

## **Chapter One: Responsibilities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing And the Committee on Accreditation**

### **Introduction**

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) is responsible for ensuring that educators for California’s public schools – from preschool through high school and adult education – are prepared in rigorous, high quality programs. The major purpose of the agency is to serve as a state standards board for educator preparation for the California public schools, the licensing and credentialing of professional educators in California, the enforcement of professional practices, and the discipline of California credential holders. The Commission works in tandem with its appointed committee of professional educators, the Committee on Accreditation (COA), to implement California’s accreditation system for educator preparation. Each of these bodies has specific responsibilities outlined in California law (California Ed Code sections 44000-44393), the California Code of Regulations, Title 5 CCR Sections 80000-80690.1, and further delineated in the *Accreditation Framework* (Attachment G).

The Commission establishes policy related to accreditation and the COA implements the policies. The statutes that distinguish the roles and responsibilities of these two bodies are found in California Education Code, Sections 44370 through 44374. These provisions, further, govern the *Accreditation Framework* and guided the development of this *Handbook*.

This chapter identifies the specific duties of each body that relate directly to the professional accreditation process. Institutions that prepare educators or that wish to add new credential programs under the *Accreditation Framework* should read this chapter.

### **I. Responsibilities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing**

The following list identifies duties and responsibilities of the Commission that are related to the initial approval and accreditation of educator preparation programs.

**A. Adoption and Modification of the *Accreditation Framework*.** The Commission has the authority and responsibility to adopt an *Accreditation Framework*, “which sets forth the policies of the Commission regarding the accreditation of educator preparation in California” (Education Code Section 44372(a)). The *Accreditation Framework* can be found [here](#). The Commission may modify the *Framework* in accordance with Section 8 of the *Framework*.

**B. Establishing and Modifying Standards for Educator Preparation.** Pursuant to Education Code Section 44372(b), the Commission has the authority and responsibility to establish and modify standards for educator preparation in California.

**C. Providing Initial Approval of Institutions.** In accordance with Education Code Sections 44227(a) and 44372(c) and Section Two of the *Framework*, the Commission determines the eligibility of an institution that applies for initial accreditation and that has not previously prepared educators for state certification in California. The Commission approves institutions that meet its adopted criteria. Institutional approval by the Commission establishes the eligibility of an institution to submit proposals for specific programs to the COA.

**D. Hearing and Resolving Accreditation Appeals.** The Commission hears appeals of accreditation decisions, which must be based on evidence that accreditation procedures or decisions were “arbitrary, capricious, unfair, or contrary to the policies of the Commission or the procedural guidelines of the COA” (Education Code Section 44374(e)). The Commission resolves each appeal, and the Executive Director communicates the Commission’s decision to the COA, the accreditation team, and the affected institution. The Appeal Procedures are found in Chapter Seven of this *Handbook*.

**E. Appointments to the Committee on Accreditation.** Pursuant to Education Code 44372(d) and Section 2 of the *Framework*, the Commission appoints members and alternate members of the COA for specific terms. The Commission selects the COA members and alternate members from nominees submitted by the Nominating Panel. The Commission ensures the COA is professionally distinguished and balanced in its composition but does not appoint members to represent particular institutions, organizations, or constituencies.

**F. Addressing Issues and Referring Concerns Related to Accreditation.** The Commission considers issues and concerns related to accreditation. Issues may be identified by Commission members, the COA, postsecondary institutions, the Commission's staff, or other concerned individuals or organizations. At its discretion, the Commission may refer accreditation issues and concerns to the COA for examination and response.

**G. Reviewing Annual Reports by the Committee on Accreditation.** The Commission reviews Annual Accreditation Reports submitted by the COA. Annual Accreditation Reports include information about the accreditation process, findings from accreditation site visits, and the outcome of COA deliberations.

