



# Understanding Your Role

## Role

**As a Visiting Committee member, your role is to act as one of a team of eyewitnesses**—the Accreditation Commission’s “eyes and ears”—to verify a museum’s operations and performance and communicate your observations and analysis to the commission. As such, you will:

- observe the institution’s operations to determine whether the museum is meeting the program’s eligibility criteria and characteristics of an accreditable museum
- verify the accuracy of the self-study’s contents
- consider the museum in light of Accreditation’s two core questions:
  - *How well does the museum achieve its stated mission and goals?*
  - *How well does the museum’s performance meet standards and practices as they are generally understood in the museum field?*
- communicate your observations and findings in writing to the Accreditation Commission

## Time Commitment

Your time commitment for this visit will depend on your work style and the complexity and size of the museum involved. However, many Visiting Committee members spend up to 40 hours on preparation, conducting the site visit, and writing the report. If you think you might need to commit more than 40 hours, review the scope of the assignment and AAM’s expectations to refocus your efforts. Or call the peer reviewer manager or Accreditation staff for guidance.

## Steps in the Process

The steps in this process are described in more detail in the following pages of this manual. To conduct an accreditation review, you

- schedule the site visit

- develop a visit agenda in cooperation with the museum
- review the museum’s documentation
- visit the museum
- write a narrative report for the Accreditation Commission that is a comprehensive, accurate, and impartial account of observations and findings
- submit the report to the Accreditation staff on time

## Visiting Committee Team

The Visiting Committee must think and act as a team in all aspects of an accreditation review. Each team member is responsible for ensuring that the accreditation site visit occurs seamlessly by reviewing the museum’s self-study materials in preparation for the site visit, participating fully while on-site, drafting the narrative report, and maintaining the highest professional conduct.

The Team Contact (formerly referred to as Chair) serves as the official contact between the team, the museum, and Accreditation staff.

In addition to the general duties of the Visiting Committee, the Team Contact’s specific responsibilities include:

- notifying the Accreditation staff within 15 days of a request that you are accepting a visiting committee assignment
- securing a second member to serve on the visiting committee
- scheduling the visit and developing a mutually agreed-upon agenda with the second member and museum director
- notifying the Accreditation staff of the visit dates
- leading the site visit
- ensuring the completion and submission of an accurate and comprehensive narrative report that includes a signed Visiting Committee’s Advisory Conclusion Form

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The Team Member balances the team and ensures objectivity.

In addition to the general duties of the Visiting Committee, the Team Member's specific responsibilities include:

- helping the Team Contact schedule the two-day visit and develop the agenda
- forwarding the museum's supporting documentation to the Team Contact
- ensuring that the team follows the agenda during the site visit
- contributing to the narrative report
- fact-checking and proofreading the final narrative report
- signing the Visiting Committee Advisory Conclusion Form