Update on the Accreditation Handbook
May 2009

Overview of this Report
This report provides an update on the work to revise the *Accreditation Handbook* for discussion and input. It has become clear that the chapter on Accreditation Site Visits may need significant restructuring or edits to address the site visits that will begin in the 2009-10 year.

Staff Recommendation

Recommendations by the Accreditation Team and Report of the Accreditation Visit for Professional Preparation Programs at Western Governors University

March 18, 2009
Overview of this Report

Overview of This Report
This agenda report includes the findings of the accreditation visit conducted at Western Governors University. The team report presents the findings based upon reading the Institutional Self-Study Reports, review of supporting documentation and interviews with representative constituencies. On the basis of the report, an accreditation recommendation is made for the institution.

NCATE & Common Standards and Program Standard Decisions For all Programs offered by the Institution

	Met	Met with Concerns	Not Met
1) Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions	X		
2) Assessment System and Unit Evaluation	X		
3) Field Experiences and Clinical Practice		X	
4) Diversity		X	
5) Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development	X		
6) Unit Governance and Resources	X		
Common Standard 1: Credential Recommendation Process	X		
Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance	X		

Program Standards

	Total Program Standards	Program Standards		
		Met	Met with Concerns	Not Met
Multiple Subject & Single Subject	21	17	4	0

The site visit was completed in accordance with the procedures approved by the Committee on Accreditation regarding the activities of the site visit:

- Preparation for the Accreditation Visit
- Preparation of the Institutional Self-Study Report
- Selection and Composition of the Accreditation Team
- Intensive Evaluation of Program Data
- Preparation of the Accreditation Team Report

Staff recommends that the Committee on Accreditation (COA) discuss the changes and proposed modifications to the ***Accreditation Handbook*** identified below, direct staff to make particular changes it deems appropriate, and direct staff to post the revised draft Handbook and to bring the Handbook to the June 2009 COA meeting for approval.

Proposed Changes to the Site Visit Chapter of the Accreditation Handbook

In reviewing the current draft of the ***Accreditation Handbook*** it was noticed that a number of issues that will be important for the site visits beginning in 2009-10 are not addressed:

1. There are references to 'mailing' documents and it is possible that the language should be made more general to include the use of new technologies such as web based documents.
2. The use of Biennial Reports by the team or how the institution may want to highlight a Biennial report is not addressed.
3. The Program Assessment information states that the COA will added additional team members to the team if the Program Assessment findings indicate the program needs additional review at the site visit.
4. The description of the Preconditions Report still includes information on the Standard Options which will have been addressed in Program Assessment beginning with the 2009-10 visits.
5. The Two-Month Out Pre-Visit is not addressed in the chapter. Institutions may not be clear of the purpose for this second pre-visit or how to maximize the benefits of the pre-visit.
6. The supporting documentation that is identified in the chapter needs to be reviewed to ensure that it adequately addresses and provides guidance to institutions for the new structure of the site visits.

A larger conceptual discussion needs to held by the COA on the focus of accreditation site visits beginning in 2009-2010. Staff has had discussions and proposes the following for the site visits. The current Chapter 7: Preparation for an Accreditation Site Visit is provided in this agenda item for the COA's information.

- **Each visit will continue to have an identified Team Lead**. A Team Lead is an experienced Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR) member who has experience in accreditation site visits and is matched to the institution on one or more of the following: size of institution, experience with types of credential programs, experience with national accreditation, segment the institution belongs to, mission of the institution or other characteristic.
- **Each visit will have a cluster of team members whose responsibility is to focus on the Commission's Common Standards.** This cluster, including the Team Lead, will range from 2 to 6 members. In joint NCATE-CTC visits, the cluster is composed of national team members and two California BIR members. The Common Standards cluster will work with the Program Cluster.
- **Each visit will have a cluster of team members whose responsibility is to spot check across and within the approved credential programs.** This cluster will range from 1-4 team members depending on the number of approved credential programs. This cluster will conduct interviews and review evidence across four essential components of all approved credential programs. Staff will develop matrices that show for each type of credential program, the program standards within each of the four components identified below:

- **Program Design**
- **Curriculum**
- **Field Experience**
- **Assessment of Candidate Competence**

Team members in the Program Cluster will interview across all programs offered by the institution and all constituent groups, using the information from the Program Assessment review to guide their work. If a concern is identified during the site visit, then the team members will move from the four categories identified above to the adopted program standards for that program(s). The Program Cluster will work with the Common Standards cluster especially in the areas of field experience and assessment of candidate competence.

