

ASPA Code of Good Practice

The ASPA Code of Good Practice provides guiding principles for members in conducting the accreditation process.

An accrediting organization holding membership in the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors:

1. Promotes quality in education through accreditation processes that:

- a. Focus on student achievement of knowledge and competence as defined by institutional and programmatic missions, goals and contexts.
- b. Affirm that teaching and learning are the primary purposes of institutions and programs.
- c. Evaluate educational quality in a manner unbiased by special interests, politics or educational delivery models.
- d. Encourage institutions and programs to provide clear and accessible public information about student achievement that is pertinent to their communities of interest.

2. Conducts accreditation processes with integrity and professionalism that:

- a. Maintain autonomy and integrity in governance and operations through appropriate relationships, practices and avoidance of conflict of interest.
- b. Create, document and implement policies, and procedures to ensure fair and consistent application of standards and objective decision making that includes attention to due process, confidentiality, and expedient response to appeals and complaints.
- c. Develop, review and revise standards and accreditation procedures with the participation of communities of interest.
- d. Maintain sufficient financial, personnel, and other resources for effective operations, while ensuring efficient and cost-effective accreditation processes for institutions and programs.
- e. Cooperate with other accrediting organizations wherever possible to avoid conflicting standards and to minimize duplication of effort by institutions and programs.
- f. Provide thoughtful analyses to assist institutions and programs in developing their own approaches and solutions, making a clear distinction between accreditation requirements and recommendations for improvement.
- g. Provide accurate, clear, accessible, and timely information to communities of interest about accreditation standards and procedures and the accreditation status of institutions and programs.
- h. Maintain a thorough and effective orientation, training, and professional development program for all accreditation personnel.
- i. Ensure that site teams have the appropriate expertise and experience for each specific review.
- j. Include periodic self-evaluations of the accreditation process that incorporate input from accredited institutions and programs.

3. Respects institutional independence and freedom in academic decision making through accrediting activities that:

- a. Encourage institutional independence and freedom to make academic decisions within the commitment to mutual accountability implicit in participation in accreditation.
- b. Promote the rights of institutions and programs to determine: missions and goals; educational and assessment methodologies; scholarship, research, and policy agendas; curricular content; and administrative and staffing configurations.
- c. Encourage experimentation, innovation, and thoughtful change that meets the needs of the profession and the communities served.