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16. Public Notification and Disclosure

CEA keeps records of the review of each program and institution seeking accreditation. Records are retained according to CEA's records retention policy, which conforms to legal and business requirements. CEA's complete records retention policy, which includes a list of documents retained by CEA and specified timelines for each is available upon request from the CEA office.

16.1. Ownership of site materials

All materials produced by the program or institution at any point during the accreditation process, including, but not limited to, self-study reports, annual reports, interim reports, and responses to reporting requirements are considered to be the property of the site and will not be shared by CEA with any outside entity except as expressly approved by the site or as required by law, including but not limited to federal and state agency regulations, responding to subpoenas, inquiries, court orders, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Sites are free to share their CEA-related materials as they so determine.

16.2. Confidentiality

All commissioners, site reviewers, and CEA staff sign confidentiality agreements stating that any and all information and materials related to sites must be maintained in a confidential manner, maintained in adherence to CEA's records retention and destruction policies, and disclosed only as expressly directed by CEA and in fulfillment of CEA policies. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event information and materials related to sites are disclosed as required by law, such disclosed information and materials may not be deemed confidential.

16.3. Public records

16.3.1. Accreditation criteria

CEA makes publicly available on its website written materials describing each type of accreditation that it grants and the criteria and procedures it uses to determine whether to grant, reaffirm, reinstate, deny, restrict, revoke, or take any other action related to each type of accreditation.

16.3.2. Governance and employees

CEA lists the names and relevant employment affiliation of the members of the Commission, the executive director, and other staff on its website. CEA will provide academic and professional qualifications upon request.

16.3.3. Accredited sites

Accredited sites, along with the current period of accreditation for each, are listed on the CEA directory on the website.

16.4. Upcoming reviews and public comments

At least 30 days before the accreditation decision, CEA informs the public of the date of the next Commission meeting and provides a list of the programs and institutions which will be reviewed. In keeping with U.S. Department of Education regulations, public comments regarding programs and institutions coming up for review are solicited at this time, to be considered by the Commission as part of the review process.

16.5. Public notification of Commission decisions

No later than 30 working days following the accreditation decision, CEA publishes the results of the Commission's accreditation decisions to sites, the public, and appropriate agencies.

16.6. Notifications following grants of accreditation

CEA provides written notice of any grant of accreditation to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency (if any), appropriate accrediting agencies, the professional community, and the public no later than 30 working days following the decision.

16.7. Notifications following probation and adverse actions

Specific notification timelines apply in the following cases:

a. a decision to deny, withdraw, suspend, or terminate accreditation

b. a decision to place an accredited site on probation or show cause

c. a final decision to uphold a decision to deny following an appeal or the expiration of the time for filing of an appeal of actions for which there is a right of appeal

For these types of decisions,

1. no later than 30 working days after it reaches a decision and within one working day of notifying the program or institution, CEA provides written notice to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, the appropriate office at the Department of Homeland Security, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency (if any), accrediting agencies, and the public.
2. within seven working days of receipt, the program or institution must disclose the probation decision to current and prospective students.
3. CEA provides language which must be used by the site when announcing probation actions to current and prospective students. The announcement must be posted visibly on the program or institution's website, provided to current and prospective students, and shall remain posted until the probation action is vacated by CEA.

16.8. Additional notifications following final decisions to deny, withdraw, suspend, or terminate accreditation

Following a final decision to deny, withdraw, suspend, or terminate accreditation (See Section 13.6. Resolution of appeals and notification of decisions), CEA prepares a statement summarizing the reasons for the agency's final determination. This statement is sent to the site, which may make comments that respond to the reasons for the denial, withdrawal, suspension, or termination. The site's responsive comments conclude the exchange and will not constitute a basis for reconsideration of the decision.

No later than 60 days after the final decision, CEA's statement and the site's responsive comments will be forwarded to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, the appropriate office at the Department of Homeland Security, applicable licensing agencies, and to the public through posting on the CEA website. If no response is made, evidence that the affected program or institution has been offered the opportunity to comment will be provided in lieu of a response. CEA reserves the right to redact inflammatory language from the responsive comments before public posting.

16.9. Distance education headcount

CEA provides a report within 30 working days after being notified to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education for any accredited institutions with an increase in distance education learning headcount enrollment of more than 50%.

16.10. Other notifications

For the following decisions, CEA provides written notice within 10 working days to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, the Department of Homeland Security, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, and accrediting agencies.

a. a decision by a program or institution to withdraw voluntarily from accreditation

b. a decision by a program or institution to let its accreditation expire at the end of the period of accreditation

c. a decision by a program or institution to close

16.11. Reporting to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education

On its website, CEA will make continuously available to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) an updated list of accredited programs and institutions. CEA will provide the Secretary with any annual report CEA prepares. It will submit for Department review any proposed changes in CEA's policies, procedures, or accreditation standards that might alter its scope of recognition or compliance with the criteria for recognition. CEA will also provide such information at any time upon request by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

CEA does not accredit institutions that participate in Title IV Higher Education Act programs. However, if CEA has any reason to believe that an institution in which a CEA-accredited program resides is failing to meet its Title IV responsibilities or is engaged in fraud or abuse, CEA will inform the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. CEA will also respond to any request for information from the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education related to an institution's compliance with its Title IV responsibilities.

CEA will notify the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education within 30 days of CEA action as a result of adverse actions by other accrediting agencies and federal or state agencies as discussed in Section 8: Maintaining Accredited Status.

16.12. Reporting to other agencies

16.12.1. Accreditation status

CEA provides directory information about accredited programs and institutions to appropriate agencies upon request, including the name of the accredited program or institution, physical address, term of accreditation, date of next review and whether or not the program or institution is in good standing.

CEA does not share information about sites in the process of seeking accreditation, except as indicated in fraud reporting below.

16.12.2. Possible fraud/serious irregularities

CEA will submit to appropriate state, local and federal authorities, any information indicating that an accredited program or institution, or a program or institution that has applied to CEA for accreditation or is in the process of seeking accreditation, may be engaged in fraud and/or serious irregularities that would jeopardize its ability to achieve or maintain accreditation.

16.12.3. Accreditation status requests

Upon request, CEA makes available to federal agencies, and recognized accrediting and state approval agencies, information about the status of any program or institution and any adverse actions it has taken against an accredited program or institution.

16.13. Other public information

CEA's published materials, including the *CEA Policies and Procedures,* the *CEA Standards for English Language Programs and Institutions*, the current Fee Schedule, and a summary of each Commission meeting are available to the public on the CEA website.