

The Accreditation Liaison Officer

The ALO's Roles and Responsibilities in an ACCJC-accredited Institution

The Chief Executive Officer at each accredited institution appoints an Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) who will work with college administration and with the ACCJC Commission and staff on all matters related to institutional accreditation. In making the appointment of an ALO, the CEO should consider the following qualifications:

- Accreditation experience or, at minimum, an expressed desire to become engaged with the responsibilities of accreditation
- An institution-wide perspective and visibility
- Sufficient standing within the institution to be able to delegate responsibilities, convene meetings, and ensure collaboration by other parties in planning and in meeting deadlines
- The availability of time and clerical resources, which may be allocated in conjunction with the CEO's appointment of the ALO; considering that these needs could be considerable at times
- Readiness to represent the institution at convened meetings of ALOs in order to further the goals of accreditation across the region
- Access to, and ideally participation on, key governance committees

The Accreditation Liaison Officer's responsibilities are to:

1. In close collaboration with the CEO, develop the campus organization and preparation for, and the successful conduct of, accreditation reviews for both comprehensive and any follow-on reviews required by the Commission.
2. Serve as the primary resource person for all accreditation matters, particularly for the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) for comprehensive reviews, including working with faculty groups, institutional researchers, student service personnel, and others to ensure the preparation of a thorough and accurate report. This will require an intimate knowledge of the ACCJC Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and policies.
3. Work with the site visit team chair, assistant chair, and Commission staff to develop the visit schedule and in other ways ensure that the peer review experience is well organized and can achieve its intended purposes.
4. Serve as the communications channel between the Commission office and the institution, expecting – for example – that questions to the Commission about accreditation matters are expressed through the ALO and that communication from the Commission to the institution are received and distributed by the ALO to the appropriate college constituencies. In this way, the ALO is kept current on all accreditation-related interactions.
5. Provide the institutional locations – both virtual and actual – for keeping accreditation records, manuals, correspondence, prior reports and Commission action letters, and related materials needed for interpreting and applying ACCJC Standards, policies, and processes. The ALO also ensures that all relevant stakeholders are aware of and have access to this information and that it is preserved for future use.
6. Serve as the interpreter of, and advocate for, the peer review process in the context of ACCJC's processes for institutional quality assurance and improvement, being a "change agent"
7. Work with the CEO and other leaders to ensure a timely and insightful response to any Commission actions requiring the institution to come into compliance with ACCJC Standards.

8. Attend meetings of ALOs to engage in training, provide feedback to the Commission for the development of policies and review procedures, and share good practices with other ALOs.
9. Serve on evaluation teams, when invited.
10. Coordinate, as appropriate, with other college leaders who are responsible for any programmatic accreditation held by the institution in order to share achievement data, coordinate campus visits, identify common issues, and address the allocation of resources.
11. Receive and respond to any complaints referred by Commission staff to the CEO and/or the ALO regarding institutional matters.
12. As requested, confer with the college business office to review and confirm invoices from the Commission staff for dues, fees, and review-related expenses to assist in their prompt payment.
13. Seek to ensure that the ongoing activities related to accreditation – such as data collection and analysis and program review – continue to be supported as standard operational practices at the institution
14. Ensure the timely and complete submission of annual and mid-term reports and substantive change requests to the Commission.
15. In multi-college districts and systems, collaborate with designated system staff and the other campus ALOs to facilitate system-wide quality improvement and development of reports to the Commission on district matters at the time of reviews.

Additional Considerations:

- The ALO should not be a consultant that is hired for a defined period of time to write an institution's report for the Commission. The ALO must be an integral part of the institution's operations, preferably at a senior level.
- To become effective in this challenging role, the ALO will want to:
 - Be familiar with the resources of the Commission, primarily through its website, its online training videos, and also by becoming acquainted with key staff.
 - Attend training sessions such as for ISER preparation and ALO workshops in order to remain current on any changes in ACCJC Standards, policies, and reviews procedures.
 - Obtain or download a copy of the *Accreditation Reference Handbook* and become familiar with its basic contents, especially its Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and Policies sections.
 - Be familiar with the institution's accreditation history with a particular focus on any recommendations from recent reviews and any compliance issues that have recurred over time.
 - Stay informed on the national conversations about accreditation through sources such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the daily online *Inside Higher Ed*, and special communications from the ACCJC office.
- Remain informed about other entities providing relevant professional development
- For national perspectives on accreditation, visit the CHEA website at:
<http://www.chea.org/pdf/AccredRecogUS.pdf>