

# CAZA

## ACCREDITATION PROCESS GUIDE

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## CAZA ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

### Mission Statement

To establish, maintain and raise standards of operation in the Canadian zoo and aquarium community through a process of self-evaluation, on site inspections and peer review.

### Goals

- Establish standards for CAZA zoos and aquariums.
- To create standards that will be a living document of currently acceptable practices for zoos and aquariums in Canada. To maintain an ongoing review process that will include recommendations on policy development, review and revision.
- Achieve recognition of CAZA accreditation as representing the national industry standard for zoos and aquariums.
- Encourage and assist member institutions to develop superior facilities and enhanced programs.
- To ensure that member institutions continuously strive for superior facilities and enhanced programs.
- Work with non-accredited institutions to communicate the importance of CAZA accreditation and encourage participation by providing whatever professional assistance is available.

### Benefits of Accreditation

**CAZA accreditation is:** A publicly recognized symbol signifying excellence in, and commitment to, collection management, veterinary care, ethics, physical facilities, staffing, conservation, education, safety and security, finance, and supportive bodies. Conversely, denial of accreditation should lead to improvements in identified areas and increased cooperation from supportive bodies.

**Accreditation:** Develops public confidence by attesting in an independent, measured, and documented manner that an institution meets or exceeds current professional standards as established by CAZA, based upon a periodic thorough review and site inspection conducted by zoological experts in operations, animal management, and veterinary medicine.

**Accreditation is important in:** Guiding private and governmental agencies that frequently need expert opinion as a basis for qualitative judgment in connection with contributions, grants, contracts, and other areas

**Other benefits include:** Eligibility for grants (makes institutions eligible for

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consideration for funding and grants from certain foundations, corporations and other sources), cuts red tape (exempts institutions from certain government requirements), allows organizations to learn from other institutions *and* better understand the importance of accreditation through participating in training and subsequent participation as accreditation inspectors, fosters staff and community pride; significantly improves the organizations ability to attract and retain a high quality, professional staff

**Membership in CAZA includes:** Animal exchange (access to specimens from other CAZA accredited facilities for loan and/or breeding); **information** /knowledge exchange (access to top experts and colleagues within the zoological and aquarium professions, for aid as needed and sharing of information); access to the CAZA Ottawa office resources.

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## **POLICIES, RULES, AND GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING**

### **Principles of Accreditation**

- Institutions are accredited based on what exists at the time of the inspection and review. While future plans are of interest to the Commission, evaluations will focus on what exists at the time of the inspection.
  - The accreditation process provides a format for the applicant institution to undertake a rigorous self-examination.
  - Accreditation certifies that an institution is currently meeting professional standards of CAZA.
  - Accreditation is based upon the informed collective judgment of experienced individuals within the profession.
  - The accreditation program is a confidential process.
  - Accreditation and membership processing may occur simultaneously, but accreditation must be achieved before membership services are initiated.
  - The granting of accreditation is for five years, and expires at the end of that period. Institutions must successfully complete the full process again before the end of the five-year period.
  - An accredited institution may be reviewed or inspected at any time within the five-year accreditation period, at the discretion of the Accreditation Commission.
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## CAZA Accreditation Scoring Philosophy

CAZA accreditation inspectors evaluate how an institution rates against written accreditation standards. Scores are awarded as follows:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Assessment against standard</u>
3	Exceptional – exceeds standard
2	Meets the standard
1	Does not achieve standard <u>and</u> it appears deficiency can be rectified within 6 months
0	Does not meet standard and is considered a major issue or one that cannot or will not be resolved in a reasonable period of time.

Scores from each accreditation inspection will be evaluated by the Accreditation Commission against a threshold level established for each of the elements of the inspection form. This threshold level is established based on criteria provided by the CAZA Board of Directors.

The decision to accredit and /or to add any conditions is guided as follows:

Applicants Score	<u>Adjudication- Current Member</u>	<u>Adjudication – New Applicant</u>
< 69.9 % in any element of the inspection form	Loss of accreditation. May reapply in one year	Denial of accreditation. May apply again in one year
70 to 79.9 % in one element of the inspection form.	Accreditation tabled for 6 month period. If not resolved at the end of that time membership is suspended for 6 month period. If not resolved at that time accreditation is removed	Application tabled for 6 month period. If issue is not resolved accreditation is denied
70 to 79.9 % in two elements of the inspection form	Accreditation is suspended for 6 month period. If not resolved at the end of that time accreditation is removed. May reapply in one year	Denial of accreditation. May apply again in one year
70 to 79.9 % in three elements of the inspection form	Loss of accreditation. May reapply in one year	Denial of accreditation. May apply again in one year
80 to 85% in one or more elements of the inspection form.	Accreditation approved, interim inspection required	Accreditation approved, interim inspection required

Score of zero on any question in the form regardless of overall score	Accreditation is suspended for a 6 month period. If not resolved at the end of that time accreditation is removed. May reapply in one year. Members that have scored a 0 and resolved the issue to the point where they have scored a 1 may be subject to a follow up inspection	Denial of accreditation. May apply again in one year
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*\*Please note that all first time accreditation applicants will automatically be subject to an interim inspection regardless of total score against acceptable range.*

**The scoring process is a tool for the Commission. If there are determined to be significant shortcomings in one or several areas, the commission may deny accreditation regardless of the scoring.**

The Commission may take one of the following actions:

**Grant Accreditation:** The Commission will grant accreditation when it is satisfied that the applicant institution meets the requirements of an accredited institution as defined in the adjudication matrix. The Commission may, however, request progress reports on any items it wishes the institution to address, require an interim or special inspection, and revisit the decision as often as necessary to assure itself that the institution continues to meet all conditions and requirements of accreditation during the five-year accreditation period. The cost of any follow up or interim inspections will be borne by the institution.

