



Core Inquiries:

General Principles, Instructions for Teams, Instruction for Colleges

General Principles:

- A. Team ISER Review will culminate in the development of Core Inquiries which highlight areas, Standards, and/or Policies that require clarification or expansion, additional information requests, and/or observation and interview requests for the Focused Site Visit.
- B. Core Inquiries will describe the areas of emphasis for the Focused Site Visit to determine whether Accreditation Standards and Policies are met and to further explore areas of commendation or recommendation.
- C. Core Inquiries will serve as a planning tool for the College in preparation for the Focused Site Visit. In the course of the Focused Site Visit, if new or emerging issues arise out of the discussions on Core Inquiries, the Team Chair will consult with the ACCJC Staff Liaison.
- D. At the conclusion of Team ISER Review, the Team Chair will conduct a conference call with the College CEO and ACCJC Staff Liaison to summarize the Core Inquiries. This is an informal briefing. The CEO should refrain from discussing their interpretations of the findings during the core inquiries briefing, which is part of the Formative component of the peer review process.
- E. The Team Chair will send a formal Core Inquiries report to the CEO within two weeks of Team ISER Review.
- F. Two weeks prior to the Focused Site Visit, the college will provide an update on the core inquiries using the ACCJC template and append available requested evidence. The College is not to prepare an immediate formal response to the Core Inquiries. Per the Core Inquiries, the College will use the time to prepare for the visit.
- G. The Core Inquiries report will be appended to the Draft Peer Review Team Report submitted to the Commission for its deliberation. Before final submission to the Commission, the Team Chair will provide an opportunity for the CEO to review errors of fact in the Draft Peer Review Team Report.

Instructions for Teams

1. Review the Core Inquiries template at the start of Team ISER Review as reminder of the expected outcome for the day.
2. Complete the Core Inquiries template based on information and discussions emanating from Assignment 3: Formative Discussion Tool for Team ISER Review.
3. Follow the steps below to complete each section for each Core Inquiry:
 - a. **Summarize** in 1-2 sentences the area which needs clarification or further development based on the review of the ISER and evidence – key words will be needed to frame areas of exploration (e.g. is it a process concern, policy issue, policy implementation, issue of exercising appropriate roles, frequency of implementation, etc.)
 - b. **List relevant Standards and/or Policies** under review that relate to the Core Inquiry (this itemization should be limited to the most relevant standards, not all standards that are remotely related to the issue)
 - c. **Describe the Core Inquiry** in further detail:
 - i. Cite evidence the team reviewed and relevant observations leading to the core inquiry
 - ii. Identify the issue that requires clarification or expansion based on the team’s initial analysis of the ISER narrative and evidence, explain gaps or exemplary practice(s) exceeding standard
 - d. **List topics of discussion for interviews during the Focused Site Visit** which will help the College clarify the Core Inquiry (e.g. use of disaggregated assessment data; status of improvement plan on employee evaluations; facilities planning and total cost of ownership).
 - e. **Identify additional information/evidence** the team will need to review for the Core Inquiry
 - f. **Identify observations/interviews** the team will need to conduct for the Core Inquiry
4. In describing the Core Inquiries, be sure to reflect on the evidence you already reviewed.

5. Be sure topics are directly related to Accreditation Standards and Policies.
6. Be clear and direct in the requests for evidence and topics of discussion you identify.
7. Engage the appreciative inquiry approach to peer review in your discussions and documentation per ACCJC's team training workshop.

Instructions for Colleges

1. Do not send an immediate narrative response or evidence to the Team or ACCJC upon receipt of the Core Inquiries.
2. Carefully review the Core Inquiries to prepare for the Focused Site Visit. Core Inquiries describe the areas of emphasis for the Focused Site Visit to determine whether Accreditation Standards and Policies are met and to further explore those areas of inquiry for commendation or recommendation.
3. Remember that during the Team ISER Review, the team validates the good work of the college and identifies those standards that were met per the college's ISER and evidence, discusses areas of potential concern and areas for potential commendation; and develops Core Inquiries which provide formative feedback to the college and are the areas which the team will follow up with the college during their focused site visit.
4. The college should use the Core Inquiries and time leading to the focused site visit as an opportunity to gather needed evidence, collate information, and to strengthen or develop processes in the continuous improvement cycle.
5. Prior to the focused site visit, institutions should use the ACCJC template to provide a college update describing any institutional improvements, strengthening of processes, documented outcomes, discussions or reflections which have occurred pertaining to each core inquiry. This document and all additional evidence should be submitted to ACCJC no later than two weeks before the date of the focused site visit. ACCJC will distribute this information to the team for review.
6. The Team Chair, Vice Chair, Staff Liaison, and CEO will hold a pre-visit conversation no later than two weeks in advance of the Focused Site Visit to discuss updates and set expectations to prepare for the Focused Site Visit.