Team Members Assigned to the Site Visit

	Programs Offered	**Prior Accreditation Site Visits**		**Site Visits Beginning in 09-10**	
Number of team members in the Cluster		**Common**	**Program**	**Common**	**Program**
Small, single site institution	MS & SS	3	2	2-3	1
Medium institution	MS, SS; Ed Sp:MM; Admin Services	4	4	3	2
Large, multiple locations institution	MS, SS; Ed Sp: MM, MS, DHH; Admin Services-LI and LII; PPS-Sch Psy, PSP-Counseling, APE; School Nurse	6	12	5-6	4

- **Approximately ½ of the team members serving on the site visit team will have reviewed a program document for the institution during the Program Assessment phase of the accreditation cycle.** The other team members will also be BIR members but will not have participated in that institution's Program Assessment process.
- **If the Program Assessment process has identified concerns about one or more approved programs, one or more additional team members will be assigned to the site visit.** This decision will be made a minimum of six (6) months prior to the site visit and communicated to the institution. The team members would be in addition to those identified in the table above. The additional team members would function as part of the Program Cluster, but have a primary focus of the identified program and completing a full review against the adopted program standards.
- **For the 2009-10 and the 2010-11 site visits, the special education preparation programs will be reviewed at the site visit, unless the institution submitted a document addressing the new standards (08-09) during their Program Assessment.** The BIR members assigned to the site visits to focus on the special education programs will function as part of the Program Cluster, but have a primary focus on the special education programs and the recently adopted program standards.

Next Steps

Staff would appreciate it if the COA would discuss the edits identified above and provide guidance to staff. In addition, if the COA would discuss the team structure and roles that are described above for the 2009-10 site visits, then a revised handbook chapter will be brought to a future COA meeting. In addition, if there are grammatical or word edits, staff would be grateful for a hard copy of the suggested edits.

Appendix A

Chapter Seven
Preparation for an Accreditation Site Visit

Introduction

The chapter describes the steps an institution will need to take to prepare for an accreditation site visit. The size and composition of the accreditation team are briefly described. The chapter provides detailed information on the procedures, activities, and decisions that precede the actual accreditation site visit which is intended as a guide for those who are charged with the administrative tasks of an accreditation site visit. The responsibilities of the consultant provided by the CTC to the institution are listed and the Year-Out and Two Month-Out Pre-Visits are also described. For more information about the accreditation team, see Chapter 10.

I. Scheduling an Accreditation Visit

Accreditation visits occur during the sixth year of the accreditation cycle. The Committee on Accreditation (COA) also retains the right to schedule more frequent site visits as a stipulation of institutional accreditation or based on reviews of the Biennial Reports or Program Assessment.

The institution will want to consider the following criteria in order to determine a date for the site visit:

1. Select a time period when students are on campus and student teachers are in classrooms. Be certain to avoid local school holidays, testing schedules when possible, major academic conferences and other times that will draw faculty away from campus or otherwise impede collection of information from program completers, employers of program completers, cooperating schools, or community members.

2. The visit, if it is a merged accreditation visit, must be coordinated with the national accrediting body. If the visit will involve a national or professional accrediting body for one or more credential programs, early planning must be initiated to allow the institution and CTC staff time to study the alignment of the national or professional organizations' standards with California's standards, and to report the results of the alignment study to the COA for its determination of alignment.

3. As a rule, the first full day of an accreditation visit will be a Monday, and team members will arrive on Sunday around noon. Exceptions are permitted to this rule, but they should be requested early in the process by the institution. Institutions with multiple sites, unusual class schedules, or other issues should also make these circumstances known early in the planning process.

4. The institution should identify the most appropriate dates from a series of dates proposed by the CTC. The COA and the CTC must schedule the year's accreditation visits in a manner that does not adversely impact the staff. The Administrator of Accreditation will confirm the dates for the site visit and the assignment of a CTC consultant at least 15 months prior to the site visit.