**Table Accreditation:** The Commission may table an institution's materials if it determines that certain conditions must be met or additional information submitted before the institution can be considered as meeting accreditation standards. A follow-up inspection may be required in some cases as a condition of coming off the table – the cost of that will be borne by the institution.

**Suspend a current members accredited status:** If at the end of the tabling period the Commission believes that the issues that led to the tabling have not been corrected, or if a member failed to meet the 80% threshold in two or more elements of the inspection form or if a member scored a zero on any question in the inspection form, an institution's accredited status will be suspended for a maximum of six (6) months.

**Deny Accreditation:** The Commission will deny accreditation when an institution does not meet the requirements needed to be recognized as an accredited institution at the present time. Submission of a new application and materials will be necessary.

**Appeals:** Termination of an existing member's accredited status is subject to appeal. Denial of accreditation to a non-member is not subject to appeal. A request for appeal must be made in writing to the CAZA Board of Directors within the timeframes defined by the Accreditation Appeal Process. The CAZA Board will decide whether to grant an appeal. If the Board grants an appeal, it will be conducted as defined by the Appeal Process. The determination of this process is final. Institutions whose appeals are denied and who lose their accredited status may reapply one year after the date of the appeal decision. In cases involving a currently accredited institution, loss of accredited status results in loss of CAZA institutional membership.

### **Tabling of an institution's accredited status**

Tabling of an institutions accredited status is a confidential process between the Commission and the member. During the tabling period membership benefits and services will be maintained.

The length of the tabling period is at the discretion of the Commission, with a maximum length of six (6) months.

During the tabling period, the affected member must submit a report to the Commission detailing progress made to address the issues that led to the decision to table the member. Upon receiving this report, the Commission will evaluate whether the Institution has implemented the necessary corrective actions.

### **Suspension of an institutions accredited status**

If at the end of the tabling period the Commission believes that the issues that led to the tabling have not been corrected, or if a member failed to meet the 80% threshold in two or more elements of the inspection form or if a member scored a zero on any question in the inspection form, an institution's accredited status will be suspended for a maximum of six (6) months.

When an institution's membership is suspended the following sanctions will be applied:

- All CAZA institutional members would be notified using the CAZA membership email system of the suspended status of the member stating that the membership was suspended but not the reasons for the action being taken.
- The institution would be required to remove all trademarked CAZA material (e.g., logo) from their facilities, website and literature.
- The institution's name would be removed from the CAZA website and from all public lists of accredited members.
- The institution would lose the right to vote on any question that is brought to that class of membership for resolution.

The affected member shall be given notice of CAZA's intention to suspend its

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accreditation. The notice shall include a clear statement of the deficiencies identified, the length of the suspension period, and a list of clear goals for the member to meet by the end of the suspension period which, if achieved, would prevent termination of accreditation and membership.

Prior to the end of the suspension period, the affected member must submit a report to the Commission detailing progress made to address the issues that led to the decision to suspend the member. Upon receiving this report, the Commission will evaluate whether the Institution has implemented the necessary corrective actions. Failure to submit this report will result in termination of membership.

### **Termination of Membership**

If at the end of the suspension period the Commission believed that the institution had not rectified the issues in question; or if an institution failed to achieve a score of 80% in three or more elements of the inspection form; or if an institution failed to achieve a score of 70% in any element of the inspection form, the accredited status of the member would be revoked resulting in a loss of institutional membership. The affected member shall be given notice of CAZA's intention to terminate its accreditation not fewer than fifteen (15) days before such action is taken

When an institution's membership in CAZA is terminated the following steps would be applied.

- All CAZA institutional members would be notified, using the CAZA membership email system, of the status of the member stating that the membership was terminated.
- The institution's name would be removed from the CAZA website and from all public lists of accredited members.
- The institution would be required to remove the CAZA logo from their website and literature.
- Since accredited status in CAZA may be the basis of an institution being allowed to participate in SSP programs, the AZA national office would be notified of the loss of accredited status. If requested, CAZA would work with the AZA and the institution to assist in the appropriate re-homing of affected SSP animals.
- Staff of the institution who are professional fellow members would have their membership status changed to that of Associates. Any institutional staff serving on the Board of Directors would have to resign their Board position.
- If requested CAZA will assist the institution in the dispersal of the animal collection in a manner consistent with CAZA policies.

In addition, although informing all potential regulators (municipal and provincial governments) of the suspension of the member may not be practicable, regulators will be notified of CAZA's progressive discipline regime and encouraged to consult the CAZA website to determine the accreditation status of any institution.

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If an institution loses their accredited status and subsequently their membership in the association, they must wait for a period of one year prior to re-applying for membership. At that time a full membership application will be required. If the issue that led to the original loss of accreditation and membership has not been resolved, the membership application will be denied until such time as it has been.

### **Accidents Involving Injury or Welfare Issues**

Should an accident occur at an accredited institution involving serious injury or seriously impacting on the welfare of a visitor, staff, or institution animal, the National Office must be contacted by telephone or email within 24 hours. A written report must be submitted to the Accreditation Commission within thirty (30) days explaining what happened and noting what actions are being taken by the institution as a result. The Commission will determine if a special inspection or other action is necessary and will notify the institution in writing once a decision has been made.

Considerations for submitting such reports include:

**Staff Injuries** – site and/or animal-related injury to staff, causing death or significant trauma resulting in extended hospital stay and/or sustained disability.

**Public Injuries** – site and/or animal-related injury to people other than staff, causing death or significant trauma resulting in extended hospital stay and/or sustained disability.

**Animal Incidents** – these include unusual circumstances involving a single animal or group of animals, and/or incidents of mass mortality; escape of a dangerous animal or mass escapes of any species within the zoo or during transport; or death/grievous trauma to individuals of an endangered or other notable species within the zoo or during transport.

### **Basic Definitions**

CAZA defines zoological parks, aquariums and related animal exhibits as humane permanent establishments in Canada which provide recreation, education, conservation and science through the display of the world's flora and fauna. Their animal collections must remain throughout the year and/or from year to year.