**H. Annual Allocation of Resources for Accreditation Operations.** The Commission annually allocates resources for accreditation operations to implement the Accreditation Framework. Consistent with the Commission’s general practice, staff assignments to accreditation operations are made by the Executive Director, in accordance with state budgets, laws, and regulations.

Pursuant to Education Code 44374.5, the Commission implements a fair and consistent fee policy that is reviewed periodically. The Annual Accreditation fee is composed of two parts: 1) an institution fee based on the average number of recommendations over the past 3 years and 2) a program fee based on the number and type of Commission-approved educator preparation programs offered by the institution.

There is also a [Cost Recovery Fee Plan](#) for selected accreditation activities. These fees include an Initial Institutional Approval fee, an Initial Program fee that is dependent on the number of standards in the program, late program submission fees, and fees for Full Program reviews when the Program Review documents were not complete.

**I. Jointly Sponsoring an External Evaluation of Accreditation Policies and Practices.** The Commission shares responsibility with the COA for the design and implementation of a comprehensive evaluation of the accreditation process, including policies, data reporting requirements, program review, site visits, training of Board of Institutional Review (BIR) members, and selection of an external evaluator to conduct the evaluation, pursuant to Section 8 of the *Framework*.

## **II. Responsibilities of the Committee on Accreditation**

The following list identifies duties and responsibilities of the COA that are related to the initial approval and continuing accreditation of educator preparation programs.

**A. Determining Comparability of Standards.** In accordance with Section Three of the *Framework*, the COA determines whether standards submitted by institutions under Option Two (National or Professional Program Standards) provide a level of program quality comparable to standards adopted by the Commission under Option One (California Program Standards). If the COA determines that the proposed standards are collectively comparable in breadth and depth to the Commission-adopted standards, the COA may approve the proposed standards as program standards in California.

**B. Providing Initial Accreditation of Programs.** The COA reviews proposals submitted by institutions (Initial Program Review-IPR) that have been determined eligible by the Commission. In accordance with Section Three of the *Framework*, new programs of educator preparation may be submitted under Options One (California Program Standards), Two (National or Professional Program Standards), or Three (Experimental Program Standards). If the COA determines that a program meets all applicable standards, the COA grants initial accreditation to the program.

**C. Continuing Accreditation Decisions.** After reviewing the recommendations of accreditation teams, the COA makes decisions about the continuing accreditation of educator preparation institutions and programs, consistent with Section Six of the *Framework*. Pertaining to each institution, the COA makes one of three decisions: Accreditation, Accreditation with Stipulations, or Denial of Accreditation.

**D. Developing Accreditation Procedures.** Consistent with the terms of Section Six, the COA recommends appropriate guidelines for self-study reports and other accreditation materials and exhibits to be prepared by institutions. The COA also adopts guidelines for accreditation team reports, which emphasize the use of narrative, qualitative explanations of team recommendations. The COA may provide additional guidance to institutions, teams, and the Executive Director regarding accreditation visit procedures. The procedural guidelines of the COA are published by the Commission in this *Accreditation Handbook*.

**E. Monitoring the Accreditation System.** The COA monitors the performance of accreditation teams and oversees other activities associated with the accreditation system.

**F. Submitting Annual Reports, Recommendations and Responses to the Commission.** Each year, the COA presents its *Annual Accreditation Report* to the Commission. The *Annual Accreditation Report* includes standard information about the dimensions and results of the accreditation process. The COA also advises the Commission about policy changes to improve the quality and integrity of the accreditation process.

**G. Holding Meetings in Public Sessions.** The COA conducts its business and makes its decisions in meetings that are open to the public, except as provided by statute.

**H. Jointly Sponsoring an External Evaluation of Accreditation Policies and Practices.** The COA shares responsibility with the Commission for the design and implementation of a comprehensive evaluation of the accreditation process, including policies, data reporting, program review, site visits, training of Board of Institutional Review (BIR) members, and the selection of an external evaluator to conduct an evaluation, pursuant to Section 8 of the *Framework*.