



香港學術及職業資歷評審局
Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of
Academic & Vocational Qualifications

Policy and Guidelines on Observing Accreditation Site Visit

1. Categories of observers

- 1.1 The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) may permit an internal and/or external observer to attend an accreditation site visit. There are two types of observers, i.e. internal and external observers.
- 1.2 Examples of internal observers include members of HKCAAVQ's Council, the Directorate, Heads and staff of business units of HKCAAVQ. A staff member of HKCAAVQ assigned to conduct and/or to provide administrative support in the conduct of an accreditation site visit is however not considered as an observer.
- 1.3 Examples of external observers include members of quality assurance (QA) agencies/networks with which HKCAAVQ has established bilateral Memorandum of Co-operation/Understanding (MoC/MoU) and specialists of HKCAAVQ.

2. Policy on observing an accreditation site visit

- 2.1 Observation of an accreditation site visit may be permitted for any of the following purposes:
 - (a) quality assurance;
 - (b) staff development;
 - (c) Council Members' understanding of the HKCAAVQ accreditation work;

- (d) research studies; or
 - (e) collaboration with sister QA agencies/networks under the respective MoC/MoU.
- 2.2 The guiding principles under which HKCAAVQ may allow an external observer are:
- (a) whether the engagement meets one or more of the purposes stipulated in paragraphs 2.1(a), (d) and (e);
 - (b) no risk to the integrity of the accreditation process; and
 - (c) minimal disturbance to the work of an accreditation panel and operator.
- 2.3 Members of HKCAAVQ's Council and staff members of HKCAAVQ must abide by their respective Codes of Conduct, including conflict of interest and confidentiality provisions.
- 2.4 Observation of an accreditation site visit by an external observer requires prior approval by the HKCAAVQ Directorate and clearance of conflict of interest. External observers must abide by the Code of Conduct for Panels, including conflict of interest and confidentiality provisions.
- 2.5 External observers will be responsible for any costs including accommodation and travel. HKCAAVQ will normally meet the costs of meals and refreshments during an accreditation site visit.

3. Roles and responsibilities of an observer

External Observers

- 3.1 Prior to an accreditation site visit, external observers should refer to the Code of Conduct for Panels and make a declaration for clearance of conflict of interest with the operator concerned. An external observer would not be able to act as an

observer if the operator raised a valid evidence-based objection to his/her presence.

- 3.2 External observers should provide HKCAAVQ with an url link in the public domain listing their photograph and biographical information. Alternatively, external observers should provide a photograph and short biographical statement of themselves for the information of panel members and for clearance of conflict of interest with the operator concerned.
- 3.3 Throughout an accreditation site visit, an external observer is required to disclose any interest at the time the interest first arises. HKCAAVQ reserves the right to discontinue the engagement of any external observer in the course of an accreditation site visit.
- 3.4 External observers are granted access to relevant accreditation documents from the HKCAAVQ Secretariat. HKCAAVQ reserves the right to withhold any other documents on valid grounds.
- 3.5 Observation of an accreditation site visit does not include participation in the discussion at the panel private meetings, and panel meetings with representatives from the operator concerned. External observers may, at the invitation of the Panel Chair and/or Panel Secretary, offer comments only during private meetings of the accreditation panel.

Internal and External Observers

- 3.6 Observers must not use any video, camera or voice recorder at any time during an accreditation site visit.
- 3.7 Observers must abide by the confidentiality requirement at all times. Observers must not disclose to the operator concerned or a third party any information obtained in the process of an accreditation site visit including the panel's deliberations.

3.8 Observers may be invited to give their views on the accreditation process or other aspects of an accreditation site visit to the Panel Secretary after the site visit.

HKCAAVQ

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