Affiliated organizations shall include all societies and organizations that support the aims and objectives of the Association, but do not qualify for institutional membership. Any organization housing wildlife must undergo an inspection process before membership services are initiated. Affiliated organizations enjoy full membership privileges except the right to vote and hold office.

**NOTE:** An institution making application should believe that it meets the definition of a zoological park or aquarium, as provided in this guide. In addition, it should believe that it meets or exceeds current professional standards as outlined in this booklet. The

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Accreditation Commission will not presume to judge, in advance of an on-site inspection, whether an institution does or does not meet these criteria.

The Accreditation Commission consists of five to six members. The Chair of the Commission, who may or may not be a member of the Board of Directors four Professional Fellow members of the Association, supported by National Office staff. The Commission independently reviews all accreditation reports and renders a decision to grant accreditation, table an application or deny accreditation. In the event an institution wishes to appeal the decision of the Commission the CAZA Accreditation Appeal Panel Process will be applied.

### **Summary of the Application Process**

It takes approximately seven months from the time an application is submitted until the Commission holds a hearing and makes its decision. If an application is tabled, it could take up to six additional months before the Commission takes final action.

The application process begins with the submission, by an established deadline, of a completed questionnaire/application. The questionnaire/application is accompanied by a variety of supporting materials and is submitted electronically. An on-site inspection will occur approximately three to seven months after submission of materials. At the conclusion of the inspection, an exit interview will be conducted. The institution will be presented with a list of items they must address to be considered to be in compliance with standards. A written response to all of the items included in the exit interview must be provided to the Accreditation Commission no later than September 7<sup>th</sup>. This written response will largely determine the Commission's decision on accreditation. Failure to provide a written response prior to the deadline will result in the application being tabled or other disciplinary action being taken. The inspection form, the exit interview and the written response are reviewed at the next commission meeting. Following their review, a hearing before the Accreditation Commission will occur at which time the institution's case will be reviewed and final decision on accreditation announced.

### **Basic Information**

**Accredited Applicants Defined.** Accredited applicants are those institutions that are accredited at the time the application is submitted and processed.

**New Applicants Defined.** "New" applicants are those institutions applying for accreditation for the first time, or any institution that is not currently accredited, regardless of whether it has been accredited in the past.

#### **Deadlines:**

1. The Commission will notify the applicant that an accreditation is required in the fall of the year preceding the required inspection.
  2. The applicant must submit the application by March 1 of the year in which they
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are inspected.

3. The Commission will schedule an inspection prior to August 15<sup>th</sup>. A written report addressing all issues raised in the exit interview must be received by the Accreditation Commission no later than September 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Fees:**

The accreditation Filing Fee is \$250.00, and is non-refundable.

**Confidentiality:** Information submitted to the Accreditation Commission by institutions as part of their accreditation application is held in strict confidence, and is made available to the following individuals only: Accreditation Commission, Visiting Committee, CAZA Board and Accreditation Appeal Panel (only in those cases where the commission's decision has been appealed).

The Commission will not disclose the names of any person(s) requesting confidentiality when providing information, verbally or in writing, about the institution before, during, or after the accreditation review, or at any time during the five-year accreditation period. This includes staff, colleagues, and/or members of the public.

### **AZA Accreditation Equivalency**

CAZA recognizes AZA accreditation as being equivalent to CAZA accreditation. Institutions who achieve AZA accreditation do not have to undergo a CAZA accreditation inspection. CAZA requires submission of a letter confirming that accreditation has been received, the filing fee, a copy of the AZA certificate and the full AZA report for review at their fall meeting.

### **First-Time Applicants**

It is advisable for first-time applicants (those institutions that have never gone through the accreditation process before) to be familiar with fundamental CAZA philosophies before applying for accreditation.

In addition, first-time applicants are strongly encouraged to request a mentor prior to making application. This will allow them to obtain an independent assessment of whether the institution is ready to undergo full accreditation review. A mentor will also help identify areas that need additional attention before an inspection takes place.

Some helpful things to remember, for first-time applicants:

- Contact the Chair, Accreditation Commission to discuss the need for a mentor well in advance of beginning the application process.
  - Become familiar with all Accreditation Materials.
  - Follow the instructions for assembling the application as contained in this booklet
  - When completing the application be sure to answer every question and attach
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required items.

- The Chair of the Accreditation Commission, assigns the application to the Chair of the visiting committee.
- Prior to application it is helpful to participate in CAZA through individual membership, attendance at conferences, and reading publications to thoroughly familiarize yourself with fundamental philosophies and policies.
- While future plans are important and are considered in the overall picture, the final decision to grant accreditation will be based on what exists at the time of the inspection and final review.
- Make sure to address all items on the List of Concerns received at the exit interview. Address as many as possible prior to the hearing with the Commission, and be prepared to show timelines, contracts, etc. for those items that are not complete.

All institutions receiving accreditation are expected to maintain accreditation standards throughout the five-year period of accreditation. Members of the public do notify CAZA if problems are observed.

### **Assembling the Application Package**

The completed questionnaire/application and all supporting documents must be submitted to the National Office by the required deadline.

**Questionnaire (Application):** It is essential that the questionnaire be completed in its entirety. Missing attachments, or unanswered or missed questions, will delay processing of the application.

In order to reduce the impact on the environment caused by filing the application and reports in paper format, and to make it easier for the commission and the inspection teams to process the materials, all applications will be submitted and processed electronically. The application form has been structured to allow the insertion of responses directly into the section of the form in which the question is asked. In cases where files are too large to insert and you will be attaching a separate file please indicate so in the body of the application. All separate files must be labeled with the number of the question to which it applies., e.g. -GA1 etc. If more than one file is being submitted that relates to the same question they should be labeled as -GA1- a etc. Once completed the application can be uploaded using the link that will be provided to you by the Accreditation Chair upon filing or submitted to the National Office in some other electronic format.

