



**Preparing for an ANSAC  
Evaluation Site-Visit  
2021-2022 Accreditation Cycle**

Workshop for  
Institutional Representatives

presented by  
Randal Keller, PhD



# Introduction

## **ANSAC Representatives**

**Randal Keller, ANSAC Chair**

**Niaz Latif, ANSAC Chair Elect**

**Alice Greife, ANSAC Chair Emeritus**

**Rebecca Popeck, ANSAC Vice Chair of Operations**

# Session Agenda

- **General Considerations**
- **The Evaluation Team**
- **Terms & Terminology**
- **The Accreditation Process**
- **Campus Visit**
- **After the Campus Visit**
- **Examples of What the Evaluation Team Looks For**
- **Common Findings**

# Learning Objectives

- **ABET Organization**
- **Terms and Terminology**
- **The Accreditation Process**
- **Pre-, On-Site, Post- Visit Activities**
- **Accreditation Actions**
- **How to Avoid Problems**
- **Example Site Visit Problems**

# Our Goals Today are:

- to develop common understandings of, and expectations for virtual evaluation activities, and
- to set the stage for a successful set of virtual evaluation visits in the 2021-22 cycle.

# ABET Organization

ABET is essentially a group of over 2,200 volunteers from academia, industry, and public that is assisted by a core staff of professionals at headquarters.



# ABET Organization

- **Board of Directors (12)**
- **Board of Delegates (~53)**
- **Accreditation Commissions (4)**

# ABET Organization

- **Four Accreditation Commissions**
  - Applied and Natural Science Accreditation Commission
  - Computing Accreditation Commission
  - Engineering Accreditation Commission
  - Engineering Technology Accreditation Com.

Commissioners are nominated by member societies



# What ANSAC Does

- **Develop and update General Criteria**
  - Most criteria are harmonized across commissions
- **Approve program criteria**
- **Assign Team Chairs to planned visits**
- **Serve on commission committees**
- **Assure quality of evaluation process**
- **Make final determination of accreditation actions**



# Terms & Terminology

# ABET Definitions

You will find the definitions of ABET's terms in the *Accreditation Policy and Procedure Manual (APPM)*.

You will also find definitions at the introduction to the ANSAC General Criteria, as follows:

# ABET Definitions

While ABET recognizes and supports the prerogative of institutions to adopt and use the terminology of their choice, it is necessary for ABET volunteers and staff to have a consistent understanding of terminology. With that purpose in mind, the Commissions will use the following basic definitions:

**Program Educational Objectives** – Program educational objectives are broad statements that describe what graduates are expected to attain within a few years after graduation. Program educational objectives are based on the needs of the program's constituencies.

**Student Outcomes** – Student outcomes describe what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation. These relate to the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that students acquire as they progress through the program.

# Program Educational Objectives

- Broad statements that describe what graduates are expected to attain within a few years after graduation.
- PEOs are based on the needs of the program's constituencies.
- There must be a process to review and update PEOs.
- Must be “publicly stated” per APPM.

# Student Outcomes

- Student outcomes describe what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation.
- These relate to the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that students acquire as they progress through the program.

# Student Outcomes Assessment

- One or more processes that identify, collect, and prepare data to evaluate the attainment of student outcomes.
- Effective assessment uses relevant direct, indirect, quantitative, and qualitative measures as appropriate to the outcome or objective being measured.
- Appropriate sampling methods may be used as part of an assessment process.
  - Not necessary to assess every course
  - Not necessary to assess every term.

# Keep in Mind

- The institution must provide evidence that they have a **working and effective system of assessment in place.**
- The institution must describe a clear relationship between program educational objectives, student outcomes, and measurable indicators of success with **required levels of achievement.**
- The evaluation team is assessing programs **based on the criteria and the strength of the evidence provided by the institution,** not on their own personal references.



# ABET Definitions

**Assessment** – Assessment is one or more processes that identify, collect, and prepare data to evaluate the attainment of student outcomes. Effective assessment uses relevant direct, indirect, quantitative and qualitative measures as appropriate to the outcome being measured. Appropriate sampling methods may be used as part of an assessment process.

**Evaluation** – Evaluation is one or more processes for interpreting the data and evidence accumulated through assessment processes. Evaluation determines the extent to which student outcomes are being attained. Evaluation results in decisions and actions regarding program improvement.

