

ASPA - Member Code of Good Practice

The ASPA-Member Code of Good Practice is oriented toward the work of accrediting organizations as a guide in establishing the principles on which relationships with programs and institutions should be based. ASPA Members endorse these principles.

An accrediting organization holding full membership in the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors:

1. Promotes the development of educational quality:

- a. Focuses accreditation reviews on the development of student knowledge and competence in light of specific institutional and programmatic missions, goals, objectives, and contexts.
- b. Conducts reviews in a spirit that recognizes that teaching and learning are the primary purposes of institutions/programs.
- c. Places educational quality in accreditation reviews above special interests, politics or educational delivery models.

2. Exhibits integrity and professionalism in the conduct of its operations:

- a. Maintains autonomy and integrity in governance and operations through appropriate relationships and practices.
- b. Creates, documents and implements scope of authority, policies, and procedures to ensure objective decision making under a rule of law framework that includes attention to due process, systems of checks and balances, conflict of interest, confidentiality, expedient response to appeals and complaints and consistent application of standards.
- c. Develops, reviews and revises standards and accreditation procedures with the participation of communities of interest.
- d. Maintains sufficient financial, personnel, and other resources to carry out its operations effectively, while ensuring efficient and cost-effective accreditation processes for institutions/programs.
- e. Cooperates with other accrediting organizations as appropriate to avoid conflicting standards and to minimize duplication of effort by the institution/program.
- f. Provides thoughtful analyses to assist institutions/programs to find their own approaches and solutions, making a clear distinction between requirements for accreditation and recommendations for improvement.
- g. Provides accurate, clear, and timely information in a professional manner to the higher education community, to the professions, and to the public about standards and procedures for accreditation and the accreditation status of institutions/programs.
- h. Maintains a thorough and effective orientation, training, and professional development program for all accreditation personnel.
- i. Ensures that site teams have the appropriate expertise and experience for each specific review.
- j. Conducts evaluations of the accreditation process with institutions/programs that have experienced the accreditation process.
- k. Encourages institutions/programs to provide public information that is appropriate to their specific communities of interest.

3. Respects and promotes institutional independence and freedom in academic decision making:

- a. Encourages institutional independence and freedom to make academic decisions in light of the commitment to mutual accountability implied by participation in accreditation.
- b. Applies standards and procedures that respect the rights and responsibilities of institutions/programs to identify, designate and control their respective: missions and goals; educational and philosophical principles and methodologies; content; agendas and areas of study pursued through scholarship, research, and policy developments; administrative structures and staffing configurations; and methodologies and timing of tests, evaluations and assessments.
- c. Has standards and review procedures that allow for experimentation, encourage innovation, and promote thoughtful change that meets the needs and conditions in the profession and the communities served.