Chapter Eight
Accreditation Decisions: Options and Implications

Introduction
This chapter presents the accreditation decision options that are available for accreditation teams to recommend to the COA and for the COA to render. In addition, this chapter explains the implications of each of the possible accreditation decisions. This chapter is intended for use by institutions, team members, team leads, and the COA.

I. Accreditation Decision Options
At the conclusion of the site visit, the accreditation review team makes a recommendation about the accreditation status of the institution. This recommendation is included in the team report and must be supported by the team’s findings on standards. The COA, after reviewing the team report and hearing from the team lead, consultant, and institutional representatives, adopts the team report and renders an accreditation decision. The possible options for accreditation decisions are as follows:

- Accreditation
- Accreditation with Stipulations
- Accreditation with Major Stipulations
- Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations
- Denial of Accreditation

Below are definitions for each of the accreditation decisions followed by the operational implications of each of the options. When the COA reviews a team’s accreditation report, they will consider two types of standards findings identified by the team. The first will be shown as Common Standards or program standards that are “not met” or that are “met with concerns.” The second will be shown as statements (“stipulations”) that describe what an institution must do to meet a standard that is substantially “not met” and that, because of its significant impact on the quality of candidate preparation, prevents the institution from being recommended for accreditation. The stipulations are conditions that must be satisfied before the COA can consider granting an accreditation decision of Accreditation. Table 1 identifies the possible follow-up activities that may be required in the COA’s accreditation decision.

Accreditation
The recommendation of Accreditation means that the accreditation team verified that the institution and its programs, when judged as a whole, met or exceeded the CTC’s adopted Common Standards and program standards applicable to the institution. The institution (including its credential programs) is judged to be effective in preparing educators and is demonstrating overall quality in its programs and general operations. The status of Accreditation can be achieved even if one or two common standards were identified as “met with concerns” or one or more areas of concern were identified within its credential programs.
Operational Implications

An institution that receives the status of Accreditation must:

- Participate in the accreditation activities required of its assigned cohort, which are Biennial Reports, Program Assessment, and Site Visits (see Table 1).
- Respond to all concerns identified in the adopted accreditation team report or specified in the COA action. This follow-up may take place in the Biennial Report or in a seventh year follow-up report, as determined by the COA.
- Abide by all CTC and state regulations.

An institution that receives the status of Accreditation may:

- Continue all accredited credential programs and propose new credential programs to the COA at any time.
- Indicate in all publications and documents that it is accredited by the CTC.

The COA will note the accreditation status in the Committee’s annual report to the CTC. The report of the accreditation team and the action taken by the COA will be posted on the CTC’s website.

Table 1: Requirements the COA may impose as follow-up activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Actions Following an Accreditation Site Visit</th>
<th>Accreditation (✓ Indicates a possible follow-up activity)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No required follow-up beyond the routine accreditation activities, i.e. Biennial Reports and Program Assessment.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Seventh Year Follow-up Report addressing all identified area(s) of concern and/or questions.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Seventh Year Follow-up Report addressing all stipulation(s), identified area(s) of concern and/or questions.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Institution Actions Following an Accreditation Site Visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Accreditation</th>
<th>with Stipulations</th>
<th>with Major Stipulations</th>
<th>with Probationary Stipulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide addendum to Biennial Report and Program Assessment documents addressing all stipulation(s), identified area(s) of concern and/or questions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit periodic Follow-up Reports (30 days, 90 days, as determined by the COA) to ensure that appropriate action is being taken in a timely manner.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-visit by CTC staff and team lead.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-visit by CTC staff, team lead, and 1 or more team members.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution notifies all current and prospective candidates of the institution’s accreditation status.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution is prohibited from accepting new candidates in one or more programs until the stipulations have been removed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution is prohibited from proposing new programs until the stipulations have been removed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accreditation: Accreditation with Stipulations

The recommendation of Accreditation with Stipulations means that the accreditation team, at the site visit, verified that the institution and some of its programs have “not met” or “met with concerns” some common standards and/or program standards, applicable to the institution, and that action is required to address these deficiencies. The institution is judged to be generally effective in preparing educators and in its general operations apart from the identified areas of concern. The concerns or problems identified are confined to specific issues that minimally impact the quality of the program received by candidates or completers.

