Accrediting Council for Collegiate Graphic Communications

ACCGC

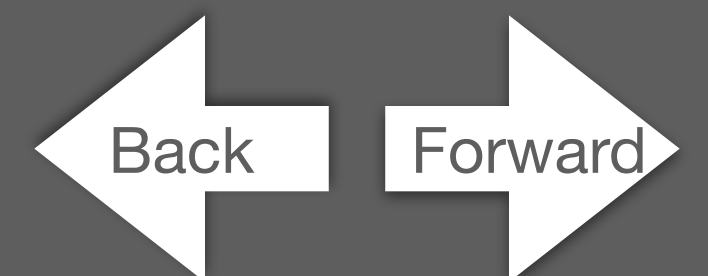## The Accreditation Process & Self Study

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We'll cover

- The process of getting accredited
- The purpose and benefit of the self-study
- The evidence you'll compile
- The ACCGC team visit and accreditation report

What is accreditation?

A process of self-analysis and peer-verification to ensure that your degree program meets quality standards.

Accreditation provides assurance to students, employers, and the general public that graduates of your degree program will acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of them in the field of graphic communications.
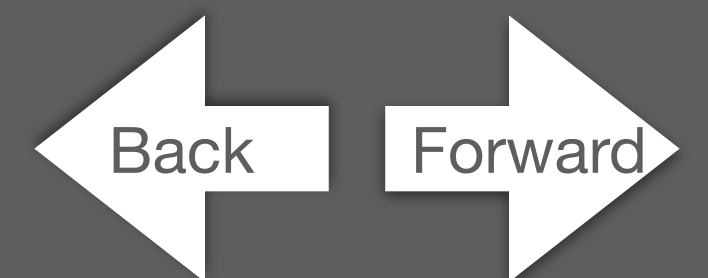
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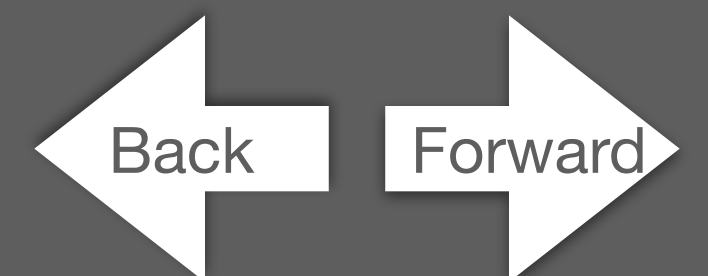
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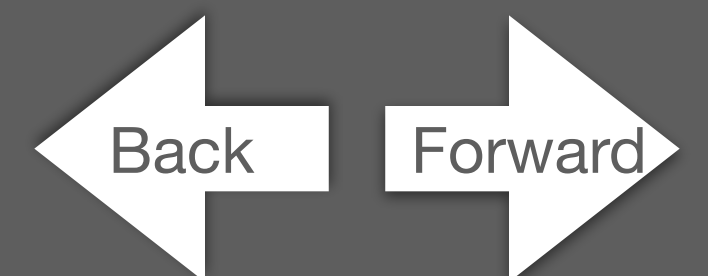
What is a self-study?

- A self-guided process of collecting information and analyzing all aspects of your program, providing a rich and detailed profile.
- The details uncovered may provide new insights into your program, leading to the verification of strengths as well as identifying inevitable areas for improvement.

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What is a self-study?

- Your self-study will involve looking into 15 ACCGC quality standards.

- Here is a link to your self-study template.

  - Note that each standard has two components: (1) collecting evidence and (2) adding commentary on the evidence found.

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What is a self-study?

- The self-study should be a team effort, with program faculty involved in adding, reviewing, and discussing information.

- Consider that the audience for your program's self-study include your own faculty and administrators, as well as a 3-member external review team made up of professional peers.
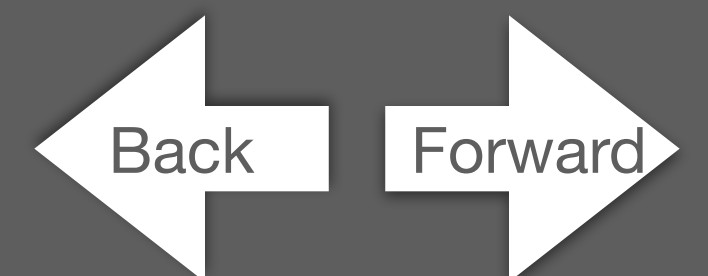
The site visiting team

- 2 educators and one industry representative will review your self-study and interview a range of people associated with your program.

