VIRTUAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES

SUMMARY DOCUMENT


Unicentro Plaza, 1er Nivel, Local 12-A. Acceso lateral. Ave. 27 de Febrero. Santo Domingo DN, Dominican Republic.
Phone 1 809 623 3295
www.caribengine.com
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INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the COVID19 pandemic of 2020, GCREAS introduced the virtual evaluation modality into its processes, to be followed as a mandatory alternate procedure whenever normal in-person evaluation is not possible, if equivalent emergency circumstances arise in the future. This alternate procedure will be subject to the following general provisions.

I. VIRTUAL EVALUATION: SCOPE AND EXPECTATIONS

1.1 Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic the GCREAS Accreditation Council has determined that, starting in 2020, teams will conduct all program evaluations virtually until the pandemic has officially been declared extinguished by the WHO.

1.2 A virtual evaluation has some noticeable differences from a traditional comprehensive evaluation that includes an on-site visit, in the following aspects:

   a. Planning. There will be no team travel to any on-site location. Teams will handle all planning, organization, and execution virtually.
   b. Information Technology. An agreement will be reached with the Institution on what will be the teleconferencing platform to be used during the virtual evaluation, subject to the requirements set forth in the GCREAS Manual for the Evaluation of Engineering Programs.
   c. Materials. All materials needed for the effective completion and execution of the program evaluation will be provided electronically (e.g. via E-mail, Dropbox, remote access, etc.). Evaluation teams will not request printed/USB/physical formats.
   d. Facility Tours. Programs will provide virtual tours of the facilities or labs.
   e. Interviews. Teams will conduct all interviews of Faculty, Students, and Staff virtually.
   f. Exit Meeting. The Exit Meeting will occur virtually.

II. COVID-19 IMPACT ON PROGRAMS AND THE GCREAS EVALUATION

2.1 In the normal course of a GCREAS evaluation, team members make judgments based on the extent to which a program has provided evidence, throughout the evaluation process, of compliance with the applicable criteria, policies, and procedures.

2.2 We are now in unprecedented and challenging times. Therefore, GCREAS recognizes that programs reviewed during the 2020-2021 Calendar have had to respond to particularly challenging circumstances and must continue to deliver their program of study. However, judgment is still to be based on the evidence a program provides that demonstrates compliance with the criteria.

2.3 Having said that, GCREAS understands and expects the need for programs to temporarily modify program delivery and make short-term accommodations for:
a. Faculty and administrative staff working remotely;
b. Courses transitioning to fully on-line modalities;
c. Laboratories being unavailable;
d. Grading Systems needing to change to pass/fail or some other variation;
e. Students needing to leave campus and continue their coursework in difficult circumstances; and
f. Data being difficult to collect and documentation difficult to produce.

2.4 GCREAS also understands and expects disruptions, such as, in data collection for input in a program’s continuous Improvement processes, and difficulties in completion and documentation of the program’s 2019-2020 continuous Improvement cycle.

2.5 It is critical that team members do not base their judgment solely on the program’s response to the COVID-19 crisis. Team members must judge the program based on compliance with the criteria. Teams must evaluate the program and its processes for compliance with the GREAS criteria as a whole, rather than using just a snapshot in time.

2.6 While maintaining the quality and integrity of an GCREAS evaluation, it is incumbent on all team members to exercise reasonableness.

2.7 The Self-Study Report, the supporting materials, the virtual facility tours, and the virtual interviews with faculty, students, and staff should help you understand the processes used by a program and provide the evidence needed to determine if the criteria have been satisfied.

