and other information are kept in the TAPAC office.

## 2.6. Accreditation Timeline

The accreditation process typically takes 12 months after the program seeking accreditation submits a Self-Study Report to the TAPAC office.

Action / Activity	Timeline	Comments
Application for Accreditation Eligibility (or re-accreditation) & Eligibility Application Fee	Mar. 1 (for June 1 Self-study submit & Fall site visit); <b>or</b> July 1 (for Oct. 1 self-study submit & Spring site visit) <b>or</b> Oct. 15 (for Jan. 15 self-study submit & later Spring site visit)	Program submits Application for Accreditation Eligibility (or re-accreditation) with the Eligibility Application Fee to the TAPAC office <b>Note:</b> Applicant programs must be TAPAC Affiliate or Accredited Program Members throughout the Accreditation Application, Review, and Decision process.
Review of Application for Accreditation Eligibility  Eligibility for Accreditation letter	4 weeks	TAPAC ED reviews program's Application for Accreditation Eligibility and determines program eligibility. In a special circumstance, the BOC may be consulted to make the eligibility decision. ED sends letter confirming eligibility to proceed or next steps if eligibility is not approved.

Date for Self-Study Report submission.		The Self-Study Report must be submitted at least 3 months but no more than 12 months after the program's eligibility is approved. After one year, the program will have to reapply for accreditation and pay the Eligibility Application Fee again.
Program submits the Self-Study Report, the Self Study Administrative Fee, and the Accreditation Team Visit Expenses to the TAPAC office	By June 1 or October 1 or January 15	Program completes and submits Self-Study Report & related documents to the TAPAC office along with the Self-Study Administrative Fee and the Accreditation Team Visit Expense Fee. The Self-Study Report and associated fees must be submitted by June 1 for Fall semester accreditation review team visits; and by October 1 or January 15 for Spring semester accreditation review team visits.
Approval of program for Accreditation Review	30 days	The ED reviews the Self-Study Report and associated documents to verify that all requested information is present. If all information is present, and associated fees have been received, the ED sends the program notice of approval for scheduling an Accreditation Review.
Selection of Accreditation Review Team and appointment of Accreditation Review Team chair		Upon the ED's verification of the Self-Study Report as complete, the ED, in consultation with the BOC EC, selects Accreditation Review Team members and appoints a chair.
Dates for the Accreditation Review Team site visit		Using the semester schedule provided by the program, the Accreditation Review Team determines possible dates for the accreditation review visit. The team chair then confirms with the Program Representative the dates for the accreditation review site visit. Working together, the chair and the Program Representative develop a schedule for the visit. If it is determined that a virtual review site visit is necessary, the chair and the Program Representative develop the schedule and format, with approval of the institution and the BOC.
Accreditation Review Team visits the program	September - December <u>or</u> January - May	The length of the Accreditation Review Team visit should be at least two (2) full days.
Accreditation Review Report shared with the program	45 days	The Accreditation Review Team prepares and shares the Accreditation Review Report with the TAPAC office no later than 45 days after the Accreditation Review Team visit (not counting

		annual ITAA meeting week in the fall). The ED sends the report to the program.
Factual correction(s) to the Accreditation Review Report	2 weeks	The ED sends the Accreditation Review Report to the program to review and make <b>factual error corrections only</b> . Factual error corrections are submitted to the ED who forwards them to the Accreditation Review Team chair.
Final Accreditation Review Report submitted	2 weeks	The Accreditation Review Team reviews the factual error submission and revises the Accreditation Review Report as needed. The review team chair submits an electronic copy of the Final Accreditation Review Report to the TAPAC office. The ED forwards the Final Report to the program.
Program submits official Response to the Accreditation Review Report	30 days	An official response to the Accreditation Review Report is submitted to the TAPAC office.
TAPAC BOC review and decision	Semi-annually	The TAPAC BOC reviews Self-Study Report, the Accreditation Review Report, the program's Response to the Report, and other relevant accreditation materials and makes the accreditation decision.
Program notified about accreditation decision	2 weeks	The TAPAC ED notifies the program and the Accreditation Review Team about the accreditation decision within two weeks after the conclusion of the BOC Accreditation Decision meeting. The BOC and Review Team members are directed to destroy all documents relating to the Accreditation Review. Official copies of the documents are retained in the TAPAC Office.
Appeal process	30 days	If accreditation is not granted, program may appeal the BOC decision within 30 days of the official notification.

