



Peer review is an assessment by individuals who are subject matter experts. Peer review is successful because of the knowledge, commitment and integrity of the professionals who conduct reviews in their fields of expertise. These subject matter experts include educators, practitioners and employers, among others.

Peer Review in Accreditation - The reliance on professional expertise in specialized and professional accreditation is critical to effective quality assurance that serves the public interest. Those who have actual and practical knowledge of the profession contribute across all aspects of the accreditation process, from development of profession-specific competencies and accreditation standards and policies through the review and decision making about accreditation status. This field-specific expertise determines what quality practice and quality education are and ensures advancement of a profession.



Fairness and Objectivity - The peer review process in accreditation ensures objectivity and avoids conflicts of interest through rigorous systems of checks and balances:

- **Formal written policies and procedures eliminate bias** among peer reviewers, decision makers, accreditation staff and academic institutions and programs.
- **Peer reviewers undergo extensive training** in accreditation standards and procedures. Accreditors have processes in place to ensure inter-rater reliability among reviewers.
- **Most peer reviewers are volunteers** who are dedicated to higher education or their specific field. Compensation is rarely provided, but when it is, amounts paid are typically inconsequential and far below usual academic consulting fees. Reviewers spend significant personal time reading and evaluating extensive documentation, visiting institutions and then collaborating to produce a report.

Peer review is a critical element in accreditation, focused on ensuring that students who complete higher education programs have essential skills for professional practice.

Peer review works in other sectors as well. In the academic world, scientific journals use peer review to determine the rigor, accuracy, importance and substance of proposed articles, grant agencies use peer review to decide what research to fund, and higher education institutions use peer review in determining faculty promotions. In the airline industry, airplanes are checked by expert mechanics and pilots.

Peer review is common sense. Peer review is essential to producing evaluations that are trusted by experts in the field. Expert knowledge, skill and judgment matter. Most would agree that the quality standards for the education of a surgeon having been developed and judged by other surgeon experts is far preferable. Without a basis in peer review, accreditation would have no credibility in the academic or professional worlds.