# ANSAC Definitions

The Applied and Natural Science Accreditation Commission (ANSAC) of ABET recognizes that its constituents may consider certain terms to have certain meanings; however, it is necessary for the ANSAC to have consistent terminology. Thus the Applied and Natural Science Accreditation Commission will use the following definitions in applying the criteria:

# ANSAC Definitions

College level Mathematics – consists of mathematics that require a degree of mathematical sophistication at least equivalent to that of college algebra. For illustrative purposes, some examples of college-level mathematics include college algebra, pre-calculus, calculus, differential equations, probability, statistics, linear algebra and discrete mathematics.

# ANSAC Definitions

Natural Science – increases the knowledge base of a field of research and science collectively that are involved in the study of the physical world and its phenomena. Natural science consists of but is not limited to biology, physics, chemistry, geology and other natural sciences including life, earth and space sciences.

Applied Science – uses the knowledge base in natural science to solve specific programs.



# The Accreditation Process

# The Self Study Report

- **The Self-Study Report includes a complete description of how and the extent to which the program satisfies each of the:**
  - **General Criteria requirements**
  - **Program Specific Criteria (if applicable)**
  - **APPM (Accreditation Policy and Procedure Manual)**

# General Criteria

**Criterion 1: Students**

**Criterion 2: Program Educational Objectives**

**Criterion 3: Student Outcomes**

**Criterion 4: Continuous Improvement**

**Criterion 5: Curriculum**

**Criterion 6: Faculty**

**Criterion 7: Facilities**

**Criterion 8: Institutional Support**

# Program/Degree-Specific Criteria

- In addition to the eight General Criteria, the team will assess the program's compliance with applicable program- and degree- specific criteria, unless the program is being reviewed under the General Criteria only.
- Applicable program specific criteria are determined by the program title.
- Additional degree criteria apply to master's degree programs.



# Terminology

- Each institution is free to define its own terminology.
- For example, if “goal” is the term used to define the expected accomplishments of graduates the first few years after graduation, this is completely acceptable to ABET.
- The Self-Study Report should clarify this terminology.

# Institution's Responsibilities

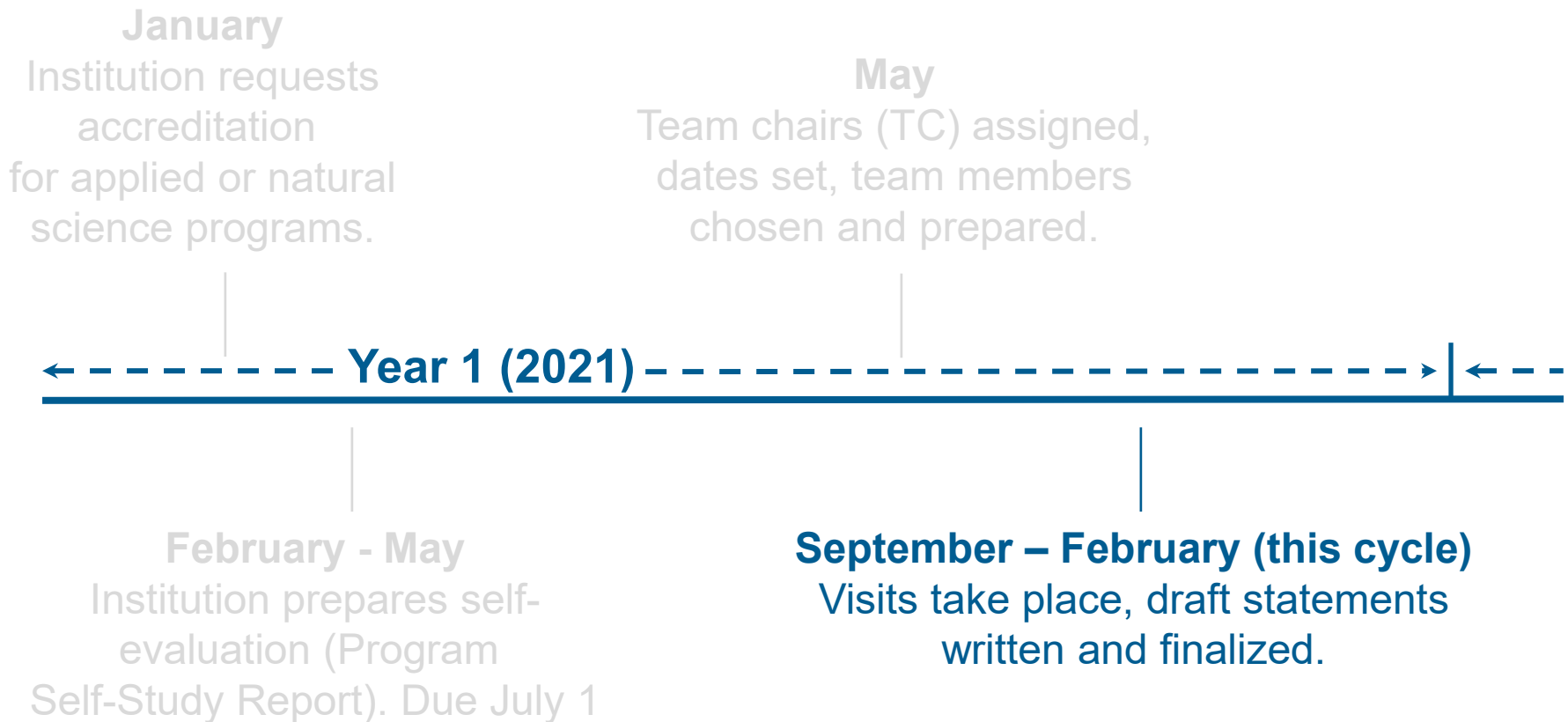
- **Host Accreditation Site Review (remotely this year)**
  - **Initial Review** – A new program is evaluated for the first time
  - **General Review** – A program has been previously evaluated and all shortcomings were resolved. A general review occurs every 6 years.
  - **Interim/Focused Review** – A program was found to have deficiencies or weaknesses in the prior evaluation and a campus visit was necessary to confirm information submitted by the institution.