**Note:** TAPAC reserves the right to adjust these timelines when circumstances warrant it.

### 3. Accredited Programs

#### 3.1. Maintaining Accreditation

- A. TAPAC accreditation is awarded for seven (7) years. The accreditation is designed to be a continuous process through re-accreditation every seven (7) years.
- B. Accredited programs are required to submit a TAPAC Annual Accredited Program Report reporting student enrollment, graduation rates, number of faculty, salaries, program budget, etc. This report also includes changes or actions the program has made

relative to TAPAC Accreditation Standards in the past year. The electronic report form should be submitted to the TAPAC office by June 30.

- C. Annual dues for accredited programs are to be submitted by January 31 (refer to TAPAC Accreditation Fees, [www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents](http://www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents).)
- D. Accredited programs are required to submit a midterm report about program status, which is due in the fourth year after accreditation. The midterm report should be in the form of a Self-Study Report, but does not include a site visit. The TAPAC BOC reviews the midterm reports and determines whether any action is required.
- E. At any time, if an accredited program has a change in eligibility criteria or other substantive change (e.g., scope, size, merger, etc.), the program must inform the TAPAC office with an official notice and the BOC determines whether any action is required.
- F. TAPAC accreditation may be temporarily suspended and the program placed on a Probationary Accredited status if the program or university loses eligibility in one or more areas of Standard 1 on a temporary basis or if the accredited program defaults in paying its annual dues or submitting its annual report on time.

### *3.2. Annual Update Policy*

- A. Every TAPAC accredited program is required to submit an Annual Accredited Program Report to the TAPAC office by June 30, covering the prior academic year. This report should follow the Annual Accredited Program Report Form. The Accredited Program Annual Fee should be submitted by January 31. If an affiliate program is accredited mid-year, the program pays a pro-rated Accredited Program Annual fee, as determined by the BOC.
- B. Failure to submit a complete Annual Accredited Program Report and/or Accredited Program Annual Fee by the deadline may result in loss of the program's accreditation status. A letter from the ED will inform the program that its accreditation will be voided if the Annual Report and dues are not received within 30 days of their due date.
- C. The Annual Accredited Program Report should demonstrate that the accredited program continues to:
  - Maintain the quality of its educational offerings
  - Achieve its objectives
  - Improve student learning
- D. Educational programs are constantly changing. Most changes have no effect on program accreditation status. However, some changes might significantly affect the nature of the program, its mission and objectives, and the allocation of its resources. TAPAC supports and encourages innovation and also is obligated to determine the effect of any substantive changes on the program's accreditation.

### *3.3. Procedures for Annual Accredited Program Review*

- A. The President will assign two members of the BOC to review the Annual Accredited Program Reports and make a recommendation to the BOC at its next regular meeting. If, in the course of reviewing the report, it is determined that more information is needed, the ED will request the additional information from the program. The BOC committee recommendation for each of the Reports will indicate that the program:
  - a) Demonstrated Satisfactory Outcomes,
  - b) Has minor issues to address (define), or
  - c) Has major issues to address (define).The BOC will accept the recommendation(s) of the committee or make other recommendations as appropriate. The President will communicate the BOC decision(s) to the respective accredited program(s).
- B. The BOC may request that a program address specific issues above and beyond those areas regularly addressed by the Annual Accredited Program Report Form. These issues may have been identified when the program was originally granted accreditation or they may have arisen subsequent to accreditation. All specific issues of concern will follow a specific accreditation standard. The request for additional information will indicate which standard the information impacts. In cases where the BOC requests additional program information, two members of the BOC will review the Annual Accredited Program Report, focusing on the auxiliary material requested. These BOC members will report to the BOC with an evaluation of whether the issues have been satisfactorily addressed. The BOC will make the final determination of whether the issues are satisfactorily addressed.

### *3.3. Instructions for Completing and Submitting Annual Update Report*

- A. Indicate any substantive program changes in the areas defined. Include explanations that may help the BOC understand the ramifications of these changes. If no substantive changes have occurred, write "None" or "NA".
- B. If substantive changes are being considered, planned, or about to be implemented, please describe and discuss their anticipated effect on the program and the program's ability to achieve its objectives.
- C. If the BOC has set any conditions on the program in its final Accreditation Decision Letter, e.g., progress reports, visits, etc., these must be addressed in the Annual Report.
- D. Submit an electronic copy of the Annual Accredited Program Report and any attachments, no later than June 30 to the TAPAC ED.
- E. A link to the most recent program curriculum, description of courses, and any program brochures must be enclosed with the report.
- F. A link to the website which a) indicates the program is TAPAC Accredited and b) includes data about student learning outcomes and/or achievement data.