Operational Implications

An institution that receives the status of Accreditation with Stipulations must:

- Participate in the accreditation activities required of its assigned cohort, which are Biennial Reports, Program Assessment, and Site Visits.
- Respond to all concerns identified in the adopted accreditation team report and all stipulations specified in the COA action, and submit, within one year, a written seventh year report with appropriate documentation that demonstrates how all concerns and stipulations have been addressed.
- Abide by all CTC and state regulations.

An institution that receives the accreditation status of Accreditation with Stipulations may:

- Continue all accredited credential programs and propose new credential programs to the COA at any time.
- Indicate in all publications and documents that it is accredited by the CTC.

The COA will note the accreditation status in the Committee’s annual report to the CTC. The report of the accreditation team and the action taken by the COA will be posted on the CTC’s website.

Removal of Stipulations

The institution must respond to all concerns identified in the adopted accreditation team report and all stipulations placed on it by action of the COA. This is done by preparing a written seventh year report for submission to the assigned state consultant within one calendar year of the visit. The seventh year report must contain documentation demonstrating that all concerns and stipulations have been addressed. Typically, the state consultant, in consultation with the team lead assigned to the original visit, will review the report, ensure that all instances of deficiencies have been addressed in the institution’s response, analyze progress made by the institution in meeting any standards that do not appear to be fully addressed in the report, and make a recommendation to the COA regarding the removal of the stipulations. In rare instances, the COA may require a revisit by the state consultant or the team lead.

The COA may act to remove the stipulations and change the status of the institution from Accreditation with Stipulations to Accreditation.
The COA will note the change in accreditation status in the Committee’s annual report to the CTC. The report and the action taken by the COA will be posted on the CTC’s website.

**Accreditation with Major Stipulations**

The recommendation of *Accreditation with Major Stipulations* means that the accreditation team concluded that the institution and some of its programs have “not met” or “met with concerns” multiple standards in the common standards, and/or program standards applicable to the institution, or that the team found areas of concern (such as matters of curriculum, field experience, or candidate competence) that impact, or are likely to impact, the preparation of credential program candidates. The team identified issues that impinge on the ability of the institution to deliver high quality, effective programs. The review team may have found that some of the institution’s credential programs are of high quality and are effective in preparing educators or that the general operations of the institution are adequate, but the team concluded that these areas of quality do not outweigh the identified areas of concern.

**Operational Implications**

An institution receiving a recommendation of *Accreditation with Major Stipulations* must:

- Participate in the accreditation activities as required of its assigned cohort, which are Biennial Reports, Program Assessment, and Site Visits.
- Respond to all concerns identified in the adopted accreditation team report and all stipulations specified in the COA action, and submit, within one year, a written seventh year report with appropriate documentation that demonstrates how all concerns and stipulations have been addressed.
- Prepare for a focused revisit by the team lead and consultant and, as required, members of the accreditation team.
- Work with the state consultant to plan the revisit that will address the concerns contained in the adopted team report and the stipulations placed upon it by the COA action.
- *Depending on the particular stipulations placed on the institution, the COA will determine whether new programs may be proposed to the COA.*
- Abide by all CTC and state regulations.

An institution receiving a recommendation of *Accreditation with Major Stipulations* may:

- Continue all accredited credential programs.
- Indicate in all publications and documents that it is accredited by the CTC.
- Be required to notify students of its accreditation status. The COA will determine whether student notification is required, and if so, whether all students or only students in particular credential programs are to be notified.
- Submit periodic reports if required by the COA accreditation action.
Removal of Stipulations
The institution must respond to all concerns identified in the adopted accreditation team report and all stipulations placed on it by action of the COA. This is done by preparing a written seventh year report for submission to the state consultant within one calendar year of the visit. The seventh year report must contain documentation demonstrating that all concerns and stipulations have been addressed. Typically, the consultant, in consultation with the team lead assigned to the original visit, will review the report, determine whether all instances of deficiencies have been addressed in the institution’s response, and analyze progress made by the institution in meeting any standards that do not appear to be fully addressed in the report.

The institution must also work with its state consultant to plan the revisit that will provide an opportunity for the consultant and team lead to confirm that changes identified in the 7th year report are being implemented at the institution and that the institution has adequately addressed the concerns identified in the adopted accreditation report and the stipulations placed upon the institution by the action of the COA. The report of the revisit team will be submitted to, and acted upon by, the COA within one calendar year of the original visit.

