



Tennessee Higher Education Commission External Reviewer and Site Visit Guidelines

Potential External Reviewers

A list of potential external reviewers must be provided to THEC along with the submission of a New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) or Expedited New Academic Program Proposal (ENAPP) and be attached as a separate document. At least three reviewers should be submitted for proposed bachelor's and master's degrees and at least five should be submitted for proposed doctoral degrees.

In addition to guidelines provided in [THEC Academic Policies \(A.1: New Academic Policies and A1.6: Expedited New Academic Programs\)](#), potential reviewers should be vetted with the following institutional characteristics in mind:

- a similar or aspirational Carnegie Classification institution,
- teaches and/or directs a program that is accredited by the proposed programmatic accreditor, if applicable,
- works at a public, SACSCOC accredited institution, and
- does not have prior affiliation with the institution.

Note, these recommendations are guidelines and THEC reserves the right to recommend a reviewer that is not on the list provided by the institution/UT System depending on the nature of the proposed program

Institutional/UT System Expectations Prior to the Site Visit

- Incorporate the Letter of Notification or Expedited Letter of Notification concerns from the THEC staff review into the NAPP/ENAPP prior to submission to THEC along with an associated crosswalk of the corresponding changes.
- Prepare contract and payment for external reviewer.
- Confirm date of site visit with external reviewer prior to confirming dates with THEC staff at least three weeks prior to the site visit.
- Provide THEC staff the proposed site visit itinerary with anticipated participants no later than two weeks prior to the site visit.
- Ensure all necessary materials have been provided to the external reviewer no later than two weeks prior to the site visit, including the complete NAPP/ENAPP document, site visit itinerary, and THEC NAPP/ENAPP evaluation.
- Once the site visit itinerary has been confirmed by THEC staff and the external reviewer, calendar invites will be sent out by the campus liaison or UT system for each meeting.
- Share contact information including cell phone numbers for program director and academic program liaison with external reviewer and THEC staff.
- Copy THEC staff on all communications with external reviewer pertaining to the proposed program.

Site Visit Sessions and Suggested Participants

- Introductory meeting between THEC and external reviewer that will be coordinated by THEC and will occur after draft site visit agenda has been provided to THEC staff.
- Meeting with campus leadership (suggested length: 30 minutes)
 - Recommended attendees: Provost, Dean of the School/College, Graduate School representation (if appropriate) and in some cases, the Chancellor/President
- Meeting with departmental leadership (suggested length: one hour)
 - Recommended attendees: department chair and program director
- Meeting with program faculty (suggested length: one hour)
 - Recommended attendees: faculty teaching in the proposed program
- Facilities tour (suggested length: 30-45 minutes)
 - Recommended attendees (this may vary based on the nature of the proposed program): facilities personnel, library representatives, IT staff, instructional designers, etc.
- Meeting with external community partners and collaborators (suggested length: 45-60 minutes)
 - Recommended attendees: external partners that will support the proposed program – this can include advisory group member organizations, internship/clinical placement partners, prospective employers, etc.
- Meeting with prospective students (suggested length: 45 minutes)
 - Recommended attendees: students that are interested in enrolling in the proposed program
- Dedicated time for THEC and external reviewers to meet prior to exit meeting (1 hour)
 - Recommended attendees: THEC staff, UT system office, and external reviewer(s)
- Exit meeting with campus leadership, department leadership, and program director (suggested length: 30 minutes)
 - Recommended attendees: Provost, Dean of the School/College, Graduate School representation (if appropriate), department chair, and program director