III. VIRTUAL EVALUATION PLANNING TIMELINE

A. Planning guidelines

3.1 All visits will be virtual, and are nominally scheduled to start in November 2020, and will be carried out in this manner until the COVID-19 pandemic is officially declared over by the WHO. TCs are to immediately negotiate specific dates with institutions that are consistent with these guidelines.

   a. Virtual visits DO NOT need to conform to a standard 3-day visit schedule. TLs can work out an acceptable way to accomplish the objectives of a traditional review, but the “visit” should not extend beyond a one-week period.
   b. For a simultaneous virtual visit, it is necessary to ensure that these are conducted simultaneously,
   c. For a joint virtual visit, it is MANDATORY that teams involved in the review of programs, complete their reviews at the same time.
   e. To ensure a flatter demand of resources to support virtual visits, institutions that require large team visits (e.g. having >2 programs) should be scheduled after January
2021, unless all parties (headquarters, team, institution) agree otherwise. Reserve March 2021 for overflow/contingency requirements.

f. GCREAS will not schedule or conduct virtual visits after the COVID-19 pandemic is officially declared over by the WHO.

B. **Time zone**

3.2 In a virtual visit, attention to time zones becomes more critical as members of the team on the situation could occupy multiple different time zones. To plan a virtual visit, consult the Time Zone World Map at [https://dayspedia.com/time-zone-map/0/](https://dayspedia.com/time-zone-map/0/)

IV. **VIRTUAL VISIT SCHEDULE** (Day 0-n)

A. **Resolving the timing of simultaneous GCREAS virtual visits**

4.1 When more than one program is involved in the virtual review, the team leaders first determine in consultation with the institution, when the GCREAS teams will conduct the virtual visit.

B. **Basic scheduling principles for the virtual visit**

4.2 The goal is to conduct a virtual visit which achieves the same goals as a traditional on-site visit, recognizing that team members and institution representatives may be in different time zones.

4.3 Team members and institution representatives have all committed to the agreed-upon dates for the virtual visit and should be prepared to devote their time to the visit much like they would to a traditional visit. However, when creating the schedule, keep in mind that participants are at home, consequently they may not be able to dedicate entire days at a time to the virtual visit.

4.4 The terms “Day 0,” “Day 1” and “Day 2” refer to the traditional GCREAS on-site visit “Days” and their corresponding activities.

4.5 **Day 0** is traditionally for reviewing display materials and conducted facility tours. For a virtual visit, teams should complete these tasks well before **Day 0**. The display materials should be made available 30 days prior to **Day 0** and the review of the materials completed 14 days prior to **Day 0**.

4.6 **Day 1** meetings may occur over a span or one or more days, depending on the overlap of time zones between the team members and the institution.
4.7 Day 2 activities (working on statements and Exit Meeting) remain at the end of the virtual visit and might also require more than one day.

4.8 Once the schedule has been set, the team should plan to participate in all scheduled activities. While the virtual visit may extend beyond three days (but should not exceed five days), the schedule should not require team members to devote more hours to a Virtual Visit, than they would do to a traditional 3-day visit.

C. Step 1 - determine the length of a virtual visit

4.9 Determine if a three-day (typical timeframe) GCREAS virtual visit will be possible or if it will require additional days. To do this calculation, assume the same number and length of meetings and interviews as scheduled during a traditional on-site visit.

4.10 Typically, meetings occur between the end of the Dean's presentation (or his equivalent) on Day 1 (approximately 9 a.m.) and the end of Day1 (approximately 5 p.m.) with about an hour or two for lunch. This roughly equates to 6 hours of interview time.

4.11 For a visual visit, you will need to factor in additional time in between meetings to allow for breaks or technical “glitches”. Therefore, plan on about 8 hours of interview and transition time per evaluator for your “Day 1” meetings, which may occur over one or more days.

4.12 Determine the number of hours per day that meetings can occur, so participants are engaging in conversations during a reasonable time of day in their respective time zone(s).

4.13 If the overlap of “reasonable” time of day for each of the participants only equals 3 hours, then you will need to plan to extend the virtual visit. Not all PEVs are required to attend all meetings together in-person visits; therefore, individual PEVs can schedule meeting with different groups virtually.