## **4. Appeal Procedure**

### *4.1. Filing Appeal*

- A. Appealable actions include denial of accreditation or termination of accreditation.
- B. The program administrator and the chief executive officer of the institution must submit a written appeal and the associated appeal fee (see [www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents](http://www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents)) to the ED within 30 calendar days of the date of receipt of notification of the accreditation decision. Specific reasons for the appeal must be set forth. There will be no change in the previous accreditation status of the appellant program pending disposition of an appeal.

### *4.2. Appointment of Appeal Hearing Panel*

- A. The TAPAC President shall prepare a roster of 10 persons selected from a pool of potential Appeal Hearing Panel candidates as established by the BOC. These candidates will have knowledge of accrediting purposes and procedures, and may include faculty, educational administrators, or industry members. To the extent possible, the Appeal Hearing Panel candidates will be selected from institutions of a size and mission similar to that of the appellant program. The roster will normally be sent to the appellant program within 21 days of appeal receipt. The program may, within 10 days of receipt of the list, strike up to two (2) persons from the list. The TAPAC President will then appoint a minimum of three (3) members from this revised list to serve as the Appeal Hearing Panel. The TAPAC President shall appoint one member of the Appeal Hearing Panel to serve as chair of the panel.
- B. No member of the Appeals Hearing Panel shall be a current member of the BOC. Neither will any member of the Appeal Hearing Panel have attended, worked at, or consulted for the appellant program or institution within the past 10 years.

### *4.3. Appeal Hearing*

- A. The Appeal Hearing Panel shall determine its schedule. Every effort will be made to schedule a hearing within 90 days of the receipt of the appeal. The appellant program and the TAPAC President shall receive at least 21 days advance written notice of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
- B. Appeal Hearing Panel members will be provided with a copy of the Self-Study Report, the Accreditation Review Report with appended program response, the Accreditation Decision Letter with notification of the BOC action, and the request for a hearing, which states the grounds for the appeal. In addition, the panel shall have full access to all documents and records filed with the TAPAC by the appellant program during the accreditation process. If the program waives personal appearance, the matter will be handled solely on briefs submitted.

- C. Appeals are administrative, not judicial, hearings. Hearings on appeals are closed to the public. The parties to an appeal shall not have the right to cross-examine individuals such as the staff, members of the accreditation review team, or members of the BOC.
- D. The Appeal Hearing Panel may request testimony from representatives of the appellant unit, the Accreditation Review Team, the BOC, and/or other witnesses whose statements the panel deems to be potentially useful. Witnesses may present oral and written statements as authorized by the panel. The chair of the Appeal Hearing Panel may set a time limit on oral presentations and shall notify all affected parties of any time limit prior to the hearing.
- E. During the hearing, the appellant unit and the BOC shall have the following rights:
  - To present written or oral testimony in keeping with any time limitations on oral presentations that may be established by the panel.
  - To be present during the entire hearing. The panel's deliberations following conclusion of the hearing and its subsequent decision process will be conducted in private.

#### *4.4. Decision of the Appeal Hearing Panel*

- A. The recommendations of the Appeal Hearing Panel shall be based on all evidence presented related to conditions existing in the appellant program at the time of the BOC decision. Changes that may have occurred following the Accreditation Review Team visit or the BOC decision will not be accepted as evidence.
- B. Within ten (10) days following the appeal hearing, the Appeal Hearing Panel shall, by majority vote, recommend: (a) that the BOC decision be affirmed OR (b) remand the case to the BOC with recommendations for further consideration if it finds the appeal to have been well founded or justified.
- C. Within 21 calendar days following the appeal hearing, the Appeal Hearing Panel shall prepare a report that provides the rationale for its recommendation. The report should be sent to the TAPAC President, the ED, and the administrator of the appellant program.

#### *4.5. Appeal Closure*

- A. The appeal shall be closed when the BOC original decision is affirmed by the Appeal Hearing Panel, or when the original decision has been remanded and reconsidered by the BOC.
- B. In cases in which the BOC decision was recommended for further consideration, the BOC shall reconsider the earlier decision at its next scheduled meeting and inform in writing the Appeal Hearing Panel and the appellant program of the results of the reconsideration.