# Institution's Responsibilities

- **Respond to Reports**
  - 7-Day Response to Program Audit Form/Exit Statement
  - 30-Day Due Process Statement
  - Supplemental Information if needed

# The Accreditation Timeline

## Year 1 (2021)



# The Accreditation Timeline

## Year 1 (2021)

**(2021 - 2022)**

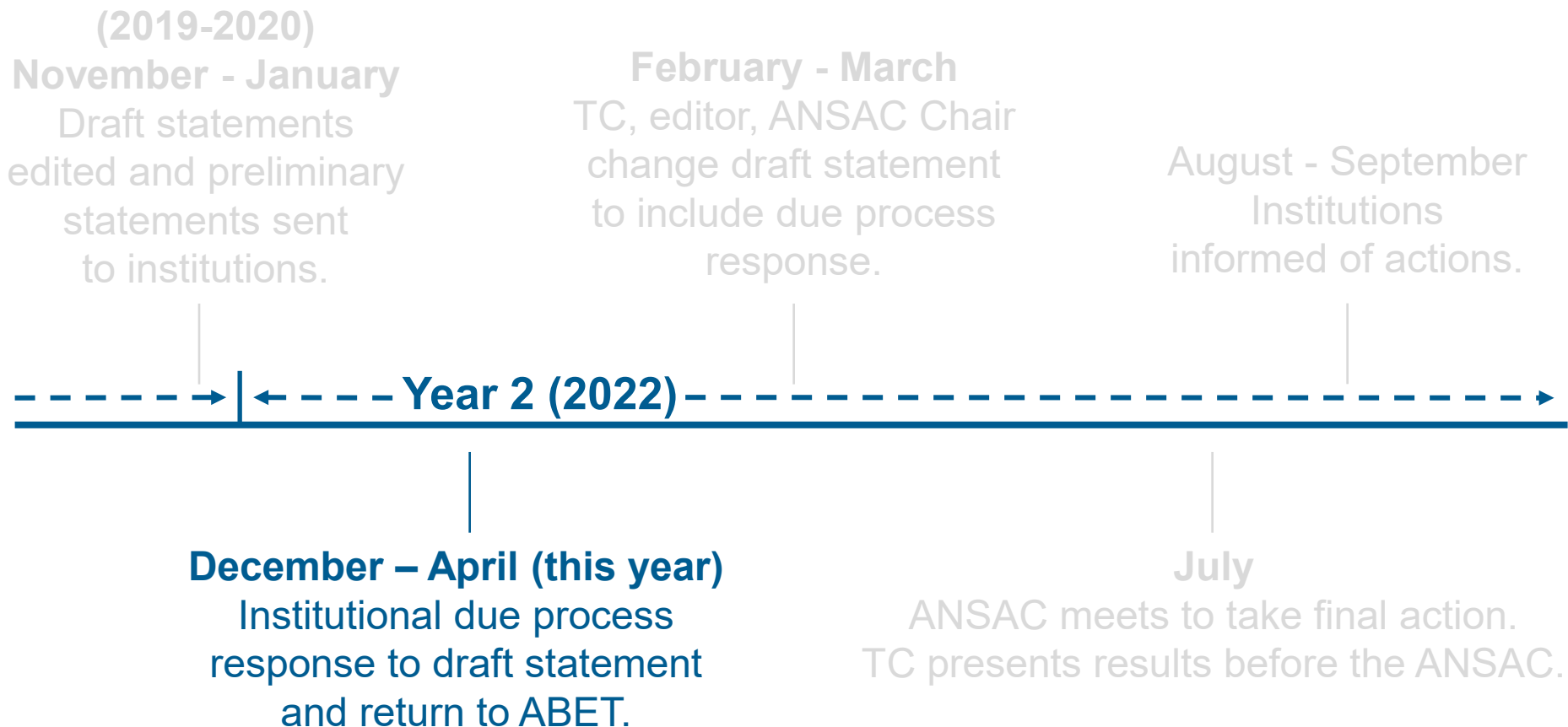
**November - March**

Draft statements  
edited and preliminary  
statements sent  
to institutions.



