

Accreditation Framework

Professional Services Division
October 2007

Overview of this Report

The draft *Accreditation Framework*, which is the document which embodies the Commission's accreditation policies, was reviewed by the Commission in June 2007. At that time, the Commission directed staff to release the *Framework* for public comment. This report summarizes the comments submitted by the field on the proposed *Accreditation Framework*.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the COA recommend to the Commission no further changes to the draft *Framework*. Following COA action, the *Framework* will be placed on the Commission's agenda for the December 2007 meeting for consideration and adoption.

Background

The COA, the Accreditation Study Work Group, and the Commission staff worked for over two years on the development of the revised accreditation system. The recommendations of the COA and the Work Group were unanimously approved by the Commission in the summer and fall of 2006. A revised *Accreditation Framework* was then drafted to reflect the policy changes approved by the Commission. The draft *Accreditation Framework* was taken as an information item to the Commission in June 2007. The draft *Accreditation Framework* is included in this item as Attachment A. The Commission directed staff to seek stakeholder comment on the draft *Framework* and return at a future meeting, with any proposed changes, for Commission adoption.

The draft *Accreditation Framework* was made available on the Commission's website soon after the June 2007 Commission meeting. Commission staff advertised the availability of the draft *Framework*, issuing a notice for public comment through the Commission's E-news list and the PSD e-news list. Given the complexity of the document and its significance to the accreditation system, nearly two and one half months were provided for feedback. The deadline for public comment was September 20, 2007. This allowed sufficient time for those who desired to provide public comment, while also ensuring that those unavailable during the summer months would also have an opportunity to do so upon returning in the fall.

Only two comments were received on the draft *Accreditation Framework* during the public comment period. It is very likely that the low number of responses were due to the fact that the COA, the Work Group, and staff had made extensive effort to consult the field throughout the entire two year process of reviewing the system, and that most of the comments had already been incorporated into the revised system or considered by the COA and members of the Work Group previously.

Public Comments

The two public comments addressed two different aspects of the accreditation system:

1) Outcomes-Based Accreditation; and 2) National Professional Accreditation.

Outcomes-Based Accreditation

The comment received related to outcomes based accreditation is sufficiently concise that it is reproduced in its entirety below.

Having read the document, I was hoping for more of a focus on outcome measure vs. documentation of processes and procedures. For a smallish program like ours (about 45 MS, 45 SS per year in a year long MA program) we are quite capable of analyzing outcomes data (student surveys, TPA data, principal satisfaction surveys) to make improvements to our program(s). We are quite limited, however, in our capacity to coordinate extensive external reviews. We simply don't have the administrative support to create the extensive documentation such reviews require. Internally, we know clearly all the moving parts. That's not the question. Our concern is that programs will be required to document for external reviewers all the moving parts, which, to my mind, stretches our already thin resources in a somewhat fruitless direction.

Staff Comment: The COA and the Accreditation Study Work Group considered the issues related to outcomes measures versus documentation of the processes and procedures. The focus on candidate outcomes was an important desired goal of the review and the revised accreditation system moves significantly in that direction as outcomes measures are incorporated into the revised system. However, the COA and the panel consistently noted the continued importance of ensuring that programs that are offered to students are of sufficient high quality and aligned with state adopted standards. The resulting proposed system balances the need for a focus on candidate outcomes with a review of programmatic inputs and quality of programs. To that end, external reviews remain an essential aspect of the accreditation system at this time. In addition, the COA and the Accreditation Study Work Group recognize the potential workload of accreditation activities on institutions and programs and have developed a system that encourages on-going attention to matters related to outcomes and quality.

National Professional Accreditation

One of the comments received regarding the *Framework* addresses the issue of national professional accreditation, and in particular, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. These comments encourage a streamlined process. Specifically, the individual proposed the following:

1. Combine the dual processes of accreditation of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association and Commission.
2. Either:
 - a. The Commission should adopt ASHA standards and have both the CTC and ASHA team review the same report. A few additional standards pertaining specifically to practice in the schools should be independently reviewed by the CTC site visitor; or

- b. The Commission should adopt ASHA standards and the ASHA team could evaluate those standards, while CTC could review any of those additional standards.
3. The ASHA annual reports could be submitted to the Commission in lieu of, or count as, submission of the biennial reports.

