Guidelines and Suggested Questions for ACPE On-Site Evaluations for Certification of Professional Degree Programs based outside the United States of America

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DEFINITION

Certification status from the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) is the public recognition that a professional program in pharmacy meets established qualifications and quality criteria through initial and periodic evaluations. The essential purpose of the certification process is to provide a professional judgment of the quality of a program and to promote institutional improvement. Certification concerns itself with (a) quality assurance and (b) quality improvement.

TERMINOLOGY

ACPE acknowledges that the terminology used and the structure and governance of academic institutions around the world differ. Terminology used in this document is in accordance with the glossaries of terms provided in ACPE's Certification Quality Criteria[1] and Policies and Procedures.[2] Please refer to these latter documents for a description of the term and the intended context in which it is used; common similar/alternate terms are also provided.

VALUE OF CERTIFICATION

The ACPE certification process benefits all constituents:

To the **public**, the values of certification include:

- an assurance of external evaluation of the program and a finding that there is conformity to general expectations of the profession;
- identification of programs that have undertaken explicit activities directed at improving the quality of the institution and its professional programs and that are carrying them out successfully; and
- an improvement in the professional pharmacy services available to the public as certified programs modify their requirements to reflect changes in knowledge, skills attitudes, abilities and practice of pharmacists.

To **students and prospective students**, certification provides:

- an assurance that the educational activities of a certified program have been found to be compliant with quality criteria and, therefore, meet the needs of the students.

Institutions benefit from certification through:

- the stimulus provided for self-evaluation and self-directed program improvement;
- the strengthening of program self-evaluation through the knowledge of a subsequent review or audit and counsel by the evaluation team;
- the enhancement of the reputation of the program because of public regard for certification; and
- the use of certification in decision-making for the investment of public and private funds.

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[1] *International Quality Criteria for Certification of Professional Degree Programs in Pharmacy*. https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/ISP/QualityCriteria.pdf

[2] *Policies and Procedures for Certification of Professional Degree Programs in Pharmacy in Countries other than the United States and its Territories*. https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/ISP/PoliciesandProcedures.pdf

And finally, certification serves the **profession of pharmacy** by:

- providing a means for practitioners to participate in setting entry requirements for the profession; and
- giving assurances that those practitioners who follow them will be adequately prepared.

THE PROCESS

While the definition of certification may be stated simply, the activity is more complex and involves defining requirements necessary for a quality educational experience. These are the Quality Criteria that have been set by ACPE, as a result of contribution and discussions from a globally representative community of interest. The Quality Criteria serve as the basis for each program evaluation. A program's self-study is followed by an on-site visit by an evaluation team, a review of the team's report by the International Commission, and a subsequent certification decision by the ACPE Board of Directors ("Board"). In addition, the process of certification operates in compliance with rigorous policies and procedures of ACPE's International Services Program, which can be found on ACPE's website https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/ISP/PoliciesandProcedures.pdf.

THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

The program self-study report includes qualitative and quantitative information on both academic staff and student achievements and on educational outcomes, which demonstrate the program's success in attaining its objectives. The self-study process typically begins at least one year prior to the on-site evaluation and should provide program description and analysis, present findings and conclusions, appraise strengths and weaknesses, and, where deficiencies exist, outline steps necessary for improvement. Ideally, through the self-study process, schools can identify areas of non-compliance with the quality criteria well ahead of the on-site evaluation, devise and implement plans and strategies to bring the areas into compliance, and the self-study report can present evidence of progress and outcomes in this regard. The self-study report should be able to serve as a planning document for the school of pharmacy.

EVALUATION TEAMS

Evaluation teams are typically composed of an ACPE executive staff member or consultant and two or three other evaluators, collectively with broad academic and practice experience. The ACPE executive staff member or consultant serves to coordinate the evaluation, and each evaluation team member participates in the evaluation process. Evaluation team members take turns chairing sessions outlined in the evaluation schedule agreed with the school and participate in the presentation of findings.

The evaluation team members are invited guests of the university and school of pharmacy. A professional demeanor is needed in all sessions, and a confrontational style should be avoided. Whenever the team is approached in a confrontational manner, the team members should do whatever possible to resolve issues in a constructive and collegial manner.

THE ON-SITE EVALUATION AND THE EVALUATION TEAM REPORT

The on-site evaluation is one component of the certification process and results in an Evaluation Team Report (ETR) that is used by the Board to make a certification decision, taking into consideration the recommendation of the members of the ACPE International Commission, based on their review. The on-site evaluation follows a pre-determined and highly structured schedule that includes interviews with the dean, academic staff, students, preceptors, and university administrators. A survey is made of physical and practice facilities as well as other educational resources. The schedule is established in consultation with the school. At the conclusion of the visit, the evaluation team orally presents its findings first to the dean of the school of pharmacy and then to the university officers. These findings serve as a framework for the written report that is subsequently furnished to the institution. On-site evaluations are customarily made on a six-year cycle; however, programs may be reviewed for purposes of certification within a shorter time period at the discretion of the Board.

