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**COMMISSION ON OSTEOPATHIC COLLEGE ACCREDITATION**

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## **COCA Site Visit Planning**

The following information is provided to assist colleges of osteopathic medicine in planning for on-site evaluations. Throughout the planning process for any site visit, COCA staff will work with COM personnel to ensure a productive experience.

### **Site Visit Notification**

COMs being reviewed for continuing accreditation will be notified of their upcoming site visit approximately one year prior to a site visit. COMs applying for pre-accreditation or COMs having a special, focused site visit, will be notified as soon as the site visit date has been identified.

### **Site Visit Team**

Approximately 9 months prior to a site visit, the COM will receive a notification with the proposed evaluation team for the site visit.

### **Team Secretary**

A COCA staff member is assigned to every site visit to assist with logistics and act as a liaison between the COM and the evaluation team.

### **Self-Studies**

If a self-study is due as part of the evaluation, the self-study is due 90 days prior to the scheduled site visit. This will provide time for COCA staff to review the documentation and work with the COM to clarify any issues before the materials are forwarded to the site team. Approximately 30 days prior to a site visit, COCA staff will contact the COM for any additional information requested by the site visiting team.

### **Site Visit Schedule**

Approximately 6 months prior to a site visit, COCA staff will contact the COM with a draft agenda listing various meetings between the site visit team and COM faculty, staff, and students. The site visit schedule is based on the site visit type and the elements being reviewed.

### **Expenses**

There is no fee for site visits, however, COMs are responsible for reimbursement of direct expenses (travel, lodging, meals, transportation, and honoraria) for the site visit team members. COCA staff do not receive an honorarium. COMs are not responsible for any expenses related to trainees or observers participating in the visit. Expenses incurred by the COM for hotel accommodations, transportation, or meals for trainees or observers subtracted the final invoice.

### **Lodging**

The COM is responsible for arranging accommodations for the site team. Reservations should be made at a hotel convenient to the COM. Arrangements should be made to have hotel expenses (room and tax and meal expenses, if applicable) directly billed to the COM. Hotel expenses for site visit trainees or observers will be deducted from the final site visit invoice.

### **Meals**

A COM will often arrange for hotels where complimentary breakfast is provided as part of the stay. If the hotel does not provide breakfast for guests, arrangements should be made to have breakfast for the site visit team at the COM. Lunch should be provided for the team in a private room or the team workroom during the visit. Coffee, tea, water and soft drinks and snacks should be available all day. The team secretary will work with the COM to identify options for dinner for the site team. Site teams are responsible for paying their own dinner expenses, which will be billed back to the COM for reimbursement. Some meals are provided by the COM on location, such as a catered lunch, but dinner is paid for by the site team members and reimbursed by the COM.

### **Ground Transportation**

The COM is responsible for arranging all ground transportation for the site visit team. Depending on the distance from the airport to the host hotel, site visitors may use taxi or car services. The COM usually arranges for group transportation from the hotel to the campus and to transport the site team to dinner.

### **Travel Logistics**

Site team member travel is booked through the AOA travel agency. Travel expenses will be billed to the COM following the site visit.

### **On-Site Logistics**

Following is a list of supplies and services that should be provided to the evaluation team:

- A workroom large enough to comfortably accommodate the team members to draft reports on a computer, review documents, eat meals, etc. This room will not be used for meetings with COM personnel.
- Access to secure high-speed Wi-Fi.
- Passwords to access secure COM websites for student or faculty handbooks, policies, etc.
- A printer should be in the same team workroom. A paper shredder should be available.
- Site team members bring laptop computers, but it is requested that the COM have backup equipment. Computers should have appropriate Internet access allowing team members to open both protected and non-protected documents for review on the COM website.
- Office supplies, e.g., pens, pads of paper, stapler, paper clips, etc., should be available in the team workroom.
- Name badges or key cards for each of the site team members.
- An IT technician should be available to assist the team during the entire visit.
- A list of key contacts must be available in the team workroom for the Team Secretary.

- It is recommended that the COM provide staff members with the ability to guide the site visit team to their respective interviews and assist with keeping track of time.

The COM must be able to accommodate site visitors with disabilities with accessible transportation, hotel accommodations, and equipment. The COM should notify the team secretary if any areas at the COM are not accessible to individuals with disabilities.

### **Materials for Review On-Site**

Whenever possible, the Team Secretary will request any additional materials for review prior to the site visit. Any additional materials should be provided to the Team Secretary electronically. Unless requested, print outs of the self-study documentation is not required.

### **Gifts to Site Visit Team Members**

Gifts for site visit evaluators are not allowed. The COCA understands that a COM may wish to impart nominal gifts of hospitality (e.g., snack bags, water, COM mementos, etc.). While the COCA does not encourage any gifts, a COM may choose to convey nominal hospitality gifts not to exceed \$25 in value.

### **Post-Site Visit Activities**

Immediately following the site visit, the COM will receive a link to an online survey to complete a brief evaluation of the site visit. This information is not shared with the site visitors or the COCA until after the site visit report has been adjudicated. Any problems or issues that arise during the site visit should be communicated to the Team Secretary or the Team Chair immediately during the site visit.

Within two weeks, the COM will receive a copy of the site visit report for a 30-day review for the accuracy of factual information. Following receipt of the COM's comments, the site visit report, report, self-study, and the supplemental documentation are forwarded to the COCA for review.

Following the site visit, the COM will receive an invoice outlining the expenses to be reimbursed for the site team.

For any questions, please contact COCA staff at [predoc@osteopathic.org](mailto:predoc@osteopathic.org) or (312) 202-8124.

### **Estimated Site Visit Expenses**

The COCA does not charge a fee for site visits. However, colleges of osteopathic medicine are responsible for reimbursing the COCA for the direct expenses associated with a site visit. Below are estimates for the costs associated with a site visit to assist COMs with budgeting. These estimates. The actual costs may vary widely depending on factors like the location of the COM, the location of the site visitors, and the season of the visit.

Site visits typically have four evaluators and one COCA staff member, except pre-operational which has one or two evaluators and one staff. For all visits, travel and meal expense estimates can be adjusted accordingly.

Budget Item	Calculation	Amount
Airfare for 4 evaluators and 1 COCA staff person	\$500 x 5	\$2,500
Ground transportation for 4 evaluators and 1 COCA staff	\$75 x 5 people x 2 days	\$750
Ground transportation from the hotel to the COM	\$25 x 5 people x 2 days	\$250
Honorarium for 1 Team Chair	\$775 x 4 days	\$3,100
Honoraria for 3 evaluators	\$750 x 4 days	\$9,000
Meals for 4 evaluators and 1 COCA staff	\$160 x 5 people x 4 days	\$3,200
Hotel accommodations for 4 evaluators and 1 COCA staff	\$200 x 5 people x 3 nights	\$3,000
Snacks and drinks	\$25 x 5 people x 2 days	\$250

Calculations are based on a typical visit to a single campus. Some site visits, such as those involving additional locations or branch campuses, last longer or require additional travel, and cost more as a result.