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7. The Accreditation Decision

The Commission makes accreditation decisions. Commissioners consider all materials pertinent to the review, including the review team report following the site visit, the financial report, and the site's response to the review team report. The Commission will also consider adverse actions, if any, by any other agency as well as any public comments received about the site. Accreditation decisions are made based on a site's compliance with the *CEA Standards*. Through structured review, commissioners seek to determine that the mission and educational objectives are being communicated and met, that the program or institution is organized so that its mission and educational objectives are supported by adequate human and fiscal resources, and that there is evidence of sufficient financial stability for the site to carry out its educational objectives and meet financial obligations.

7.1. Types of accreditation decisions

The Commission may make a decision to accredit or to not accredit. Possible accreditation actions are listed below.

a. Grant five-year initial accreditation to a program or institution that is in compliance with the *CEA Standards*.

b. Grant 10-year reaccreditation to a program or institution that is in compliance with the *CEA Standards*.

c. Grant one-year initial accreditation to a program or institution that substantially meets the *CEA Standards* but needs to address minor standards-related deficiencies. The program or institution agrees to a proviso that it must comply with the requirements of the Commission by the end of the grant of one-year initial accreditation. A Commission decision to accredit for a one-year rather than a five-year period may not be appealed.

d. Grant four-year continued initial accreditation to a program or institution that has received one-year initial accreditation and has complied with the requirements issued by the Commission.

e. Grant one-year reaccreditation to a program or institution that has applied for reaccreditation and substantially meets the *CEA Standards* but needs to address minor standards-related deficiencies. The program or institution agrees to a proviso that it must comply with the requirements of the Commission by the end of the grant of one-year reaccreditation. A Commission decision to reaccredit for a one-year rather than a 10-year period may not be appealed.

f. Grant nine-year continued reaccreditation to a program or institution that has received one-year reaccreditation and has complied with the requirements issued by the Commission.

g. Grant initial accreditation of up to 20 months to an additional branch that has met CEA's requirements. The exact period of initial accreditation will be specified in the Commission's letter to the branch.

h. Grant continued initial accreditation to an additional branch location for a term to total five years from the date of the grant of the initial accreditation. The exact period of continued initial accreditation will be specified in the Commission's letter to the branch.

i. Defer a decision pending receipt of additional information required by the Commission in order to make a fully-informed decision. A deferral may be granted only until the next meeting of the Commission and may include a requirement for a special site visit. Deferral may not be used to give a program or institution an opportunity to come into compliance with specific standards. For sites pursuing initial accreditation, the unaccredited status remains until the Commission decision. For sites undergoing reaccreditation or continued initial accreditation, the site's accredited status remains in place during the period of deferral. The period for a grant of accreditation following a deferral begins from the time the Commission makes the new accreditation decision.

j. Deny initial accreditation or reaccreditation to a program or institution that has not substantially met the standards. A program or institution that has been denied accreditation may appeal the decision or reapply for accreditation. A program or institution that has been denied accreditation cannot again be considered by the Commission for an accreditation decision for at least one year after denial.

k. Deny four-year continued initial or nine-year continued reaccreditation to a program or institution that has not met the requirements of one-year accreditation. A program or institution that has been denied accreditation may appeal the decision or reapply for accreditation. A program or institution that has been denied accreditation cannot again be considered by the Commission for an accreditation decision for at least one year after denial.

l. Deny continued accreditation to an additional branch which had been granted up to 20-month initial accreditation. A program or institution that has been denied accreditation may appeal the decision or reapply for accreditation. A program or institution that has been denied accreditation cannot again be considered by the Commission for an accreditation decision for at least one year after denial.

m. Withdraw accreditation from a program or institution that

    i. no longer meets eligibility requirements due to pending action by a state agency to withdraw or terminate an institution's legal authority to operate

    ii. no longer meets eligibility requirements due to changes in the program or institution structure, ownership, institutional accreditation as applicable, or other condition

    iii. fails to meet the conditions of advisory actions including but not limited to advisory actions resulting from:

1. failure to be in compliance with the *CEA Standards* through failure to report a substantive change,
2. failure to be in compliance with the *CEA Standards* following an investigation of a complaint,
3. failure to be in compliance with the *CEA Standards* through failure to respond adequately to accreditation reporting requirements,
4. failure to demonstrate continued compliance with the *CEA Standards* following submission of the interim report.

Advisory actions leading to withdrawal are discussed in Section 12: Advisory and Adverse Actions.

7.2. Policies specific to programmatic accreditation

For any grant of programmatic accreditation for which a site has sought accreditation of programs in addition to the ELP or accreditation of the unit within which the ELP resides, the following policies apply:

a. For an English language unit to be accredited, the English language program and each regularly offered program within the unit must undergo review.

b. For additional regularly offered, non-credit programs to be accredited, the English language program must receive accreditation.

c. The English language program may be granted accreditation and one (or more) of the individual programs may be denied accreditation.