II. The Institutional Overview Meeting (The Year-Out Pre-Visit)

Approximately twelve to eighteen months prior to the scheduled accreditation visit, the CTC consultant will contact the institution to schedule a pre-visit meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to acquaint the administration and faculty of the institution/program sponsor with the Accreditation Process, to provide assistance in the development of the Preconditions Report (due 10-12 months before the scheduled site visit) and the Institutional Self Study Report (ISSR) (due two months prior to the actual accreditation visit), and to answer other questions that may arise. The institution may invite anyone it chooses to attend this meeting.

Logistical and Budgeting Arrangements

The CTC is responsible for all direct expenses of the state accreditation team, including lodging, per diem, and travel expenses. The CTC is also responsible for (a) the direct expenses incurred by the Team Lead and the consultant in working with the institution on arrangements for the visit, (b) direct expenses involved in a focused site visit and any re-visits related to noted stipulations from the original visit and, (c) the substitute expenses for team members who are classroom teachers, if requested. The CTC will enter into a contract with the institution through which the lodging and meal expenses of the team members will be paid.

If the institution/program sponsor is planning a merged accreditation visit, the institution is responsible for the costs associated with the national accrediting body. This is also true if the institution elects to have one or more of its credential programs accredited by a national professional association.

The institution is responsible for covering the costs of assigned time to its faculty and staff for the development of reports or documents. If the institution elects to have a reception for the team or to provide snacks to the team during the visit, the institution bears the cost of these items.

The institution is responsible for preparing all necessary documents including, but not limited to the *Preconditions Report* and the *Institutional Self-Study Report* with sufficient copies of these reports for team members, all necessary back-up documents and files to support the *ISSR*, and any other materials deemed useful to the team by the institution. All materials sent to the CTC and to team members should be considered the property of the CTC. Any materials of value should be kept on campus in the document room.

The institution is responsible for providing sufficient space on campus for a private room for the team, a document room for all files and materials, space for all team members to conduct their interviews, access to telephones for team members required to make telephone interviews, and computers to facilitate team writing.

The institution is also responsible for assisting the CTC consultant in identifying an acceptable hotel in close proximity to the campus, arranging for meals for the team, and arranging parking permits or other forms of transportation during the visit for team members.

The institution is responsible for making all necessary arrangements regarding the interview schedules. This includes providing parking for interviewees, assigning campus guides to direct individuals to their interview locations, arranging for back-up interviews, and ensuring that an adequate number of interviews are scheduled for the institution and all its programs. When necessary, institutions are encouraged to propose innovative arrangements for handling interviews (e.g., interactive audio and video connections or dispersed interview sites) and are strongly advised to ensure that sufficient numbers of interviews are scheduled across all key groups.

In the case of a re-visit or the visit of a focused site team, the institution is responsible for making the same type of arrangements as noted above for an original visit.

The institution is responsible for all expenses involved in attending a COA meeting, including the meeting at which that institution's accreditation is scheduled for discussion and decision. In the event of an appeal, the institution must bear the cost of making the appeal and attending any appeal hearings or meetings. If a re-visit is required as a result of the appeal, the standard division of responsibilities and costs as noted above will apply.

III. Preparation for a Site Visit

Several documents are used to provide background information and to prepare the site visit team. Information from those documents will also influence the composition of the team and the breadth of the site visit. The institution's *Preconditions Report* provides current information about its responses to preconditions, and provides information about the context in which the institution/program sponsor operates. The COA will utilize information provided by BIR members who reviewed the institution's *Program Assessment* documents in setting the focus of the accreditation visit. The *ISSR,* which includes the response to the Common Standards, is provided to all team members prior to the site visit to inform their evidence gathering at the visit.

Preliminary Program Assessment Report of Findings

The *Preliminary Program Assessment Report of Findings,* which was developed by BIR members who reviewed the Program Assessment documents (see Chapter 6), will identify any program standards that raised concerns or questions. The COA will review the Program Assessment *Preliminary Report of Findings* and determine whether the site visit team should include members with specific expertise in the programs identified with concerns.