#### *4.6. Accreditation Status during Appeal*

An appellant program retains its accreditation status until the appeal process is completed.

#### *4.7. Expenses of the Appeal Hearing*

All costs and expenses incurred by TAPAC in providing for the Appeal Hearing Panel, the expenses incurred by the panel members, the expenses incurred in the conduct of the hearing, and all other expenses in support of the completion of the appeals procedure shall be borne by the appellant program. An initial deposit to defray costs shall be provided by the appellant program at the time of the appeal notice. If expenses incurred exceed this initial deposit, the appellant program will be assessed the additional amount. If expenses are less than the initial deposit, the difference will be refunded to the appellant program. See [www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents](http://www.tapacaccreditation.org/documents) for current fee amounts.

### **5. Accreditation Documents**

#### *5.1. Maintaining Accreditation Records and Retention of Documents*

The TAPAC ED will maintain accreditation records and retain all related documentation for three (3) years in hard copies and 10 years in electronic copies. The records must be easy to track and accessible. The BOC may request review of the records and documents.

#### *5.2. Ethical Procedures Related to Accreditation Review*

Conflict of interest is defined as “a circumstance in which an individual’s capacity to make an impartial or unbiased accreditation decision may be affected because of prior, current, or anticipated institutional affiliation(s), other significant relationship(s), or association(s) with the institution under review.” (Source: Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Conflict of Interest Policy, Revised 2013).

Conflict of interest and ethical practice applies to the entire accrediting process from the review of the application through the final deliberations of the TAPAC BOC; and includes members of the BOC, staff, reviewers, and volunteers. Every precaution shall be taken to ensure that all participants in the accreditation process develop and express objective opinions and make decisions free from self-interest and personal bias. They shall avoid conflicts of interest or any appearance of a conflict of interest between personal interests and the interests of TAPAC accreditation.

The primary responsibility for determining potential conflict of interest rests with each participant in the accreditation process. Participants who question whether they have a conflict of interest should consult with the TAPAC President. Members of the BOC must excuse themselves on matters where their objectivity would be compromised, such as being involved in a discussion or vote related to their institution.



Examples of actual or apparent conflict of interest include the following:

1. Commissioner(s) whose unit is being considered for accreditation or was employed by the institution within the last 10 years
2. A member of the Accreditation Review Team who within the last 10 years attended or graduated from an institution being considered
3. A commissioner or accreditation reviewer who within the last 10 years has served as a consultant or was employed by an institution being considered for accreditation
4. Other activities in the recent past or planned in the near future where there is the expectation of a financial or governance role within the unit
5. Have an immediate family member employed by the institution within the last 10 years or who is anticipating employment by or consultation with the institution within the near future.
6. Other considerations that commissioners or accreditation reviewers deem pertinent.

The BOC operates in an open and transparent manner in accordance with applicable legal requirements and with the Code of Ethics. TAPAC accreditation earns and sustains trust with individuals, institutions, and government entities through honest, truthful, and responsible transactions. In the event a commissioner, Accreditation Review Team member, or TAPAC staff does not voluntarily excuse himself/herself, the BOC may take such action as it deems appropriate.

## **Appendix**

### **Example of a Site Visit Schedule**

The following example itinerary provides suggestions as to the types of meetings to be held and the personnel who could be invited to participate in sessions. Programs are expected to customize the itinerary as needed to work with class schedules, personnel calendars, and any additional/different topics needing discussion. Details of the itinerary should be worked out between the program coordinator and the Accreditation Team Chair.

Session discussions are guided by the review team. Personnel in attendance should be prepared to discuss their interactions with the program as related to the standards/topics identified for each session, but they do not need to prepare presentations.

If the program coordinator and unit administrator are not the same person, the review team may request a separate meeting with the unit administrator. The program coordinator/unit administrator does not remain with the Accreditation Review Team during conferences with other administrators, alumni, students, and others on the schedule. Accreditation Review Team members are free to discuss the program's personnel, resources, and other related topics with administrators, faculty members, and other institutional representatives.

