# Guidelines for BAETE Program Evaluators - 2018

## 1.    Introduction

Program evaluators are the primary representatives of BAETE and they interact directly with the institution under evaluation. Therefore, the conduct, attitude and professionalism of the program evaluators during an evaluation have direct bearing on the credibility and the reputation of the accreditation process and decision, and of BAETE itself. The purpose of this document s to provide a guideline to the program evaluators to highlight the best practices.

## 2.    Conflicts of interest

BAETE treats conflicts of interest with utmost seriousness. This issue is discussed in Section 2.9 of the Accreditation Manual 2017. Each evaluation team member is required to disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest at the earliest opportunity. Examples of conflicts of interest include but are not limited to the following scenarios.

- A current or former full-time or part-time faculty or staff member of the concerned institution
- Present or past member of any committee in the concerned institution
- Current or past involvement in any for-profit activity in the concerned institution
- Dependent studying in the concerned institution

## 3.    Confidentiality

All information provided by the institution, in the SAR or elsewhere, and all findings by the evaluation team members during the on-site visit, are confidential. These may be used only for the purpose of evaluation of the concerned program. The information or findings may not be revealed to any unauthorized persons without written permission of the concerned institution. Section 2.8 of the Accreditation Manual stipulates that confidentiality must be maintained at every stage of the accreditation evaluation.

## 4.    Conduct

- Composure – Being composed means that the person is able to communicate effectively under all situations. No team member should lose temper for any reason at any stage of

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the accreditation evaluation. The discussions with different groups/persons of the concerned university should remain focused to the topic at hand and should not wander/digress to subjects not related to the accreditation evaluation. This is particularly important for the team chair and members when dealing with the top management of the concerned institution, say, the Vice chancellor.

- Collegiality – The nature of the behavior of the evaluators with officials, faculty members and students of the concerned institution is extremely important. Accreditation evaluation is a peer level task and the behavior of the evaluators need to communicate that sentiment. Under no circumstances should an evaluator feel superior to his/her counterpart from the concerned institution. An evaluator should not appear as intimidating or threatening to the institution. He/she should be gracious, polite and patient when dealing with people from the concerned institution. Cynical, demeaning or sarcastic languages or attitudes are to be avoided at all times.

- Diligence – Prior preparation is essential to perform effectively as an evaluator. He/she should study the SAR in detail in advance and identify the gaps or the issues that need further exploration. Evaluators should also exchange their views during pre-visit meeting(s). During meetings with different stakeholders the evaluators should know what to look for and guide the questions or the discussions accordingly.

- Gifts, favors and meals – Institutions often give mementos or other valuable gifts to the members of the evaluation team. Such practice should be strongly discouraged and the message should be conveyed to the institution in advance. Similarly, an evaluator should also not ask anyone from the institution for any favor or anything personal before, during or after the onsite visit. The requirements of the evaluators during the visit should be communicated beforehand by the Team Chair which should not include anything of personal nature. All the meals served to the evaluation team should be working meals. Meals should not be elaborate and no meal should be turned into a social or formal event. No one from the institution should join the evaluators during any meal.

5. **Professionalism**

- Team work – An evaluation is effective and credible only as long as the team members' behaviors are coherent, cooperative and collaborative. Evaluators should be cordial to

one another. This is particularly important during the onsite visit. An evaluatos should set aside any negative personal feeling if that exists towards another member, and act professionally towards the common goal of fair and evidence-based evaluation of the concerned program for accreditation.

- Formality – Accreditation is a formal, professional activity. Evaluators should dress appropriately and act accordingly. Moreover, when friends, former colleagues or students of a team member is among the officials or faculty members of the concerned institution, overtly friendly and overtly personal behavior is to be avoided as such behavior may give to others a perception of compromise of a fair and unbiased evaluation. Such behavior by anyone from the institution should not be entertained either.

- Decorum – An evaluator is expected to attend the entire onsite visit without missing any part of the visit. Evaluators should refrain from using the mobile phone during the visit. This is particularly important when meetings/discussions with stakeholders of the institution are in session.

