Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools

Evaluation Team Procedures Manual
April 2018 Edition

Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) is recognized by the United States Department of Education (ED), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) as a national accrediting agency for Christian postsecondary institutions that offer certificates, diplomas, associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees, including distance education.
Overview of the Accreditation Process

Accreditation in the United States is voluntary and non-governmental in nature, a system of institutional self-regulation that is unique in comparison with other nations. TRACS provides accreditation for Christian liberal arts colleges and universities, graduate schools, seminaries, Bible colleges and institutes that offer a certificate, diploma or degree (associate, baccalaureate, graduate and/or post-graduate) at both a candidacy level and an accredited level. TRACS is an institutional accreditor. This means the institution as a whole is considered, rather than individual programs within the institution. Every facet of the institution is included in the evaluation process. The geographic scope is transnational.

The granting of Candidacy, Accreditation, and /or Reaffirmation is based, in large part, on peer review. The on-site Evaluation Team Visit is a major component of this review. The purpose of this manual is to provide information concerning the role of the Evaluation Team in the review process. Knowing how an Evaluation Team functions can prepare the team members and the institutional leadership for maximal profit from the experience.

There are four major steps included in the process for institutions seeking Candidacy, Accreditation or Reaffirmation:

1. **Self-Study** - The institution conducts a self-study following procedures prescribed by TRACS. The Self-Study report addresses the level of compliance with each TRACS Standard. Upon completion, the Self-Study report, along with any supporting documentation, is submitted to TRACS. The institution will also send a copy of Self-Study materials to each member of the Evaluation Team. The Self-Study report becomes the basis of the on-site Evaluation Team review.

2. **On-site Visit and Evaluation Team Report** - During an on-site visit, the Evaluation Team, composed of peer professional educators, evaluate both the institution and the Self-Study report. An Evaluation Team Report which contains the team’s findings, and an Institutional Response Matrix is presented to the institution for follow-up.

3. **Accreditation Commission Action** - At the next regularly scheduled meeting following an Evaluation Team visit, the members of the Accreditation Commission review the Self-Study report, the Evaluation Team Report, the Institutional Response Matrix submitted by the institution, the recommendation of the Evaluation Team and the TRACS staff recommendation. The institution is invited to have representative(s) present for the Accreditation Commission's decision-making meeting. The Accreditation Commission determines the institution’s accreditation status based on these factors.

4. **Follow-Up** - Utilizing the Institutional Response Matrix, the institution follows up on the Findings, Recommendations and Suggestions noted in the Evaluation Team Report and any conditions imposed by the Accreditation Commission until such time as all unresolved Findings, Recommendations, Suggestions and conditions are satisfied.
Findings are given when the Evaluation Team determines that the institution is in possible non-compliance with a Standard noted as an Institutional Eligibility Requirement (IER) or with the overall expectations of a Requirement area.

Recommendations are given when the Evaluation Team determines that the institution is in possible non-compliance with a non-IER related TRACS Standard.

Suggestions are given when the Evaluation Team determines that, although not technically in non-compliance with a TRACS Standard, the institution should give further attention to a particular area.

The entire accreditation process is designed to assist in the improvement of the institution by leading the institution to assess both strengths and weaknesses. When weaknesses are identified, the accreditation process guides the institution as it provides remediation to become a stronger institution. A complete description of all aspects of the accreditation process is found in the following official TRACS publications: Steps Toward Accreditation, Self-Study Guidelines, Policies and Procedures Manual and the Accreditation Manual. These publications detail the official guidelines and expectations for institutions, Evaluation Teams and the Accreditation Commission.

Fundamentally, accreditation indicates that an institution has met the TRACS Standards at an acceptable level of compliance and has the prospects of addressing satisfactorily any weaknesses identified within a reasonable time. Accreditation certifies that the institution has conducted a comprehensive Self-Study that has been validated by an on-site Evaluation Team of professional peers. Thereby, the institution has demonstrated that its educational programs have satisfactory quality, that adequate resources exist to support the programs, and that it is committed to self-improvement and self-enhancement.