The evaluation team has a responsibility to report areas of strength and areas, if any, which may be in noncompliance with quality criteria (as the evaluation team understands and interprets them for the specific program(s) being assessed), and to provide recommendations for continuing improvement. The report generated by the evaluators is not a "certification" report, but an interim, albeit important, evaluative step in the certification process. The evaluation team, in a sense, "audits" the program self-study report by providing an external peer-review. The institution is given opportunity to respond to the report of the evaluation team prior to any decision rendered by the Board. During a subsequent meeting of the Board, decisions concerning compliance and noncompliance with quality criteria and the overall "certifiability" of the program are made on the basis of all of the available information (i.e., the self-study report, the ETR, and any communications from the institution).

The ETR, it should be noted, is constructed for several audiences (e.g., the members of the Board and International Commission, the school, and university administrators). In accord with its quality enhancement objectives, evaluators have latitude in formulating recommendations and suggestions for improvement. The subsequent certification actions of the Board, however, are more narrowly constructed along the lines of certification quality criteria in accord with quality assurance objectives. The Board may also present recommendations for improvement in accord with objectives for quality enhancement.

POLICY ON CONFIDENTIALITY

ACPE maintains confidentiality with regard to its ETRs and the subsequent Certification Action and Recommendations. The ETRs are considered to be property of the university or school, and no information is released to third parties without the approval of the University President or his or her designate. *Information with respect to clarifications or interpretations of the Evaluation Team Report should be referred to ACPE for appropriate responses.* The Board's final decision regarding certification status is posted on ACPE's website.

GUIDELINES FOR ON-SITE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

As noted above, the on-site evaluation is used to investigate various aspects of the professional program(s), to provide the opportunity to meet with administrators, academic staff, other staff, preceptors, and students, both individually and in various groups, and to conduct surveys of resources used to support the program(s). To facilitate the flow of the sessions involving multiple team members, the members take turns "chairing" or leading the sessions. Chairs are designated on the visit schedule or during the team's orientation meeting. The chair for a particular session should strive to facilitate and lead discussion rather than control the session. It is important that other team members also participate in order for all necessary information to be reviewed. General duties of a session chair include:

1) Coordinating the logistics for the assigned session. This includes:

    a) Room set-up: The room should be set-up so as to facilitate discussion; the team should be seated together in a fashion that permits discussion and interaction while alleviating the need to search for team members in a mixed audience.
    b) Introductions: While introductions may have occurred as individuals assemble for the session, it is helpful to go around the room and have all participants introduce themselves and provide a brief statement of background and/or how each individual is involved in this particular group. For the members of the self-study committees, ask them to indicate which section of the report they worked on. It is helpful at this time to provide a brief statement describing the team and its purpose both in a general sense and relating to the specific session at hand.
    c) Ground Rules: It is important to describe the ground rules for each session prior to the beginning; this consists of describing the available time frame, as well as the approach to be used. Guests should be assured that their individual comments will be held in confidence, that the ETR will summarize in aggregate the comments received, and that no individual will

be specifically identified during subsequent discussions at the school or in any reports. The chair should serve as timekeeper, to assure adherence to the schedule.

2) Serving as discussion leader/facilitator for the assigned session. Generally the chair initiates discussion and questioning for the session, with other team members joining as they have comments and/or questions. Specific sessions vary, and additional guidelines for the various types of sessions that comprise an on-site evaluation, are provided below.

As it is the task of the evaluation team to audit and validate the self-study that the school has prepared, it may be helpful and appropriate to ask the same question(s) in multiple sessions or of different individuals. Questions provided in this document are suggested, not required. Team members are, however, encouraged to ask the suggested questions, even if the question's importance may not be immediately clear; all questions and resulting information are significant to the team's work. **Questions should not be presented so as to infer judgment. Rather, questions should seek information and evaluation from the host institution.**

Explain that some questions from the team members may relate to opportunities for quality improvement rather than the expectations of the quality criteria. As such, encourage the participants to describe how things are done currently as well as presenting ideas for quality improvement.

When appropriate, team members are encouraged to ask follow-up questions to gain further insights into specific issues. The primary role of the members of the evaluation team is to listen and gather information about the quality of the program with a view to evaluating compliance with the quality criteria. A secondary role - given the objectives of the certification process - is to help the institution to improve the quality of its program; however, unless help and advice is requested by individuals from the host school, team members should not routinely offer examples or camparisons from their personal experience, home institution or home country. The team is visiting a unique institution, and such comparisons, while offered in a positive sense, may be misconstrued. The team leader should ensure that all members of the team have equal opportunity to pose questions and participate in any discussions.

The remainder of this document contains some specific guidelines regarding the various sessions that will be conducted over the course of the visit. At the beginning of the visit, the evaluation team will meet in an orientation session to review the schedule and assignments.

Introductory Session with the Dean

Generally, the on-site evaluation begins with an introductory session with the Dean. This session, at the request of the Dean, may include other individuals, such as associate and/or assistant deans, depending on the organizational structure and division of responsibilities.

