

# COMMISSION ON MASSAGE THERAPY ACCREDITATION (COMTA)

## Peer Review Team Member and Site Visitor Qualifications

Peer review team members and site visitors provide the Commission with verification of the documentation, practices and assertions of the institution or program seeking accreditation related to meeting the accreditation standards. All team members must be trained by COMTA in the standards and policies related to accreditation and agree to abide by the ethical principles maintained as part of the evaluation process.

1. Qualifications and expectations: Peer Reviewer
  - A. Current or recent involvement in training program or other experiences relevant to the responsibilities of the specific role on the off-site review team.
  - B. Familiarity with the COMTA accreditation standards and understanding of the criteria needed to comply with those standards.
  - C. Dependability – Can be counted on to be responsible in meeting obligations.
  - D. Objectivity – Can remain focused on the Standards, setting aside personal views to evaluate the institution's/program's operation according to the established criteria.
  - E. Communication skill – Can interact in a professional manner to obtain appropriate information.
  - F. Skilled in accurate recall, note taking and report writing.
  - G. Capable of deductive reasoning and logical analysis.
  - H. Respects the confidentiality inherent in the accreditation process.
  - I. Maintains a flexible, cooperative attitude.
  - J. Is physically able to fulfill responsibilities.
  - K. No individual may serve on an off-site team unless she/he has attended an Accreditation Training Workshop or served on a site review team within the previous two years.
  
2. Qualifications and expectations: Site Visitor
  - A. Site visitors must have participated as a peer reviewer and have been rated as “above average” in all areas.
  - B. Interviewing skill – Can successfully interact in a professional manner to obtain appropriate information and to sensitively handle attitudinal problems that may arise.
  - C. Time management skill – capable of creating and managing a schedule, prioritizing activities as needed.
  - D. Computer literate in use of Microsoft Word.
  - E. Responsible for completion of off-site visitors' report and assigning ratings to the report sections.
  
3. Process of becoming COMTA Reviewers and Visitors
  - A. Completion of the Site Reviewers Training Application Form.
  - B. Submission of a current resume, letter of application, references, and signed Statement of Ethics.
  - C. Participation in COMTA site reviewer training at a COMTA Accreditation Training Workshop or similar training event.
  - D. Review of the application materials by the Commission staff. They determine, based on qualifications and training workshop participation, whether the applicant meets the requirements for a COMTA Site Reviewer. They also determine in which specialty areas the applicant is qualified to serve.
  - E. Become part of the pool of potential on-site visitors.
  
4. Selection of COMTA Site Visit Teams
  - A. The COMTA office maintains a list of potential review team members who have been approved by the Executive Director based on their credentials.
  - B. Notification of all off-site and on-site visits in the upcoming cycle is sent to potential team members, who respond with their availability for specific visits.
  - C. COMTA staff reviews the available team members and matches them with the requirements of the upcoming off-site and on-site reviews. During the off-site review, one person is a Management/Finance specialist, with knowledge of administration, business and finances. Another is an Education specialist, with knowledge of education processes such as admissions, student services and student records. Another is a Content specialist with specific knowledge

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about the training needed for the practice of massage therapy and bodywork. A Commission Representative may be a team member.

- D. During the off-site review, one individual with experience as both an off-site and an on-site reviewer will be designated as a team leader. This team leader will oversee the off-site review process, and serve as a contact person for the on-site review.
- E. In order to maintain the high standards of impartiality and objectivity every effort is made to ensure that no conflicts of interest, real or perceived, exist. Site review team members are expected to refrain from participating in any visit where they would have a real or perceived conflict of interest. Since the COMTA office cannot be knowledgeable of all potential conflicts of interest, it is the responsibility of the applicant and proposed team members to notify COMTA if a specific nominee is unsuitable for a particular review. A list of all potential reviewers is sent to the applicant school or program, thus giving the applicant the opportunity to identify reviewers who may have a conflict of interest. The objections of the applicant are taken into consideration when the slate of reviewers is drawn up. The applicant is then notified of the composition of the team.

The following situations are possible conflicts of interest:

- 1. Ownership of or employment at competing institutions/programs.
  - 2. Former employment by the applicant.
  - 3. Family or friendship connections with the operators of the institution/program.
  - 4. Close professional or personal relationship with staff/faculty members.
  - 5. Professional consulting relationships with the applicant.
- F. Off-site reviews are scheduled and the off-site team members are notified.
  - G. On-site reviews are scheduled in coordination with the applicant's schedule, and the on-site team members are notified.

### Evaluation

- A. The team leader evaluates all peer reviewers after each review.
- B. All peer reviewers evaluate team leaders after each review.
- C. Programs/institutions evaluate site visitors and the peer review process.
- D. Staff reviews all evaluations as they are received; these also are reviewed bi-annually by the Research and Assessment Committee.