The accreditation process helps new institutions establish themselves according to commonly accepted standards for postsecondary education and assists established institutions to become stronger. The result is that the interests of students and the public are served by providing assurance that the institution is operating at an acceptable level of quality to justify both its existence and students choosing it for their education.

The basic purposes of the Evaluation Team are to determine if the institution is in compliance with the TRACS Standards, to identify areas in need of improvement, to validate the Self-Study Report, and to make a recommendation concerning the institution’s accreditation status to the Accreditation Commission.

The Evaluation Process and the Role of the Evaluation Team

The institution begins the evaluation process by conducting a comprehensive Self-Study that involves all constituencies of the institution. One outcome of the process is a Self-Study Report. This report is a straightforward description and self-appraisal that identifies both strengths and weaknesses of the institution in relation to the TRACS Standards. The Evaluation Team members evaluate the adequacy of the Self-Study Report and serve as helpful collegial consultants to the institution by noting Findings and by making Recommendations and Suggestions for improving its operations and programs.

The Standards and evaluative criteria, as detailed in the Accreditation Manual, have been developed to represent expectations of good practice and serve as the basis of the Evaluation Team’s analysis. Under the leadership of a standing Standards Review
Committee, there is on-going review of the TRACS Standards by the Accreditation Commission.

The ultimate goal of the Self-Study and follow-up evaluation processes is to ensure that institutions demonstrate compliance with all of the TRACS Standards. TRACS Standards are divided into two categories: Accreditation Requirements and Federal Requirements.

The Accreditation Requirements (Standards 1-16) and Federal Requirements (Standard 17) are as follows:

1. Faith Statement
2. Mission and Name
3. Institutional Objectives
4. Institutional Integrity
5. Operational Authority
6. Organizational Structure
7. Publications and Policies
8. Educational Programs
9. Faculty
10. Student Services
11. Financial Operations
12. Institutional Assessment
13. Strategic Planning
14. Library and Learning Resources
15. Facilities and Equipment
16. Health and Security
17. Federal Requirements

The Evaluation Team Members

Before being eligible to serve as a member of an Evaluation Team, individuals are required to either attend a training workshop for Evaluation Team members or complete the workshop for Evaluation Team members available on the TRACS website. Workshops are conducted at each TRACS Annual Conference and, occasionally, TRACS staff provide training sessions as needed during the year. As part of the training, each participant becomes thoroughly familiar with the contents of the Accreditation Manual, Benchmarks for Excellence, and the Evaluation Team responsibilities outlined in this publication. After completing training, the individual submits all documentation (including transcripts) which serve as the criteria for determining the level of expertise for each of the areas to be reviewed. TRACS staff review the qualifications for each individual, identify the areas for which expertise is documented and approve the individual for use as a team member. Finally, the individual’s name is entered into the Team Pool.

At the appropriate time in the process, the Evaluation Team is formed for an institution. The team will vary in size depending on the institution to be evaluated and the type of visit. The Evaluation Team typically includes at least five peer evaluators (made up of professionals, educators, and faculty members), including a team chair. A staff representative acts as a resource to the team for each visit. TRACS Accreditation Commission members may not serve on Evaluation Teams.
The following factors are considered when determining the suitability of an individual to be placed in the Team Pool and when selecting team members and assigning them to specific review areas:

1. **Governance / Administrative Evaluator:** Minimum of three years of experience in program or institutional leadership as a senior administrator (CEO, executive vice president, chief academic officer, division director, institutional effectiveness/assessment director, or other cabinet-level administrator) in a postsecondary institution, master's degree in an appropriate academic or professional discipline (doctorate preferred, required for graduate level evaluators), completion of TRACS evaluation team training, completion of orientation to the responsibilities of the Evaluation Team members outlined in this publication.

2. **Academic Evaluator:** Minimum of three years of experience as an educator engaged in academic leadership (provost, academic dean, assistant provost/dean, academic division director, program director, registrar) in a postsecondary institution, master's degree in an appropriate academic or professional discipline (doctorate preferred, required for graduate level evaluators), completion of TRACS evaluation team training, completion of orientation to the responsibilities of the Evaluation Team members outlined in this publication.