# The Accreditation Timeline

## Year 2 (2022)



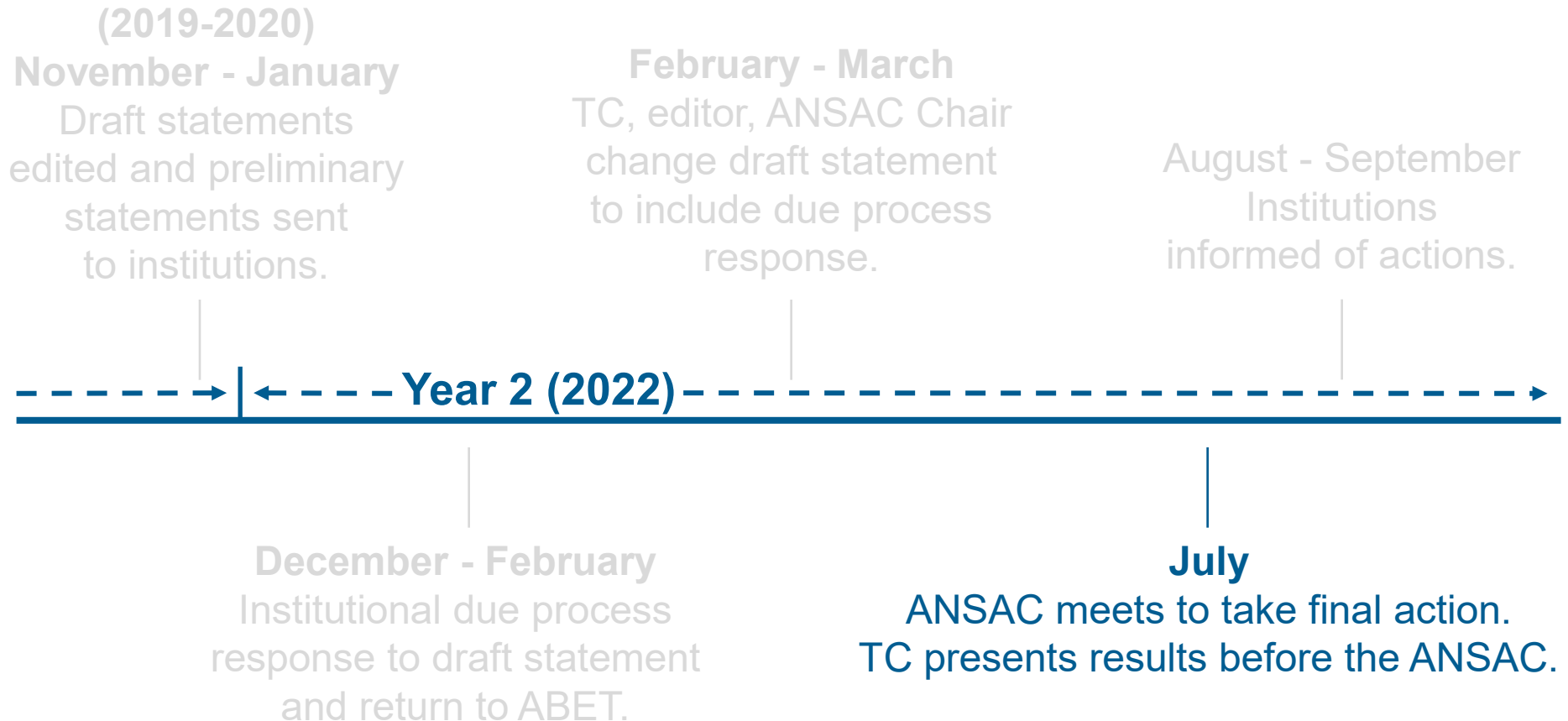
# The Accreditation Timeline

## Year 2 (2022)



# The Accreditation Timeline

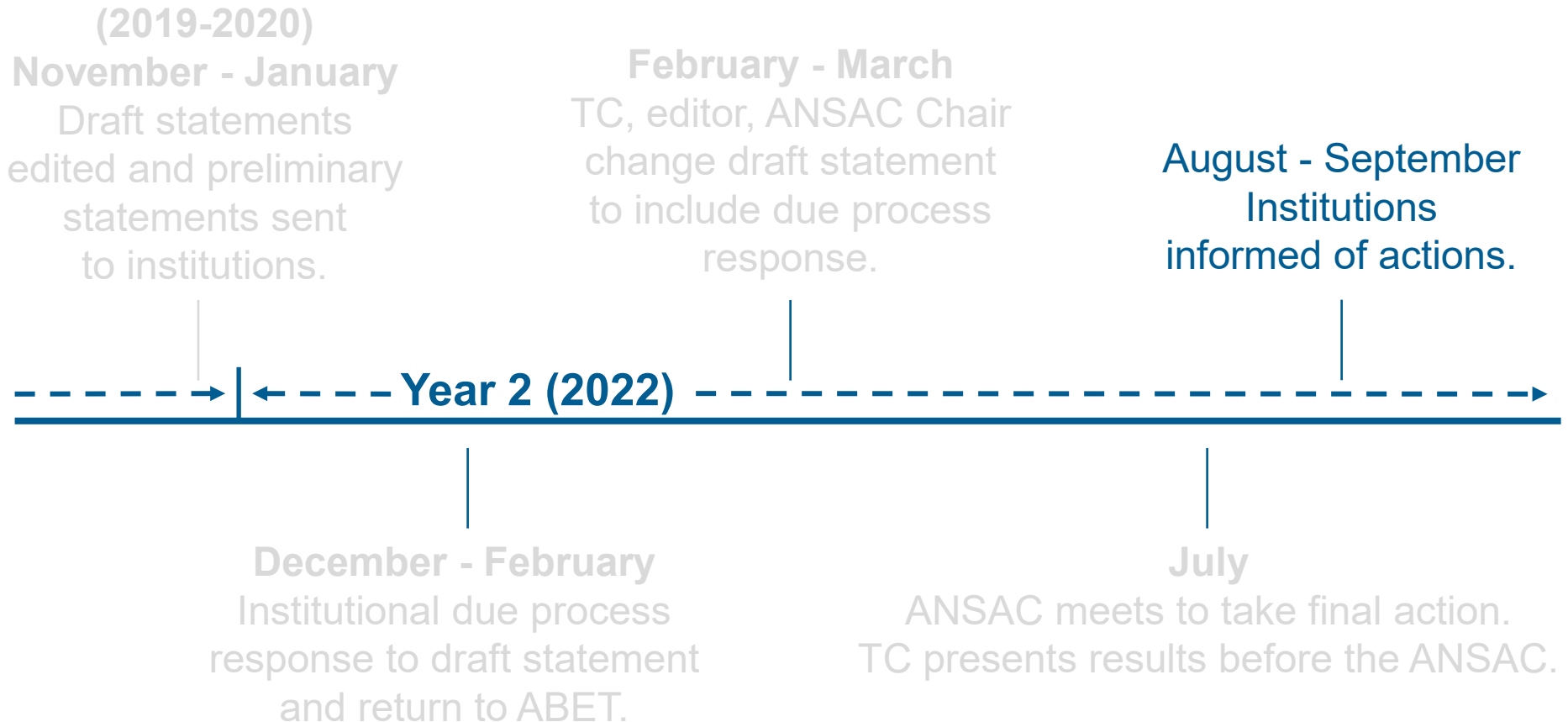
## Year 2 (2022)





# The Accreditation Timeline

## Year 2 (2022)





# Virtual Review: Scope and Expectations

# Virtual Review: Scope and Expectations

- **Planning** – There will be NO team travel to any on-site location. Teams will handle all planning and organization virtually.
- **Materials** – Programs are to provide all materials electronically (e.g., institutional system, Dropbox, e-mail etc.).  
No printed, USB, or physical formats will be requested or accepted.

# Virtual Review: Scope and Expectations

- **Facility Tours** – Programs will provide for virtual tours of the facilities and labs.
- **Interviews** – Teams will conduct all interviews of faculty, students, and staff virtually.

# Virtual Review: Scope and Expectations

- **Exit Meeting** - The Exit Meeting will occur virtually.
- **Information Technology** - Zoom will be the default videoconferencing platform supplied and supported by ABET.

Institutional requirements may drive an alternative videoconferencing platform.