The COA will review the revisit report and determine whether all stipulations and concerns have been addressed. If the COA determines that all stipulations and concerns have been corrected, the COA will act to remove the stipulations and change the status of the institution from Accreditation with Major Stipulations to Accreditation. If the COA grants the institution Accreditation, the institution will be permitted to continue all accredited credential programs and to propose new credential programs to the COA at any time. The revisit report of the team, the action of the COA to remove the stipulations, and the new accreditation decision will be posted on the CTC’s website. The institution may then notify its constituency of its change of accreditation status as appropriate.

In the event the COA determines that the institution has not made significant progress on resolving the stipulations as evidenced in the 7th year report or verified by the state consultant and team lead at the revisit, the institution will be brought back to the COA for consideration of Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations or Denial of Accreditation.

On some occasions, significant progress may have been made, but additional time beyond one calendar year is needed for the institution to remedy all of the identified deficiencies. If this is the case, the COA may continue the current stipulations or adopt revised stipulations. When the COA adopts revised stipulations, it will do so as an Accreditation with Stipulations decision. In the same action, the COA will specify the amount of additional time the institution will have to address the remaining stipulations. In such cases, the COA may determine appropriate follow-up by the institution and a timeline for COA action to remove the remaining stipulations and concerns.

Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations
The recommendation of Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations indicates that an accreditation team identified serious and pervasive deficiencies in the institution’s
implementation of the Common Standards and program standards applicable to the institution, or that the team found areas of concern (such as matters of curriculum, field experience, or candidate competence) that substantially impact the preparation of credential program candidates. The team identified issues that prevent the institution from delivering high quality, effective programs. The review team may have found that some of the institution’s credential programs are effective in preparing educators and/or that its general operations are adequate, but the team determined that these areas of quality clearly do not outweigh the identified areas of concern.

Operational Implications
An institution receiving a recommendation of Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations must:

- Participate in the accreditation activities as required of its assigned cohort, which are Biennial Reports, Program Assessment, and Site Visits.
- Respond to all concerns identified in the adopted accreditation team report and all stipulations specified in the COA action, and submit, within one year, a written seventh year report with appropriate documentation that demonstrates how all concerns and stipulations have been addressed.
- Prepare for a focused revisit by the team lead and consultant and, as required, members of the accreditation team.
- Abide by all CTC and state regulations.
- Notify all students in all credential programs in writing of its accreditation status.
- Submit an action plan describing the institution’s plan to address the stipulations and concerns.
- Provide updates at specified intervals, as determined by the COA.

An institution receiving a recommendation of Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations is permitted to continue all accredited credential programs for a period of one calendar year. The institution may not:

- Propose new programs of professional preparation or expand existing programs.

An institution receiving a recommendation of Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations may:

- Continue all accredited credential programs for a period of one calendar year, although the COA may place limitations on particular programs.
- Be required to demonstrate to the COA satisfactory progress in addressing particular areas of interest, whether identified as stipulations or concerns, prior to one calendar year. This will be determined by the COA in its accreditation action.

The COA will note the accreditation status of the institution in the Committee’s annual report to the CTC and the accreditation team report, as well as the action taken by the COA, will be posted on the CTC’s website.

Removal of Stipulations
The institution must respond to all concerns identified in the adopted accreditation team report and all stipulations placed on it by action of the COA. This is done by preparing a
written seventh year report for submission to the state consultant within one calendar year of the visit. The seventh year report must contain documentation demonstrating that all concerns and stipulations have been addressed. Typically, the state consultant, in consultation with the team lead assigned to the original visit, will review the report, determine whether all instances of deficiencies appear to have been addressed in the institution’s response, and analyze progress made by the institution in meeting any standards not fully addressed in the report.

The institution must also work with its state consultant to plan the revisit that will provide an opportunity for the state consultant and team lead to confirm that changes identified in the 7th year report are being implemented at the institution and that the institution has adequately addressed the concerns identified in the adopted accreditation report and the stipulations placed upon the institution by the action of the COA. The report of the revisit team will be submitted to, and acted upon by the COA within one calendar year of the original visit.

The COA will review the revisit report and determine whether all stipulations and concerns have been addressed. If the COA determines that all stipulations and concerns have been corrected, the COA will act to remove the stipulations and change the status of the institution from Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations to Accreditation. If the COA grants the institution Accreditation, the institution will be permitted to continue all accredited credential programs and to propose new credential programs to the COA at any time. The revisit report of the team, the action of the COA to remove the stipulations, and the new accreditation decision will be posted on the CTC’s website. The institution may then notify its constituency of its change of accreditation status as appropriate.