3. **Student Services Evaluator:** Minimum of three years of experience in student affairs, student life, student services, or student ministry leadership in a postsecondary institution, master's degree in an appropriate academic or professional discipline (doctorate preferred, required for graduate level evaluators), completion of TRACS evaluation team training, completion of TRACS evaluation team training, completion of orientation to the responsibilities of the Evaluation Team members outlined in this publication.

4. **Finance/Business Evaluator:** Minimum of three years of experience in institutional finance or business affairs (CFO, vice president of finance, director of business affairs) in a postsecondary institution or corporation, business degree, completion of TRACS evaluation team training, completion of TRACS evaluation team training, completion of orientation to the responsibilities of the Evaluation Team members outlined in this publication.

5. **Library / Learning Resources Evaluator:** Minimum of three years of experience in librarianship in a postsecondary institution, library science degree (MLS/MLIS), completion of TRACS evaluation team training, completion of TRACS evaluation team training, completion of orientation to the responsibilities of the Evaluation Team members outlined in this publication.

6. **Faculty Evaluator:** Minimum of three years of teaching or research experience in a postsecondary institution, master's degree in an appropriate academic or professional discipline (doctorate preferred, required for graduate level evaluators), completion of TRACS evaluation team training, completion of TRACS evaluation team training, completion of orientation to the responsibilities of the Evaluation Team members outlined in this publication.

7. **Distance Education Evaluator:** Minimum of three years of experience teaching distance education courses, developing distance education curriculum, and/or administering a distance education program in a postsecondary institution; Master's
degree in an appropriate academic or professional discipline (Doctorate preferred, required for graduate level evaluators); completion of TRACS Evaluation Team training; completion of TRACS Distance Education Training and completion of TRACS evaluation team training, completion of orientation to the responsibilities of the Evaluation Team members outlined in this publication.

8. **Assessment / Institutional Effectiveness Evaluator:** Minimum of three years of experience in assessment of student learning, institutional effectiveness, and planning in a postsecondary institution; master's degree in an appropriate academic or professional discipline (doctorate preferred); completion of TRACS evaluation team training, completion of orientation to the responsibilities of the Evaluation Team members outlined in this publication.

**The Team Chair**

Before being eligible to serve as a team chair, individuals must have served on at least three Evaluation Teams and must either attend in person or complete on-line a training workshop for Evaluation Team Chairs. Evaluation Team Chair training workshops are conducted at each TRACS Annual Conference. The chair coordinates the on-site visit and, if deemed necessary, may make a pre-team visit to determine the institution's readiness to host the Evaluation Team. The chair assists the TRACS staff representative with the team orientation session at the beginning of the visit. The chair coordinates assignments, and periodically convenes the team for reviews of the progress and to share information and impressions. The chair is responsible for preparing the draft of the Evaluation Team Report and the team recommendation for the Accreditation Commission. Additionally, the chair will facilitate the finalization of all team evaluation instruments.

**Team Preparation**

Approximately six weeks prior to the scheduled Evaluation Team Visit, each team member will receive, from the institution, a copy of the institution's Self-Study Report, including supporting documents. Each team member reads the materials with specific scrutiny given to their area(s) of assignment and will prepare a preliminary narrative for these areas. Each team member will formulate questions, identify those to be interviewed during the visit, and note additional documentation which he or she may need to review during the visit.

**Team Roster, Travel Itinerary, and Accommodations**

Once all Evaluation Team members have been selected and properly approved, TRACS will provide a team roster to the institution that identifies the areas of review assigned to each team member, the travel itinerary for each team member, and information concerning the team’s accommodations during the visit. The institution is responsible for arranging on-site transportation and lodging. Since much of the work of the team will be completed at the hotel, the institution should arrange for a meeting room at the hotel.