Applicants are required to include a carefully considered Mission Statement to provide the Commission with a clear understanding of each institution's objectives. The mere statement that an institution was established to display its collection to the general public will not be sufficient. It is also helpful to the Commission to know the reason(s) a new applicant institution is seeking accreditation.

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## Accreditation Processing (Listed in Order of Occurrence)

**Visiting Committee Selection:** The institution's chief executive will be presented with a list of the proposed visiting committee. The chief executive may request alternates for all committee members. Substitution of committee members is subject to the approval of the Commission Chair.

**Assignment of Visiting Committee Chair:** The Accreditation Commission will assign a chair for the visiting committee.

**Scheduling the Inspection:** Once the committee makeup is confirmed, the institution's chief executive will be notified. The inspection will be scheduled shortly thereafter by the Chair of the committee in consultation with the applicant institution's chief executive and the other members of the committee. All inspections normally must be completed no later than August 15<sup>th</sup>. Exceptions must be approved by the Accreditation Commission. Once inspection dates are selected, the institution should provide the Visiting Committee Chair with contact information for accommodations at a nearby hotel. Individual members may then contact the recommended hotel to make reservations, or the institution may choose to make these arrangements for them. That decision is left to the preference of the institution, and the chief executive should inform the Visiting Committee Chair as to the institution's preference at the time the inspection dates are finalized.

## The Inspection

During the inspection, the Visiting Committee is acting on behalf of the Accreditation Commission. Inspectors will usually tour the grounds and facilities as a group, and individually return to areas of particular interest or expertise thereafter. During this time they will speak with staff members, view records, and make note of positive and negative impressions. During the site visit, the committee will also meet with members of the governing authority and key personnel. The full cooperation of the institution's staff will greatly assist the process. Inspections are generally conducted in two to four days.

**Gifts:** Members of the Visiting Committee may not accept any gifts or privileges offered by the institution.

**Inspectors' Expenses:** The applicant institution bears the expenses of the Visiting Committee. Every effort will be made to hold expenses to a reasonable minimum. CAZA reimburses the inspectors directly and, as soon as all inspectors have submitted expense reports, the applicant institution will be invoiced by CAZA for the total amount due. Reimbursable expenses are food, lodging, transportation, parking, postage, and any reasonable expense directly associated with the inspection. Any follow up inspection costs will also be the responsibility of the institution.

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**Media Coverage:** It is inappropriate to schedule media coverage during the inspection

**Interviews:** An opportunity for the Visiting Committee to interview staff *in confidence*, without *supervisors or management present*, should be provided. The Committee will also interview members of the institution's governing authority at some point during the visit.

**Private Work Area.** A dedicated workspace must be made available to the Committee while it is on site. The Visiting Committee members need ample time and space to discuss, in private, various aspects of the institution's operation, review their reports, and to compile the final List of Concerns prior to the exit interview with the chief executive.

**Records:** All records of the institution must be readily available and staff members must be on hand to answer any questions posed by the inspectors.

**Social Events:** While it is helpful for the applicant to arrange for a luncheon or dinner so that the Visiting Committee can meet staff members and members of the governing authority, the Visiting Committee should not be expected to participate in social functions beyond those required for the orderly discharge of its duties and responsibilities.

## Conclusion of Inspection

**Exit Interview.** The inspection shall conclude in an exit interview with the institution's Director or CEO. [NOTE: It is strongly recommended that the institution's Director or CEO be present for the exit interview. However, should unavoidable circumstances dictate, the chief executive may send a designated representative] The chief executive may have a maximum of two staff present at the exit interview however, to encourage a candid discussion, it is preferable for just the chief executive to be present. During the exit interview, the Visiting Committee will discuss the general impressions (positive and negative) formed by the committee during the inspection. The institution's accomplishments will be discussed along with an itemized list of concerns that must be addressed for the institution to be considered in compliance with standards.

**List of Concerns:** During the exit interview, the Committee will provide the chief executive with a written list of any items found to be of concern (this list will also be provided to the Commission as part of the written report). The institution must address each of these concerns in preparing for the hearing before the Commission. An institution should strive to complete as many items on the list of concerns as possible prior to the hearing before the Commission. However, consideration will be given to the amount of time an institution has between the exit interview and the hearing, and the amount of time believed reasonable to address each concern. Items that cannot be

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completed prior to the hearing should be covered by an action plan with estimated completion dates.

**Written Response to the List of Concerns:** The chief executive must submit a written response to each item on the List of Concerns. The response must be submitted to the National Office by September 7<sup>th</sup>. Exceptions to this deadline must be approved by the Accreditation Commission. The response should list each concern, followed by a description of how that concern is being addressed. The response should include documentation where appropriate (photos, copies of contracts, agreements, policies, etc.) and should be as concise as possible. The purpose of the written response is to provide information to the Commission in advance so that, at the hearing, the institution's chief executive need only report on additional progress made since the response was submitted. The response must be submitted electronically.

**Process Evaluation Form:** Each applicant is provided an opportunity to evaluate the overall process and the Visiting Committee's effectiveness immediately after the inspection. The Chair, Accreditation Commission will provide the institution's chief executive with a short evaluation form requesting input regarding the overall process and the performance of the Visiting Committee. Returning the form is optional, but helps the Commission to better evaluate the effectiveness of the overall process. Information contained in the form shall be shared with the Commission and may be shared with the Visiting Committee to assist them in enhancing their performance in future inspections.

**Visiting Committee's Written Report to the Commission:** Following the inspection, the Visiting Committee, under the direction of the Chair, shall prepare a full written report for the Commission. That report, as well as the List of Concerns presented to the institution during the exit interview, and the inspection form will be submitted to the Commission for review and formal action at the institution's scheduled hearing. The report provides insight regarding the Visiting Committee's impression of the facility, its operations, and the care provided the animal collection. Applicant institutions shall receive a copy of the inspection form within 4 weeks of the accreditation hearing.