### Example of Accreditation Visit Schedule

Time	Activity	Personnel to Meet with from the Institution	TAPAC Review Team	Location
<b>Sunday</b>				
Varies	Arrival and Dinner & Accreditation Review Team Meeting	N/A	All reviewers	Reviewers Decide
<b>Monday – Day 1</b>				
7:30 – 8:30 am	Meet and Greet Breakfast	Program Coordinator/Unit Administrator	All reviewers	TBD
9:00 - 10:00 am	Tour of Facilities - Standard 6	Program representative gives tour of facilities; Workroom Orientation; hard copies of all documents should be available for team access	All reviewers	TBD
10:00 – 10:30 am	Overview of Program- All Standards	Program Coordinator (questions/clarifications)	All reviewers	TBD
10:30 – 11:00 am	Strategic Plan Standard 2	Unit administrator/program coordinator, other faculty with reporting responsibility	All reviewers	TBD
11:00 am– 12:00 pm <b>Session 1</b>	Class Visit	Visit a lower-level course. Reviewer should observe the course for approximately 30 min., then ask the professor to leave so the reviewer can seek students' candid feedback about the program	One Team Member	TBD
11:00 am– 12:00 pm <b>Session 2</b>	Faculty Support Services Standard 4	Learning technology, teaching development center, library, any other academic support services for faculty	One team member	TBD
11:00 am- 12:00 pm <b>Session 3</b>	Curriculum Development Standards 3, 7	Personnel involved with course approval for general education core, course/ curriculum revisions, course scheduling, class sizes	One team member	TBD
12:00 – 1:15 pm	Lunch meeting with current students	The program should select 6-8 students representing different majors/emphases and class levels	All reviewers	TBD
1:30-2:15 pm	Interview College/School Dean Standards 2,3	College or School Dean	All reviewers	TBD

2:30-3:30 pm <b>Session 1</b>	Student Academic Support Standards 5.02.01, 6.09	Advising personnel, Student Success Center, other student support services	One team member	TBD
2:30-3:30 pm <b>Session 2</b>	Internship & Career Services Standard 5.02.02, 5.02.03	Internship coordinator, Career Planning Services	One team member	TBD
2:30-3:30 pm <b>Session 3</b>	Class visit	Visit an upper-level course. Reviewer should observe the course for approximately 30 min., then ask the professor to leave so the reviewer can seek students' candid feedback about the program	One team member	TBD
3:30-5:00 pm	Review Student work Standard 7	Student work should represent a range of quality deliverables, not just the best of the assignments	All reviewers	TBD
Evening	Dinner and work on report draft	The Accreditation Review Team will have dinner on their own and begin to develop their report	All reviewers	TBD
<b>Tuesday – Day 2</b>				
8:30 – 9:15 am	Interview with Provost Standards 2 & 3	Provost	All reviewers	TBD
9:30 – 10:30 am	Student Learning Outcomes Standard 7	Individuals from the institution and program that are involved in outcomes assessment	All reviewers	TBD
10:30 – 11:30 am	Financial Resources Standard 3.01.01	Program Director, Unit Administrator, Development Officer, personnel involved w/budget management for college, department, program	All reviewers	TBD
11:45 am- 12:45 pm	Lunch & meeting w/program faculty  All standards	Program faculty  Programs w/10 or more faculty may need 2 sessions w/faculty	All reviewers	TBD
1:00-2:00 pm	Advisor Board & Alumni Standard 3.05	Representatives of program Advisory Board, 2-3 alumni of program Virtual attendance is acceptable	All reviewers	TBD
2:00-3:00 pm <b>Session 1</b>	Marketing, recruitment Standard 5.01	Admissions/recruiting personnel, those responsible for marketing materials, enrollment data	One team member	TBD
2:00-3:00 pm <b>Session 2</b>	Class Visit	Visit an upper-level class for a different major/concentration/emphasis. Use the same protocol as described for other class visits	One team member	TBD

2:00 – 3:00 pm <b>Session 3</b>	Diversity & Inclusion initiatives Standards 3.01.03, 5.03	Personnel involved with diversity and inclusion initiatives for faculty and students	One team member	TBD
3:00 -4:00 pm	Accreditation Review Report Development	The team will finalize its draft report in the workroom at the institution.	All reviewers	TBD
4:00-4:30 pm	Exit Meeting Debriefing*	Program coordinator, Chair/Director (program faculty and/or Dean invited at the direction of program coordinator/unit administrator)	All reviewers	TBD

**Note \*:** At this meeting, the chair of the Accreditation Review Team presents an oral summary of findings relative to program compliance with each of the accreditation standards components, specifying strengths, concerns, and potential actions required to address concerns of the review team. However, the Accreditation Review Team Chair emphasizes that the final decision regarding compliance with TAPAC Standards rests with the TAPAC Accreditation Decision Committee of the TAPAC Board of Commissioners (BOC).