**Conflicts of Interest**

A conflict of interest includes, but is not limited to, having served for compensation during the prior three years as an employee of or consultant to an institution under consideration; being a stockholder or board member of the institution during the prior five years; or any other association or activity, including the appearance of a conflict of interest that an impartial
person might reasonably conclude would compromise a person’s capacity for objectively dealing with an issue concerning a particular institution.

In addition to the stipulations outlined in the general Conflict of Interest definition above, the following guidelines are applied to Peer Evaluators when determining what constitutes a conflict of interest and whether or not a member of the Peer Evaluator Pool is eligible to serve as an Evaluation Team Member, Focus Team Member or as an IFYR Peer Reviewer:

TRACS staff shall not knowingly assign a person to serve as a Peer Evaluator if that person:

1. Within the last five years has been an appointee (e.g., a board member) or employee of the institution, or has been recently a candidate for employment at the institution.
2. Is a graduate of the institution.
3. Has any other impediment to rendering an impartial, objective professional judgment regarding the institution, such as a close personal or familial relationship with persons at the institution or a strong bias regarding the institution.

TRACS staff relies on the personal and professional integrity of Peer Evaluators, expects them to be sensitive to potential conflicts of interests in the peer review process, and assumes they will act accordingly.

Peer Evaluators must not have served the institution undergoing review as a paid consultant within three years of the review.

A Peer Evaluator must not seek or accept employment from the institution undergoing review or serve it as a consultant for a period of one year following the review.

If it is discovered that a conflict of interest may have significantly affected the evaluation of an institution by a Peer Evaluator, either the TRACS President or the Chair of the Accreditation Commission (whichever is appropriate) may ask that a further evaluation of the institution be initiated to ensure an objective review.

As a part of the training required for inclusion in the Peer Evaluator Pool, individuals receive training concerning conflicts of interest. Upon agreement to serve as a member of either an Evaluation Team, a Focus Team or as an IFYR Peer Reviewer, individuals sign a “Conflict of Interest Form” specific to the institution to be reviewed.

Any Peer Reviewer who knowingly violates this policy will be removed from the Peer Evaluator Pool.

The Visit

The visit to the institution usually lasts four days. The team arrives during the afternoon of the first day in time to participate in a team orientation session. At this meeting, strategies and procedures for conducting a successful site visit are reviewed. Each team member provides the team chair with a list of persons to be interviewed and briefly reports on their initial findings regarding the institution’s compliance each Standard to which they have been assigned. Concerns are noted which need further exploration. Typically, the institution will host an evening dinner or reception on this first day which involves the team members and key administration to introduce all parties and to confirm plans and expectations for the rest of the visit.
On the morning of the second day, final decisions are made related to the schedule to be followed for the rest of the visit. Upon arrival the campus, the team tours the campus, becomes acquainted with the background materials made available in the on-campus team room, and conducts interviews with designated individuals.

From this time on, the team members are immersed in reviews within their assigned areas: visiting classes, interviewing, conducting open meetings, taking extensive notes of findings, sharing findings with the other team members, and expanding or correcting draft sections of the Evaluation Team Report.

During the evening, the team meets to compare notes, review findings, and work toward consensus. Following any team meetings, each team member will work independently and will continue writing their particular sections of the draft Evaluation Team Report.

On the morning of the third day, once the team returns to the campus, team members proceed with whatever is necessary to enable them to fulfill their assignment and bring on-campus work to a close. Additional interviews may be conducted and additional documents may be reviewed as necessary. The team continues to discuss findings among themselves.

Once all drafts of the various sections of the Evaluation Team Report have been submitted and compiled into a comprehensive document, the team meets, to finalize the Evaluation Team Report and to complete all evaluation instruments.

The team then decides on its confidential recommendation concerning the institution’s sought status that will be provided to the Accreditation Commission.

The visit concludes on the fourth day with an exit interview with selective members of the institution. A draft copy of the Evaluation Team Report will be given to the institution’s Chief Executive Officer at the exit interview. Each team member reads the Commendations, Suggestions, Recommendations, and Findings for their assigned areas of review. The team chair and TRACS staff will provide the institution with information concerning institutional responsibilities moving forward. There is no discussion of the Evaluation Team Report and the team will not entertain questions concerning its determinations.