# COVID 19 Impact on Program Delivery

- We understand you (and institutions world-wide), beginning March 2020, may have encountered the following:
  - Faculty and staff working remotely due to the global pandemic
  - Courses transitioning to fully-online
  - Laboratories being unavailable
  - Grading system changes such as pass/fail
  - Students studying under difficult circumstances
  - Data being difficult to collect and documentation difficult to produce

# Team Operational Mindset

- Our teams will NOT be judging your program(s) based on your response to COVID-19.
- We will evaluate the program and its processes over the duration of the accreditation cycle for compliance with the criteria and the APPM, rather than using just a snapshot in time.

# Team Operational Mindset

- We will be reasonable in our approach and decision-making without compromising the quality and integrity of the review.



# Virtual Visit Dates and Duration

- Visit dates are now scheduled.
- Virtual visits may be extended beyond 3 days, but no longer than 1 week.
  - Team members and institutions may be in multiple time zones (you and the team will need to be flexible with the workday).
  - Some activities may need additional time to complete in the virtual modality.

# Support/Display Materials

- Guided by APPM I.E.5.b. (2) – (8)
- Requirements are not different for virtual visits; however, the timing and methods of submission, organization, and presentation may be different.
- The program must make materials available at least one month prior to the start date of the virtual visit.
- Work with the Team Chair (and PEVs) to determine what materials they will require and where the materials will be located.
- Note, the APPM does NOT require access to textbooks.

# Support/Display Materials

- If an institutional system is used to provide access to evidence and documentation, team members must be given access to your network and the software.
- Guidance or training material on the institutional system must be provided so the team members can efficiently find evidence and documentation.
- Timeliness and testing are critical for the team to be able to conduct its work.
- Translation will be needed where the language of instruction is not English (follows APPM I.D.1.g.).

# Information Technology

- Identify all personnel involved in the review.
- Identify your IT point of contact for the team and ABET HQ IT personnel.
- Zoom, as stated earlier, is the default ABET videoconferencing platform.
  - Team chair and PEVs will set up meetings. You will need to provide support at the institution.
- If circumstances at your institution require an alternative videoconferencing platform, you will need to provide access, set up meetings, and provide training and support to the team.

# Information Technology

- .
- Need to establish and test minimum IT requirements.
  - Bandwidth, wired and wireless connectivity, and security. Wired (ethernet) connectivity is always preferable.
  - Identify headset and microphone requirements for one-on-one and group interviews. Provide A/V hardware, training, and support to all institutional participants.
- Establish backup plans.



# **Before the Campus Review**

# Planning for the Virtual Site Visit

The Team Chair, PEVs, Institution and its programs will:

- Set the schedule to include virtual interviews, meetings, and facility tours.

# Planning for the Virtual Site Visit

Institution and its programs will:

- Providing electronic support materials and access for team review, and
- Establish IT hardware and testing.



# Transcript Request

- The Team Chair will also ask the institution to provide 6-10 transcripts selected randomly.
- Institution should also provide documentation to support analysis of transcript (e.g., degree audit, waiver requests, etc.)

# Facility Tours

- Correlate with the equipment list from the Self-Study Report.
- Provide annotated photographs.
  - Allows the PEV to view the various instruments/equipment used.
- As soon as facilities are accessible, provide narrated, recorded videos.
  - Cover labs, classrooms, library, and computing services.
  - Short videos (10 min/lab, one video/lab or other location).
  - Smartphone quality will suffice – need audio and video.
  - Include name, location, signage, general layout, safety, courses supported, instructional equipment, etc.
  - Early testing using a sample video to verify usability by team.

# Facility Tours

- Later, the team may request a live, on-camera walkthrough, if the facilities are accessible. If facilities are not accessible, you will have the narrated videos as back up.



# During The Campus Virtual Visit

# Objectives of the Campus Virtual Visit

- Make a **qualitative assessment** of factors that cannot be documented in a written questionnaire.
- Conduct a **detailed examination** of the materials compiled by the institution.
- Provide the institution with a preliminary assessment of its **strong points and shortcomings**.

# Evaluate/Document/Recommend

The team will:

- ✓ Identify issues for each criterion.
- ✓ Select key term that applies overall for each criterion.
- ✓ Explain impact of each concern, weakness, and deficiency.
- ✓ Recommend an accreditation action.

# The Decision-Making Process

- Preliminary decision before visit begins
- Night before the exit interview recommendation
- Team decision at conclusion of visit
- Decisions by editors and ANSAC Chair
- Draft Statement consistent with ANSAC Chair decision

# Communication is Critical!

The Dean (or designee) and the Team Chair must plan and be informed of all activities.

- ✓ The Team Chair should be the conduit for any communication between ANSAC team and the institution itself.
- ✓ Any communications between a program head and program evaluator should be copied to the Dean and Team Chair.



