

Similarities & Differences: Peer Review

Both the Museum Assessment and Accreditation programs require peer reviewers to be:

- well-informed about current standards and best practices in the field
- broadly knowledgeable about institutions similar to the ones they review
- objective, professional, thorough, and diplomatic while visiting the museums and preparing their reports

•scrupulous in maintaining confidentiality about the results of the review

•familiar with the museum's self-study and supplementary documents

However, there are significant differences between the two programs.

Program Differences: Peer Review

MAP Surveyors

The role of the peer reviewer is to:

Provide the museum with information about how its operations measure up to standards and best practices in the field as well as ideas about how it might address its current challenges and which resources might aid that effort.

The peer reviewer should be:

- Collegial
- Supportive
- Helpful to the museum

The primary audience for the resulting report is:

The museum's staff and governing authority, funders, affiliate groups, and the community at large.

Accreditation Visiting Committee

The role of the peer reviewer is to:

Provide the Accreditation Commission with information that can aid its decision-making process. Visiting Committee members do not provide feedback or suggestions to the museum about how to improve operations.

The peer reviewer should be:

- Courteous
- Objective
- Reserved

The primary audience for the resulting report is:

The Accreditation Commission



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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I am a MAP Surveyor who is assessing a museum that wants to become accredited. What do I need to know?

A: You need to be generally familiar with:

- *Museum Accreditation: Criteria and Characteristics*
- Accreditation Commission's Expectations
- The steps in the accreditation process

This information is available in "Conducting an Accreditation Visit" and from the peer review section of the AAM Web site.

Q: I am a MAP Surveyor who is assessing a museum that wants to know whether its accreditation application will be successful. I also serve as an Accreditation Visiting Committee member. What can I tell them?

A: You may discuss accreditation requirements and procedures, such as whether the museum is eligible to apply. We also encourage you to help the museum understand *Museum Accreditation Criteria and Characteristics* and the Accreditation Commission's Expectations. But you should not state whether or not the museum's accreditation application will be successful; the Visiting Committee and Accreditation Commission will examine materials that you do not have at your disposal or may interpret information differently than you do.

Q: I am an Accreditation Visiting Committee Member who is reviewing a museum that clearly has some problems. What can I do to help them?

A: You should describe any concerns as they relate to the accreditation process. But it is not your role, as a member of the Accreditation Visiting Committee, to help the museum address its issues or improve operations or to make suggestions for future actions. You are there to observe and report back to the Accreditation Commission. After the accreditation review is over and your commitment is completed, you can provide the museum with information about MAP or ask MAP staff to send program information to the museum.