

Guide to EAC PEVs making an ETAC Visit

Architectural, Civil, and Construction Engineering Technology Programs

Introduction & Purpose

If you are reading this, then you are probably an experienced EAC PEV who has volunteered to help ASCE fill a need for an ETAC PEV. As ASCE is short on ETAC PEVs, your willingness to help is greatly appreciated. If you approach the visit with curiosity and a willingness to understand, you will find visit technology programs a mind expanding experience.

As there are some differences between the criterion, forms, and procedures used by the two commissions, this document is written you to make the transition to being a PEV on an ETAC visit.

Major Differences Between Commissions

There are notable differences between the two commissions as they each operate fairly independent of each other. Harmonization of the criteria has helped to reduce these differences, however each commission deals with different programs, so there are many differences.

The most notable differences important to you on your upcoming visit are:

- Differences in Criterion and how they are interpreted
- Differences in forms used to complete the visit
- Differences in visit procedures.

This document addresses each of these areas.

Differences In Criterion

You should download and study the ETAC criteria as soon as possible. Below are some notable differences. There may be others.

- 1) Criterion 1: Students. No significant difference.
- 2) Criterion 2: Program Educational Objectives (PEOs). This criterion is the same, however, ETAC has decided that definition of a PEO is not part of the criterion, so does not sustain findings that are based on non-compliance with the ABET definition of PEOs. This means if you write up a shortcoming because the PEOs do not meet ABETs definitions, the ETAC editors will remove those shortcomings from the final statement. It is, however, to point out to the institution that their PEOs do not the ABET definition in an observation statement.
- 3) Criterion 3: Student Outcomes (SOs). In the ETAC criterion, the sub topics a-i or a-k are considered to be “learned capabilities” that must appear in the published outcomes of the program. The program may adopt these learned capabilities directly as outcomes. However, if the program has chosen to write their own outcomes, you must review their published outcomes to ensure that each of learned capabilities are somehow manifest in the published outcomes. It is common to have shortcomings if any one or more of the learned capabilities are not readily evident in the published outcomes.

Note that the language for the learned capabilities is different than that used by EAC for its SOs. These learned capabilities are written for technology programs, not for engineering programs. There is a distinct lack of language relating to design.

The ETAC criterion 3 also requires that the “There must be a documented and effective process for the periodic review and revision of these student outcomes.” There is not a similar sentence in the EAC criterion 3. Note that the criterion does not say that this review process much include the constituents.

Note that the self-study and program’s website should be sufficient to fully evaluate this criterion before the visit.

- 4) Criterion 4: Continuous Improvement. The criterion is the same for both commissions and the same standards apply. Note that ETAC looks at the assessment of the program's published outcomes, not the learned capabilities a-i and/or a-k listed in criterion 3. There is no requirement that the program demonstrate attainment of the learned capabilities. Please stick to the review of the assessment of the student attainment of the program's published outcomes, even if there is a shortcoming under criterion 3 because not all the learned capabilities are manifest in the student outcomes.
- 5) Criterion 5: Curriculum. This criterion is significantly different between the two commissions. ETAC accredits both associates and baccalaureate degree programs, so the criterion is different for each. ETAC criterion 5 is, in many ways, less prescriptive than the similar EAC criterion. You should review this carefully and consult with your team chair if you have specific questions.
- 6) Criterion 6: Faculty. While this criterion is written differently for each commission, the intent is basically the same. Note that ASCE recognizes that technical programs do not require professional engineering registration; however, the faculty must still demonstrate their qualification as outlined in the criterion. Note that many technology programs are very small and operate with a few as one faculty member, supplemented with adjunct instructors. This is not considered a shortcoming unless there is not a plan in place to deal with unexpected loss of the key faculty member.
- 7) Criterion 7: Facilities. No difference in the criterion. Note that technology programs tend to rely heavily on laboratory experiences. The same concerns for safety, condition, support, etc apply to reviews by both commissions.
- 8) Criterion 8: Institutional Support. No difference in the criterion. This criterion is applied the same by each commission.
- 9) Program Criteria. The two commissions write their program criteria differently. ETAC has both Objectives and an Outcomes section in their program criteria statements. As programs are only required assess their own published outcomes, there is no requirement that the program provide assessment data on the program criteria unless it is a part of their published outcomes. As a PEV you will be checking to ensure that the curriculum adequately covers the program criteria so that a student can reasonably be expected to attain the program criteria outcomes.

Differences In Forms

You should download and study the ETAC forms as soon as possible. ETAC has only two forms (to the EAC three) for you to work with. The two forms are:

- T301: Program Audit Form
- T351: PEV Report Form

The form you will work with the most is the PEV Report Form. You need to review the ASCE ETAC Program Evaluator Instructions to see the requirements for filling out these forms. You will find that, in general, the ETAC forms are simpler to complete than the EAC versions.

The T351-Program Evaluator Report Form includes the following:

- ❖ Basic Information Sheet
- ❖ Detailed comments documenting the observations and assessment of the PEV for each criterion and the accreditation policy and procedure manual.
- ❖ A List of Corrective Action on Previous ETAC Findings
- ❖ Program Review Worksheets which are a daily summary of the PEV's assessment of the institution's compliance with each criterion and the accreditation policy and procedure manual.
- ❖ Program Summary

This form is significantly different than EAC's E351 form. It has elements of both EAC's E351 and E341 forms.

The T301-Program Audit Form includes the following:

- ❖ Program Audit Summary
- ❖ Detailed explanation of shortcomings

This form will be completed at the end of the visit; however it is considered good practice to draft potential exit statements prior to the visit based on your initial review. Doing so can save some time during the visit.

For an ETAC visit, you will not be writing a separate exit statement. The exit statements are written by criterion on the T301 form. You are to write the shortcoming relating to each criterion in the box provided for each criterion. This is the form that will be left with the institution at the end of the visit.

Shortcoming statements are written differently by the two commissions. The T301 form has the statement outline on it. The major difference is that you need to “Describe the evidence needed to resolve the finding” in addition to quoting the criterion, stating your observations, and the negative impact on the program. The evidence statement should not be prescriptive (i.e. don’t tell them how to solve the shortcoming). It should describe the characteristics of an acceptable solution.

Your Team Chair will probably request a brief program description (similar to what you’d write in an EAC exit statement) separately as there is not a place for it on the form.

Differences in Visit Procedures

For the most part, the visit procedures are not significantly different.

The most notable difference is that ETAC does not want you communicating with the program directly prior to the visit. All communications with the program are passed through the Team Chair. This practice slows information flow down, but has the benefit of keeping the Team Chair in the loop, and allowing the Team Chair to filter out requests that may not be relevant or offensive before passing the request on to the institution.

Class visits are often treated differently. Many ETAC PEVs like to visit with two classes: one at the entry level and one near the completion of the curriculum.

The ETAC interview schedule is often much lighter than the EAC interview schedule as there often much fewer faculty to visit with. This as the added benefit of allowing more time for the writing of exit statements. It is not uncommon for ETAC PEVs to have their first draft exit statements done on Monday night.

While all of ABET has taken on a more team oriented approach, it is important to remember that all shortcoming decisions are team decisions. Be open to discussion with the team about the nature and severity of any shortcomings. On your first couple of ETAC visits, it is good to listen to those on the team who are experienced with technology programs. The culture is different and you should be sensitive practices that are necessarily different than what is found in engineering programs.