The institution is provided with the opportunity and means to cite any “Errors of Fact” or any misinterpretations contained in the draft of the Evaluation Team Report. If no changes to the report are necessary, the report is finalized and becomes the official and final Evaluation Team Report.

**Institutional Response**

Once finalized, the institution will receive a copy of the final Evaluation Team Report, along with an Institutional Response Matrix. The Institutional Response Matrix will contain the Findings, Recommendations and Suggestions given by the Evaluation Team as noted in the Evaluation Team Report. Utilizing the Institutional Response Matrix, the institution will respond to each Finding, Recommendation and Suggestion and submit these responses to TRACS by a specified date. The responses should indicate actions taken and/or timelines for future action in reference to each Finding, Recommendation and Suggestion. Supporting documentation for each action/response should be included.
Accreditation Commission Review

At its next biannual meeting, the Accreditation Commission will review the following documents when considering and determining the status of the institution: the institution’s Self-Study Report, the Evaluation Team Report, the Evaluation Team’s recommendation concerning the status sought, the institution’s Institutional Response Matrix, and the recommendation of TRACS staff concerning status sought. Before a final decision is reached, representatives from the institution are invited to appear before the Accreditation Commission to provide updates and answer Commissioner questions. The Accreditation Commission will decide to grant the institution the status sought, defer the institution concerning its sought status, or deny the institution concerning its sought status.

Evaluation

All parties participating in the institutional evaluation process are involved in assessing the efficacy of the process itself as well as the instruments and individuals involved. Assessment tools are provided which allow the institution to evaluate the Evaluation Team as well as the evaluation process overall. Additionally, the Evaluation Team members assess the Team Chair; and the Team Chair evaluates the team members. TRACS and its processes are evaluated by both the institution and the Evaluation Team members.

A Word to Evaluation Team Members

It is vital that each Evaluation Team member remains focused on their assigned areas of responsibility. If a team member discovers information regarding another evaluator’s assignment, those findings should be shared with the other person, but no team member should become intrusively involved in any of the other members’ assigned areas.

Evaluation Team members must respect the confidentiality of information learned during an evaluation visit. They must be careful to use TRACS Standards and policies and procedures; not the expectations of some other institution or agency. It is important that no one seek information to satisfy their own curiosity apart from what is called for in the TRACS Standards.

During the visit, team members should focus on the on-site evaluation as a priority, not their own personal business or that of their institution. Unless prior arrangements with TRACS staff, the team chair and/or the institution, team members should not arrive late or leave early. They should never attempt to lure employees of the institution to their own institution. Neither should they use an evaluation visit as an opportunity to seek employment at the reviewed institution for themselves or others.

Self-promotion should be avoided as should the accepting of gifts or favors that might in any way be misinterpreted as influence peddling or that might create a conflict of interest. Misplaced sentiment for an institution with inadequate funding or other challenges will simply obstruct fairness and objectivity. It is possible to be fair while remaining firm and objective.

The team should avoid citing specific individuals in the Evaluation Team Report, rather they should emphasize the individual’s position or title, e.g., the President or the Academic Dean. It is not the responsibility of the Evaluation Team to prescribe solutions to deficiencies or areas of deficiency or non-compliance. Such areas will be identified in the Evaluation Team Report with Findings, Recommendations and/or Suggestions, but the team should not demand specific solutions.
Preparation for the Evaluation Team Visit

It is the responsibility of the Evaluation Team to review the institution and its Self-Study in order to honestly and objectively evaluate the existing programs for the purpose of assisting the institution in developing quality and to determine if the institution maintains the appropriate level of compliance with the TRACS Standards which qualify the institution for Candidacy, Accreditation, or Reaffirmation.

