



# Accreditation Criteria and Characteristics

The *Eligibility Criteria for Participating in the Accreditation Process*, the *Guide to the Characteristics of an Accreditable Museum*, and the *Accreditation Commission's Expectations* outline the topics to be covered during an accreditation review and help you

## Analyze the self-study materials

Once you familiarize yourself with the museum's issues, concerns, strengths, and weaknesses, use the guide to shape the agenda and identify questions you should ask and the additional information you'll need.

## Set the agenda

Compare the characteristics to the museum's self-study materials; then consider what you should review and whom you should interview to develop a good understanding of the institution.

## Write the report

Use the report to tell the Accreditation Commission how the plans, policies, and practices described in the self-study are used in the museum's daily operations. A clear description and analysis of each heading and an overall picture of the museum's practices aids the commission's decision-making process.

Two core questions guide every accreditation review:

- 1. How well does the museum achieve its stated mission and goals?**
- 2. How well does the museum's performance meet standards and best practices as they are generally understood in the museum field, as appropriate to its circumstances?**

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**e** Report covers the complete range of operations included within the scope of the review.

The *Guide to the Characteristics of an Accreditable Museum* is composed of the following parts:

**HEADINGS** indicate the areas of operations to cover. Your visit should include a general assessment of operations in each area, comparing it to the

- museum's mission
- museum's resources
- characteristics of an accreditable museum
- standards and best practices in the field

Note any particular successes or deficiencies in each area and their impact on the museum's overall operations.

**Characteristics**, listed under each heading, describe the high standards of operations expected of an accredited museum. In some cases these are supported by an Accreditation Commission Expectation.

**Questions** (indicated by a "•") contain diagnostic queries regarding key strategic issues. They should guide your review.

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The *Accreditation Commission's Expectations* reflect the evolving nature of standards and practices in museums. During its review of over 100 institutions a year, the Commission discusses how current practices in museums relate to the existing eligibility criteria and Characteristics of an Accreditable Museum. These Expectations support and elaborate on the Characteristics of an Accreditable Museum. Periodically, after thorough deliberation, the Commission revises its expectations to stay current with evolving standards. The Commission focuses on presenting desired outcomes rather than on prescribing methods by which these outcomes must be achieved.