



Council of Writing Program Administrators  
WPA Consultant-Evaluator Service  
**Ethics Guidelines for CWPA Consultant-Evaluators**

Members of the CWPA Consultant-Evaluator Service adhere to principles that maintain the integrity of the Service: confidentiality, avoidance of conflicts of interest, and fairness. The Consultant-Evaluator Service is committed to ethical practice in all aspects of its work.

Because actions based on these ethical principles are situated in the context of a visit, Consultant-Evaluators, understanding that their actions express a communal ethos, make decisions through careful and sustained reflection and in consultation with the leaders of the CWPA Consultant-Evaluator Service.

The following five categories encompass important considerations concerning every visit.

**1. Agreeing to a visit**

- Given potential conflicts of interest, certain visits are out of bounds. These include campus visits where the WPA or other administrator is a former advisee or mentee of the Consultant-Evaluator. In addition to potential conflicts of interest, concerns here include the strength of the prior relationship and the inherent exercise of power accompanying it.
- Members consider conditions that enable them to be unbiased and fair. Answers to questions such as these may be discussed with the WPA to work out in dialogue: (a) Have I worked at this institution or been rejected for a job there? (b) Is the WPA someone with whom I've publicly disagreed or someone with whom I've collaborated or coauthored? (c) Am I currently reviewing, or have I recently reviewed, scholarship or grants written by anyone in the department or program? and (d) Can I acknowledge my own positions so that they do not interfere with an unbiased visit?

**2. Comporting oneself before and during a visit**

Members act professionally when planning and going on a visit. They:

- Share all communications with their partner before and during the visit;
- Give adequate time to advanced preparations, including reading the self-study, reviewing the schedule, and if necessary, asking the WPA in advance for more information or changes to the schedule;
- Treat everything spoken and discussed during and after the visit as confidential, unless campus participants give permission for sharing; and
- Refrain from recommending the visitors' own projects, e.g., seeking adoption of visitors' textbooks and scheduling speaking engagements or consultancies.

**3. Drafting and circulating the report post-visit**

Members plan and write the report thoughtfully and professionally.

The report is confidential, being shared with the two visitors, the C-E service Directors, and those people designated by the campus to receive the report. The official recipient of the report is the leader of the unit that is funding the visit, although in some cases it may be someone commissioning the visit, such as a dean or provost, who then shares the report with the leader of the unit. The CWPA C-E Service expects the report to be circulated to all key stakeholders.

Although the purpose and focus of the visit are determined prior to the visit, during the visit stakeholders may be asked about particulars they would like covered in the report.

Consultant-Evaluators convey their sensitivity to the rhetorical situation of reports and their objectivity as Consultant-Evaluators.

Consultant-Evaluators may share a penultimate draft of the report with the campus point person, but for the sole purpose of correcting any errors of fact.

#### **4. Engaging with the campus post-visit**

Members carefully negotiate post-visit interactions with a campus.

a. Communicating with campus constituents post-visit:

C-Es are discrete when faculty and administrators bring up the visit after the report is submitted. C-Es are careful to engage in discussion only when talking with those involved and then with careful consideration of the circumstances of the visit.

b. Working with the writing program subsequent to the visit:

The CE must wait six months following submission of the final report for any of the following connections with the campus: presenting a workshop, providing professional development, doing paid consulting, or applying for a position. After that six months when considering a connection, the CE considers pertinent questions from among the following: (a) Will accepting the invitation undermine the credibility of the report? (b) Will it appear that a purpose of the C-E visit was to solicit employment for myself? (c) Could another person do the work well as well as or better than I and, thereby, benefit from additional consulting experience? (d) Does the institution seem to want to bypass addressing the problems itself by asking the visiting C-Es to solve them?

#### **5. Serving as an independent consultant instead of working as a CE through CWPA**

Members consider various factors when accepting any appointment as a writing consultant or evaluator. If asked to be an independent reviewer, not a member of a C-E visit, the C-E considers these questions: (a) Would a C-E visit serve this institution's purpose more than the visit of a single reviewer or more than one reviewer independently commissioned? and (b) Is the institution able to fund a CWPA C-E visit?

Consultant-Evaluators and campus constituents are welcome at any time to discuss with the Directors of the CWPA Consultant-Evaluator Service any ethical issue about which they have a question or concern.