The following approach is suggested for the chair:

1) Coordinate the room set-up and start of the session, in accord with general guidelines.
2) Follow up with any housekeeping details, such as times and locations for any sessions, and a review of the schedule, including the team assignments which have been made.
3) Begin the discussion by asking the Dean general questions or requests for descriptions:

    - What progress has the school made since the last on-site evaluation? (Even if ACPE has not previously conducted an on-site evaluation of the program, it is possible that the school and its program(s) have been evaluated by another quality assurance agency. If applicable, changes and progress made as a result of that evaluation should be explored.)
    - What strengths and weaknesses were identified as a result of the self-study process?
    - Describe the school's mission statement. How does the school's mission align with that of the university? How does the school assess its outcomes? Are the stated objectives consistent with the mission and appropriate in light of the professional program offered?
    - How has information obtained from programmatic assessments been used to enhance the program?
    - What plans does the school have for its professional programs? Summarize the school's strategic plan or goals and objectives for future development.
    - Where do the graduates of the program practice, and how is the degree program equipping them for their roles?
    - How does the school contribute to discussions at the national level to set and advance the vision for pharmacy education and practice? How is the school socially accountable in terms of its contribution to meeting national needs and goals, including healthcare and economic development? How does the school and its program meet local community needs and contribute to the advancement of pharmacy practice?
    - What resources (financial, personnel, professional practice sites, etc.) will be needed to address the weaknesses that have been identified and to support the plans set-forth by the institution? What is the school's plan for obtaining these resources?
    - What is the Dean's general vision for the future of the school and its professional program?
    - What is the Dean's impression of the morale (general mood, sense of well-being; not to be confused with "morals") within the school's academic staff and student body? How many academic staff have resigned during the past two years?
    - Describe the collaborative relationships with any external groups that the school has to support the education, research and scholarly activity, practice and community service.
    - Describe how the school contributes to the activities and governance of the university.
    - Does the school or Dean have an advisory council? If so, what is its role and value to the Dean, school, and program?
    - What are the biggest challenges facing the school and you? What has been the response to the challenges? What additional resources will be needed for the school to successfully address the challenges?
    - Describe the individual(s) to whom the Dean reports, their education and professional experience and the nature of the relationship(s).
    - What would you like the ACPE team to remember from this meeting? What areas have we NOT discussed that are important to you?

- Do you have any specific requests for the evaluation team? How can the team help you and the program?
- Do you have any questions for the evaluation team?

This introductory session with the Dean is also a good time to obtain clarification regarding information that may be unclear in the self-study and other materials provided. Frequently, this involves clarifying budgetary information, academic staff numbers, and unique aspects of the curriculum and/or professional program. The Dean should be requested to provide the requested information during the visit if it cannot be provided at the session.

Survey of Physical Facilities

At some point during the on-site evaluation, team members will tour and review the various physical facilities available in support of the school and its professional program. Team members consider the following questions during these reviews:

1. Pharmacy Building or Main School Location

- Does the quantity of space available appear appropriate for the professional program?
- Does the quality of space available appear appropriate for the professional program?
- Is the space appropriately maintained and safe?
- Does the space enable the program to fulfill the quality criteria?
- Is the space be used efficiently and effectively?
- Is the allocation and configuration of space (offices, teaching/classroom space, research/laboratory space, student space, etc.) conducive to teaching and learning?
- Is there adequate space for small group discussion sessions?

2. Additional Campuses or Locations (where present)

- Do additional campuses or locations offer comparable facilities, services, and experiences for students, academic and other staff, as applicable?
- Do students, academic and other staff feel appropriately a part of the school and program?
- Are communications between campuses/locations adequate and effective?
- If elements of the curriculum are delivered using distance education technologies, is the delivery efficient and reliable?
- Have students, academic and other staff reported any specific problems, disadvantages, or challenges associated with the location?

3. Library Facilities

- Is the quantity of the collection appropriate for the professional program?
- Is the quality of the collection appropriate for the professional program?
- Are the materials current?
- Are the support resources (personnel, computers, reference materials, on-line databases, etc.) adequate for the program?
- How does the school or university teach academic staff and students the effective and efficient use of the library and other learning/educational resources?
- Is the mechanism for obtaining input from the school regarding library resources (library committee, etc.) appropriate?
- What is the extent of the full text journal availability via telecommunications or the Internet by academic staff and students in professional practice experiences?
- Is any library access available at practice sites and/or to preceptors?

4. Educational and/or Learning Support Resources

- Are students required to own a computer? What type of software and technical support is provided?
- Are there resources, which may include computer facilities, audiovisual resources, etc., available for student and/or academic staff use?
- Overall, do the educational support resources available appear adequate for the professional degree program provided?

5. General

- How is the adequacy of physical facilities assessed by the school?
- How is information obtained from programmatic assessments used to enhance physical facilities?