4.14 Accommodate institutions, to the degree possible, and schedule meetings that work best for institutional Representatives, even if that means early or late meetings for the team members.

D. Step 2: Mapping out the schedule for Day 0, Day 1, ... Day n

4.15 Remember the guiding principles is the virtual visit ought to be as close to a traditional on-site visit as possible, though flexibility will be required to accommodate time zones difference.
4.16 Schedule a meeting ahead of time on Zoom or any other agreed-on teleconferencing platform.

1. **Day 0**

4.17 For a traditional on-site visit, Day 0 would typically be a Sunday. For a virtual visit, you will need to schedule some of the typical Day 0 activities in advance.

   a. **Prior to Day 0: team meeting**

4.18 This meeting could occur the morning of the virtual visit or the day/night, beforehand depending on the time zone or the members of the team. The purpose of this meeting is to get a sense of the shortcomings going into Day 0, prior to the official virtual visit.

4.19 Programs need to prepare recorded facility tools, prior to the virtual visit. If the campus is not accessible, or there is a stay-at-home order in place at the time of the virtual visit, PEVs can use the pre-recorded tools to make an initial determination on the program's compliance with Criterion 6. PEVs may request additional information if there are questions regarding the laboratory safety or operability of equipment. In addition to the pre-recorded facility tours, each program should plan to provide a “live” facility tour, if possible, from a cell phone or other device capable of streaming live contact to the PEVs.

   b. **Prior to Day 0: materials review**

4.20 Each program needs to provide access to the display materials no later than 30 days prior to Day 0. Each program needs to make a representative of the program available to answer questions related to the materials. If the materials are not entirely in English, the program needs to provide a translator. Schedule these sessions with program representatives for 2-hour windows of time, to complete the review of the materials no later than 14 days prior to Day 0.

   c. **Day 0: Team meeting**

4.21 After all team members have completed the facility tours and reviewed materials, the team should hold a second meeting to discuss the status of these programs. Depending on time zones, this meeting should have occurred prior to the start of Day 1.
d. **Day 0**: meetings with the Dean and program heads

4.22 For virtual visits communication is critical to success. The Team Leader should plan on meeting with the Dean each day of a virtual visit and program evaluators should meet with the heads of their programs, to keep everyone connected and to make sure there are no surprises.

2. **Day 1**
   
a. **Day 1**: Dean's welcome address, an overview (or equivalent)

4.23 Traditionally this is the Dean's opportunity to address the team and share information about the institution, the college, and the program that the team will be reviewing. Plan to record the session for future references, if the Dean consents.

   b. **Day 1**: Team Chair meetings.

4.24 Schedule meetings with appropriate institutional leadership and institutional units (e.g. Records and Registration, Finance, Career Services, Assessment. etc.) for as long as the “reasonable overlap” in time zones occurs, remembering to allow approximately 10 minutes between meetings, as a buffer in case of technical problems or needed breaks. Recognizing some virtual visits are going to have multiple “Day 1’s” to accommodate time zone differences, continue Team Leader meetings until the duration of meeting times has reached approximately 6 hours of total interview time.

   c. **Day 1**: Program evaluator meetings

4.25 Schedule meetings with the appropriate program individuals and supporting programs (e.g. Chemistry, Physics, Math, Computer Services, the Library, etc.) for as long as the “reasonable overlap” in time zones occurs, remembering to allow approximately 10 minutes between meetings as a buffer in case of technical problems or needed breaks. Again, since some virtual visits are going to have multiple “Day 1’s” continue Program Evaluator meetings until the duration of the meeting times has reached approximately 6 hours of total interview time.

   d. **Day 1**: Meeting with the Dean and program heads.
4.26 If your virtual visit has multiple “Day 1’s” the Team Leader should plan on meeting with the Dean each day and program evaluators should meet with the heads of a program each day, to keep everyone connected and to make sure there are no surprises.