In the event that the revisit team determines that the institution has not made significant progress in addressing the stipulations according to the timeline set by the COA, a recommendation of Denial of Accreditation will be made to the COA.

On some occasions, significant progress may have been made, but additional time beyond one calendar year is needed for the institution to remedy all of the identified deficiencies. If this is the case, the COA may continue the current stipulations or adopt revised stipulations. When the COA adopts revised stipulations, it will do so as an Accreditation with Stipulations decision. In the same action, the COA will specify the amount of additional time the institution will have to address the remaining stipulations. In such cases, the COA may determine appropriate follow up by the institution and a timeline for COA action to remove the remaining stipulations and concerns.

Denial of Accreditation

Part 1: General Definitions, Parameters, and Operational Implications for Denial of Accreditation

The COA can deny accreditation upon either an initial visit or a revisit to an institution. Although a recommendation of Denial of Accreditation typically comes after a finding of
probationary status at an initial visit and after the institution has been provided with an opportunity to institute improvements a review team can recommend Denial of Accreditation at any time if the situation warrants the finding in accordance with this section of the Handbook.

a) Initial Visits
A COA decision of Denial of Accreditation upon an initial visit means that extremely serious and pervasive issues exist at an institution. In these instances, the COA has determined that it is highly unlikely that the issues and concerns identified by a review team and COA can be successfully addressed and rectified in a timely manner. The particular facts, the leadership and/or the infrastructure indicate that a significant amount of time and work must be devoted should the institution choose to address the identified issues during which time it is not prudent to have candidates enrolled in the credential program.

Parameters to be Used in Considering a Team Recommendation of Denial of Accreditation at an initial site visit
If on an initial site visit, the review team's findings are more serious than what is defined in the Accreditation with Probationary Stipulation section above, the review team may consider Denial of Accreditation at an initial site visit. These findings might include:

- Significant misrepresentations that were apparently intentionally made to the site visit team and/or in the documents presented to the site visit team
- The institution qualifies for the ruling of Probationary Stipulations in the table General Guidance for Initial Site Visit Team Recommendations (based upon the number of standards unmet), but the team feels that candidates and/or students in the K-12 classroom are possibly being harmed or a disservice is being done to them due to the degree to which those standards are not being met. The degree of harm makes the determination "denial" instead of "probationary".
- The institution has blatantly and systematically disregarded the policies and processes of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing regarding credential program approval, credential program implementation, and candidate completion, establishing a pattern of disregard.
- The institution is routinely credentialing candidates who were clearly not meeting all credential requirements
- An overwhelming number of the standards were found to be not met, suggesting that candidates are not able to acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities required in the standards.

b) Revisits
If an accreditation team, upon conducting a revisit to an institution that received major or probationary stipulations, finds that the stipulations have not been adequately addressed or remediated, or determines that significant and sufficient progress has not been made towards addressing the stipulations. If an accreditation team finds that: (a) sufficient progress has been made, and/or (b) special circumstances described by the institution justify a delay, the COA may, if requested by the institution, permit an additional period of time for the institution to remedy its severe deficiencies. If the COA votes to deny
accreditation, all credential programs must close at the end of the semester or quarter in which the decision has taken place. In addition, the institution's institutional approval ceases to be valid at that time and the institution will no longer be a CTC approved credential program sponsor.

Operational Implications (for either Initial Visits or Revisits)
An institution receiving Denial of Accreditation must:

- Take immediate steps to close all credential programs at the end of the semester or quarter in which the COA decision occurs.
- Announce that it has had its accreditation for educator preparation denied. All students enrolled in all credential programs must be notified within 10 days of Commission action that accreditation has been denied and that all credential programs will end at the end of the semester, quarter, or within 3 months of when the COA decision occurs. The Commission must receive a copy of this correspondence.
- File a plan of discontinuation within 90 days of the COA's decision. The plan must give information and assurances regarding the institution's efforts to place currently enrolled students in other credential programs to provide adequate assistance to permit students to complete their particular credential programs.
- Upon the effective date of the closure of credential programs, as determined by the COA, remove from all institutional materials and website any statements that indicate that its credential programs are accredited by the CTC.

The revisit report of the team, the action of the COA, and the new accreditation decision will be posted on the CTC's website.

Furthermore, an institution receiving a Denial of Accreditation would be prohibited from re-applying for institutional approval for a minimum of two years.