7.3. Procedures for decisions to grant accreditation

a. The program or institution will receive a written explanation of the Commission's accreditation decision within 30 days. A discussion of any condition(s) related to standards will accompany the report.

b. For sites granted one-year initial accreditation or one-year reaccreditation, the Commission's letter will include reporting requirements that must be met within one year of the accreditation decision. The site's one-year report responding to the Commission's letter, which will include a response to reporting requirements and any supporting documentation, is due two months prior to the one-year anniversary of accreditation. The Commission will review the report and make a decision to grant continued accreditation, defer a decision, or deny continued accreditation. If the site fails to provide a required one-year report by the deadline, accreditation will expire at the end of the one-year grant of accreditation.

c. For sites granted five-year accreditation, continued initial accreditation of an additional branch, or 10-year reaccreditation, the letter may or may not include reporting requirements. The site's report, which will include a response to reporting requirements and any supporting documentation, is typically due two months prior to the one-year anniversary of accreditation. If reporting requirements are issued, the Standards Compliance Committee (SCC) is charged with the review of such reports.

d. For sites granted continued accreditation beyond one year, the Commission may require continued follow-up reporting. Such reports will have specified due dates not to exceed 12 months. The Standards Compliance Committee (SCC) is charged with the review of such reports.

7.4. Procedures for decisions to deny or withdraw accreditation

a. The program or institution will receive a written explanation of the Commission's accreditation decision within 30 days.

b. In the event of denial of accreditation or withdrawal of accreditation by CEA, the letter will state the reasons for the denial or withdrawal and the fact that the site may appeal the decision, and will state procedures by which the site may make a responsive comment. A program or institution may appeal an adverse determination consistent with CEA appeals procedures set forth in Section 13: Appeals.

    i. A decision to withdraw accreditation is the culmination of a process of warning, probation, and show cause actions. See Section 12: Advisory and Adverse Actions for details.

    ii. If a Commission decision to deny or withdraw accreditation is based solely on failure to meet financial standards, the program or institution has a one-time only opportunity to submit significant financial information that was not available for review at the time of the decision and that may materially affect the decision. Any determination by CEA upon review of the new financial information is not separately appealable by the program or institution.

7.5. Early reaccreditation decisions

In cases where the site comes before the Commission for a reaccreditation decision before the end of the previous grant of accreditation, the end date of the previous grant of accreditation is rescinded and replaced with the date the Commission makes the reaccreditation decision.

a. If reaccreditation is granted, the period of reaccreditation commences on the date the Commission makes the reaccreditation decision.

b. If reaccreditation is denied, the denial decision is effective on the date the Commission makes the decision; appeal and other processes available to the site following a denial conform to CEA's policies.

7.6. Expiration of a grant of accreditation, voluntary withdrawal from accredited status, or closure

a. An accredited program or institution may choose to let its accredited status expire at the end of the term of accreditation. The site must inform CEA in writing of the decision to let accreditation expire. The program or institution is responsible for any fees due through the end of the term of accreditation. Regardless of whether or not CEA is formally notified, accreditation will automatically expire at the end of the current grant period if a site

   i. fails to provide a required one-year report by the established deadline.

   ii. fails to complete the reaccreditation process, including filing a reaccreditation application and attending an accreditation workshop by the established deadline.

   iii. if an additional branch, fails to complete the process for continued initial accreditation.

b. An accredited program or institution may choose to voluntarily withdraw from accredited status. The site must inform CEA in writing, state the reason for withdrawal, and state the date of withdrawal. The program or institution is responsible for any fees due through the specified date.

c. An accredited program or institution which closes or changes so as to no longer be eligible must inform CEA in writing of the last date of operation. The program or institution is responsible for any fees due through the specified date.

d. If an accredited program or institution ceases operations without notice to CEA, upon learning of the closure the Executive Committee will promptly investigate to determine the facts and conditions. Following investigation, the Executive Committee will authorize immediate withdrawal of accreditation and may take other actions related to CEA's policies and interests. CEA will promptly notify the public and appropriate agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security if applicable, of the withdrawal of CEA accreditation and the reasons for doing so. The Commission will vote to acknowledge the withdrawal of accreditation at the next available Commission meeting.

e. With any of the actions above, if students are affected by the action, the site must provide evidence of a teach-out or transfer plan for current students, a refund policy, or other means of meeting the site's obligations to affected students.

f. Upon expiration of the term of accreditation or the site's notification to CEA of its voluntary withdrawal or closure, the Commission, or the Executive Committee if a Commission meeting is not imminent, will vote to acknowledge the expiration or accept the voluntary withdrawal or closure.

g. For both programs and institutions, CEA will notify the public and appropriate agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, of expiration, voluntary withdrawal action, or closure within 10 working days. CEA will amend public references to CEA accreditation of the site and will require the site to remove references to CEA accreditation in its public information within 10 working days.

7.7. Announcement of accreditation decisions

CEA provides specific language to announce and publish the grant of accreditation (see Section 19: Constituent Council Governing Rules).