e. **Day 1: Team meeting.**

4.27 At the end of all the Team Leaders and program evaluators meetings, schedule a Day 1 team meeting.

3. **Day 2**

4.28 If your virtual visit has multiple “Day 1’s” to accommodate time zone differences, plan on scheduling typical Day 2 activities at the conclusion of all Day 1 activities. Day 2 might also require multiple days to accommodate time zone differences and the availability of participants.

   a. **Day 2: Answering lingering questions and working on statements.**

4.29 Typically, the team uses the morning of Day 2 to get any new or lingering questions answered and to work on statements. Similarly, on the virtual visit the team and program chairs should reserve time for this purpose.

   b. **Day 2: Team meeting.**

4.30 In preparation for the Informal De-Brief and the Exit Meeting, the team needs to have a working meeting to assess each other's findings and make final refinements to the Exit Statement.

   c. **Day 2: Informal Debrief meeting.**

4.31 Schedule Debrief meetings for the program evaluators to meet with the program chairs, or the Team Chair to meet with the Dean.

   d. **Day 2: Exit meaning.**

4.32 Schedule an exit meeting with University leadership, the Dean, and the GCREAS team to present the Exit Statement.
e. To remember.

(i) The goal is to conduct a virtual visit which achieves the same roles as a traditional on-site visit, without sacrificing the quality and integrity of the review.
(ii) The team should not devote more hours for a virtual visit than they would to a traditional 3-day visit.
(iii) Expect the virtual visit to extend beyond three days.
(iv) The virtual visit should not exceed 5 days.

V. DISPLAY OF SUPPORT MATERIALS

A. GCREAS requirements for support material

5.1 Note that the GCREAS requirement for support material are not different for virtual reviews. The timing and methods of submission, organization, and presentation may be different.

5.2 Materials - Evaluators will review materials that are sufficient to demonstrate that the program is in compliance with the applicable criteria and policies. Much of this information should be incorporated into the Self-Study Report; additional evidence of program compliance may be made available to evaluators prior to and during the visit, using an online storage location. The program should make the following on-site materials available to the team during the visit, without duplicating materials provided in the Self-Study Report.

a. Representative examples of graded student work, including when applicable, major design or capstone projects.

b. Materials addressing the issues arising from the team's review of the Self-Study Report or online institutional materials.

c. Documentation of actions taken by the program after submission of Self-Study Report, as being available for review during the visit.

d. Materials necessary for the program to demonstrate compliance with the criteria and policies.

5.3 Evidence that the program educational objectives (PEOs) stated for each program are based on the needs of the stated program constituencies.

5.4 Evidence of a documented, systematically utilized, and effective process involving constituents, for periodic review of the PEOs stated for each program.
5.5 Evidence of the assessment, evaluation, and attainment of student outcomes (SOs) for each program.

5.6 Evidence of actions taken to improve the program.

5.7 Student Support Services to confirm adequacy of services appropriate to the institution’s mission and PEOs and SOs

5.8 The process for certifying completion of a program and awarding of degree, including visits with persons responsible to ascertain that the process works as reported.

5.9 Note that the GCREAS does not require the display of textbooks. The textbooks can help program evaluators to better understand the rigor and breadth of coverage of a course. Also, the syllabi and the Self-Study Report should list text use and indicate the material the course covers. If necessary, the evaluator can Google a text to check its appropriateness for a course.

B. Other evidence of compliance with policies procedures and criteria

5.10 Note that programs need not duplicate and resubmit documentation and supporting material submitted with the Self-Study Report.

   a. Documentation of meetings at which faculty considered program improvements, based on assessment and evaluation of SOs.
   b. Evidence of actions taken to improve with program based on:
      c. The results of assessment evolution of SOs.
      d. Input from other sources (e.g. faculty or industrial advisors)
      e. Evidence, such as student work, that curricular elements specifically listed in Criterion 4 are covered.