## Accreditation Hearing

**Preparing For the Hearing:** Prior to the Commission's meeting, the institution's chief executive will be notified regarding the exact date, time, and location of the institution's hearing. The chief executive may bring to the hearing any staff considered pertinent to the anticipated discussion. The chief executive should be prepared to verbally update the Commission on any additional progress made since the written response to the list of concerns was submitted. The collective information from both the written and verbal reports will be considered, along with application materials, the inspection report, and other current information, in determining the outcome. Failure to have taken corrective measures, or to present solid plans for doing so, will affect the outcome of the case.

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**Chief Executive's Attendance at the Hearing:** It is desirable that the institution's chief executive or designate attend the hearing to answer questions and to make any statements desired. If however attendance at the meeting is not possible the interview will be conducted by conference call.

**The Hearing:** Hearings are closed sessions, and are attended by the members of the Accreditation Commission and/or Commission Advisors.

After the hearing, the Commission will resume in private session to deliberate and make a decision. Once a decision is reached, the Commission Chair will inform the institution's chief executive of the outcome. An official letter noting the decision and reiterating points of discussion will be provided following the meeting, and a copy of the inspection form will be sent to the institution within four weeks. (If accreditation is granted, the institution shall receive a certificate acknowledging the institution's accreditation for use in applying for permits, grants, exemptions, etc.).

### **When it's Time to Process Again**

The granting of accreditation is for five years, and expires at the end of that period. Accredited institutions must successfully complete the entire process again before the end of that period to avoid a lapse in accreditation and CAZA membership. **Accredited institutions are expected to keep track of their own expiration dates.** Institutions will be reminded six months in advance of the deadline for submission of materials (twelve months in advance of accreditation expiration), but should not rely on this reminder as a method of tracking an expiration date. Reminders are sent so that institutions can budget the appropriate funds, begin compiling the necessary materials, and review the reports previously submitted to be certain all noted concerns have been addressed. With the reminder from CAZA, each institution will be supplied with a current set of accreditation materials.

### **Long Term Expectations**

Accreditation is mandatory for Institutional membership in CAZA. Similarly, membership in CAZA must be maintained as a condition of accreditation. All institutions must process at least once every five years and are subject to any new or higher standards, policies, guidelines, or resolutions adopted by Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums. Even though an institution may have been accredited previously, there is no guarantee that accreditation will be granted during subsequent inspections. Standards are subject to continuous review and enhancement. Once accredited, an institution is expected to continuously advance its professional operation and constantly meet, or surpass, all standards.

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## General Policies

**CAZA Membership:** Membership in CAZA must be maintained as a condition of accreditation.

**Chief Executive Vacancy:** The “**Chief Executive**” is the highest-ranking employee in charge of the management of an Institutional Member as determined by that Institutional Member. Position titles include, but are not limited to, Chief Executive Officer, Manager, Director, and Executive Director. The chief executive (including any person filling that position on an acting or temporary capacity) of an Institutional Member must qualify for and maintain a Professional Fellow Class membership. If a member institution’s chief executive fails to maintain such membership, or if the position of chief executive becomes vacant, the member institution shall have 60 days from the time of that occurrence to correct this deficiency. This may be achieved by appointing a qualified replacement on an interim basis or permanently filling the position. Failure to do so would be a violation of CAZA’s by-laws and would result in the termination of the institution’s membership.

When a vacancy occurs in the position of chief executive, an accredited institution must notify the Accreditation Commission in writing, and a follow-up letter must be submitted after six months to inform the Accreditation Commission of the status of the search. An accredited institution that is without the services of permanent chief executive for longer than one year may be subject to loss of accreditation and membership.

**Chief Executive Vacancy Occurring During Accreditation Processing:** If the position of chief executive is vacated at any time during processing, processing will be suspended and the current accreditation may be extended for one year to allow for a new chief executive to be appointed and employed for an appropriate period of time prior to submission of materials. A new application and supporting materials may be required when the institution next makes application.

**Change of Governance:** A change in governance refers to a change of the governing authority, such as from a governmental agency to society or vice versa. If a change in governance occurs, a written confirmation from the CEO or chairperson of the new governing authority is required stating their intention to abide by the CAZA Code of Professional Ethics , Charter & Bylaws and Accreditation Standards.

**Change of Location:** In the event of a relocation of an accredited institution, the institution must reprocess for accreditation as soon as the new location is officially open.

**Change of Ownership:** A change in ownership refers to the sale or formal transfer of ownership of an institution. In the event of a change in ownership of an accredited institution, a written statement from the CEO or chairperson of the new ownership group is required stating their intention to abide by the CAZA Code of Professional Ethics, Charter & Bylaws and Accreditation standards.

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**Requesting a variance under the CAZA standards:** Institutions requesting a variance under the CAZA Standards should submit that request in conjunction with their application for accreditation. The request should be in the form of a letter detailing the variance being requested, and including all necessary documentation. The Accreditation Commission will discuss the requested variance with the inspection committee, and they will consider the variance during the actual inspection. The committee will include a separate report and opinion regarding the variance as an attachment to the Visiting Committee Report. The Accreditation Commission will take action on the request at the time of the institution's accreditation hearing. If a variance is granted by the Commission that variance, unless it was for a specific period of time, will be reviewed annually to determine if it should be extended. Notwithstanding the above, if the variance is granted for medical or animal welfare grounds an assessment by a qualified, independent, veterinarian will be required on an annual basis to support the request for an extension of the variance

**Extensions of Accreditation:** Accreditation is for five years. Under special circumstances, extensions of accreditation may be granted to current accreditation. An institution desiring an extension must submit a request in writing to the Accreditation Commission, including a full explanation as to why the extension is being requested, as soon as possible to avoid a lapse in accreditation and CAZA membership. The Commission will review the request, make a determination, and the institution will be notified. (NOTE: *Missing a deadline will not be considered an acceptable reason for extension of accreditation.*)

**Institutions under Construction:** Institutions currently being constructed may apply for accreditation prior to the opening date; however, the on-site inspection will not take place until the institution is officially open to the general public and a permanent, full-time chief executive has been on board for at least six months.