Part II: Procedures to Be Used by COA Regarding Denial of Accreditation

Revisits
Denial of Accreditation after a revisit by a site visit team requires a simple majority vote by the COA.

Initial Visits
A Denial of Accreditation after an initial site visit requires a 2/3 majority vote of COA members present at the meeting. In determining a decision of Denial of Accreditation after an initial site visit, the COA will employ the following protocol:

- The COA takes action at a regularly scheduled meeting (via a 2/3 vote) to deny accreditation.
- Subsequent to the COA vote to deny accreditation, the COA may send a focused site visit team (2 or more experienced staff or BIR members) to revisit the institution to verify the initial findings or outline additional information that may influence the COA's decision/vote and to work with the institution to identify possible next steps for the institution.
- If a focused site visit team has been convened, the COA revisits its decision at the next regularly scheduled COA meeting after receiving focused site visit team report.

Process of Re-applying for Initial Institutional Accreditation
If the institution were to desire to provide educator preparation programs at a future date, it would be required to make a formal application to the CTC for initial institutional approval. This would include the submission of a complete self-study report including responses to the preconditions, common standards, and program standards. The self-study must show clearly how the institution attended to all problems noted in the accreditation team revisit report that resulted in Denial of Accreditation. The CTC would make a decision on the status of the institution and would be made aware of the previous action of Denial of Accreditation by the COA. If the CTC grants initial institutional approval to the institution, the COA would review, and if appropriate, approve its programs. An accreditation site visit would be scheduled within two years to ensure the newly approved programs adhere to the Common and all program standards.

II. Guidance for the Team Recommendation
The site visit team must use its collective professional judgment to reach an accreditation recommendation for an institution. The site visit team’s recommendation for an accreditation decision is a holistic decision based on the common standard findings, and on the number and severity of “Met with Concerns” or “Not Met” findings for the specific programs offered at the institution.

The COA makes one accreditation decision for the institution and all of its approved educator preparation programs. This accreditation decision reflects, to a great degree, the team’s findings on the Common Standards. However, if one or more programs are found to have significant issues, it is likely that one or more related common standards will reflect findings of “Met with Concerns” or “Not Met.”

The table below provides general guidance to site visit teams as they discuss which accreditation recommendation is appropriate for the institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Standards Less than Fully Met</th>
<th>Range of Accreditation Recommendations</th>
<th>Denial of Accreditation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Met with Concerns</td>
<td># Not Met</td>
<td>Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
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<td>1-2</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*General Guidance for Initial Site Visit Team Recommendations*

*Used only in extreme situations in accordance*
When teams are deliberating about the accreditation recommendation, they must consider the findings on the common standards, as well as the number and severity of standard findings for the programs. The table identifies the range of likely accreditation recommendations for an institution based on the number of common standards that are “Met with Concerns” or “Not Met.” If an institution has only a couple of common standards found to be “Met with Concerns” or “Not Met,” then the accreditation recommendation would likely be Accreditation or Accreditation with Stipulations which are on the left side of the range shown on the table. If, on the other hand, there are a number of common standards found to be “Met with Concerns” or “Not Met,” then the team’s accreditation recommendation would likely be in the middle or towards the right side of the range identified above.

In its determination of an appropriate accreditation recommendation, the accreditation team must also take into consideration the number of educator preparation programs an institution offers. If an institution offers a small number of programs, then a small number of program standards found to be less than fully met becomes significant. On the other hand, if an institution offers a large number of programs, then a few program standards found to be less than fully met might not be as significant a factor in the accreditation recommendation.

The information provided in the table is only a general reference tool for teams as they consider the impact of the findings on all common and program standards to determine an accreditation recommendation. It does not replace the critically important professional judgment that team members bring to discussions about the degree to which an institution and its programs align with the adopted standards. Similarly, it does not replace the team’s assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of an institution and its programs, nor of the team’s judgment about the impact of the institution on candidates or the quality of the institution’s offerings. By the end of the site visit, team members have a great deal of information about an institution, its unique characteristics, and the quality of its programs. That knowledge, as supported by evidence, is used by the team to generate and justify an accreditation recommendation.
In like fashion, the table serves as a reference tool for the COA which must consider information from the accreditation report, the team lead, and the institution to render a single accreditation decision. The table is not a substitute for the professional judgment and experience of the COA members nor is it a substitute for the deliberations that take place at the COA meeting where the accreditation report is presented.