- The external team's job is to corroborate your own self-study findings and provide feedback.

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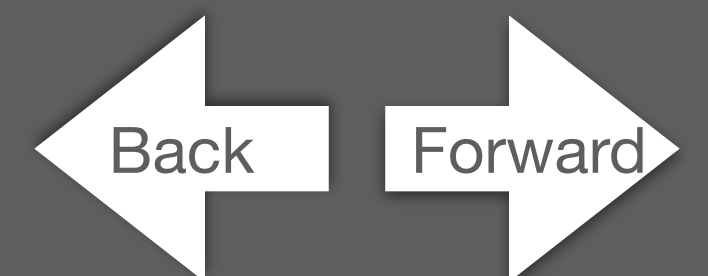
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1 to 2 years prior to accreditation

- Pay the accreditation review fee ($2000 for bachelors degrees and $1200 for associate degrees).
- Begin the self-study with support from an ACCGC-appointed self-study mentor.
  - The self-study generally requires 2 semesters to complete, often including a summer session.

3 months prior to accreditation

- Your ACCGC visiting team is assigned.
- Dates for a 3-day team visit are finalized.
- You'll arrange meetings for the visiting team with members of your institution.
  - Download a sample/template schedule here

1 month prior to the team visit

- You'll provide the self-study documentation to the team members.
- You'll provide the team with a private meeting room, sometimes called an 'evidence room.'
- You'll organize physical course materials for review, as well as provide access to courses through your institution's Learning Management System (LMS).

# 1 month prior to the team visit

- Visiting team travel will be finalized.
  - Your institution will need to cover team travel expenses and coordinate local transport, hotel reservations, and meals.

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The 15 Accreditation Standards

- Let's look at each of the 15 standards and the evidence you'll be collecting.

- Keep in mind, a standard not fully met does not mean your program won't be accredited. Finding areas for improvement are one of the benefits of the self-study process.
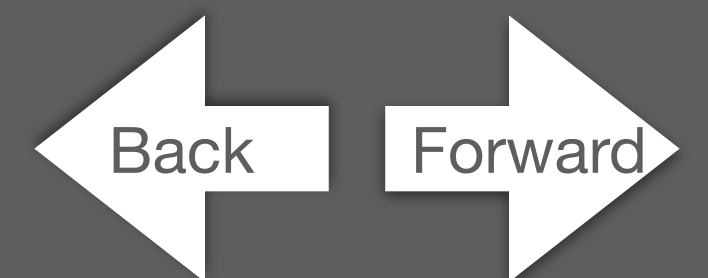
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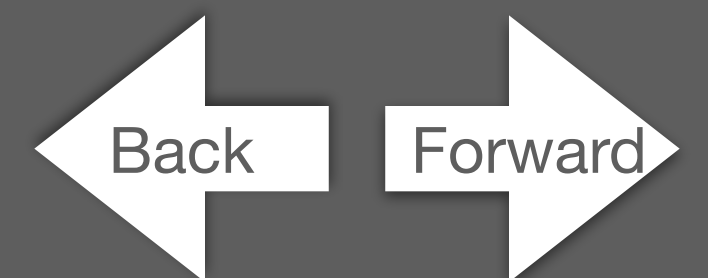
Standard 1 - Mission and Strategic Plan

- *Evidence:* the missions of your program, your department, and your college.

- *Commentary:* describe how these missions work together (or don't work together, as the case may be).
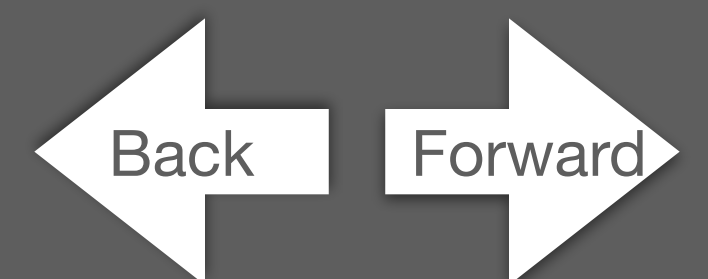
Standard 1 - Mission and Strategic Plan

- *Evidence*: provide your program's strategic plan. This may be embedded into a department strategic plan, or may stand alone.

