Information for Prospective Members of the APA Commission on Accreditation (CoA)

Prospective members of the Commission on Accreditation (CoA) are drawn from those who are knowledgeable about education and training in psychology and who have had broad, national exposure to multiple aspects of the profession. Members of CoA are appointed by the Board of Educational Affairs (BEA).

The CoA meets 3 times per year (March/April, July and October/November) for approximately 4 days each (Thurs, Fri, Sat, Sun am) in meetings where comprehensive reviews are conducted of doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral residency programs in professional psychology. On occasion, an additional day will be added to allow the Commission’s work on policy related tasks. Additionally, the Commission on Accreditation has a 4 day meeting in January or February each year that consists of developing and reviewing accreditation policies and procedures.

Considerable preparation is required prior to each program review meeting. Each CoA member is usually assigned 4-8 programs for which s/he serves as a reviewer. Review of a program includes the review of the full program self-study, site visit report, program’s response to the site visit report, and all the program related correspondence. Each member will serve as a reviewer for programs that represent their particular substantive area or specialty and level as well as for programs from other areas/levels. All members are responsible for the review of programs at the doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral residency level. Preparation time for these reviews runs between 5 and 10 hours for each review depending on complexity, with many reviews requiring several hours of detailed study. All program reviews are completed within the four weeks prior to the meeting.

In addition, the agenda for the Commission’s policy discussions generally requires a number of hours of preparation. Policy issues range across a broad spectrum and include topics such as specific provisions of the Guidelines and Principles as well as the general conduct of the accreditation review process. Each CoA member participates as a member of a CoA work group (e.g. Communication, Training, Research, or Complaints) and a policy panel (e.g. Doctoral, Internship, Postdoctoral Residency).

Other potential tasks include:
- preliminary reviews of self-studies from applicant programs
- serving as a chair or co-chair of a program review panel
- serving as a chair or co-chair of a work group or policy panel
- conducting workshops for site visitors or training directors (usually 1-day at the annual convention or at gatherings of various constituent groups)
- representing CoA at various group meetings (such as CCPTP, APPIC, CoS, etc.)
- participating in CoA governance via membership on the executive committee
- occasionally participating in special site visits

This is clearly a heavy work-load appointment and an appropriate allocation of time and effort is an important consideration. Finally, prospective members need to know that while serving as a CoA member (and for one year after), you may not serve as a regular accreditation site visitor (but may serve as a special site visitor at the request of the CoA) and may not serve as a formal or informal consultant to any program.

Updated May 2013

s/accred/commission