Evaluation Team members should familiarize themselves with the following materials prior to the Evaluation Team visit.

a. TRACS Accreditation Manual
b. TRACS Institutional Eligibility Requirements (IERs)
c. TRACS Policies and Procedures Manual
d. TRACS Benchmarks for Excellence
e. TRACS Evaluation Team Procedures Manual
f. TRACS Evaluation Workbook
g. TRACS Evaluation Instruments for Team Members
h. The Institution’s Self-Study Report
i. The Institution’s Financial Records (as appropriate)
j. Previous Staff and/or previous Evaluation Team Reports (as appropriate)
k. Institutional Publications (Catalogs, Manuals, Handbooks, etc.)
Responsibilities of the TRACS Staff Member

The TRACS staff member assigned to the institution under review will be responsible for certain aspects of the evaluation process before, during, and after the Evaluation Team visit.

Before the Visit:

1. Upon receipt of the institution’s Self-Study Proposal, TRACS staff will conduct a Self-Study Visit to the institution to review initial drafts of the Self-Study report as well as other key institutional documents and publications. The timeline for completing the Self-Study process and hosting the Evaluation Team is also finalized during this visit. In a follow-up report to the institution, the staff member will offer non-binding recommendations to the institution regarding the finalization of the Self-Study Report and to ensure that the institution is prepared to host the Evaluation Team.

2. TRACS staff will select the Evaluation Team members from the Team Pool. Staff will also ensure that there are no known conflicts of interest between the proposed team members and the institution.

3. In concert with the Team Chair, TRACS staff will coordinate communications between the institution, the Team Chair, and individual Evaluation Team members and will ensure that all team members are provided with the completed Self-Study materials once submitted to and approved by TRACS.

During the Visit:

1. TRACS staff will conduct the Team Orientation and Training session in concert with the Team Chair.

2. TRACS staff will act as resource for the Team Chair and Evaluation Team members. If asked to do so by the Team Chair and the team, the staff person will act as an editor and will compile the various elements of the draft Evaluation Team Report.

3. TRACS staff will ensure that team members remain focused on TRACS Standards as they conduct their review and write their individual sections of the draft Evaluation Team Report. This area of responsibility includes an emphasis on the Institutional Eligibility Requirements, Benchmarks for Excellence, and particular areas of focus.

4. TRACS staff will provide guidance in defining and properly delineating Commendations, Findings, Recommendations, and/or Suggestions noted in the draft Evaluation Team Report.

5. TRACS staff will distribute and answer questions regarding the Evaluation Instruments and collect all required documentation for return to the TRACS Office.

6. TRACS staff and the Team Chair will oversee the exit interview with the institution’s key personnel. The President of the institution will receive a draft copy of the Evaluation Team Report, an Errors of Fact information sheet, and a Post Site Visit Questionnaire.
After the Visit:

1. Once the institution has submitted any factual errors to be corrected in the draft Evaluation Team Report, the Report is finalized and submitted to the institution along with an Institutional Response Matrix on which the institution will respond to each Finding, Recommendation and/or Suggestion given by the team in the Evaluation Team Report.

2. TRACS staff will present the Self-Study Report, the Evaluation Team Report, the team recommendation concerning the accreditation status sought, the institution’s Institutional Response Matrix, and a staff report/recommendation to the Accreditation Commission at the next meeting for consideration of the institution’s sought status.

3. TRACS staff will continue to receive periodic Progress Reports from the institution and will report the institution’s progress to the Accreditation Commission until such time as all team Findings, Recommendations and/or Suggestions, as well as any conditions imposed by the Accreditation Commission, have been satisfactorily addressed.
Responsibilities of the Team Chair

The Team Chair will be responsible for certain aspects of the evaluation process before, during and after the Evaluation Team visit.

Before the Visit:

1. Once provided the names and contact information of the Evaluation Team members, the Chair will establish communication with each of the team members confirming their travel plans for the visit and coordinating other aspects of the visit as necessary.

2. Once Self-Study materials have been received, the Chair and the TRACS staff will determine if a visit by the Chair and/or TRACS staff is necessary prior to the Evaluation Team visit.

3. Team members will be encouraged to begin their review of the Self-Study materials and compile a list of questions to be answered and individuals to be interviewed during the visit.