- *Commentary*: explain the short and long term goals of the program, as well as planned and completed actions that assure the positive development of the program.

Standard 2 - Governance/Administration

- *Evidence*: organizational chart; minutes of department/program meetings; policies on program, department, and college governance.

- *Commentary*: explain program-level administration, as well as administrative input and support at the department and college levels.

Standard 3 - Financial Support

- *Evidence*: record of fund allocation from the institutional budget down to the program level; types and amounts of external financial support, such as donations.

- *Commentary*: explain the balance of full-time vs adjunct faculty, required class sizes, condition and age of equipment and facilities, faculty support for travel to workshops and conference, outside areas of support (like industry donations and partnerships).
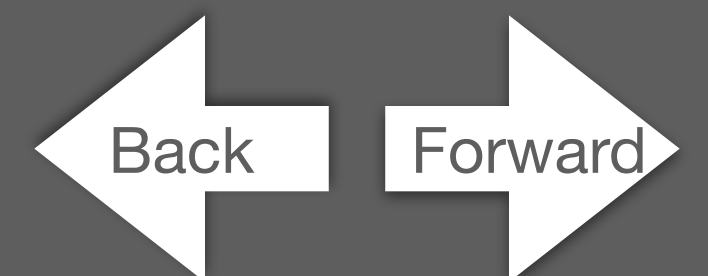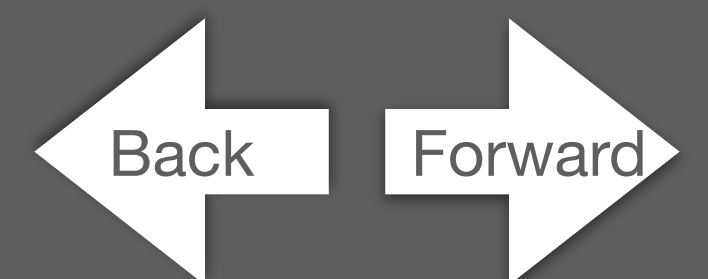
Standard 4 - Advisory Committee

- *Evidence*: roster of industry advisory committee members with diversity of specializations; bylaws (committee policies—member qualification requirements, member selection, and member responsibilities); meeting minutes for the past 5 years.

- *Commentary*: describe the function of the advisory committee, including frequency of meetings, areas of committee input, resulting actions over time, and the rationale for committee member composition.
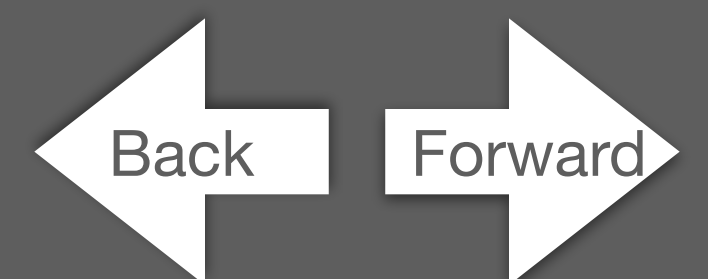
Standard 5 - Learning Outcomes Assessment

- This is a link to outcomes assessment training. Plan on about 20 minutes to complete the training.

- *Evidence*: ACCGC Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) crosswalked to program SLOs; direct measures of each SLO with project and rubric examples; indirect measures of (a) graduating students, (b) employers, and (c) program alumni; use of outcomes to provide input to program changes.

- *Commentary:* Outcomes assessment use, results and actions over time.
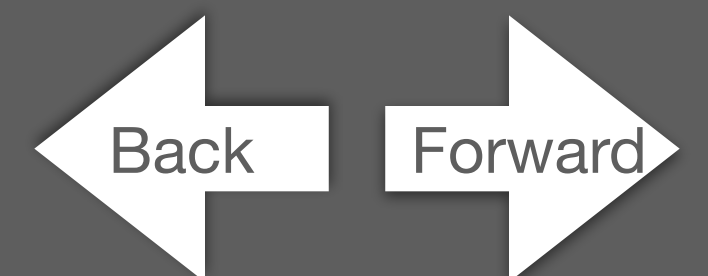
Standard 6 - Curriculum

- Evidence: program admission requirements; course plan (requirements for graduation with prerequisite structure, including any prescribed general education); course syllabi related to the major (not general education); SLO alignment across course objectives; table showing course offerings and enrollments by semester.