Session with the Self-Study Committee

This session should focus on how the self-study process was conducted and how the resulting report was prepared. The chair should stress that there is no “right way” or “wrong way” to do a self-study, and the nature of the questions does not convey an expectation of how the self-study should have been done. The following approach is suggested for the chair:

1) Coordinate room set-up and start of the session, in accord with general guidelines.

2) Begin discussion and questioning. General issues to address with the committee include:

- Describe the Self-Study Committee. What is the composition and representation of the committee? When and how and was the committee established?
- Describe the school’s mission from the committee’s perspective.
- What process was used to conduct the self-study and create the report?
- To what extent did the self-study process bring academic staff together?
- What are the major findings of the self-study?
- What (if any) surprises or revelations came about as a result of doing the self-study?
- Did members of the academic staff receive a complete, final version of the self-study report for their review?
- Was the self-study report validated by a (anonymous) vote of the academic staff? Did students, graduates, and/or other external stakeholders participate?
- Does the majority of the members of the academic staff concur with the findings of the self-study report? Summarize any minority viewpoints.
- How did the Self-Study Committee handle conflict resolution when determining strategic priority areas within the school?
- What programmatic assessments were performed? How did the Self-Study Committee use the resulting information? Has action been taken already in areas found in need of improvement?
- How will the self-study report be used now and into the future to support plans and progress by the institution?
- What would you change about the self-study process?
- What are the biggest challenges facing the school and committee? What has been the response to the challenges? What additional resources will be needed to address the challenges?
- What would you like the ACPE team to remember from this meeting?
- How did ACPE’s self-study process facilitate your work? Suggestions for improvement for ACPE?
- Do you have any questions for the evaluation team?

Session with the Executive/Leadership Committee (or equivalent) (excluding the Dean)

Many schools of pharmacy use an Executive Committee or equivalent group in collegiate governance as a means of communication and/or to provide advice and support to the Dean. These committees are often composed of the Dean, Associate and/or Assistant Dean(s), Department/Division Chairs, Program Director(s), or academic staff representatives.

In general, this session should focus on the structure and function (including effectiveness) of this committee. Guidelines for the Chair include the following:

1) Coordinate room set-up and start of the session, in accord with general guidelines.

2) Begin discussion and questioning. General issues to be addressed with the Committee include:

- Describe the Executive Committee, including its composition/representation and how it was formed.
- How often does the committee meet?
- Describe the role and function of the Committee. What is the role in terms of reviewing the program, strategic plan or master academic plan?
- How effective is the Committee relative to its stated role/functions?
- What is the purpose of meetings with the Dean (e.g., information sharing, decision making, and strategic planning)?
- Does the Organizational Chart make sense on a day-to-day basis? Do you know to whom to report and how to get things done?
- How are faculty members oriented to the school and program, and how does the school and university support their continuing development.
- Describe how decisions are made and how information flows in the school. How effective is the communication between the Committee and the academic staff?
- How is information from programmatic assessments used by the Committee to improve the program?
- What is the school's mission from the Committee's perspective?
- How does the committee assess the school's mission and goals? Describe and assess how the institution systematically assures that the stated goals are achieved.
- How does the school contribute to discussions at the national level to set and advance the vision for pharmacy education and practice? How is the school socially accountable in terms of its contribution to meeting national needs and goals, including healthcare and economic development? How does the school and its program meet local community needs and contribute to the advancement of pharmacy practice?
- What are the biggest challenges facing the school and Committee? What has been the response to the challenges? What additional resources are needed for the school to successfully address the challenges?
- What would you like the ACPE team to remember from this meeting? What areas have we NOT discussed that are important to you?
- Do you have any questions for the evaluation team?

Session with the Committee responsible for the Curriculum

This session should provide an opportunity for detailed review of the curriculum for the professional program. The following approach is suggested for the chair:

1) Coordinate room set-up and start of the session, in accord with general guidelines.

2) Begin discussion and questioning. General issues to be addressed with the Committee include:

   - Describe the composition and function of the Curriculum Committee. Describe the process to appoint members to the Committee. How many student representatives are on the Committee? What steps (such as scheduling) are taken to assure that students can attend?
   - Describe the school's mission from the Committee's perspective.
   - How does the institution systemically assure the achievement of goals? How effective are these assessments?
   - Describe the process and rationale used to identify and adopt the competencies to be achieved by graduates.
   - Describe briefly the school's curricular model and the philosophy behind it.
   - At this point, site team members should be invited by the session chair to ask specific questions about the curricular material that they received in advance.
   - Describe specific curricular areas and/or approaches in detail. How does the curriculum support the development of skills in the areas of: critical thinking, scientific reasoning, digital literacy, communication, problem-solving, team and group working, and self-directed learning? How do teaching methods accommodate various learning styles?
   - Describe the academic/educational background (and preparedness) of students entering the program, including general education and basic science components.
   - What curricular changes have been made since the last evaluation or recently (if this is the first evaluation)? What changes are currently being contemplated?
   - What process is used to revise existing courses/programs? What process is used to approve new courses/programs?
   - How is the information obtained from assessments of educational achievement applied to foster enhanced student achievement?
   - How is the information obtained from assessments applied to enhance the curriculum?
   - Are students required to own a computer? If so, how are computers integrated into the curriculum?
   - What are the biggest challenges facing the school and Committee? What has been the response to the challenges? What additional resources would be needed for the school to successfully address the challenges?
   - What would you like the ACPE team to remember from this meeting? What areas have we NOT discussed that are important to you?
   - Do you have any questions for the evaluation team?

