

NACCAS Policy on Consultants - Effective 2014

The Commission's belief and intention is that the accreditation process is and should be a rigorous, disciplined and detail-oriented process of learning and self-evaluation. By carefully and thoroughly documenting an institution's procedures, and assessing how those procedures meet NACCAS' accreditation requirements – or, conversely, how they fail to do so and what must be done to correct that failure – the institution's staff develops a deeper, clearer and more meaningful understanding of both the institution and NACCAS' requirements.

The Commission further believes that developing this institutional (i.e., staff-based) body of accreditation knowledge and experience is one of the most important results of the self-evaluation process. Staff-based accreditation knowledge is essential to ensuring that an institution is able to consistently and continuously comply with NACCAS' requirements over the long run. Institutions that rely too heavily on guidance from external consultants fail to develop the staff-based understanding of accreditation requirements the Commission expects, and are ill-prepared to remain compliant without the consultant's continuing oversight and assistance.

The Commission understands that, from time-to-time, even knowledgeable staff may have questions or concerns about NACCAS requirements or processes. For that reason, NACCAS maintains a staff of experienced and knowledgeable accreditation experts dedicated to providing ongoing technical assistance to accredited schools and applicants for accreditation, and to answering questions concerning NACCAS' *Standards and Criteria*, Policies, Rules and application processes. This assistance is available to schools at no additional charge, as are NACCAS webinars and other valuable resources available on NACCAS' web site. Schools may also request special, individualized on-site consultations or trainings with NACCAS staff, at the school's expense, and NACCAS will make its best efforts to honor such requests.

The Commission strongly believes that institutions that develop the appropriate level of staff-based accreditation knowledge, and that utilize the training and other resources available to them from NACCAS, should not need the assistance of third-party consultants.

Accordingly, the Commission has adopted this Policy on Consultants:

1. NACCAS does not encourage the use of external consultants.
2. NACCAS will not endorse or recommend consultants for those institutions that choose to use them. Institutions that choose to hire a consultant are strongly encouraged to select one carefully, based on thorough research and the recommendations of knowledgeable and trustworthy sources.
3. All communications between an institution and NACCAS must be with the primary contact person(s) at the institution, not with external consultants. Your consultant's role is to advise you, not to interact with NACCAS on your behalf.
4. If you elect to have your consultant present at an on-site evaluation of your institution, the consultant may only be present as a non-participant observer of the process. NACCAS' on-site evaluation team will be communicating directly, and exclusively, with the management, employees and students of your institution.