C. Timeline for support materials

5.11 The Team Chair and the institution should discuss and agree upon when of the situation will make the support materials available to the team.

   a. What you doing should be available at least one month prior to the start date of the virtual visit
   b. Emphasize to institutions and PEVs that the team needs display materials early to identify and begin addressing resolving issues prior to the start of the virtual visit. Program evaluators should not plan to use the extra time for a more detailed
examination of the support materials than they would ordinarily have time to do on Day 0 of a traditional on-site visit.

c. Teams AND programs benefit from clearing of communication and support materials issues before the team writes findings during the visit. This is specifically true during reviews where there is no on-site visit. It is truly a win-win.

d. It is difficult for teams and programs to resolve issues if materials are not available and reviewed until the start of the official visit. There will be more than enough to handle on Day 1 without scrambling to get answers to questions or support material.

5.12 Within 14 days from when the institutions make support materials available to the team, the team should review the materials and submit questions or issues to the program for resolution.

5.13 Programs should provide responses prior to the start of the virtual visit. If programs have trouble collecting or making information available, they should discuss this with the team.

D. Methods of making materials available

5.14 Do NOT ask the institution to mail physical materials or media.

   a. Asking the institution to ship physical materials is an unreasonable burden.
   b. Inserting a thumb drive from an external Source can pose risks to the TC/PEV

5.15 The TC should work with institutional representatives to determine where the material support for the virtual review would be located.

   a. Institutional sites: OneDrive, Canvas, other LMS, etc.
   b. Neutral third-party sites: Dropbox, Google drive, etc.

5.16 It is important to design a structure that allows the team to easily find what it needs.

5.17 Test the solution early to ensure that the team can readily access the materials.

5.18 Institutions may provide a sampling of graded student work which demonstrates the breadth and depth of topic coverage.

5.19 In the case of materials to support Criterion 8, teams could consider asking for samples of a material, which is not dissimilar to requesting a sample of transcripts, as we have always done.
a. Review of the Self-Study Report may indicate that the team would want to see documentation to support assessment, evaluation, and continuous Improvement action for 3 or 4 randomly selected student outcomes.

b. If the program can successfully comply, the team may decide to move on. If not, the team could request additional material.

c. This approach will help relieve the burden for programs that do not currently have student work and other documentation available in electronic format.

E. Important considerations for teams in gaining access to electronic materials.

5.20 Early access to support materials is critical for success. Testing to ensure team access is critical in positioning the team to conduct this work.

5.21 Considerations for access to support materials.

a. Resolve security issues.
b. Remember confidentiality is important.
c. Ensure the institution organizes the materials for ease of access and understanding. Evaluators must be able to access all supporting materials effectively and early.
d. Work with institutions to allow team access. Institution security and IT people are sometimes weary of allowing outside access, even though the law allows access for official purposes such as accreditation.

5.22 If the institution stores the materials on a learning management system or some other document storage system, the TC should request training from the institution on accessing materials.

5.23 TC’s should have a specific point of contact at the Institution, for dealing with access and reviews of online support materials, to help resolve problems.

5.24 TC’s should work with the program, if certain materials are not available as originally planned, due to COVID-19 closures (e.g. examples of rated works from Spring 2020)

VIII. VIRTUAL FACILITY TOURS

A. Criterion 6 Requirements (harmonized) & common issues

1. Criteria 6 requirements (harmonized)
5.1 Classrooms, offices, laboratories and associated equipment must be adequate to support attainment of the student outcomes and to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.

5.2 Modern tools, equipment, computing resources, and laboratories appropriate to the program must be available, accessible, and systematically maintained and upgraded to enable students to attain the student outcomes and to support program needs.

5.3 Students must be provided appropriate guidance regarding the use of tools, equipment, computer resources and laboratories available to the program.

5.4 The library services and the computer and information infrastructure must be adequate to support scholarly and professional activities of the students in faculty.

