

Site Visitor Ethical Guidelines

When accepting an appointment to visit a program, each site visitor is required to subscribe to the Site Visitor's *Ethical Guidelines* to ensure that the site visitor duties are carried out fairly, impartially, and responsibly by avoiding actual or apparent conflicts of interest and other improprieties. Adherence to these *Guidelines* is essential to maintaining and preserving the integrity and effectiveness of the accreditation process.

Possible conflicts of interest and other ethical issues are not always clear-cut or easy to define. Therefore, it is not possible to establish absolute and detailed rules and regulations to cover every conceivable possibility. As a profession, social work is relatively small, and one recognizes that research collaboration, guest lectures, or other professional relationships may occur among faculty members quite apart from the operation of the social work program. The visitor avoids assignments that would provoke questions about her/his objectivity and integrity. Therefore, in those instances, good and careful judgment must prevail after examining the issues in each situation. The following criteria have evolved over time in response to questions of conflict of interest. These criteria are intended to provide guidelines that bring about credibility and objectivity in Commission on Accreditation (COA) actions.

Disqualification Criteria-A Limited List

No person shall visit a program:

- that she/he visited during its last review before the COA.
- where she/he was a serious recent candidate for a position; served as a former site team member; was enrolled as a student; was a member of an advisory board; was a participant in an educational collaborative organization with the program; served as a former or present consultant to the program, or engaged in a professional manner with the program or individual employed by the program through a grant, scholarly work, etc.
- if she/he resides in the same state as the program under review.
- currently or during the last accreditation cycle had a close personal or professional relationship with someone in the program, that raises a question about real or apparent conflicts of interest.
- has business relationship with institution and/or social work program.

- has mental or physical condition that may make it difficult to engage in the activities required on a site visit.
- Any other reason that you think may disqualify you or that may be perceived as a conflict that could potentially bias your review.

Examples of Improper Behavior that May be Associated with the Site Visitor's

Role

- Making negative comments about a program's accreditation visit in public.
- Considering extraneous information or information not presented by the program in its self-study or disclosed by the program on site.
- Disclosing institutional information, oral or written, gathered in the accrediting process or during the deliberations relative to the on-campus site visit.
- Do recruitment of faculty, student or for a job for yourself.

Individual visitors can find themselves defending against lawsuits resulting from divulging confidential information that was construed as damaging to the professional reputation of an individual or program. **Therefore, individual site visitors may not under any circumstances discuss site visit findings with anyone. Site visitors are reminded that individual as well as collective liability is possible if the Commission on Accreditation, the Department of Social Work Accreditation, and Council on Social Work Education violate its own operating principles.**

**Council on Social Work Education
Commission on Accreditation**

Site Visitor's Ethical Guidelines Pledge

I, _____, do hereby affirm that I have read

(Print Full Name)

and understand the Commission's Ethical Guidelines for Site Visitors and that I shall to the best of my ability observe and uphold such guidelines during my service as a site visitor.

Site Visitor: _____

(Signature)

Date: _____

Received by the Department of Social Work Accreditation

on: _____