Preconditions Report

Program sponsors will prepare a *Preconditions Report* to be submitted to the CTC staff consultant ten to 12 months before the site visit. This brief report describes the institutional mission and includes information about the institution's demographics, special emphasis programs, and other unique features of the institution/program sponsor. The institution must include the following information in its *Preconditions Report:*

1. **Special Characteristics of the Institution:** The institution notes any special characteristics about its credential programs that would affect the composition of the team, the organization of the visit, or the development of the team schedule. Offering programs at multiple sites, the use of unusual delivery formats-including technology, and/or unusual staffing patterns are of particular interest to the CTC and may require particular expertise among the review team

members. Institutions with multiple-site programs must include specific information about the administrative relationships among the various locales and options, and include a table that shows, for each site, the program completers from the prior year and the current enrollment.

2. **Indication of Selected Options:** In the *Preconditions Report*, the institution identifies the standards option it has selected for each credential program in the accreditation review. Institutions may select different standards options for different credential programs, as described in the *Accreditation Framework (http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/coa-reports.html).*

3. **Response to Preconditions:** In its *Preconditions Report*, the institution includes its response to accreditation preconditions established by state laws and the CTC. The institution must respond to preconditions for all credential programs offered by the institution. The Preconditions may be found on the Site Visit web page (http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/program-accred-site-visits.html) or within each approved program's standards handbook.

Using information from the Program Assessment *Preliminary Report of Findings* and the institution's *Preconditions Report*, the COA will determine whether the site visit team will focus its review on the Common Standards or whether it will also focus on reviewing program standards identified with concerns by the *Program Assessment* Review Team. If the *Preliminary Report of Findings* identifies concerns about one of the programs, the site team may expand to include someone with expertise in the program with concerns. If there are no concerns identified in the *Preliminary Report of Findings,* then the review team will be smaller. In either case, site reviewers will review evidence that substantiates, confirms, or contradicts the preliminary findings of the Program Assessment.

Institutional Self-Study Report

The Institution's *Self-Study Report* is the second major document that must be provided by the institution/program sponsor in the year prior to the site visit. The *ISSR* must include, at a minimum, the following items:

- Letter of Transmittal by President
- Letter of Verification by Dean or Director
- Background of the Institution and its Mission and Goals
- Education School or Department Mission and Goals
- Responses to the Common Standards
- *Preliminary Report of Findings* from Program Assessment Review
- Biennial Reports

All other background material and data should be placed in the document room on campus and referenced in the *ISSR*. Institutions are encouraged to use graphic representations and other visual information in the *ISSR* document. Institutions planning to use multi-media presentations should confer with the CTC consultant early in the planning process. No less than 40 days before the visit, the institution should mail sufficient copies of its *ISSR to* the team.

Educator preparation institutions have the capacity to produce electronic documents, spreadsheets, and documents with hyperlinks. The CTC encourages institutions and agencies preparing for site visits to utilize their electronic capacity and create a document room that is primarily electronic. This can be done by creating websites with links to all documents, including minutes of meetings, class syllabi, student evaluations, and student portfolios. Although the *Preconditions Report* and the *ISSR* may be submitted in paper form, institutions are encouraged to utilize electronic transmission.

Preparing Campus Exhibits

The COA uses a three-part process of evidence collection and evaluation. The *ISSR constitutes* the first element, the institution's assertion as to how it meets the Common Standards. The second element in the collection and evaluation of evidence is the team's review and analysis of supporting documentation. The third element is the array of interviews conducted with individuals who know each program best -- its faculty, candidates, program completers, cooperating educators, and employers of program completers.

Supporting Documentation Required

In the document room on campus, the institution is required to assemble detailed materials that verify and support the assertions made in the *ISSR*. The following list of supporting documentation is not exhaustive; it is intended to be illustrative. The institution should tailor its supporting materials to its own mission and goals, organizational structure, and array of credential programs. The institution is also encouraged to utilize alternate means of presenting supporting materials including videotapes, CD-ROMs, wall displays, interactive computer programs, and audio tapes. If the institution makes use of alternate approaches to providing support, its representatives should confer with the assigned consultant and the Team Lead to ensure that sufficient time is allocated within the master schedule to permit the full review and appraisal of the developed materials. These materials include but are not limited to:

1. Complete *vitae* from full-time and part-time faculty who work at the institution.
2. Information regarding recruitment and retention procedures for full-time and part-time faculty.
3. Information on support for full-time and part-time faculty including research, travel, and staff development support.
4. Information on recruitment and admissions procedures including the actual selection process for admission.
5. Copies of all advisement materials used in all credential programs.
6. Copies of student handbooks, supervisor handbooks and other relevant credential publications.
7. Copies of relevant budgets, including school budgets, departmental budgets and program budgets, if available.
8. Institutional procedures on budget and faculty allocations.
9. Copies of recent catalogues and individual course syllabi. (Note: Where multiple sections of credential courses are offered, institutions should provide additional

evidence that all sections of the required credential courses attend to the relevant standards.)

