

Council on Education for Public Health

Policies and Procedures Related to CEPH Accreditation Activities Outside of the United States[†]

CEPH addresses the willingness to conduct accreditation activities outside of the United States in its *Accreditation Procedures, amended June 2010*. The adopted procedures state that “CEPH will consider applicant institutions located outside the United States; however, due to the variable nature and scope of international accreditation activities, such activity will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis.”

The procedures further specify two additional steps that must be undertaken by such schools and programs: 1) submission of a formal request for consultation, and 2) conduct of an on-site consultation visit by a CEPH staff member. The formal request for consultation should include: a description of the university; description of the curricula and degree objectives for pertinent degree programs, including a description of the practice placement requirement and the culminating experience; student demographics; a brief description of the secondary and higher education systems in the country; description of available and utilized quality assurance programs for higher education in the country; assurance that the self-study will be written and the site visit conducted in English (or simultaneous translation provided by the institution); and any other information requested by CEPH staff.

Based on the staff report and recommendation provided to CEPH following the staff consultation, CEPH will determine whether to invite a full application from the school or program. When an application has been invited and submitted, the school or program adheres to the same criteria and procedures as US-based institutions. The only exception is the requirement that the institution be regionally accredited. Foreign institutions that are eligible for US-based regional accreditation (for example, those chartered in the United States) must provide evidence of such accreditation.

When the Council agrees to allow a staff consultation visit and then to invite a full accreditation application, it is agreeing, in principle, to develop and make an effort to sustain a relationship with the university and its school or program in public health. Thus, decisions are not made without serious consideration of all factors including congruence of the public health school or program's organization, offerings, and philosophy on public health professional education with CEPH accreditation criteria as well as practical factors such as safety of its staff and volunteers. CEPH has developed a time-tested model of successful peer reviews, predicated on the sense that an in-person visit by CEPH staff and/or volunteers is the most effective method for conducting CEPH's accreditation work. If the Council acts not to approve the in-person visit, it may recommend other formats, including program/school travel to the US (in the case of a consultation visit), teleconference or videoconference. In the interest of preserving CEPH's successful model of accreditation reviews, which depends heavily on on-site interactions between CEPH and the program/school, such distance-based procedures should be undertaken extremely rarely. Typically, video- and teleconferences should only be undertaken when:

- 1) There is not sufficient confidence that an in-person visit would be prudent at the time in question; and

[†] Because of CEPH's longstanding relationship with Canada and because consultation visits and site visits have already been conducted at several Canadian institutions, pre-application staff consultation visits and re-accreditation site visits may be conducted upon approval of the Executive Director in consultation with the CEPH Administrative Committee, if necessary. After the initial staff consultation, all other procedures for international institutions will be followed as outlined in the *Accreditation Procedures, amended June 2010* and this policy statement.

- 2) The timeframe for the visit is not flexible (ie, reaccreditation); and
- 3) There is confidence that in-person visits will be possible within a reasonable timeframe to begin and sustain requirements for accreditation and that the school or program will be able to adhere to typical CEPH review practices in the foreseeable future.

The following procedures apply to any type of CEPH visit outside the United States, including consultation visits, site visits, focused review visits, etc.

Decision making on undertaking a visit

Staff prepares a recommendation for the Council that includes the following:

1. An assessment of security risks, including factors such as terrorism and street crime. This assessment should be documented and based on reliable information, including State Department information and information obtained from program/school faculty at the location of proposed travel.
 2. An assessment of health risks, including documentation of any vaccinations that are required or recommended.
 3. Information on visa or other bureaucratic requirements for entry into the country, including information on the amount of advance time needed for such paperwork.
 4. Information, if available, on interest/willingness of specific staff or CEPH volunteers who have explicitly indicated interest in such travel.
 5. A yes/no staff opinion on whether CEPH should undertake the visit, based on the information above.
- The full Council must act to approve or disapprove the visit. The Council's decision will be informed by information contained in the staff recommendation. The Council will pay particular attention to information that relates to the likelihood of changes over time. The Council should have reasonable assurance that it will be possible to continue with subsequent visits when it approves each visit. This will help to prevent, as much as possible, programs and schools from investing resources in an accreditation process that will not be possible to continue.
 - If approving the visit, the Council may ask that the visit be conducted by CEPH staff, by a CEPH volunteer or by some combination of the two. Councilors may recommend CEPH volunteers whom they believe or know to be qualified and willing to participate in the visit. Though the Council's decision to approve a visit should be based on its confidence that appropriate staff and/or volunteers can be identified, final visit approval is contingent on the willingness of appropriate staff and/or volunteers to travel. No staff member or volunteer will be required to travel on the visit. The CEPH Executive Director, in consultation with the CEPH Administrative Committee, may cancel the visit at any time due to lack of available personnel or emerging events in the country that would change the conditions that existed at the time of the Council's original decision to conduct the visit. The Executive Director should communicate this policy both to the program/school and to any staff and volunteers who are asked to participate.

