



## **State Department of Higher Education Observers of Evaluation Teams**

The Commission has over the years maintained a good working relationship with the higher education departments in the states that comprise the New England region. It wishes to continue these relations without compromising its independence as a non-governmental agency. State approval of institutions in some New England states is contemporaneous with and/or dependent upon Commission accreditation.

Each year after the schedule of comprehensive evaluation visits is prepared, Commission staff notify the departments of higher education in each New England state. In turn, they may identify a staff member to accompany the evaluation team. The observer is of considerable value to the team as a source of information about the state's system of higher education, its resources, constraints, and plans.

In order to avoid confusion or misunderstanding about the role and responsibilities of an observer from a state department of education, the Commission has established the following procedures.

1. Before the visit, the institution provides the observer with the same self-study materials as those sent to the visiting team, and the team chair makes available necessary information about the schedule and other arrangements for the visit. The Commission provides a copy of its policies and procedures to the observer.
2. The observer may attend the team orientation session and other team meetings and may accompany team members on their interviews with various institutional groups. It is understood, however, that the institution, team chair, or any team member may decline to have the observer present at specific interviews or meetings where the presence of an observer could adversely affect the productivity of the meeting.
3. The observer is not present for the team's deliberations regarding its recommendations, nor does the observer receive a copy of the team report or participate in its preparation.
4. The institution is not responsible for any hotel, food, transportation or other expenses of the observer.

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