   Supplementary question (time permitting):

   - Does the curriculum address Inter-Professional Education (IPE) and cultural competence?

Session with the Committee responsible for Assessment

This session should provide an opportunity for detailed review of programmatic and curricular assessment for the degree program. The following approach is suggested for the chair:

1) Coordinate room set-up and start of the session, in accord with general guidelines.

2) Begin discussion and questioning. General issues to be addressed with the Committee include:

- Describe the school's mission from the Committee's perspective. How does the institution systemically assure the achievement of goals? How effective are these assessments?
- Describe the composition and function of the Assessment Committee. What experience in assessment and/or evaluation do members on the Committee possess? What is the process to appoint members to the Committee? How many student representatives are on the Committee? What steps such as scheduling are taken to assure that students can attend?
- Describe <u>briefly</u> the school's assessment plan from the Committee's perspective.
- What underlying values drive the school's assessment efforts?
- At this point, members of the team should be invited by the session chair to ask specific questions about the assessment process and materials that they received in advance, related to: (a) institutional/programmatic assessment (mission-related goals, such as research; (b) curricular assessment; and (c) student learning outcomes assessment.
- Describe both formative and summative assessments at each level of the academic program.
- How are the data from these assessments used? Who uses the assessment findings? How are curriculum and/or teaching strategies modified based on these data? How do academic staff intentionally build upon the courses and educational experiences to achieve learning priorities?
- Who receives information from programmatic assessment and how is it communicated?
- What are your student learning goals? Explain how you are using assessments to improve student learning?
- What assessment changes have been made since the last certification evaluation or in recent years (if this is the first evaluation)? What changes are currently being contemplated?
- Describe the process used to assess professional practice experiences.
- How is information from assessment of professional practice experiences communicated to experiential-program coordinators or committee?
- What are the biggest challenges facing the school and Committee? What has been the response to the challenges? What additional resources would be needed for the school to successfully address the challenges?
- What would you like the ACPE team to remember from this meeting? What areas have we NOT discussed that are important to you?
- Do you have any questions for the evaluation team?

Questions to address multiple pathways and distance campuses:

- Describe any data used for comparison of multiple/distance pathways or campuses. Were any significant differences found and if so, what are they, what is the perceived cause, and what is being done to address them?

Supplementary questions (if not adequately answered elsewhere):

- How is the information obtained from assessments of educational achievements applied to foster enhanced student achievement?
- How are educational achievements of students documented?
- How is information from student assessment communicated to the Curriculum Committee?
- How is the committee monitoring assessment activities? How will the committee evaluate assessment efforts?
- What resources is the committee using for its assessment efforts?

Session with Students

Sessions with students may take place either with the entire team meeting the entire group of students or with individual members of the team meeting separately with a small group of students. The guidance provided below should be adjusted according to the arrangement on your visit.

Sessions with students provide an opportunity for students to present their perspectives and concerns regarding the school and its professional program. The institution is instructed that students are to be self-selected for participation in these sessions; it is important to verify exactly how this selection was made. Site team members should realize that not all questions/areas will be addressed due to time constraints. It is also important to get more than one student's opinion about the various issues; and to ask specific follow-up questions when warranted to gain additional insights. Because students may not be as familiar with the certification process as the academic staff, the chair may need to spend more time describing the process and answering student questions. Care must be taken so that the meeting does not focus on just one or two specific student complaints or grievances. In addition, site team members should not be tempted to "solve" the issue for the students by offering possible strategies for the students to pursue. Specific guidelines for the chair include:

1) Coordinate room set-up, in accord with general guidelines.

2) Initiate session with introductions, description of the available time frame, and the approach to be used. It is helpful if students indicate their class level in the professional program, and provide an indication of their interests and goals (i.e., practice intentions, post-graduate education, etc.) as a component of their introduction.

3) Begin discussion and questioning. General questions to be addressed by the student(s) include:

- In your opinion, what are the strengths and weakness of the school? Be sure to allow more than one or two students to respond to this important question before moving on.
- What are your perceptions regarding the curriculum? What are your perceptions regarding the academic staff and staff? How accessible are the academic staff? Do you feel that the academic staff foster professionalism and professional ethics? Do the academic staff serve as <u>positive</u> role models? What is the level of academic staff-student interaction?What is the system of student governance used by the school?
- What activities and organizations are available to students?
- What forms of counseling are available, and are they readily accessible?
- Describe the access to healthcare provided to students.
- What forms of financial aid are available, and is the financial aid office helpful?
- What forms of tutoring are available for students facing academic difficulty?
- What forms of career counseling and placement are available?
- How satisfied are you with the library: access, resources, support and guidance to use the library?
- What advice are students given prior to going on pharmacy practice experiences?
- How well informed were you about the reality of attending this program? Did you have any welcome or unwelcome surprises?
- How involved are students in the affairs of the school? Have you noticed any results from the input that was provided?
- Are you aware of the school's policies and procedures regarding student complaints and grievances?
- Was there a process in place for you to provide input regarding the program? Do you feel that any concerns you raised were addressed?
- What advice would you give to someone who is taking the program? If you were able to live your life over, would you enroll in this program again? Would you recommend this program to your brother, sister, or a friend?
- What are the biggest challenges facing the school? What has been the response to the challenges?