10. Internship programs should provide evidence of district and bargaining representative agreements and other evidence that internship standards are being met. Copies of all Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) should be available in the document collection.
11. Minutes of advisory group meetings or other evidence of collaboration and community involvement.
12. Evidence of on-going, systematic, comprehensive program evaluation and improvement with specific evidence of changes made or contemplated as a result of this evaluation process.
13. Candidate assessment instruments and procedures with summary information on candidate evaluation results as appropriate.
14. Evidence of institutional commitment to and assessment of all field supervisors (individuals serving as cooperating teachers or others who serve as non-employee evaluators of candidates).
15. Evidence of leadership within the institution and leadership among the elements of the institution with particular attention to articulating a vision, fostering collegiality, delegating responsibility and authority, and advancing the stature of professional education within the institution.

Preparing, Organizing, and Presenting the Supporting Materials

The supporting materials serve as verification of the assertions made in the *ISSR*. Institutions are encouraged to ensure that the display of these materials is clearly linked to the appropriate standards. The institutional planners should encourage faculty and staff to begin to collect documents, hand-outs, and other programmatic materials early in the development process. Sorting and selecting materials is easier once all possible documents have been pulled together. In assembling the document room itself, institutions may wish to use one or more of the following organizational schemes:

1. Color-coding files or sets of documents by Common Standard
2. Labeling documents by Standard number within a credential program or closely related set of credential programs
3. Sorting materials in banker's boxes or crates by credential
4. Developing a website where team members will be able to find the documents and supporting evidence
5. Providing team members with "look-up only" capacity on campus computer systems or computers provided to the team
6. Providing information presented in the order in which students experience the credential program (i.e., recruitment and admission materials presented first, then curriculum materials)
7. Providing mock-ups of highly detailed student files that clearly show how curriculum, field experience, and candidate competence standards are met.

8. Developing story boards, organizational charts, or other visual display devices that depict aspects of the institution and its various credential programs

Institutions are encouraged to use other presentation devices and approaches that may assist team members in understanding how the institution meets or exceeds all common and any program standards that were not met through the Program Assessment process. Care should be taken to alert the consultant and Team Lead to any innovative methods being contemplated to ensure that the team will be properly advised before the visit begins.

As institutions/agencies reduce their use of paper documents, the CTC will encourage them to develop electronic exhibits when planning for site visits. This will allow members of the review teams to review documents well in advance of the site visit.

Scheduling Interviews

It is the institution's responsibility to set up the interview schedule for all clusters in consultation with the CTC consultant. Since the time available to the team is limited and COA policy dictates that sufficient numbers of individuals from all constituent groups be interviewed, **creating a workable interview schedule is a critical task for the institution and should receive as much attention as the preparation of the *ISSR*.** A matrix identifying interviewees can be found in Appendix B.

It is very important that the interviews occur in a room that is secure and private. Interviewees who believe their comments might be overheard by others may be less willing to identify concerns or problems they are experiencing in the program. The same consideration needs to be made for phone interviews; team members need to feel that their responses and questions are not being overheard by anyone associated with the program, institution, or agency.

Who Should be Scheduled for Interviews by the Team

Team members interview persons involved in the development and coordination of the programs, the preparation of the candidates, and the employment of program completers. These interviewees come from the credential program and surrounding school districts. A list of persons who are typically scheduled for interviews is noted below:

Candidates

Beginning Candidates (small number)
Middle of Program Candidates (larger number than Beginning Candidates)
Candidates who are nearing completion, especially those in student teaching and/or field experiences (majority of candidates interviewed)

Master Teachers/Supervisors

Currently working with candidates or have worked with a candidate in the past year. If the professional development school model is used, then the bulk of the interviews should be with the cooperating faculty from participating schools.