4. The Chair and TRACS staff will be prepared to answer any questions and address any concerns raised by the team members as a result of their review of the Self-Study materials prior to the visit.

5. The Chair should inform the institution, prior to the visit, of any preliminary questions or concerns raised by the team members so that the institution will have an opportunity to respond appropriately in advance of and during the visit.

6. The Chair, in concert with TRACS staff and institutional personnel, will establish the daily schedule for the visit based on the generally accepted format established by TRACS.

During the Visit:

1. The Chair will be responsible for coordinating the team’s activities during the visit. It may be necessary for the Chair and/or TRACS staff to arrive at the institution prior to the arrival of the other team members to ensure that necessary preparations have been made for the visit.

2. The Chair will conduct the team orientation and training session in concert with the TRACS staff.

3. The Chair will act as the team spokesperson in all matters pertaining to policy, procedures, and institutional relations with TRACS, and coordinate all interviews, including the exit interview with key institutional personnel.

4. The Chair will ensure that all team members submit their drafts of the narratives for the individual portions of the Evaluation Team Report and that these drafts are compiled into a single cohesive report. TRACS staff will to serve as the editor and compiler of these drafts.

5. The Chair will oversee the final team meeting concerning the compilation of the draft Evaluation Team Report and the completion of all Evaluation Instruments.
6. The Chair and TRACS staff will oversee the exit interview with the institution’s key personnel.

**After the Visit:**

1. Once the visit is completed, the Chair will communicate via email with each team member expressing his/her appreciation for their service on the team.

2. The Chair may be called upon by TRACS staff or the Accreditation Commission to provide clarity on any issues which remain unclear and which may influence the final decision of the Commission regarding the status sought by the institution.
Responsibilities of the Evaluation Team Members

The Evaluation Team members will be responsible for certain aspects of the evaluation process before, during and after the Evaluation Team visit.

Before the Visit:

1. Team members should indicate their willingness and suitability to serve on the Evaluation Team and submit the “Conflict of Interest” form provided by TRACS.

2. Team members should coordinate with the TRACS Evaluation Team Visit Coordinator regarding travel arrangements for the visit.

3. Upon receipt of the Evaluation Team Packet from the TRACS Office, and the Self-Study Report from the institution, Evaluation Team members should familiarize themselves with all documents in the packet and conduct their review of their assigned areas of the Self-Study Report.

4. Team members should prepare a written summary of findings and observations based on the review of the assigned areas of the Self-Study materials. Corrections and additions may be made after confirmation occurs during the team visit.

5. Team members should compile a list of questions to be answered and individuals to be interviewed during the visit and should send these lists to the Team Chair prior to the visit.

6. Team members should maintain communication with the Team Chair and TRACS staff regarding questions and to ensure clarity regarding travel and other matters.

During the Visit:

1. Team members should be present and actively participate in the orientation session on the afternoon of the first day of the team visit.

2. Team members should bring printed copies of all relevant documents provided to them by TRACS via the web accessed Evaluation Team Packet as well as any other needed materials, documents and/or supplies.

3. Team members should conduct the necessary interviews and review the necessary documents on-site to ensure a thorough review and accurate conclusions.

4. Team members should contribute appropriately to the writing and final compilation of the draft Evaluation Team Report and to the completion of all Evaluation Instruments.

After the Visit:

1. Team members should complete and submit to TRACS a copy of the TRACS supplied expense report, with receipts attached, within ten days of the completion of the visit.

2. Team members should remain available to the Team Chair and TRACS staff to provide clarity on determinations noted in the Evaluation Team Report as needed.
3. All team member follow-up communications with the visited institution should be conducted through the Team Chair and/or TRACs staff.
Responsibilities of the Host Institution

The host institution will be responsible for certain aspects of the evaluation process before, during and after the Evaluation Team visit.

Before the Visit:

1. Once informed of the proposed Evaluation Team roster, the institution will notify TRACS of its approval of the selected team members and indicate that there are no conflicts of interest with the members selected utilizing the “Conflict of Interest” form provided by TRACS.