- What would you like the ACPE team to remember from this meeting? What areas have we NOT discussed that are important to you?
- Do you have any questions for the evaluation team?

Questions to address multiple pathways and distance campuses:

- What is your relationship like with your peers at the distance/main campus?
- Describe any coursework that you do with peers at the distance/main campus.
- What is your impression of your peers at the distance/main campus?

Supplementary questions (time permitting):

- How do students receive advice regarding the professional program, registration, etc?
- Did you receive any recruitment brochures, catalogs, etc.? Were these materials accurate and not misleading regarding resources available, academic policies, progression policies, etc.?
- What kind of information have you received and what kind of learning activities have you done related to the various areas of pharmacy practice to help you make a career choice?

Interviews with Individual Members of the Academic Staff

During the course of an on-site visit, team members will have multiple opportunities to visit with individual academic staff at the host institution. The primary purpose of these individual interviews is to provide the opportunity for academic staff to have individual and confidential input into the evaluation process. Guidelines for team members to follow include:

1) Begin by introducing yourself. Describe who you are and why you are there: set the ground rules; establish the available time frame; describe the purpose of the interview; and assure confidentiality. The individual academic staff member should also provide an introduction and brief overview of their background and current interests and activities. Information to supplement the team member's knowledge of academic staff members' backgrounds may be found in the self-study materials or on-site.

2) Team members are advised to be prepared for a wide variety of reactions from individual academic staff members. These include everything from very quiet or withdrawn behavior, requiring more probing on the part of the team member, to very assertive, aggressive behavior, requiring restraint or redirection by the team member. Some academic staff may come to the interview with supplemental documentation or a prepared presentation. In this case, the team member should receive the information for transmittal to the rest of the team. In some cases, information is presented, that is not necessarily relevant to the work of the team. In these cases the team member is encouraged to move on to more germane issues as quickly and smoothly as possible. The objectives of the team include the verification of statements and impressions presented in written materials (self-study report, supplemental information) or in general group sessions during the on-site visit.

3) Specific questions for team members to ask individual academic staff members, include:

- Did you participate in the self-study process and development of the report? Were you provided an opportunity to review the draft report and provide feedback? Do you agree with the final self-study report? Were there any errors of commission or omission?
- What are your individual goals and objectives? What do you require to address your individual needs, departmental goals, and collegiate goals?
- Describe your perceptions regarding the leadership and direction of the Dean, associate and assistant Dean(s), and your department/division Chair.
- Do you feel there is an adequate flow of information and communication within the school? Do you feel involved in the school's affairs?
- Describe your perceptions of the students and their professional development.
- Describe your perceptions regarding the process for professional development of academic staff and your personal developmental opportunities.
- What are the biggest challenges facing you and the school? What has been the response to the challenges? What additional resources would be required for the school to successfully address the challenges?
- What would you like the ACPE team to remember from this meeting? What areas have we NOT discussed that are important to you?
- Do you have any questions for the evaluation team?

Session with Student Services Staff

The evaluation team's visit includes a session with the individual(s) involved with the management of student services for the school. This session should focus on all support services provided to students to assist them through the professional program.

1) Coordinate room set-up and start of the session, in accord with general guidelines.

2) Begin discussion and questioning. Particular questions to be discussed and documents to be reviewed during this session include:

- How were you involved in the development and/or review of the self-study report? Do you feel that the self-study report adequately assessed and described issues pertaining to student services?
- Describe the university's and/or school's policies and procedures for the following activities:
  - Application and admission, both at the pre-professional and professional levels (if applicable). Progression of students through the program
  - Advising and counseling
  - Tutoring and remediation
  - Career development and placement
- Describe the administrative and/or professional support staff available for the management and provision of student services.
- What resources are needed at enhance your student services program?
- What information is disclosed to prospective students and existing students, and how?
- Describe the efforts that have been undertaken to professionalize students. How are students mentored? What is the extent of student-academic staff interactions?
- Describe the school's policies, procedures and documentation system for handling student grievances and complaints. How are these policies and procedures are communicated to students? How many student complaints were received? How many were resolved? What are common areas/issues for complaints?
- What are your biggest challenges within the student services area?
- What would you like the ACPE team to remember? What areas have we NOT discussed that are important to you?
- Do you have any questions?

