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**Virtual Site Visit Policy**

With the global impact of COVID-19, the Commissioners, acting under its authority, the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA) has implemented the following emergency measures to allow for virtual site visits. This policy is effective immediately and will be in effect until updated by the ACPHA Commissioners.

1. This policy has been implemented in keeping with the guidance provided by the United States Department of Education (USDE) on March 17, 2020, allowing temporary flexibility to use virtual site visits to help accrediting agencies serve governing organizations, and in the case of ACPHA, to assist Hospitality Administration/Management programs, and students through the period of COVID-19 interruption.
2. As allowed by the USDE, ACPHA programs seeking continuing accreditation will be reviewed virtually.
3. The Commission reserves the right to determine when to conduct a virtual site visit based on input from hospitality program representatives. The Commission’s decision is final.
4. ACPHA reserves the right and has the authority to determine whether a delay of the continuing accreditation site visit is warranted.

**A. Purpose**:

1. The purpose of the Virtual Site Visit is the same as an On-Site visit; to validate the Self-Study Document, and to clarify aspects of the program that cannot be evaluated fully through the initial review of the document.

2. Protect the health and safety of ACPHA peer evaluators, students, governing organization/Hospitality Administration/Management program representatives, the public, and other stakeholders.

**B. Virtual Site Visit**

1. A virtual site visit is not the customary site visit format used by ACPHA to conduct the review of a Hospitality Administration/Management program seeking continued accreditation. When a virtual site visit is conducted by ACPHA, all or some of the peer evaluators are not physically present at the Hospitality Administration/Management program. A virtual site visit shall use an engaged, interactive format; it shall not rely solely on a review of documents or exchanges of emails.

2. The rigor, quality, and process of the site visit as well as the opportunity for the governing organization/Hospitality Administration program to provide evidence as well as verify, clarify, or amplify evidence must be comparable to an On-Site visit. Therefore, a virtual site visit requires the use of video or web conferencing tools, which allow real-time synchronous communication among participants and visual display of individuals, groups, documents, and/or physical spaces.

3. A Virtual Site Visit will be scheduled accordingly to accommodate time zones of all ACPHA peer evaluators conducting the virtual visit and the time zone of the Hospitality Administration/Management program hosting the visit, with the understanding that adjustments to schedules will be needed of all participants involved.

**C. Technology, Facilities, and Support Services**

1. All Virtual Site Visit activities shall be scheduled using a real-time synchronous virtual meeting system approved by ACPHA.

2. The Hospitality Administration/Management program is responsible for ensuring that its technology infrastructure, facilities, and support services can accommodate a fully engaged, real-time interactive virtual visit.

3. The Hospitality Administration/Management program must conduct a technology test prior to the Virtual Site Visit to demonstrate to ACPHA’s satisfaction that it has adequate technology infrastructure and support services to conduct a Virtual Site Visit that meets ACPHA’s requirements, including making 100% of the program’s written report, required appendices, and supporting evidence available virtually to the peer evaluators and ACPHA.

4. The Hospitality Administration/Management program must ensure that there are adequate meeting spaces (facilities) for Hospitality Administration/Management program representatives to meet virtually with ACPHA peer evaluators, including simultaneous meetings as needed with individuals and groups.

5. The Hospitality Administration/Management program must provide virtual access (e.g., through a learning management system) to written information that is comparable and sufficient to the access normally found during the On-Site Visit to demonstrate compliance with ACPHA Standards. The Hospitality Administration/Management program must provide:

a. Six weeks before the visit, team members will be given full access to the Program’s written report, required appendices, and supporting evidence.

b. Any additional information the team members request before/during the visit.

6. The Hospitality Administration/Management program must provide virtual access to all interviewees (simultaneously as needed with individuals and groups) that is comparable and sufficient to the access normally found during the On-Site Visit to demonstrate compliance with ACPHA Standards.

7. The governing organization/Hospitality Administration/Management program shall not record (audio or video) any portion of the Virtual Site Visit. If evidence of recording is discovered, the team chair shall terminate the Virtual Site Visit immediately, and the Hospitality Administration/Management program will no longer be visited/accredited using the Virtual Site Visit format. If evidence of recording is discovered, it may adversely affect the Hospitality Administration/Management program’s accreditation status with ACPHA.

8. Where applicable, the ACPHA Team Chair will arrange all meetings using online services such as ZOOM, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, etc.

Technology Program Requirements for Virtual Site Visits

1. Programs must have current technology and facilities to facilitate a virtual visit; for all team members participating remotely.

2. The ACPHA Team Chair will conduct a technology test with the Program and the peer evaluators prior to the visit to ensure compatibility.

3. The Hospitality Administration/Management program shall not record via audio and/or any device any portion of the Virtual Site Visit. If evidence of recording is discovered, the team chair will end the site visit immediately, and contact the ACPHA office.

4. The Program will provide technology support during the meeting for their program participants.

*Approved by ACPHA Commission July 22, 2020*