2. Common issues

5.5 Equipment needs upgrade, repair, or maintenance.

5.6 Students do not have access to appropriate modern equipment or tools.

5.7 Inadequacy of a space (e.g. lab, classroom) or its condition.

5.8 Spaces and equipment currently adequate, but reason to anticipate increased enrollment or current budgeting trends may jeopardize this.

5.9 Safety hazards or other laboratory operational issues.

5.10 Out-of-date Library facilities and holdings.

5.11 Issues with the adequacy of available facilities at a remote site.

B. Rationale, timing, & preparation for tours

1. Rationale for tours.

5.12 Programs/institutions describe labs, computing and other facilities in the Self-Study Report.

5.13 The reason for touring facilities is to visually verify the accuracy of a Self-Study Report, the safety of the equipment and work environment, the working condition of equipment, the atmosphere of the learning environment, etc.

5.14 Visual verification of information in the Self-Study Report is still necessary during the virtual visit.

2. Timing of Tours.

5.15 The team typically conducts facility tours on Day 0 of a traditional on-site visit, when few students are around (e.g. Sunday)
a. Touring on Day 0 ensures the team will not disrupt classes and the program can address issues identified prior to the completion of the visit.

b. During a virtual visit, view the facilities (e.g. narrated videos, live on-camera walkthroughs) early, so there is time to revisit labs, as necessary.

c. Institutions should prepare pre-recorded, narrated videos, as soon as they have access to the facilities. Teams can use these to complete at least an initial review prior to what would be Day 0.

d. Teams will prefer to participate in live, on-camera walkthroughs during or slightly before the scheduled review. But, should conditions restrict access to facilities, the teams can fall back on the pre-recorded narrated videos.

3. Preparation for Virtual Tours.

5.16 A virtual tour will require more planning than usual.

5.17 Identify potential shortcomings from the Self-Study Report and determine how you will need to evaluate them.

5.18 Prior to the virtual visit, work with the institution to identify the technology available and ensure the technology provides adequate video resolution and sound.

C. Virtual laboratory tour components.

5.19 Annotated photographs: To help the PEV view and understand the various instruments or equipment used to support the program.

5.20 Narrated video using a smartphone.

   a. No more than 10 minutes/lab and one video/lab.

   b. A walkthrough with two PEVs on the receiving end is representative of the type of narrated video that the team would need.

   c. Include the following:

      (i) Identify the name of the lab and physical location in building/on campus

      (ii) Identify who uses the lab and the courses the lab supports.

      (iii) Provide a general layout and views of the setting of labs

      (iv) Show safety equipment (PPE, eyewash stations, showers, first aid kits, fire blankets, SDS sheets, inspection reports etc.)

      (v) Identify number of instructional experimental setups in the lab.

      (vi) Show instructional equipment and supplies.

      (vii) Provide the number of students working concurrently in the lab or on any single experimental station (capacity)

   d. Live on-camera walkthrough, if feasible or as needed to verify compliance with the criteria.
(i) Consider recording these walkthroughs [See example in Additional Resources]

   e. Correlation with the equipment list from the Shelf-Study Report.

D. **Virtual classroom tour components.**

5.21 Annotated photographs: to help PEV view and understand the various equipment available to support instruction.

5.22 Narrated video using a smartphone. Include the following:

   a. Show bigger and smaller restrooms to give the team a sense for representative types of classrooms.
   b. Show a regular whiteboard and a technology classroom, with associated audio-visual equipment.
   c. Identify the courses that use the classroom.
   d. Provide the capacity of the classroom.
   e. Show typical instructor station.
   f. Pan the classroom to provide a sense of its general condition.