# HQ Directive on Electronic Recording of ABET Accreditation Meetings

- Any type of electronic recording of live ABET accreditation conversations or meetings is **prohibited**.
- This policy applies to ABET Accreditation staff, volunteers, and the institutions involved in evaluation reviews.
- For accreditation reviews this applies to review planning meetings, ABET team meetings, exit meetings and faculty, staff and student interviews.
- Exceptions to this would be pre-recorded laboratory tours.
- All parties involved in the pre-recorded laboratory tour must be identified by name and provide their recorded consent to be recorded.

# Campus Virtual Visit Activities – Day 0

(Usually Sunday) Noon- 5:00 pm

- Team evaluates course materials, laboratory reports, assessment data and other relevant information for the program(s) under review.
- Tour facilities (virtually).
- PEV meets Program Chair
- Team Chair meets with Dean

# Course Materials

- Courses appear appropriate to accomplish the program educational objectives and program outcomes.
- Student work indicates active engagement and demonstration of learning.
- Evidence with respect to specific outcomes (including those in the criteria) as appropriate to the assessment plan.
- A few missing items, or even entire missing courses, are not necessarily systemic problems. PEVs will pursue any major gap to see if it represents a serious problem.

# Laboratory Reports

- Evidence (lab reports) of appropriate student learning (not just cookbook).
- Evidence to support program outcomes.
- Evidence of faculty reviewing and correcting written communications.
  - Not just check marks – written reports!
  - Provide corrections to grammar and composition.

# Typical Documents Reviewed by the Team

Documentation of results and evidence that results are being used to improve the program, for example:

- ✓ Student portfolios
- ✓ Nationally-normed examinations
- ✓ Alumni and employer surveys
- ✓ Placement data
- ✓ Other

# What Does the Team Evaluate?

Processes in place which provide for:

- Definition of desired, measurable outcomes
- Collection of data linked to the outcomes
- Analysis of data and evaluation of results
- Implementation of change
- Repeat cycle and review (closing the loop)

# Interviews

- Provide a private, well-connected, and suitably equipped location for one-on-one interviews.
- For group interviews, establish participant location, IT requirements, and A/V hardware needed to have a productive meeting.
- Testing is critical in all interview locations.
- Need to have institutional IT staff available for set up, testing, and troubleshooting.

# Assessment & Improvement Evidence

Among the materials that the institution collects for display should be:

- Examples of assessment tools
- Summary of results
- Faculty meeting minutes
- Advisory Board meeting minutes



# Campus Visit Activities – Day 1

(Monday) 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

- ABET Team meets with administration
- TC meets with dean, associate dean, president, provost, registrar, finance, admissions, placement, assessment
- PVEs meet with Faculty, Students, Employers, Alumni

# Campus Visit Activities Day 2 (Tuesday) 8:00 – Mid Afternoon

- Team finalizes visit forms and documents
- Brief program chairs and dean on findings.
- Team conducts Exit Meeting.

# Exit Meeting with Institution CEO

- Similar to those done in conventional reviews but may be abbreviated in duration.
- The institution CEO should be present for this meeting.
- Team Chair makes introductory remarks and invites PEVs to read their exit statements.

# Exit Meeting with Institution CEO

- Statement includes strengths, deficiencies, weaknesses, concerns, and observations, as necessary.
- Program Audit Form (PAF), which documents the team findings, will be available online in the Accreditation Management System (AMS).

# Program Audit Form (PAF)

- Reflects the shortcomings discerned in any of the criteria as a result of reviewing the Self-Study Report and conducting the on-site evaluation.
  - ✓ Cites specific wording from criterion
  - ✓ Describes observations
  - ✓ Explains the impact of shortcoming

# Important Point!

- All shortcomings identified at the time of the visit will be reflected on the PAF that is available on the AMS.
  - It is possible that a shortcoming identified at one level by the team may be framed at a different level later in the editing process if consistency in application of criteria across institutions demands it.
- After the visit, all communication with the visit team must be through the Team Chair. No direct contact with PEVs.

# PAF Key Terms

- **Compliance** – The program satisfies the applicable criteria.
- **Concern** – A program currently satisfies a criterion, policy, or procedure; however, the **potential exists for the situation to change** such that the criterion, policy, or procedure may not be satisfied.

# PAF Key Terms

- **Weakness** – A program **lacks the strength of compliance** with a criterion, policy, or procedure to ensure that the quality of the program will not be compromised. Therefore, remedial action is required to strengthen compliance with the criterion, policy, or procedure prior to the next evaluation.
- **Deficiency** – **A criterion, policy, or procedure is NOT satisfied.** Therefore, the program is not in compliance with the criteria.