Administrators
From schools where candidates and student teachers are placed, and/or who assist with field work placements. These should be school sites where placements are routinely made.

Program Completers
Completers from the two previous years. In cases where most program completers leave the area, it may be necessary to go back one more year to ensure that a sufficient number of interviews are conducted. If necessary, the team will call completers who have left the area to ensure that the interviews adequately represent individuals who have completed the credential program.

Employers of Program Completers
School District Personnel Office Administrators
School Site Principals
Although not Employers, Department Chairs of program completers may be helpful in providing information about candidate preparation

Administration and Faculty of the Institution
President (optional unless merged NCATE/COA visit)
Academic Vice-President
Chief Financial Officer of Institution
Dean of the College or School of Education
Chairs of the involved Departments
Program Coordinators of each credential program
Field Supervisors in each credential program
Professors and Instructors from each credential program (Full-time and Part-time)
Credential Analyst
Advisory Committee for credential programs

Institutions that have satellite campuses must ensure that a representative sample of each category of stakeholder is scheduled for interviews. If the satellite locations cannot be readily accessed by car, it might be necessary to establish a telephone or electronic connection to permit the interviews to occur. Review teams cannot, with confidence, develop program findings or accreditation recommendations if they have not interviewed enough candidates, faculty, completers, and administrators from satellite areas. The responsibility rests with the institution to anticipate the need to for adequate interviews with off-campus constituencies. If the dean or director of an institution has concerns about off-campus interviews, that person must talk with the institution's assigned consultant.

NOTE: The number of individuals to be interviewed will vary by category and program, and will depend upon program size, relative "importance" to the credential preparation program, availability, and location of the interviewees. For a small credential program, generally everyone associated with the program will be interviewed. Specific problems with interview sample size must be discussed well in advance of the visit with the Team Lead and the CTC consultant.

Selection of Interviewees

The institution should begin assembling lists of potential interviewees at least the semester before the visit. Placement and Alumni offices should be consulted along with the Credential Analyst for the names of program completers, district-employed supervisors and other personnel. The names of current candidates should be assembled as soon as practicable in the semester of the visit. Faculty who teach in the program should be alerted to the visit dates to prevent them from being off-campus. Special arrangements may be necessary for part-time faculty or faculty on early retirement or sabbatical leave. Not all interviews will be conducted one-on-one. Candidates can be interviewed in small groups (3-10 candidates). Faculty and administrators should be interviewed individually. <u>Telephone interviews, closed-circuit television, videoconferencing, off-campus interview sites, and other innovative means of conducting the interviews are strongly encouraged, particularly on campuses where parking and travel are difficult or where program completers work at significant distances from the campus.</u>

It is essential that representation from all stakeholder groups (faculty, staff, candidates, program completers, employers, and district-employed supervisors) for each approved credential program be available for interview. In addition, if the program is provided at satellite locations or through distance learning, stakeholders from these locations must be included. A matrix of interviewees by common standards is shown in Appendix B.

Review of Interview Schedules by Team Lead

Interview schedules should be completed approximately three weeks before a visit. When the schedule is complete, it is sent to the CTC consultant and the Team Lead for their final review. If an institution does not get the interview schedule completed in time for consultant and Team Lead review before the visit, the schedule will be reviewed on the afternoon or evening before the interviews begin. This may cause complications if changes are requested, so institutions are urged to avoid this problem. Once any changes are made by the Team Lead, the schedule will be followed as amended. Late additions to the schedule, if needed, should be clearly noted.

Additional Notes on Creating an Interview Schedule

The interview schedule should be thought of as a table with one column for each team member (see Appendix B for a Sample Interview Schedule). A time frame on the left margin gives the number of allowable slots for the interviews. Since faculty and institutional administration should have individual interviews whenever possible, the scheduler should be cognizant of teaching and travel schedules. Generally, all faculty who teach full-time in the program should be on campus for interviews during the visit. Programs with heavy afternoon and evening classes will need to work with the CTC consultant to balance the time commitments of the team. Scheduling interviews during the late afternoon of the first full day will be critical for campuses with evening classes. If getting to the institution is a challenge, interviews may take place at a school site or other location, depending on the amount of travel required. This could be very helpful to campuses where parking is difficult or where getting to campus is a problem. Institutions selecting this option should discuss the specific needs with the CTC consultant well in advance of the visit.