2. Upon completion of the Self-Study, the institution will forward a digital/electronic copy of the Self-Study and all supporting documentation (via email, drop box, flash drive, CD, etc.) to the TRACS office. Once approved by TRACS, the institution will forward digital/electronic copies of the Self-Study and all supporting documentation to each team member. As may be requested by individual team members, the institution should be prepared to send to those team members, printed copies of either the full Self-Study and all supporting documentation or specified portions of the Self-Study and/or supporting documents. The Evaluation Team members should receive the Self-Study and all supporting documents at least six weeks prior to the scheduled team visit.

3. The institution should make all hotel, dining and local travel arrangements for team members as specified in a letter which will be sent to the institution’s Chief Executive Officer. Additionally, the institution should provide each team member with the name and telephone number of the hotel where the team will be staying during the visit, along with emergency contact numbers in the event of flight delays, etc.

4. The institution should reserve a workroom at the hotel for team use during the visit. The hotel workroom should contain a digital projector and screen (if necessary) suitable for PowerPoint presentations. Internet access and power strips should also be provided in the hotel workroom. Some institutions provide snacks and/or beverages for the team members in the hotel workroom. This workroom at the hotel should be reserved for team use during all of the days of the team visit unless otherwise advised by the Team Chair and/or TRACS staff.

5. The institution should ensure that board, administration, faculty, staff, and students are aware of the dates for the visit and that representatives from each of these constituencies are available for interviews during the visit.

6. The institution should provide a private and secure workroom on the campus exclusively for team use during the entire visit. The workroom should contain a computer with a printer, internet access and a printed copy of the complete Self-Study along with all supporting documents. In addition to the Self-Study and supporting documents, the following documents may also prove beneficial in the workroom: course syllabi, student evaluation instruments, sample student portfolios, faculty files including evaluations, previous Self-Study reports and evaluation information, numerous year’s financial audits, job descriptions, various committee meeting minutes, etc. Some institutions provide snacks and/or beverages for the team members in the campus workroom as well.

7. The institution should notify the community of the Evaluation Team Visit through the local newspaper or by other appropriate printed means which are accessible to the public. This
announcement should be published approximately two weeks prior to the date of the visit. The institution should submit to the Team Chair or to TRACS staff a copy of the announcement as it appeared either before the visit occurs or on the first day of the visit.

Below is a sample of the wording to be used in the announcement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Institution TO HOST ON-SITE EVALUATION TEAM VISIT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of Institution</strong> will host a Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) on-site Evaluation Team on <strong>dates</strong> for the purpose of evaluating the institution for <strong>Candidacy / Accreditation / Reaffirmation</strong> (choose one) status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third party comments are invited and may be addressed to: TRACS, 15935 Forest Road, Forest, VA 24551.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRACS is approved by the U.S. Department of Education as a nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency and appears on the DOE Secretary's List of Approved Accrediting Agencies, which is provided in the Higher Education Directory. TRACS is also recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).</td>
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**During the Visit:**

1. The institution should ensure that the team members have full access to administrators, faculty, students, alumni, board members, other key personnel and should supply key documents as requested by team members.

2. The institution should ensure that the travel needs (transportation to and from airports, hotels, restaurants, and the campus) are met.

3. The institution should ensure that the Chief Executive Officer, administrators and other key personnel are available for the exit interview.

**After the Visit:**

1. The institution should complete and return to the TRACS office the “Post Site Visit Questionnaire” and should submit “Errors of Fact” concerning the draft of the Evaluation Team Report according to TRACS instructions.

2. Once the Evaluation Team Report is finalized, the institution should respond, utilizing the Institutional Response Matrix supplied by TRACS, to each Finding, Recommendation and Suggestion given by the Evaluation Team. The institution’s response is to be submitted according to the established timeframe.

3. The institution should make arrangements to attend the appropriate Accreditation Commission meeting and should be prepared to appear before the Commission to provide insight and answer questions regarding institutional progress since the Evaluation Team visit.