

Committee on Accreditation Membership

Overview:

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) is a 16 member committee with 7 members elected by the accredited agencies and 9 members appointed by the Board of Directors. The term for an elected member is three years with re-election allowed indefinitely. The appointed member term is one year with annual re-appointment by the Board allowed indefinitely.

The COA is the operations body of the Pro Board accreditation system. They apply the policies, procedures, and accreditation criteria, developed and approved by the Board, in making collective decisions about the accreditation and re-accreditation of agencies that certify to the NFPA Professional Qualifications standards.

The members of the COA review applications for accreditation and are assigned as members of a two person team to conduct site visits, or on site audits, of the applying agencies. The audit is to ensure compliance with the Pro Board criteria for fair, valid, reliable certification testing that is correlated to the NFPA Professional Qualification standards (such as NFPA 1001).

Economic Considerations:

Serving on the COA is a voluntary position without any associated remuneration. However, other than the time a member commits to the work of the COA, there is no cost to the member or the member's organization. All travel, hotel, meals, and associated expenses are covered by the Pro Board. This is typically done with direct billed fares, and other "out of pocket" member's expenses are covered by submittal of a travel reimbursement request. The turn around after submittal is usually very fast.

Connectivity:

A member of the COA is expected to have web and email access with the ability to receive attachments in email, download files from a web portal or a dropbox folder.

Knowledge Skills and Abilities (KSA):

The COA is a diverse group with various KSAs and education levels including advanced degrees in education. However, no one person's perspective is inclusive of all of the needed perspectives to successfully administer the entire scope of the COA's work. So, your perspective is as important as the longest serving or the person with the most advanced degree on the Committee.

The Pro Board accredits agencies that certify fire service professionals across the entire spectrum of the NFPA Professional Qualification standards including; Firefighter, Fire Officer, Fire Inspector, Fire Investigator, Driver Operator, Hazardous Materials Responders, Rescue Technician, etc. Therefore, broad experience in the fire service as well as knowledge and experience in the field of certification testing and accreditation can be helpful. However, no one member is expected to have all of those KSAs and it is the nature of the broad based sixteen- member COA to pool our KSAs to effectively do the work of the committee.

The ability to adopt the attitude of an accreditor is also very important. As a member of a site visit team we are invited to perform an audit of an agency's program that is a result of people's hard work. We are tasked with looking at it critically to ensure their certification program meets the Pro Board criteria for accreditation. However, our goal is **not** to be critical of the program. Rather it is to identify any deficiencies and then assist the agency in identifying ways that the deficiencies can be corrected.

The ability to do that diplomatically with a comprehensive explanation of the findings and sensitivity to the agency's position is what we seek in a member of the COA.

Duties:

The following are the main duties of a COA member and approximate number of iterations per year and time involved with each iteration:

- Review and comment in writing on accreditation document packages and forward comments to the site team. 4-6/yr @ 2-3 hrs each
- Review documents submitted by agencies for consideration of actions in subsequent COA meetings. 15 – 20/yr @ .5 hrs each
- Attend & participate in COA meetings 3/yr @ 2 days each
- Attend & participate in COA teleconference meetings 3/yr @ 2 hours each
- Attend & participate in site visits as one member of a team of at least two persons. 2-4/yr @ 2-3 days each – as assigned
- Work on subcommittees with several other COA members to do research or a project and report back to the COA. voluntary/varies – as assigned

Training:

A comprehensive new member training will be held at the April COA meeting. In addition, new members will participate as a trainee in one or two site visits before taking on the full responsibilities of that role. Assistance with the first assigned accreditation document review will also be provided.

Travel:

There are three meetings of the COA per year. One is in January at the Pro Board Accreditation Conference. The other two are typically at or near an airport and are usually require a one night stay.

Site visits vary but are typically a travel day and a day and a half with the agency with travel home the afternoon of the second day with the agency.

Benefits to Individual & Organization:

The benefits to the individual are engaging with a talented group of professionals on the COA, expanding one's knowledge and perspective on the fire service especially in the areas of training and certification, doing valued work in a team environment, and working with a wide variety of certification systems and the people who run them.

The benefits to the COA member's organization are the broadening of their member's perspective by membership on the COA, access to the resources (when offered) of the agencies and other COA members, and the prestige associated with having a member appointed to a position on the Pro Board's COA.