5.23 Live on-camera walkthrough, if feasible or as needed to verify compliance with the criteria.

5.24 Correlation with the description from the Self-Study Report.

F. **Virtual library and computer services tour components.**

5.25 University web-site for Library holdings.

5.26 Annotated photographs.

5.27 Narrated video using a smartphone. Include the following:

   a. Holdings appropriate to support the program the team is reviewing.
   b. Textbooks.
   c. Reference materials for support of UG research and projects (e.g. engineering standards)
   d. Physical or electronic access
   e. Available software as appropriate to the discipline (e.g. analysis/modeling)
   f. Students study rooms and spaces.
   g. Student access.

5.28 Live, on-camera walkthrough, if feasible or as needed to verify compliance with the criteria.

5.29 Correlation with the description from the Self-Study Report.
F. Verifying facility conditions.

5.30 Build the composite picture using:
   b. University web-site.
   c. Annotate photographs.
   d. Narrated video tours.
   e. Live walkthroughs (if feasible)

5.31 Interviews with the following groups can provide a more comprehensive understanding of facilities available for the program.
   a. Students.
   b. Faculty.
   c. Staff.

G. Tips for successful live walkthroughs.

5.32 Develop the pre-recorded videos as early as possible. If campus accessibility becomes a problem as the academic year progresses, you will have addressed this critical component of the review.

5.33 Where possible, use a smartphone (typically has a decent camera) rather than an iPod (awkward to hold) or a video camera (does not integrate with Zoom easily for a live broadcast).

5.34 Charge your phone before the tour. An hour-long video broadcast through Zoom consumes a fair amount of battery power.

5.35 Make sure you use landscape mode, rather than portrait mode for the video. It results in a better and larger image for the team to see.

5.36 Record the tour through the chosen platform, so you can account for any video outages and there is an artifact the team can refer to later, as necessary.

5.37 Have Wi-Fi and LTE services turned on, so the phone has the best internet connectivity possible, to broadcast the tour with minimal degradation of video and audio.

5.38 Start each tour with a view of the signage for the space, so the team knows which space they are seeing and can relate that back to the Self-Study Report.

5.39 Move the camera slowly around the room. Since the frame rate is not particularly high, rapid movement will make it impossible for the team to clearly see what you are trying to show.
5.40 Provide a narrative as you walk through the tour, so that the team knows what you are showing. But, also listen for any comments and feedback from the team, as they may have requests for more details, or a close-up view of equipment, etc.

5.41 Be careful not to put your finger over the camera during the tour. Since it is an extended broadcast your hands will tend to get tired. Change the way you hold the phone to maintain comfort, but be careful not to accidentally obscure the camera.

5.42 Practice a tour with a team member prior to the virtual visit to make sure everything works smoothly.

H. Guidance to program evaluators

5.43 Pin the video in the chosen platform to the tour, so the image you see does not jump from one speaker to another during a discussion. You want the video to always show you the tour.

VI. Information technology for Virtual Evaluations.

A. Connectivity and system requirements.

1. System requirements.

6.1 You should find, in the on-line help facilities for chosen teleconferencing platform a detailed description of each of the requirements needed, and verify/share with the team and the institution those requirements, including:

   a. Bandwidth requirements.
   b. System requirements.
   c. Supported operating systems.
   d. Supported tablets and mobile devices.
   e. Processor and RAM requirements
   f. Supported browsers

2. Connectivity

   a. A wired connection will work better than wireless. Wireless is better than a mobile cellular signal. But, all of these will work.
   b. Enable all applicable modes (wired, wireless and cellular), so there is some redundancy, if signal strength changes with location.

3. Guidance to the institution.

   a. Identify all the spaces the team will use for the virtual visit – individual interviews, group interviews, exit interview, lab tours, other facility tours, etc.
   b. Conduct a walkthrough and test each space to verify reliable and stable connection.
B. **Video conferencing platform**

1. **Platform to choose**

   6.2 GCREAS is flexible to use any videoconferencing platform that is agreed with the Institution, provided that it allows for the following:

   a. Conference duration: 40 minutes for group meetings (at least for 11 meetings)
   b. A total of 100 participants.
   c. Any recording may be done locally on the computer.