Survey of Practice Sites/Session with Preceptors

Team members will have opportunities to meet with preceptors and/or to visit selected practice sites used by the school in support of the professional program. Team members may meet individually with a preceptor, a group of preceptors, or other experiential program staff. The general guidelines presented below for surveying practice facilities are also applicable to individual and group meetings, because the goal is to evaluate the experiential component of the professional program. Visits to practice sites provide an opportunity to see not only the clinical facilities, but also to visit with preceptors and students who are in experiential rotations.

1) Coordinate room set-up, in accord with general guidelines.

2) Initiate session with introductions, description of the available time frame, and the approach to be used. If meeting with preceptors or volunteer academic staff members, begin with brief introductions and an explanation of the certification process.

3) Specific questions which preceptors or volunteer academic staff may be asked to address include:

   - How were you selected for this meeting?
   - Why do you precept students?
   - Summarize briefly the pharmacy practice at your site. From your perspective, how does the practice experience provided at your site contribute to the overall program of practice experience?.
   - What is your educational philosophy? What methods do you use for teaching students?
   - How are you involved in the assessment of students? Do you assign grades? If so, what criteria do you use?
   - How much time do you spend with the students (during an average day or week)? What is the quality of the time that you spend with the students?
   - What is the extent of the administrative and educational support provided to preceptors by the school? What benefits do you receive for being a preceptor?
   - What type of access do you have to the school's library resources for pharmacy?
   - Are there additional benefits that you would like the school to offer?
   - How are goals and objectives for a practice experience/rotation disseminated and what help do preceptors received to interpret them? To what extent are preceptors involved in developing the goals and objectives for their practice experience/rotation?
   - Are you involved in collegiate affairs (i.e., can preceptors provide curricular suggestions, do the preceptors have a role in program evaluation)?
   - How do preceptors communicate with the school if there are issues that need to be addressed?
   - What is your approach for handling difficult students or negative issues? What does the school do to help you? What has been your experience with the level of professionalism among the students you precept?
   - How are changes made to the curriculum when preceptors have concerns about students' knowledge, skills or values? For example, if students have problems with communication skills, what is the process to improve those skills in the curriculum?
   - Describe the type of feedback that the school gives preceptors about their practice experiences/rotations. Do preceptors receive mid-rotation feedback?
   - What advice are students given prior to going on practice experiences to help them deal with potential personality conflicts with preceptors?

- Do you have any suggestions for improving the experiential program?
- What are the biggest challenges facing preceptors? What has been the response to the challenges?
- What would you like the ACPE team to remember from this meeting? What areas have we NOT discussed that are important to you?
- Do you have any questions for the evaluation team?

Supplementary questions (time permitting):

- What type of clinics do you have? How many hours do you spend at the site?
- Are you involved in the affairs of the school (i.e., can preceptors provide curricular suggestions, do the preceptors have a role in program evaluation)?

4) Additional questions to consider when visiting a practice site include:

- What are the goals and objectives of the practice experience/rotation(s) offered at the site?
- How does the school assure standardization of experiences and subsequent evaluations for both student and site/preceptor performance?
- What is the student/preceptor ratio at the site? Are there enough preceptors to give all students adequate attention?
- What percent of the practice experience/rotation is devoted to dispensing versus patient care? What kinds of opportunities are available for students to care for patients?
- What opportunities exist for students to participate on interdisciplinary teams?
- Are students on site for the entire practice experience/rotation? When do students debrief or reflect on their experiences or return to campus for in-depth case discussions? What type of contact do students have with the campus during practice experiences/rotations?
- What is being done to assure the quality of the site? Are there any factors affecting the quality of the sites? How is information obtained from assessments applied to enhance the program? What complaints do you have about the site?
- What does the school do to foster a sense of inclusiveness among preceptors?
- What is the administrative relationship between the site and the school? What is the nature of the preceptors at the site (i.e., school funded, shared position, volunteer academic staff, etc.)?
- Overall, does the site meet the experiential needs of the professional program?

Session with Experiential Staff

Team members will meet with experiential program coordinators used by the school to support the experiential program.

1) Coordinate room set-up, in accord with general guidelines.

2) Initiate session with introductions, description of the available time frame, and the approach to be used. Begin with brief introductions and an explanation of the certification process.

3) Specific questions to be discussed include:

