

Guidelines and Policies for Virtual Site Visits with Supplemental Self-Study Questions

CWPA Consultant-Evaluator Service

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For a limited time and in response to the current pandemic, the CWPA Consultant-Evaluator Service will offer virtual site visits, with the understanding that in-person site visits are likely to be more nuanced, potentially more productive, and hence more desirable. When the co-directors of the C-E Service determine that in-person site visits are once again viable, virtual visits may no longer be an option, except under unusual circumstances.

Due to the many constraints and technological requirements that attend virtual site visits, the Service has modified several of its policies and procedures to ensure that our virtual visits emulate, as closely as possible, on-site evaluation visits, ensuring high-quality discussions with program stakeholders and preserving confidentiality for all participants.

To that end, we expect host institutions to follow these guidelines for the visit:

FEES

- 1.) The honorarium for each C-E will, for the time being, remain \$2000.
- 2.) The administrative fee will be increased to \$450 to support additional expenses incurred by virtual site visits.

TECHNOLOGY

- 1.) The institution requesting the visit will be responsible for hosting and for facilitating the technological needs of the visit, and campuses should include an inventory/vetting of the institution's capabilities as part of the self-study. An IT point person should work in tandem with the visit coordinator (see point 2 below). All meetings should have separate and distinct passwords, and the passwords for those meetings should be shared only with the individuals who have been invited to those meetings. In the case of open meetings (such as with teachers or students), the visit coordinator should be responsible for screening visitors who "drop in."
- 2.) The institution will appoint a visit coordinator (who will work with the IT person) and serve as a guide/point-person to ensure that everything will be going/is going properly during the visit but who will not necessarily attend any meetings unless that person's specific presence is relevant; this may or may not be the WPA, staff person, or a person who contributed to the self-study; this person's contact information should be provided to the C-Es, and he/she/they should be reachable by text or phone should any questions or problems arise.

- 3.) The institution, with the C-Es and the co-directors, will delineate a back-up plan, such as a telephone conference call that works for all, in case there are technological issues that interfere with scheduled meetings. Extra time should be built into the schedule to allow for any necessary adjustments.
- 4.) Each C-E should be designated a “co-host” on Zoom (or other platform) to allow the C-Es to conduct meetings that allow them to mute/unmute, acknowledge “raised hands,” read questions or comments in the chat (if the C-Es so permit), etc.
- 5.) Several days before the visit, and as scheduled by the visit coordinator and the consultants, the institution’s IT person and general point person will meet on Zoom (or the designated platform) with the C-Es to confirm that the technology is working well and to troubleshoot any unforeseen issues.
- 6.) The Zoom (or other platform) discussions during the visit *will not be recorded, nor will transcripts be made*. Similarly, no one can “sit in” on otherwise scheduled meetings if they are not part of that meeting; *no one can be an anonymous presence at a scheduled meeting*. Anyone scheduled to be at a meeting must have camera access to be present. At the discretion of the consultants, the “chat” function may be used, if it does not distract or detract from the conversation; participants must be warned about accidentally sending comments to the group that are intended to be private and only for the C-Es. Use of email to the C-Es will be encouraged for this purpose.

SCHEDULING

- 1.) The visiting team, in collaboration with the institution’s representative(s), should decide upon the parameters of the visit including the total number of days (usually 2; no more than 3) and appropriate daily beginning and ending times for meetings at least six weeks before the visit takes place.
- 2.) The institution’s representative(s) will consult, as necessary, with the C-Es to craft the visit schedule, which should also include opportunities for individuals who are not part of other meetings to have brief conversations with the C-Es. These participants, too, should not be anonymous.
- 3.) Occasional short breaks between meetings should be factored into scheduling whenever possible.
- 4.) The customary informal Sunday night dinner should be replaced with a virtual meeting hour with the same “key players” as would have been part of the dinner group.
- 5.) As with regular on-site visits, the schedule should allow the C-E team to meet privately via Zoom (or other designated platform) after the first day of meetings (usually Monday night) for the customary debriefing and initial discussion and crafting of recommendations.
- 6.) Also as with regular on-site visits, include a substantial break (45 minutes minimum) immediately before the exit interview(s) so that the C-Es can meet once again to prepare. The specific day and time for this work session, of course, will depend on the schedules of those at the institution as well as the overall schedule for the visit.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR THE SELF-STUDY

- What changes in teaching (mode, training, standards, compliance, other) and related concerns have been made in response to the pandemic?
- What have been the short- and long-term implications of the pandemic for the writing program and/or department, including wellness and mental health issues?
- To what extent have the WPA and writing faculty been consulted about current and anticipated changes to the writing program during this time?
- How have the institution and the writing program addressed technology and accessibility issues, both for students and for faculty? Are faculty members required to use an LMS (as opposed to e-mail, Zoom meetings, conference calls, or some other platform) for remote instruction? Has this raised any ethical and/or pedagogical issues for users (privacy, surveillance, visibility, best practices, etc.)? How have faculty members been educated/trained on the use of learning technologies? With what level of success?
- How have BIPOC and other marginalized students been affected by institutional and programmatic changes since the pandemic? How have teachers responded to the particular concerns raised by your BIPOC and other marginalized students since the pandemic? How have program policies and curricula been revised to address those concerns?
- Have your enrollment patterns, demographics, and/or DWF rates changed since the pandemic? If so, how?
- How has writing placement and/or writing assessment been impacted by the pandemic?
- What effects have pandemic-related program changes had on NTT and/or adjunct faculty? Have tenure clocks for TT faculty been paused?
- Feel free to comment on these and any other related issues.