Planning for an approved visit

- Planning for the visit should begin immediately after the Council's decision.
- The Executive Director should identify and contact an individual or individuals qualified to conduct the visit to determine their interest and willingness. This contact should include provision of the information on security, health risks and logistics that was provided to the Council with the staff recommendation.
- Once an appropriate person or persons has agreed to the visit, the Executive Director should assign a staff coordinator to the visit. This may be the staff member who is traveling on the visit, if applicable. The staff coordinator will establish contacts with faculty and staff at the program/school as soon as possible. This contact should occur at least six months before the proposed visit if possible.
- The staff coordinator should immediately begin work with an on-site contact to establish logistical arrangements.
 - Typically, the on-site contact will recommend accommodations and may make hotel reservations, but the staff member should approve the accommodations.
 - The on-site contact may recommend specific airlines and/or travel routes. In some cases, the on-site contact may wish to directly purchase and pay for airline tickets. If this is acceptable to the CEPH traveler(s), each traveler should approve his or her itinerary before tickets are purchased.
 - For overnight flights or for flights longer than eight hours, the program/school must agree to pay for business class tickets.
 - The staff coordinator should work with the on-site contact to determine what cellular or other phone service is available locally. The staff coordinator will ensure that each CEPH traveler will have access to a telephone capable of making international calls. This may involve renting a cell phone for the duration of the trip. After the visit, the program or school will reimburse the cost of the rental, if applicable, and all business-related calls during the trip. The program or school will also reimburse one personal call of up to five minutes per day.
 - The staff coordinator will ensure that all travelers have phone numbers for multiple in-country contacts, provided by the program or school, as well as 24-hour contact information for the CEPH Executive Director.
 - The staff coordinator will ensure that the whereabouts of all staff/volunteers are registered with the embassy or consulate in the country of travel.
 - The staff coordinator will work with school or program officials to negotiate and ensure that appropriate security measures are provided by the institution. All reasonable requests for security measures must be accommodated by the institution.
 - The staff coordinator will work with the on-site contact to determine recommendations for currency exchange (pre-visit or upon arrival) and expectations relating to availability of ATMs, accepted credit cards, etc.

- The staff coordinator will work with the on-site contact to arrange transportation from the airport to the hotel, including contact information for the driver or service, if used.
- The staff coordinator should also immediately begin work obtaining visas or any other necessary papers. The staff coordinator will facilitate this process for any CEPH volunteer involved, but each volunteer is ultimately responsible for his or her own documents. The school or program is responsible for reimbursing the cost of such documents.
- The staff coordinator should also immediately begin coordinating receipt of any needed vaccinations. Staff and volunteers will be expected to assume responsibility for their own vaccinations. If vaccinations are not covered by volunteers' or staff members' insurance, they may provide the Executive Director with an advance cost estimate. If approved by CEPH, CEPH will reimburse the volunteer or staff member for vaccination expenses and will bill the program or school.
- At least two months prior to the trip, the staff coordinator will prepare basic information on any important information regarding business or personal customs, conventions regarding dress, etc. and will provide this information to all travelers.

Travel insurance

CEPH maintains group insurance policy that covers travel assistance with the Hartford Group. This policy covers all staff and volunteers traveling on behalf of CEPH. Hartford maintains an arrangement with Worldwide Assistance Services, Inc. (WAS), which provides emergency medical assistance and emergency personal services to travelers. Staff members carry an identification card at all times with the contact information for WAS. CEPH volunteers traveling abroad will also be provided with such a card. WAS does not guarantee travel assistance in countries for which a travel warning has been issued.

Liability

All volunteers traveling outside North America must sign a release of liability for overseas travel.