- Punctuality – The importance of punctuality cannot be over-emphasized. Time management plays a central role in establishing the credibility and professionalism of the accreditation. All meetings, discussions and visits should start and end on-time. This message should be communicated to the institution with all seriousness in advance. The visit schedule should be carefully prepared considering contingencies including traffic congestion. Punctuality is important not only during the onsite visit but also before and after the visit. As per Section 3.2 of the Accreditation Manual 2017, the onsite visit should be held within 12 weeks of the formation of the evaluation team and the report of the evaluation team should be submitted within three weeks of the visit.

## 6. Activities

- Pre-visit activities – The evaluation process starts with the study of the SAR. If any additional information is required from the concerned institution, the request should be made through the team chair giving the institution sufficient time to respond. Preliminary evaluation of each criterion should be done based on the SAR and the issues which need further investigation during the onsite visit should be identified. During the pre-visit meeting(s), the observations of each evaluator should be exchanged so that all the

evaluators are on the same page. The team chair should distribute the criteria among the team members for evaluation. The strategy for the visit and the draft plan should be finalized during the pre-visit meeting(s).

- Activities during onsite visit – During the visit, the evaluation team is expected to do the following. Assess the issues which could not resolved from the SAR, examine and verify in detail the information provided by the institution, review the infrastructure and the facilities, provide a preliminary assessment of the program in terms of compliance, concerns, weaknesses and deficiencies in each criterion. The activities to be conducted for this purpose include but are not limited to (i) meeting the institution and the program heads, (ii) meeting with the  faculty members, (iii) meeting with the students, (iv) meeting with the non-teaching staff of the program, (v) examine course materials including exam questions, answers, project reports and other examples of student works, (vi) examine transcripts, (vii) examine documents demonstrating evidence of achievement of outcomes and objectives, (viii) examine documents demonstrating CQI, (ix) visit the labs, class rooms, library, placement center, and other support facilities, and (x) conduct the exit meeting.
  - Exit meeting is one of the most important activities of the onsite meeting. The Chair of the evaluation team chairs the exit meeting. The assessment of the evaluation team is verbally communicated to the concerned institution in terms compliance, concern, weakness or deficiency in each of the criteria. The evaluation team should not prescribe any specific remedial to address any particular non-compliance.  Justification for each choice should be briefly provided. It is preferable that the evaluation team debriefs the program head in a pre-exit meeting to ensure that there is no gap between the evaluation team and the institution. The institution is not expected to respond to the presentation of the assessment of evaluation team in the exit meeting except to correct factual error.
- Analysis of observations and findings – The observations that the evaluators make should be categorized under appropriate BAETE criterion. During this process, a holistic approach should be adopted. The findings should be consolidated to get the big picture. Evaluators should not be nitpicking preparing a long list of minor concerns and weaknesses. Rather the issues which impact the outcomes should be highlighted. The

evaluators should also not analyze each criterion and sub-criterion in isolation. On the contrary, they should focus on the relationships and interdependencies among different criteria.

- Collection of evidences to support conclusions – The conclusions that the evaluators reach from their evaluation should be evidence based. Conclusions must be made in accordance with the criteria stipulated in the Accreditation manual. Moreover, the definition of concern, weakness or deficiency may not be arbitrarily made or interpreted. The use of these terms must be consistent with the descriptions provided in the Accreditation Manual. Personal bias or perception should not be the basis of any conclusion. Quantitative and prescriptive evaluations should also be avoided. Evaluators need to recognize that there may be multiple ways to do something right. Consequently, the absence of evidence for their preferred method may not automatically imply non-compliance. Instead, an issue may be regarded as non-compliant when evidence demonstrates that either the desired outcome is not achieved or a process itself is absent.

- Preparation of the evaluation team report – The evaluation team report should also be evidence based and specific. The justifications for each conclusion should be adequately provided. Although a brief statement of compliance should highlight the areas in which the program far exceeds the minimum requirement, a detailed subjective narration of the observations is to be avoided. The report may contain general recommendation to assist the program on how to address a non-compliant issue, but the evaluators should refrain from writing prescriptive recommendations.