**Institutions within Institutions:** In order to be accredited, a zoological park or aquarium which is a part of a larger institution (such as a university, museum, or botanical garden) must be distinct enough to be separately identified and must adequately fulfill the definition of a zoological park or aquarium as earlier defined. When accreditation is granted in such cases, it will apply only to the zoological park or aquarium concerned and not to the non-zoological activities of the larger organization in fields in which the Association has no expertise.

**Interim and Follow-up Inspections:** The Accreditation Commission or the CAZA Board of Directors may, at their discretion, assign an individual or committee to conduct an interim or follow-up inspection of a tabled institution (as a requirement for coming off the table), or of any accredited institution at any time during the five-year accreditation period. While on site, that individual or committee may, at their discretion, inspect all or portions of the institution.

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**Mentoring Program:** Mentoring is defined as short term support for institutional applicants. In the event that longer term or more in depth support is required, CAZA consultants or other consultants could be contracted on a fee for service basis. The Commission does not conduct ‘pre-accreditation’ inspections but recognizes that there may be a desire on the part of some institutions to have their operations evaluated prior to making application for accreditation. In these cases the institution may contact the Chair of the Accreditation Commission in writing for assistance in assigning a mentor. The mentor is a professional coach in the industry who can guide the institution with regard to preparing for a CAZA accreditation inspection. Any costs incurred by the mentor shall be borne by the applicant institution. It should be noted that having a mentor does not guarantee an institution will be successful in achieving accreditation.

**Multiple Facilities under One Authority:** If two or more institutions are under the same ownership and governing authority, are located adjacent to each other, and public admittance is covered by a single entrance fee, they may apply for accreditation as a single institution. In such cases, the institution(s) should first submit a request in writing for the consideration of the Commission. All facilities are subject to inspection. Should the Commission determine that the institutions do not meet the above criteria, processing as separate facilities will be necessary.

**Six-Month Rule:** An institution may not process for accreditation if it is without a *permanent*, full-time chief executive. That individual must be employed by the institution *for at least six months* before application materials may be submitted. Materials may not be submitted under the leadership of an *Interim* or *Acting* chief executive.

**Temporary Closings:** Institutions temporarily closed to the public will retain their accreditation and their CAZA membership. Should an institution’s cycle of accreditation review fall within the period of temporary closure, an extension must be requested in writing prior to the institution’s regular deadline for submission of accreditation materials. During the period of closure, a written Progress Report must be submitted to the Chair of the Accreditation Commission every six months until such time as the institution has re-opened. Upon re-opening, the institution must submit materials for full accreditation review by the first deadline that falls after re-opening. In the case of institutions closed for less than six (6) months, a waiver may be requested in writing.

**Zoos Containing Aquariums:** The Commission will determine, on a case by case basis, whether aquariums contained within zoological parks are of a sufficient size and nature to require a fourth inspection committee member specializing in aquarium management.. In these cases the institution will be notified of this decision by the Chair, Accreditation Commission when the selection of the Visiting Committee process begins. The same rule shall apply to aquariums with exhibits containing land-based animals.

### **Criteria for Selection of the Visiting Committee**

The institution’s chief executive will be presented with a list of the proposed visiting

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committee. These will be zoo professionals with experience in one or more of three primary categories:

- operations
- curatorial/husbandry (animal management)
- veterinary medicine

The chief executive may request alternates for committee members. Selection of alternate committee members is subject to the approval of the Commission Chair. Once the committee is confirmed, the committee chair will consult with the applicant institution's chief executive and with committee members to determine the dates of the inspection

*[NOTE: exceptions to criteria listed below may be made by the Accreditation Commission.]*

### **Criteria for Service as an Accreditation Inspector**

- Individual membership in CAZA. (veterinarians may be an exception)
- Current employment at an accredited institution
- Minimum of 5 years experience in the profession. (veterinarians may be an exception)
- Relevant professional experience (previous and current position)
- Must attend proscribed Accreditation Training Sessions.
- Must have expertise and experience sufficient to fulfill primary responsibilities in one of the three roles on the inspection committee (Operations, Animal Management, Veterinary)

### **Professional Fellows who have retired; Criteria for service as an accreditation inspector**

Retired Fellows may not serve as Chairs, and must meet the following criteria to participate as inspectors *[exceptions may be made by Accreditation Commission]*:

- Be retired, or in transition, from an accredited institution
- Must be approved by the Accreditation Commission on an annual basis
- Must remain current with CAZA policies and practices
- Must thoroughly review the inspector's handbook and the accreditation standards annually
- Must stay abreast of current practices within the profession
- Must participate in proscribed accreditation training sessions.
- Must have expertise and experience sufficient to fulfill primary responsibilities in one of the three roles on the inspection committee (Operations, Animal Management, Veterinary)

### **Criteria for Selection of Committee Chair**

- Previous participation as member of an inspection committee.
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- Current employment at an accredited institution
- Strong leadership, organizational, and interpersonal skills
- Willingness to organize visit and facilitate discussion with committee members and with staff of the host institution.
- Ability to meet required deadlines and follow instructions for compiling the final report to the Commission.

