

ATHEA Accreditation Commission Manual

Version: 04-July-2018

1. The Board of Commissioners (Accreditation Commission) powers, membership, and selection

a. The commission and its powers:

- i. The Accreditation Commission is an independent decision making body of ATHEA.
- ii. The Accreditation Commission exercises the following powers:
 1. Determines the accreditation status of its full members.
 2. Recommends changes in accreditation principles and processes where appropriate. Any such changes must be approved by the membership of the association.
 3. Re-evaluates the status of accredited members as necessary.
 4. Appoints members of site visit teams and decides the respective roles of the members of the site visit teams.
 5. Participates in site visits as needed.
 6. Exercises such other incidental powers as are reasonable and necessary to carry out the functions of the Board of Commissioners.

b. Criteria for membership:

- i. The Accreditation Commission is composed of at least five members from the accredited member institutions of ATHEA, and at least one member who represents the general public. At the beginning of ATHEA, because there are fewer than five accredited institutions, the commission is composed of members who have experience with other accrediting bodies, international higher education, and sufficient expertise to make a meaningful contribution.
- ii. No voting members of the Accreditation Commission can serve concurrently on the Board of Directors.

c. Selection:

- i. The members of the Accreditation Commission are chosen by the commission and ratified by the General Assembly.
- ii. The members of the Accreditation Commission are appointed to staggered terms of three years. Newly appointed commissioners will take office either upon their ratification by the General Assembly, or when appointed by the Accreditation Commission to fill a vacant position.
- iii. Members of the Accreditation Commission may not serve for more than two full consecutive terms. The time spent filling a partial term created by the removal of a commissioner or a vacancy does not count toward the two-term limitation.

2. Meetings and decision making

- a. The Accreditation Commission can meet remotely on a monthly basis (or every two months according to need) and also meets in-person at least once a year. This is a closed meeting unless otherwise decided by the voting members of the commission.
- b. A chair and a vice chair of the Accreditation Commission are elected by the other members of the commission. The chair is in charge of the meeting agenda and may assign tasks to other members of the commission as needed. The vice chair replaces the chair if the chair is unavailable for meetings. It is expected that at the end of the chair's three-year term, the vice chair becomes the chair, and a new vice-chair is elected.
- c. The Accreditation Commission may invite the ATHEA Executive Director, members of the Board of Directors, or other members of ATHEA staff to participate in meetings ex-officio. This is entirely at the discretion of the voting members of the Accreditation Commission.

3. Code of conduct, conflict of interest, confidentiality

a. Code of conduct

- i. All members of the Accreditation Commission will:
 1. Act in a positive, ethical, and professional manner at all times, and to perform duties according to the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and diligence.
 2. Maintain positive and constructive relationships with other members of the commission, with ATHEA staff, with site evaluators, and representatives of educational institutions.
 3. Treat as confidential, all information and deliberations that would not ordinarily be in the public domain, and therefore refrain from publicly disclosing any such deliberations, discussion or materials of the commission's processes.

b. Conflict of interest

- i. Members of the Accreditation Commission cannot participate in accreditation decisions in the following situations
 1. Professional conflict of interest:
 - a. Concerning the organization he or she represents or has financial or ownership stake.
 - b. Concerning an organization to which the member currently provides professional services which may impact the review.
 - c. Concerning an organization towards which the member may be biased because of a previous event (for example if the member was previously a member of staff or a student of the organization).
 2. Personal conflict of interest:
 - a. Concerning an organization which employs a close friend or family members and/or where a close friend or family member has a financial interest or ownership stake.
- ii. Any commissioner with a potential conflict of interest must inform the chair and recuse himself from any involvement in that specific application.
- iii. All members of the site evaluation team must sign a conflict of interest statement.

4. Confidentiality



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- a. All members of the Accreditation Commission commit to ensuring that any information which may be legally, commercially or personally sensitive is treated in the strictest confidence and that all members of a site evaluation team sign a confidentiality agreement.

5. Process flow chart

a. Steps in the process:

1. Initial candidacy application submitted
 - a. Application is reviewed by designated commission members. A decision is made during the next commissioners' meeting to accept, require revisions, or reject initial accreditation application. Institution is notified two weeks following the commissioner's meeting by the executive director. If accepted, the institution drafts and submits a self-evaluation report.
2. Self-evaluation report submitted
 - a. Report is reviewed by designated commission members. A decision is made during the next commissioners' meeting to accept, require revisions, or reject initial self-evaluation report. Institution is notified two weeks following the commissioner's meeting by the executive director. If accepted, a site visit will be organized.
3. Site visit
 - a. A team of peer evaluators is formed drawing from a list of approved evaluators representing ATHEA accredited institutions and one student.
4. Site visit report assessed by commissioners
 - a. Following the site visit, during the next meeting of the commissioners, the site visitor's report and the self-evaluation are assessed. A final decision about accreditation is made with the following possibilities: accreditation, deferral, or rejections. The commission may also include recommendations, actions required, and commendations. Institution is notified two weeks following the commissioner's meeting by the executive director and the decision is communicated privately to the institution via an institution report and publicly via a public report.
5. Required actions
 - a. The institution reports on required actions, conditions, and/or recommendations according to the stipulated time frame. The report is assessed by the commission which may decide to lift or maintain the required actions, conditions, and/or recommendations. In the case of conditions, if not met, the commission may decide to revoke accreditation. Institution is notified two weeks following the commissioner's meeting by the executive director.
6. Annual report
 - a. The institution submits an annual report to be reviewed and approved by the commission. All annual reports should be submitted by February 15th.