- *Commentary:* provide context with a history of how the curriculum evolved. Provide the rationale for any major-specific GenEd requirements. Describe areas of challenge for students or advisors.

Standard 7 - Internships

- Evidence: data on annual student work experiences related to the graphic communications industry; policies, procedures, and guidelines for course-related internship/practicum/cooperative study.

- *Commentary*: Explain how the program connects students with job opportunities, either for course credit or for non-credit experiences (part-time and summer jobs).

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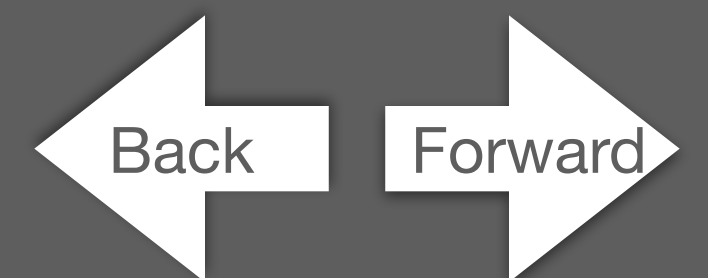# Standard 8 - Instructional Facilities

- *Evidence*: Floor plan(s) of instructional facilities; classroom technology.; Inventory of laboratory equipment and software; equipment and software maintenance policy; lab supervision and safety policy.

- *Commentary*: Explain how lab equipment and instructional facilities support (or do not support) the course objectives and student learning outcomes.

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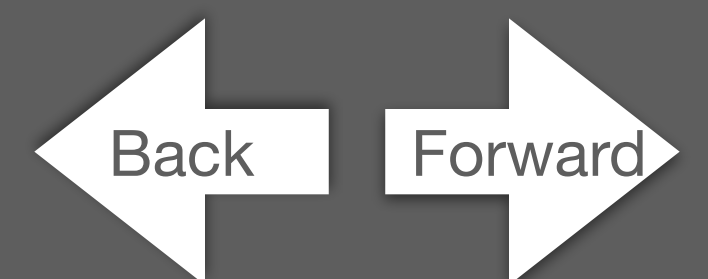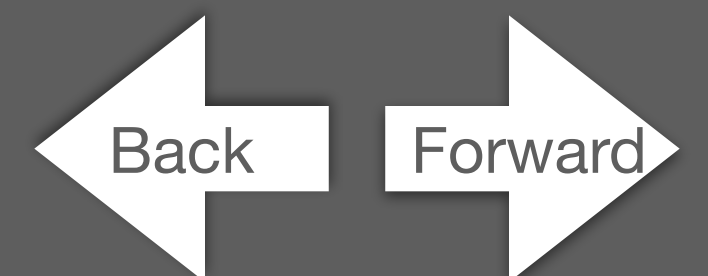
Standard 9 - Staff Support

- *Evidence:* Availability of office staff; technical support staff; student assistants; external support services.

- *Commentary:* Explain the ways in which the program utilizes office staff, technical support staff, student assistants, and external support services.
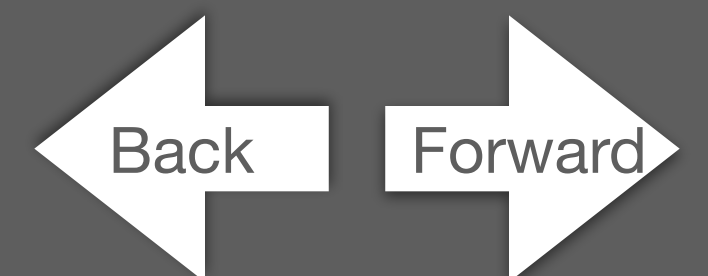
Standard 10 - Faculty

- Evidence: breakdown of tenured, tenure-track, instructional, and adjunct faculty with specializations and course responsibilities; workload balance for teaching faculty (contact hours, scholarship, service, advising); policies on selection and appointment of faculty; faculty vitae ; documented faculty professional development activity.