   6.3 All TCs must have free access to the videoconferencing platform chosen, with the facilities of extended meeting duration, large number of users, recording in the cloud, etc.

   6.4 All PEVs must also have free access to the chosen videoconferencing platform

   6.5 The steps to follow should include the following

      a. Establish which platform the institution supports and adopt that platform, if secure.
      b. Contact GCREAS headquarters to determine how secure the platform is and, as necessary, for additional technical support with the platform.
      c. Ask the institution to provide access to information, training materials, and tests.
      d. Request institutional support in scheduling all meetings.
      e. The JE and the PEVs may use another platform for communications and work within the team.

2. **Backup plans**

   6.6 Have the chosen platform installed on multiple devices (computer, tablet, smartphone)

   6.7 Have phone numbers of institutional representative / program president / IT support and cell phone numbers for the continuity of operations, in case of power or service outages.

   6.8 The following communication platforms can be used:

      a. Zoom
      b. Teams
      c. Skype
      d. FaceTime.
4. **Security.**

6.9 GCREAS is aware of all the security issues that users of video conferencing platforms have experienced, but understands that several updates have recently improved their safety. In any case, it is recommended to take all possible and reasonable measures to protect virtual evaluations from possible attacks on the integrity and confidentiality of the processes.

6.10 Things you can do for the setting up of meetings to assure security:

   a. Require password.
   b. Use waiting room, which requires the meeting host to let participants in to the meeting.
   c. Disable screen sharing for everyone.
   d. Lock meeting, if needed (perhaps for Exit Meeting) This feature keeps new participants from joining the meeting.
   e. Verify and manage participant list.
   f. Encourage participants to not broadcast meeting details or password.

C. **A/V Hardware, requirements**

1. **For the TCP/PEV**

   6.11 A built-in or external camera is required.

   6.12 Headsets are required as they significantly improve the quality of the conversation.

   6.13 GCREAS will reimburse the TC up to $75 (including shipping and taxes) for a headset and Camera. Please submit itemized receipt for reimbursement.

2. **For meetings**

   6.14 One-on-one meetings, such as interviews with institutional personnel and faculty, are easier to do. All participants will require a camera and are encouraged to use a headset for High Fidelity in communications.

   6.15 Group meetings, such as meetings with student, advisory board, and the Exit Interview, require some though.

      a. Determine if the participants will be on campus.
      b. Establish IT and Hardware requirements.
c. In-person groups where the participants are all together in one room will need a portable, shared microphone, conference phone, or similar device, for audio. They will also need an external speaker, for the TC/PEV to be able to hear.

d. All participants in virtual groups will need cameras, and headsets are preferred.

D. **Training**

6.16 GCREAS headquarters will send out invitations to TCs to share with teams on best practices for remote meetings.

6.17 GCREAS headquarters will schedule training sessions for TCs.

6.18 Headquarters can assist with training the team if necessary.

G. **Testing of connection and platform**

6.19 Schedule and conduct test with:

   a. The team as a whole.
   b. Institutional administrators, dean(s), faculty, staff, and students who will be involved.

G. **Display of supporting materials**

6.20 Display of supporting materials may take the form of documentation of assessment and evaluation, meeting minutes, capstone designs, course materials, etc.

6.21 Do NOT ask institutions to mail physical materials

   a. Asking institutions to ship physical materials is an unreasonable burden.
   b. Inserting a thumb drive from an external source can pose risks to the TC/PEV

6.22 The TC should work with institutional representatives to determine where material supporting the ritual review will be located.

   a. Institutional sites: OneDrive, Canvas, other LMS, etc.
   b. Neutral third-party sites: Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.

6.23 It is important to design a structure that allows the team to easily find what it needs

6.24 Test the solution early to assure individuals outside institution (i.e. the team) can readily access the materials.