The campus may also wish to combine an alumni event or some special activity with group interviews to encourage program completers, master teachers, and district-employed supervisors to come to the campus. A reception following the end of the interview period, or some other professional development activity, particularly when planned in conjunction with local schools, can increase attendance, make the whole process more useful, and build productive relationships with area schools.

The most frequent concerns expressed by team leads/members relate to lengthy introductions which delay the onset of the interviews, gaps in the interview schedule, significant imbalances in the numbers of interviews scheduled with program completers, employers of program completers, and other off-campus constituents, and insufficient privacy for sensitive interviews. Institutions are urged to attend to these concerns.

Schedulers are urged to think about over-booking slightly to account for individuals that may not make the interview, to avoid, if possible, scheduling one constituency (e.g., program completers) into only one afternoon, and to entice off-campus constituents with additional reasons to make the journey to campus. A final option is to have someone available to make stand-by calls or to provide the names and telephone numbers of individuals who could be interviewed by telephone.

Given the importance of the interview process to the final team recommendation and the complexities of bringing large numbers of people on and off campus, institutional planning teams should begin early to develop plans for handling this element of the program evaluation.

IV. The Accreditation Site Team Daily Schedule

Sunday afternoon

Accreditation team visits are scheduled for four days. The team arrives at its hotel site on Sunday, typically around noon. (Merged NCATE/COA visits typically begin a day earlier for the Team Lead and the Common Standards Cluster members. The remainder of the team begins on Sunday.) Institutions may request another schedule if they believe it will be beneficial to them.

The team holds an organizational meeting at the hotel, may attend a campus orientation/reception provided by the institutional sponsor, spends some time in the document room, and reconvenes as a group to prepare for Monday, completing its business normally by 9:00 p.m.

Institutions are encouraged to schedule an event on Sunday at the hotel or on the campus for the accreditation team. This event provides an opportunity for general remarks by senior administrators, an introduction to the dean and program directors, and an overview of the institution for the team. Poster sessions that describe the different educator preparation programs at the institution provide team members with a valuable overview of each program and create an informal setting for team members to talk with candidates, completers, faculty, and community members. Institutions may want to have community members or other guests included in this event, including adjunct faculty and program completers who may not be available during the week. Details of this optional part of the visit should be arranged during the preliminary discussions with the CTC consultant.

Monday

The first full day of the accreditation visit is devoted to document review and interviews with samples of all major interest groups -- faculty, administration, candidates, program completers, employers of program completers, district-employed supervisors, cooperating school personnel, and community members. The team schedule created by the institution must allow sufficient time during the day for document review and team meetings. Interviews should not be scheduled after 6:00 p.m. unless the individuals cannot be available earlier in the day or by phone.

Tuesday
The second full day of the accreditation visit can duplicate the first full day or it may include visits to important collaboration sites or other facilities deemed essential by the institution. The team schedule created by the institution must include time for a mid-visit meeting early in the morning to permit the Team Lead to share with representatives of the institution (a) areas where the standards appear not to be fully satisfied, and (b) requests for additional information pertaining to those standards. Interviews should conclude by 5:00 p.m., if at all possible, to ensure the team will have sufficient time to conclude its activities.

Tuesday evening
The evening of the second day is set aside for report writing by the team and no other activities can be scheduled. During this time, individual members will report their findings about each program and the team will deliberate about its accreditation recommendation. Once the team agrees on the program findings and recommendation, the program reviewers, cluster leads, team lead, and consultant will write their various portions of the report. If possible, a complete draft of the report will be completed this evening.

Wednesday
The morning of the third day, the team meets at the hotel so that all members have an opportunity to read and comment on the draft report. As soon as all edits are completed, the team and consultants will prepare to present the team's findings and accreditation recommendation to the institution.

Report to Institution
By mid-morning or early afternoon, the team presents a summary of its findings and the recommendation to the institution. The institution may invite anyone to attend this presentation of the report. In some instances, the senior administrators and unit director will schedule a private session with the team lead and consultant for a preview of the report.