- *Commentary*: provide context for the balance of full-time and part-time faculty; explain the institutional norms for faculty qualifications and expectations for service and scholarship. Explain the process for professional development support.

Standard 11 - Faculty Evaluation

- *Evidence*: policies for tenure, retention, and promotion; policies for student teaching evaluation and instruments; policies and practices for faculty evaluation and feedback for instructional effectiveness, scholarship (if required), and service contributions.

- Commentary: summarize the faculty evaluation methods and how feedback for improvement and progress toward promotion is provided to faculty.
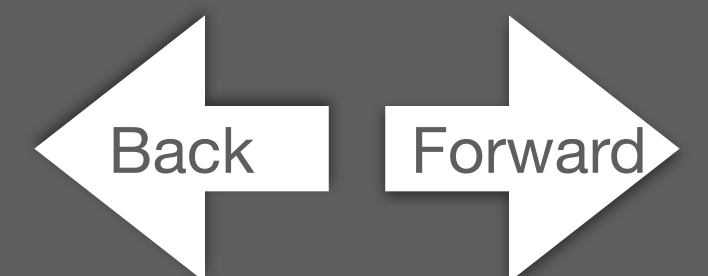
Standard 12 - Instruction & Evaluation

- *Evidence*: course syllabi include a clear plan of instruction; support media (online references, instructor created media, textbooks, etc.); policies, practices, and rationales regarding modes of instruction (face-to-face, hands-on laboratory, hybrid/blended, on-line); quizzes & exams; major projects & grading rubrics

- *Commentary*: provide an overview and rationale for the modes of instruction used.

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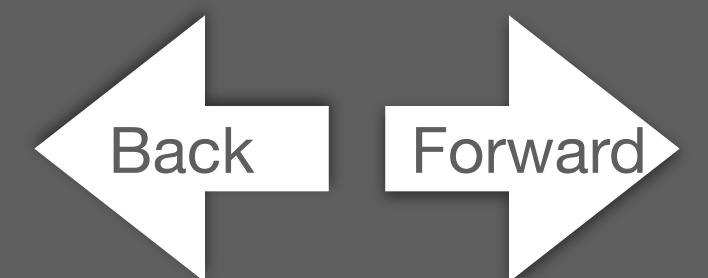
Standard 13 - Student Records and Advising

- *Evidence*: the academic advising and record keeping system; policies on student advisement schedules/requirements; strategies/support services to assure retention, persistence, and completion rates; data on completion rates and time to graduation rates; student surveys/opinions on advising satisfaction.

- *Commentary*: provide the context for how students are helped to plan the courses they should take to graduate on time, including how prerequisites and course grades play a part; provide commentary on completion rates and time to graduation rates.
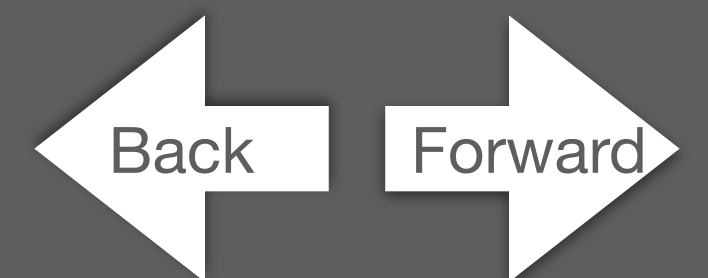
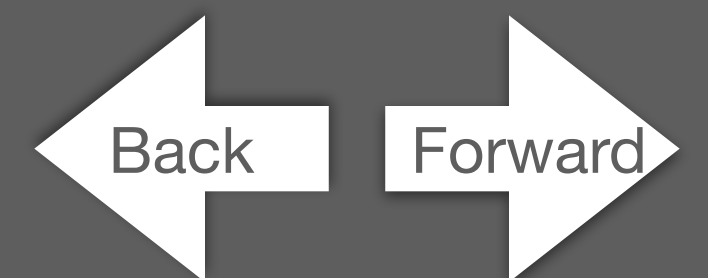# Standard 14 - Graduate Placement and Follow-up

- *Evidence:* career counseling services; job opportunities through faculty contacts and job fairs; graduating seniors and recent alums initial job placements; longer term job advancements and satisfaction;

- *Commentary:* provide an overview of programs that exist to help students prepare resumes, for interviewing, and for job searching; explain how the program tracks its graduates for job placement and advancement.