# After the Campus Review

# Post-Review Process

- “7-Day Response” from institution (to clear up errors of fact in the oral exit statement or on the PAF).
- “Draft Statement” prepared by Team Chair; edited by an ANSAC executive committee member, ANSAC chair, and ABET HQ, and sent to institution.
- 30-day “Due Process” response from the institution.
- Revised & edited “Draft Statement” becomes “Final Statement”.
- ANSAC will accept “Supplemental Information” if needed but only if institution has already submitted a “Due Process” response.
- ANSAC takes final accreditation action at the July Commission Meeting.
- ABET sends “Final Statement” and accreditation letter to institution (August or September).

# Opportunity for Evaluation of Team

After the visit the Dean or designee has the opportunity to evaluate the Team Chair and Program Evaluators against the ABET Competency Model.

# It's Not Done Until the Commission Votes

- Institution may submit supplemental material within a reasonable time prior to annual ANSAC meeting.
  - Supplemental material provided after the 30-day due process period should be material that was not available when the due process report was submitted, e.g., end-of-semester project reports, or faculty hires.
  - Communication with your team chair is key to ensuring relevancy.
  - Submit supplemental material by June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Note: 7-Day and Due process responses are uploaded onto the AMS. The Supplemental Information should be sent to Team Chair and ABET HQ.

# Ongoing Resolution of Issues

- Programs are encouraged to solve problems quickly.
  - **This is, in fact, the desired result!**
- Final report considered by the entire Applied and Natural Science Accreditation Commission, which makes final decision on accreditation at their July meeting.
- Only “Not to Accredit” can be appealed.

# Possible Accreditation Actions

**NGR.....Next General Review**

**IR.....Interim Report**

**IV.....Interim Visit**

**SCR.....Show Cause Report**

**SCV.....Show Cause Visit**

**RE.....Report Extended**

**VE.....Visit Extended**

**SE.....Show Cause Extended**

**NA.....Not to Accredit**

# Actions and Durations

## For a General Review

<u>Evaluation</u>		<u>Action</u>		<u>Duration</u>
Any Weak?	Any Def?			[Years]
No	No	NGR	Next General Review	6
Yes	No	IR	Interim Report	2
Yes	No	IV	Interim Visit	2
—	Yes	SC	Show Cause	2

# Actions and Durations

## For an Initial Review

<u>Evaluation</u>		<u>Action</u>		<u>Duration</u>
Any Weak?	Any Def?			[Years]
No	No	NGR	Next General Review	6
Yes	No	IR	Interim Report	2
Yes	No	IV	Interim Visit	2
—	Yes	NA	Not to Accredit	



# Actions and Durations

## For a Focused or Interim Review

<u>Evaluation</u>		<u>Action</u>		<u>Duration</u>
Weak?	Def?			[Years]
No	No	RE	Report Extended	2-4
No	No	VE	Visit Extended	2-4
Yes	No	IR	Interim Report	2
Yes	No	IV	Interim Visit	2
—	Yes	SC	Show Cause	2
—	Yes	SCR	Show Cause Report	2



# Common Findings

# Common Findings

## Criterion 1 Students

- Prerequisites not met.
- Lack of oversight provided in courses that students select.
- Course transfer issues involving students from community college or other institutions into the program.
- No documentation for waivers

# Common Findings

## Criterion 4 Continuous Improvement

- No systematic plan
- A plan but it is not implemented
- No or minimal data collected
- Collected data not assessed
- Results not used to improve program

# Common Findings

## Criterion 6 Faculty

- Faculty member not identified as administratively in charge of the program (applies to some program criteria).
- Inadequate number of faculty to handle the program.
- Lack of documentation to address replacement of faculty due to retirement or to other professional opportunities (new job).
- Issues associated with professional development, external consulting, and professional certification (PE, CIH, CSP, etc.).

# Common Findings

## APPM Issue - Student Displays

- Student displays out of date or not organized.
- Lack of documentation showing written and oral communications.
- Inability to tie-in student materials (coursework) to program educational objectives or student outcomes.

# Planning and Next Steps

- The TCs and PEVs have undergone extensive training developed specially for the 2021-22 review cycle.
- The TC will provide you with explicit and detailed guidance on all critical areas of the review identified in previous slides.
- Communicate early and often with the team to assure the visit will be trouble-free and productive.
- A team of ABET Adjunct Accreditation Directors, HQ Staff, and an IT team will also be available to teams to support virtual visits.
- Finally, if you have questions, reach out to your team chair!