### **Criteria for Determination of Committee Size**

Size of the institution and complexity of operations (smaller, less complex institutions would likely be assigned a two person committee; larger, very complex institutions would likely be assigned a four person committee)

### **Criteria for Determination of Committee Composition**

- One committee member should be from the institution's previous inspection committee, if available
- Committee members' experience and expertise should parallel the general scope of the institution to be inspected (i.e., an aquarium should have a committee with strong aquatic experience)
- Committees should include at least one member from an institution similar in size and budget to the institution to be inspected.
- **Two Person Committees** should include one member with experience in both operations and animal management, and one with experience in veterinary medicine.
- **Three Person Committees** should include one member with experience in operations, one with experience in husbandry and animal management, and one with experience in veterinary medicine.
- **Four Person Committees** should include one member with experience in operations, one with experience in husbandry and animal management, one with experience in veterinary medicine, and one with experience particularly relevant to the institution being inspected (such as aquatics, elephants etc.)

### **Primary Considerations of the Commission and Visiting Committee**

**Acquisition and Disposition:** The Visiting Committee shall ascertain that the institution's acquisition and disposition policy adheres to CAZA's policy, and that the policy is being followed.

**Collection:** The Visiting Committee shall consider the size *and* nature of the living environments provided the collection, and whether the physical *and* psychological well-being of the collection is being met. The scope of the institution's enrichment program will be closely reviewed. The Visiting Committee will also check to be sure that the institution's collection plan adheres, at minimum, to accreditation requirements.

**Collection Health Care:** An institution's animal health care program must be under the direction of a licensed veterinarian, an appropriate number of persons must be

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employed in the animal health care program, and the extent of professional services provided the collection must be adequate.

**Collection Security:** The security program employed by the applicant institution shall be sufficient to provide appropriate protection to the animal collection. The Commission shall base its judgment with respect to security on the operation, location, size, and physical facilities.

**Conservation and Education:** The scope of the institution's conservation and education programs will be closely reviewed. Consideration is given by the inspectors and the Commission on the size, budget, and other areas affecting these programs.

**Venomous Wildlife:** Institutions maintaining collections of venomous animals must have an appropriate supply of antivenin available and policies/procedures in place for the safe handling of those animals. Alarm systems and emergency procedures will be closely reviewed by the Visiting Committee.

**Finance:** The institution's financial health will be reviewed and considered in terms of meeting the needs of the institution for the five-year period of accreditation. Contingency plans will also be reviewed.

**Master Plans, Policies, & Procedures:** Master plans, written policies, and procedures should be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as necessary, and should be of a quality on par with other accredited institutions of similar size and nature.

**Physical Facilities:** The physical condition of the institution will be closely observed, and maintenance programs reviewed.

**Record Keeping:** The institution's animal record-keeping system is of primary concern to the Accreditation Commission and will be carefully reviewed by the Visiting Committee.

**Safety:** The Visiting Committee shall review the institution's safety programs employed for the protection of its employees, the visiting public, and the animal collection. Inspectors will look for potential safety hazards in both public and restricted areas.

### **Areas of Primary Focus**

Following are the areas of primary focus for the Visiting Committee and the Accreditation Commission when evaluating an institution. Issues are broken into the main section headings covered by the Accreditation Standards.

### **Governance**

The governing authority must be supportive of the institution's decision to abide by the CAZA Code of Ethics, Acquisition & Disposition Policy, Accreditation Standards, and

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Constitution & Bylaws, and must recognize and support the institution's goals and objectives. Among the things we will closely examine are:

- The governing authority's perception of what the chief executive's role is in the decision making process
- The process of hiring and firing personnel
- The lines of authority for acquisition and disposition of animals
- The relationship between the governing authority and the Director
- The levels of control on the part of the governing authority, and whether they are appropriate.
- The governing authority's role in the day-to-day management of the institution, including staff and programs

A support organization must share an institution's goals and objectives, and have a good working relationship with the institution. Among the things we will closely examine are:

- The society representatives' roles at the zoo or aquarium
- The society's support and fund-raising efforts
- How funds are allocated and distributed
- Financial reports and how funds benefit the zoo or aquarium
- The relationship between the society board and staff
- Whether having a support organization might be helpful, if one does not exist

An institution must provide sufficient evidence of its financial stability, including contingency plans, and funding for capital improvements and maintenance. Among the things we will closely examine are:

- Whether it appears the facility will be solvent for the five-year accreditation cycle, including long-term funding, contingency plans, emergency funds, etc.
- Whether budget cuts or other financial problems are anticipated in the future
- Financial records
- The budgeting process, including who has control, how requests originate, the role of the governing authority, what controls are in place on spending, and whether there is an audit process.

**Staff:** A key element of an institution's successful operation is maintaining a staff sufficient in qualification and number. Effective communication, working relationship, and training are also important. Among the things we will closely examine are:

- Job descriptions and the qualifications of staff in those positions
- How familiar staff are with their responsibilities
- Management's relationship with staff, including problems and proposed solutions
- Staff's relationship with management, including problems and proposed solutions

- Keeper's and aquarists roles and responsibilities, and relationship with management, including problems and proposed solutions
- Clarity of lines of authority for staff
- Staff training frequency, appropriateness, detail, etc.
- Staff involvement with managed species programs
- Funding for staff travel and participation in meetings, and which staff members are eligible to participate

**Physical Facilities:** While the Commission is interested in an institution's future plans, *accreditation will be based upon its operations and facilities at the time of inspection and review.* Among the things we will closely examine are:

- Facilities and conditions that exist at the time of the inspection and review
- The public's overall experience [examples: the entrance; parking; the restrooms (cleanliness and convenience); drinking fountains (cleanliness and convenience); refreshment stations (number and convenience); quality of food being sold; benches and rest areas (number and convenience); accessibility compliance; etc.]
- Overall aesthetics of the buildings and grounds
- Adequacy of maintenance
- Condition of exhibits
- Adequacy of furniture in exhibits
- Appropriateness of exhibit groupings
- Adequacy of environmental controls in buildings and holding areas
- Whether the animal facilities meet or exceed all relevant federal and provincial requirements
- Whether all service areas have sufficient space for safety
- Program of appropriate water quality monitoring, including written records
- Whether "CAZA Accredited" signs are displayed at the institution [*currently accredited* institutions only]

