

Agency for Accreditation of Public Health Education (APHEA)

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Background:

APHEA is an independent European agency focused on assuring the quality of public health education through validating curricula and accrediting Programmes and Institutions of Public Health programmes or their equivalent.

There are two steps required for accreditation of programmes and institutions of public health. Firstly there is the validation of the curriculum / curricula and secondly a site visit during which reviewers corroborate the information provided in the relevant self-evaluation documents (see accreditation processes).

A final report will then be written and agreed to by the reviewers final which will assess to what extent APHEA accreditation criteria have been met and will also offer insight on the educational programme and institution being evaluated. This report serves as the basis for the ultimate decision of the APHEA Boards of Accreditation and Directors as to whether the institution or programme will be accredited. Reviewers volunteer to represent APHEA, thereby sharing their time, effort and expertise.¹

Site Visitor Qualifications:

- Be a senior academician (e.g., dean, director, associate director, department chair or senior faculty member) in public health or a related field. Must possess strong written, communication and analytical skills. Doctoral degree required.

OR

- Be a senior public health practitioner (primarily employed by a public health department, non-profit organization, health-related organization, etc. with preferably at least 10 years of experience in public health). Must possess strong written, communication and analytical skills. At least master's degree required.

OR

- Be a (senior) staff member at an institute of higher education, accreditation agency or similar organization experienced in peer review and/or accreditation processes, either on a national or international level, preferably within the domain of health. Experienced in the application of quality frameworks and maintaining quality assurance. Must possess strong written, communication and analytical skills.

¹ Currently APHEA does not pay honoraria for the services of team members although this is presently under review and is sought to change over future years . APHEA does however ensure the reimbursement of actual costs.

Site Visitor Time Commitment:

There are two basic areas of activity. Firstly there is the validation of the curriculum / curricula which is a desk-based activity. Secondly site visits are scheduled based the availability of the schools and the reviewers and requests for participation typically come to visitors 2-4 months prior to a site visit.

Site visitors will be expected to devote approximately 8-16 hours to preparatory work in the months immediately preceding the site visit (e.g., curriculum validation, self-evaluation review, drafting of site report sections and, if the chair chooses to organize one, participating in site team teleconference in the month preceding a visit).

The length of a programme review is two days and three days for an institutional review. Site visitors are expected to travel and work on-site which includes attendance at an evening executive session the night prior to a site visit and the actual site visit. Site visitors must be present over the course of the entire visit. The site visitors will complete parts of the site visit report over the course of the visit and will later be expected to review the entire report which will be put together by the rapporteur and site visit chair who will ultimately be responsible for the contents of the final report.

APHEA has and will continue to develop training workshops and materials which site visitors will be expected to attend in order to learn the process and accreditation criteria prior to conducting a site visit.

Site Visitor Responsibilities:

- Identify and disclose any potential and perceived conflicts of interest when accepting a site visit invitation.
- Make no disclosure about individual programme evaluations and recommendations resulting from the review process.
- Have thorough knowledge of the accreditation criteria, their interpretation, and the problems potentially encountered in their application.
- Be very familiar with programme's self study report and other materials pertaining to the programme distributed prior to site visit.
- Be present, attentive and participatory during all site visit interviews, meetings and executive sessions of the site team.
- Assess programme's compliance with accreditation criteria, make judgments and provide evidence for judgments.
- Avoid comparisons or advice giving while on site at programme.
- Adhere to the site visit agenda and comply with requests of site visit chair.
- Agree on team judgments in order to formulate consensus in final report.
- Draft sections of site report during the site visit and submit them to the team secretary on the last day of the visit.
- Review draft site report (put together by site visit chair along with team secretary)
- Site visit chair takes responsibility for contents of final report.

*If you would like to become part of APHEA's reviewers' pool and potentially take part in a future site visit, please fill out the **APHEA reviewers' form** which can be found in the site visitor section of the APHEA homepage and send to julien.goodman@aphea.net.*

Please note that all applicants will be reviewed by APHEA's Board of Accreditation.