Report to the COA
During a regularly noticed public meeting of the COA, the Team Lead will make a presentation of the team's findings. The institution may invite anyone to attend this public presentation of the accreditation team's report. The COA will make an accreditation determination after hearing the report from the team lead and a response from the institution.

V. Special Circumstances

According to the *Accreditation Framework*, the COA makes a single decision about the continuing accreditation of educator preparation at each institution, including a decision about the specific credentials for which an institution may recommend candidates. Because of that, the following special circumstances need attention:

1. **Off-Campus Programs, Distance Learning Programs, Extended Education Programs and Professional Development Centers** - Information about all sites where programs are offered must be a part of the planning for the accreditation visit. Interviews must be scheduled to represent participants at all sites. If necessary, members of the accreditation team may be asked to conduct visits to off-campus sites prior to the accreditation visit. In

some cases, the team size may be increased to facilitate the gathering of data from multi-site institutions. It is expected that the CTC's standards are upheld at all sites where the programs of the institution are offered. Information from the various sites will be a part of the accreditation decision made about the institution.

2. **Programs Not Assigned to the Education Unit** - Even though a particular credential program may reside outside of the education unit at an institution, it will be included in the accreditation visit and will be affected by the single accreditation decision that is made about the institution. Pertinent information about these programs must be included in the *ISSR.* The education unit is considered, by the CTC, to be responsible for assuring program quality for all credential preparation programs.

3. **Cooperative Programs Between Institutions** - Since the accreditation decision is made about the institution and all of its related programs, cooperative programs between institutions must be included in the accreditation visit and treated as a part of each institution's accreditation visit. An accreditation decision made at one institution that co-sponsors a cooperative program may be different than the decision made at another institution that co-sponsors the same program.

4. **Other Special Circumstances** - As other special circumstances arise, the COA will develop policies and procedures to address them.

VI. Accreditation Findings, Accreditation Recommendations and Team Report

The accreditation team report consists of three main parts. The first part includes a statement about the team's accreditation recommendation, summary information about the findings of the team, and summary information about the institution and its programs. This part includes a table that identifies for each program how many standards apply to the program, and, separately, how many of those standards were met, met with concerns, and not met.

Accreditation Team Recommendations

Once the team reaches consensus about program and common standards findings, the team must deliberate on its accreditation recommendation. For a thorough discussion of the accreditation recommendations and their operational implications, see Chapter 8. The team lead and consultant will support the team as it determines whether the findings of the institution and its programs support a recommendation for accreditation or whether the findings are substantive enough to warrant a recommendation of accreditation with stipulations. There are three levels of accreditation with stipulations:

Accreditation with Stipulations

Accreditation with Major Stipulations

Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations

In the event an institution fails to address stipulations assigned by the COA within the time period determined by the COA, a subsequent review team may recommend Denial of Accreditation.

VII. Activities after the Site Visit

Committee on Accreditation Actions

Following the site visit, the consultant will assist the Team Lead in preparing the team recommendation for submission to the COA. At the COA meeting, the team lead and consultant will present the site report and the accreditation recommendation. The institutional representatives will be present and will have an opportunity to respond to the report and recommendations. The COA will deliberate about the report and act upon the recommendation: whether to accept or modify the recommendation. The COA will include in its accreditation action any stipulations placed on the institution, the due date by which the institution must remedy any stipulations, and whether a seventh year report or a follow-up team visit should occur. For a thorough discussion of the seventh year report, see Chapter Nine.

Appeal Procedures

In the event the institution believes the site review team demonstrated bias or acted arbitrarily or capriciously or contrary to the policies of the *Framework* or procedural guidelines, it may appeal the team recommendation to the COA. The CTC's consultant for the institution will assist the team as it prepares for and presents its appeal.

The institution may also file a dissent with the CTC regarding the action of the COA. In that case, the consultant will help the Team Lead prepare for and present the review team perspective.

Committee on Accreditation Actions

Every member of the COA receives a copy of the institutional review at least ten days prior to a scheduled meeting. Members study the materials in advance of the meeting and are prepared to ask for clarification and to discuss their perspectives of the report and the findings. The COA may not refute the findings of the site review team. The COA's task is to review the findings and to discuss the accreditation recommendation in light of the findings. Following deliberations, the COA will vote on an accreditation status and will specifically identify any stipulations to be placed on the institution and the means by which the stipulations may be removed.