**Safety/Security:** The security program employed by an institution should be sufficient to provide appropriate protection for the animal collection, its employees, and the visiting public. Adequacy will be based on the operation, location, size, and physical facilities. Among the things we will closely examine are:

- How often animal escape drills are conducted, and when the most recent drill took place
- Location of escape procedures throughout the institution
- Files on safety incidents over the past five years (i.e., escapes, accidents, injuries, attacks, public problems)
- Whether staff know the process of treating an injury to a visitor, and where the nearest first-aid station is located
- Whether exhibits are safe for the animals, the staff, and the public
- Whether walkways, steps, and other public areas are free of debris and in good

repair

- Whether work areas are free of clutter and are safe work environments for employees
- How flammables and other hazardous solutions are stored
- Whether adequate safety procedures are in place for potentially dangerous animals
- The alarm systems and emergency procedures
- Whether minimum operational safety standards for diving are being met [for institutions using underwater diving with compressed air]
- Whether adequate security is provided for the animal collection both day and night
- Whether incidents of vandalism have occurred, how prevalent the problem is, and how it is being addressed
- Security personnel routines for nightly rounds, emergencies, etc.
- Firearms storage
- Whether the perimeter fence is of sufficient height and construction, and is separate from all exhibit fencing

**Animal Collection:** In developing its accreditation program, CAZA has been especially concerned with the need for assuring the highest standards of animal management and husbandry. It is our belief that this objective is paramount in the operation of collections of living creatures and that good conscience permits no higher priority. Among the things we will closely examine are:

- The Institutional Collection Plan (mandatory 2008)
- All animal facilities, including those that may be located off-site
- The animals used in off-premises programs
- Whether records are kept current
- Records for collections
- Animal diets, food coolers, freezers, etc.
- Whether there are noticeable signs of pests, and pest control solutions being utilized
- Whether staff is aware of the operational policies that relate to collection management.
- Whether the collection is protected from excessive heat and cold
- Whether the collection is provided sufficient shade in outdoor exhibits
- Whether each specimen is maintained in numbers sufficient to meet their social and behavioural needs (display of single specimens should be avoided unless biologically or behaviourally correct for that species or individual)
- Whether the institution is applying it's written enrichment program
- Whether the entire collection is being provided with appropriate enrichment on a regular and frequent basis
- Whether exhibit enclosures are of sufficient size and nature to provide for the psychological and physical well-being of each specimen
- The written policy for animal and public safety in animal contact areas

- Whether the facility's acquisition/disposition policy incorporates, at minimum, all requirements contained in CAZA's Acquisition And Disposition Policy
- Whether acquisition and disposition records are up-to-date
- How verification is made that collection procedures used by the collector do not cause environmental abuse [for institutions utilizing aquatic collectors and dealers]
- How verification is made that commercial collectors are properly permitted to legally collect animals from the wild [for institutions dealing with commercial collectors taking animals from the wild]
- Whether adequate policies and procedures are in place for the safe handling of venomous animals

Institutions Maintaining Elephants: Among the things we will closely examine are:

- Whether there is compliance with the CAZA Elephant Care Manual
- The written elephant management protocol.
- The responsibilities of the Elephant Manager
- Whether continuing education and training are supported by management
- Whether elephant staff are aware of, or involved in, CAZA, AZA, EMA, AAZK or the elephant TAG
- The most recent incident report

Institutions Maintaining Marine Mammals:

- Whether the institution is in compliance with the CCAC Recommendations on the Care of Marine Mammals

**Veterinary Care:** The institution's animal health care program must be under the direction of a licensed veterinarian. Among the things we will closely examine are:

- Whether the institution follows the guidelines of the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians
- Whether medical records are up-to-date
- Whether an adequate number of persons are employed in the animal health care program
- Whether the extent of veterinary services provided the collection is adequate
- Quarantine procedures and their implementation
- Emergency procedures
- Drug protocols including emergency protocols
- Whether veterinary response time is adequate in an emergency
- Whether adequate serum is available
- Whether drugs used comply with government regulations
- Biological Disposal methods and practices
- Whether the role of the veterinarian in the review of diets for the collection is appropriate

**Conservation and Science:** The scope of the institution's participation in conservation programs is important. Consideration will be given to the size, budget, and other areas affecting these programs. Among the things we will closely examine are:

- The number of staff dedicated to conservation programming
- Whether the facility is contributing sufficiently to CAZA conservation programs based upon budget and/or staff size
- Whether there are any Studbooks published by the institution
- Participation in field conservation programs
- Staff attendance at CAZA conferences and animal management programs related meetings, etc.
- Efforts undertaken for energy and natural resource conservation (i.e., recycling, water conservation initiatives, etc.)
- Local and national program related literature
- Level of participation in conservation programs with colleges and universities
- The protocol for evaluating potential research projects
- How research projects are coordinated
- How research is viewed by staff
- Whether research information is published in appropriate journals
- The level of involvement with local and regional academia

**Education:** Education must be a significant element in the mission statement of the institution, and all institutions must have a written education plan that matches current industry standards. Among the things we will closely examine are:

- The number of staff dedicated to education programming
- That one paid staff member is dedicated to education on (at least) a part-time basis
- How the education message is conveyed to the casual visitor
- Publications, brochures, or other printed material
- Classrooms and teaching areas
- The availability of funds allocated for education programs
- Whether exhibit signage contains appropriate information including a call to action in the area of conservation
- The level of education department contact with local schools, colleges, and other academia
- The volunteer, docent, and outreach programs
- The level of outreach programming and whether animals are being used appropriately.
- How graphics are developed and designed

**Other Programs/Activities:** An institution should have a strategic and/or multi-year plan to guide the institution in its development. Among the things we will closely examine are:

- The multi-year plan and whether it is on schedule
  - The strategic plan
  - Other programs being developed or already in place
-