Standard 15 - Diversity and Inclusion

- *Evidence*: statistics of current faculty and student diversity, retention, and graduation; policies/trainings that provide assurances for non-biased inclusion and the encouragement of gender and ethnic diversity; accommodation for the needs of those with disabilities.

- *Commentary*: discuss the diversity and inclusion initiatives and diversity statistics in the student body and among institutional employees.
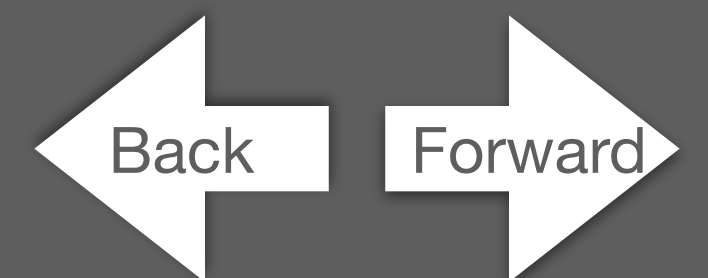
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The Team Visit: Day 1

- The team will travel to your campus, arriving by late afternoon.
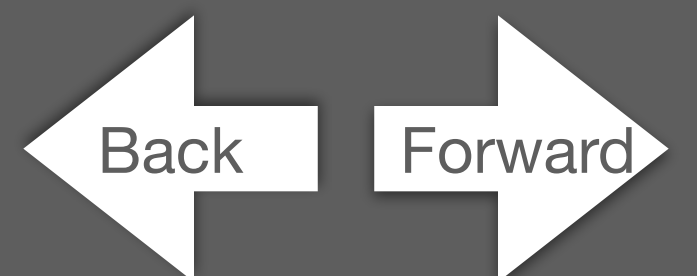- The team meets with the department chair and faculty, often for dinner and a facilities tour.

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The Team Visit: Day 2

- You've scheduled a full day of observations and interviews for the team.
- Arrange for someone to escort the team from one interview to the next.
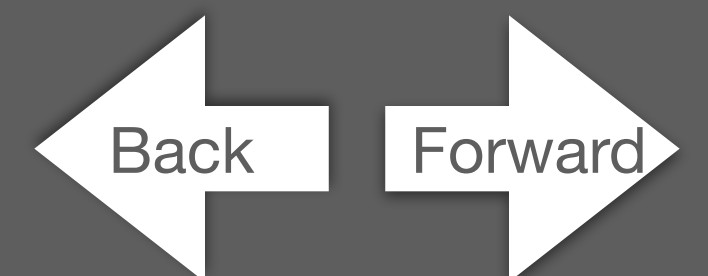- The team usually has a working breakfast, and working lunch in the evidence room, and a working dinner.

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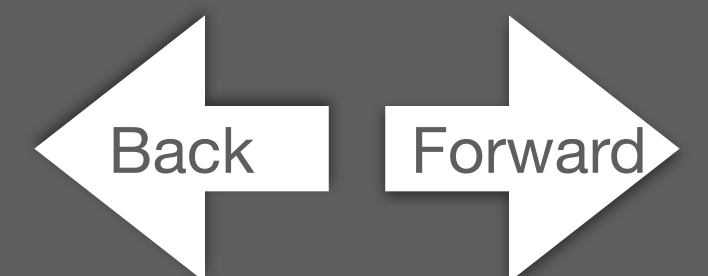
The Team Visit: Day 3

- This day will include morning interviews only, including that with the department chair.
- The team will have an hour or so to plan an exit interview, which is delivered in the late morning/noon hour and attended by faculty and administrators.
- The team will travel home in the afternoon.

After the visit

- The team will have one month to complete a report on the 15 standards.
- The managing director will share with you the evidence reported upon for you to approve.
- Within the 2 following months, an ACCGC board meeting is scheduled to discuss the report and vote on the team's accreditation recommendation
- The report and decision is shared with you.

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Coordination

Please direct any questions about the accreditation process to Dan Wilson, ACCGC managing director.

<u>dan.wilson@ilstu.edu</u>

Best wishes for a great experience with your accreditation process!

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