- Describe the selection criteria for practice sites and preceptors
- Describe the quality assurance process for practice sites and preceptors. How often are the practice sites visited by a member of the experiential staff?
- What is the extent of the administrative and educational support provided to preceptors by the school? What benefits do preceptor receive from the school?
- What type of access do preceptors have to the school's library resources for pharmacy?
- Are there additional benefits that you would like the school to offer to preceptors?
- How are goals and objectives for a practice experience/rotation disseminated and what help do preceptors received to interpret them? To what extent are preceptors involved in developing the goals and objectives for their practice experience/rotation?
- Are preceptors involved in collegiate affairs (i.e., can preceptors provide curricular suggestions, do the preceptors have a role in program evaluation)?
- How do preceptors communicate with the school if there are issues that need to be addressed?
- What does the school do to help preceptors handling difficult students or negative issues?
- How are changes made to the curriculum when preceptors have concerns about students' knowledge, skills or values? For example, if students have problems with communication skills, what is the process to improve those skills in the curriculum?
- Describe the type of feedback that the school gives preceptors about their practice experiences/rotations. Do preceptors receive mid-rotation feedback?
- What advice are students given prior to going on practice experiences to help them deal with potential personality conflicts with preceptors?
- Do you have adequate resources to coordinate and manage the experiential program?
- Do you have any suggestions for improving the experiential program?
- What are the biggest challenges facing the experiential program? What has been the school's response to the challenges?
- What would you like the ACPE team to remember from this meeting? What areas have we NOT discussed that are important to you?
- Do you have any questions for the evaluation team?

Session with Recent Graduates

This session provides an opportunity for graduates to present their perspectives and concerns regarding the school and its professional program. The institution is requested to invite pharmacists who are from different practice backgrounds and who have graduated from the program within the past five years. It is important to verify exactly how the selection was made. Site team members should realize that not all questions/areas will be addressed due to time constraints. It is also important to get more than one graduate's opinion about the various issues; and to ask specific follow-up questions when warranted to gain additional insights. Because graduates may not be as familiar with the certification process as the academic staff, the chair may need to spend more time describing the process and answering graduate's questions. Care must be taken so that the meeting does not focus on just one or two specific graduate's complaints or grievances. Specific guidelines for the chair include:

1) Coordinate room set-up, in accord with general guidelines.

2) Initiate session with introductions, description of the available time frame, and the approach to be used. It is helpful if graduates indicate the year of their graduation from the professional program, and provide a brief statement about what they have done since graduation and where they are practicing now.

3) Begin discussion and questioning. General questions to be addressed by the graduates include:

   - In your opinion, what are the strengths and weakness of the school? Be sure to allow more than one or two graduates to respond to this important question before moving on.
   - What are your perceptions regarding the curriculum? What are your perceptions regarding the academic staff and staff? How accessible were the academic staff? Do you feel that the academic staff fostered professionalism and professional ethics? Did the academic staff serve as <u>positive</u> role models? What was the level of academic staff-student interaction? How effective was the system of student governance used by the school?
   - How well prepared did you feel as you entered the workplace?
   - In what areas of study did you feel very confident as you used the knowledge and skills in the workplace?
   - What areas of study did you not feel confident as you used the knowledge and skills in the workplace?
   - If there was one thing you could change about your pharmacy education, what would it be?
   - What was the one thing that you benefited from the most in your pharmacy education?
   - What forms of counseling were available, and were they readily accessible?
   - What forms of financial aid were available, and was the financial aid office helpful?
   - What forms of career counseling and placement were available?
   - How involved were students in the affairs of the school? Did you see results from the input that was provided?
   - Were you aware of the school's policies and procedures regarding student complaints and grievances?
   - Was there a process in place for you to provide input regarding the program? Do you feel that any concerns you raised were addressed?
   - What advice would you give to someone who is taking the program? If you were able to live your life over, would you enroll in this program again? Would you recommend this program to your brother, sister, or a friend?
   - What were the biggest challenges facing the school? What has been the response to the challenges?
   - What would you like the ACPE team to remember from this meeting? What areas have we NOT discussed that are important to you?
   - Do you have any questions for the evaluation team?

Questions to address multiple pathways and distance campuses:

- What was your relationship like with your peers at the distance/main campus?
- What was your impression of your peers at the distance/main campus?

Exit Reports

The evaluation team's on-site visit ends with an exit report with the Dean of the school, followed by an exit report with university administration (typically the president and/or the vice president for academic affairs/provost, or quivalent positions). The exit reports present the opportunity for the evaluation team to relate its findings prior to departure. The ACPE staff member or consultant leads the exit reports, with the support of the remainder of the evaluation team. The details of the presentation are determined during the session that precedes the exit reports. The general format for the exit reports is as follows:

1) Summarize the gains made since the last on-site evaluation (if applicable);

2) Summarize the strengths and weakness of the program as identified by the self-study report and by the evaluation team; and

3) Summarize the major findings of the evaluation team. This should be organized in the following manner:
   a) A synopsis of the strengths of the program in the view of the evaluation team
   b) Review of the team's findings concerning needed improvements, organized in accord with the Certification Quality Criteria.

The exit report should include all the major issues noted by the evaluation team during the visit. Every major issue addressed in the Evaluation Team Report should be at least mentioned by the team during the exit reports.

At the conclusion of the report, the ACPE staff member will summarize the next steps in the certification process: Following the team's departure, the ACPE staff member or consultant will prepare the complete Evaluation Team Report. This report will be transmitted to team members for comment, and then it will be transmitted to the Dean for comment regarding its accuracy and completeness, not its findings. Once the report is finalized, the finished version will be transmitted to the Dean, University administration, the International Commission, and the Board for review and action at the designated Commission and Board meetings.