Staff Comment: The COA and Accreditation Study Work Group discussed these issues during the review of the accreditation system. It was determined that every effort would be made to eliminate duplication where possible for programs that seek both national program accreditation and Commission accreditation. However, there was also great concern that all programs respond to California standards and, where national professional standards diverged from California standards, the Commission process must ensure that the California standards were being addressed adequately by the program.

With respect to biennial reports, the COA and Work Group has noted that, as long as the program addresses the requirements of the biennial reports, programs may use information and documentation provided for other purposes such as national professional accreditation. Staff notes that a review of the annual reports for ASHA provided by the individual suggests that there is some commonality between the ASHA and Commission reporting requirements, but that key aspects of the biennial report are not requested in the same manner by ASHA. For instance, the ASHA annual report requires outcomes data and a description of anticipated changes in the program, but not necessarily an analysis of the data that leads to changes in the program. Major or subtle differences in reporting requirements for national professional accrediting bodies may require some additional information be submitted to the COA to meet the requirements and objections of the biennial reports.

The role of national program accreditation in the Commission's accreditation system will be discussed further in Item 16.

Attachment A

Draft Accreditation Framework



COMMISSION ON
TEACHER CREDENTIALING

Ensuring Educator Excellence

Accreditation Framework
Educator Preparation in California

2007

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Educator Preparation for California

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The Accreditation Framework

Educator Preparation for California

Introduction

This Framework addresses the accreditation of colleges, universities and local education agencies that prepare teachers and other educators for state certification and professional practice in California public schools. Accreditation is the primary assurance of quality in the preparation of professional educators, and as such, is an essential purpose of the Commission. It provides an important quality assurance to the education profession, the general public, and the accredited institutions. This Introduction to the *Framework* articulates the purposes of the accreditation system in the field of educator preparation.

The Purposes of Professional Educator Program Accreditation

Professional accreditation is the process of ascertaining and verifying the quality of each program that prepares individuals for state certification. In this context, state certification is the process of ascertaining and verifying the qualifications of each future member of the education profession. These two processes--professional accreditation and state certification share a common overarching objective--ensuring that those who teach and provide education services in California's public school system have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to be effective educators. Accreditation of educator preparation in California serves to achieve four purposes: to ensure accountability, ensure high quality and effective programs, to ensure adherence to standards and to support ongoing program improvement. Each purpose is more fully articulated below.

A primary purpose of the professional accreditation system is to ensure accountability to the public, the students and the education profession that educator preparation programs are responsive to the educational needs of current and future students. Only an accredited educator preparation program may recommend a candidate for a license to teach in California. The general public has a compelling interest in accreditation decisions that are part of the public education system in California. The expertise and experience of the accreditors should be credible to the general public and the education profession in California.

A second purpose of accreditation is to ensure that educator preparation programs are high quality and effective and provide education and experiences consistent with the knowledge and skills required of an educator serving the needs of the diverse population in the California public schools. The Commission has statutory responsibility for adopting accreditation standards which describe levels of quality that it deems to be acceptable for quality assurance. Standards should not focus on purely technical or operational aspects of educator preparation, but should enable trained reviewers with professional expertise to ascertain whether an educator preparation program is characterized by acceptable levels of quality as defined in the standards.

The Accreditation system is oriented to issues of quality. During a review, reviewers obtain evidence that relates to the educational quality of preparation programs and policies governing the programs. Through experience, expertise and training, the reviewers are skilled at discerning the important from the unimportant in educator preparation. The findings and recommendations of accreditation reviewers focus on important matters of quality in the preparation of educators.

Accreditation decisions hinge on findings that are evidence-based, educationally significant and clearly related to quality-oriented standards.

A third purpose of the accreditation system is to ensure adherence to standards. The standards are designed to ensure that each educator’s preparation is appropriate to the requirements of professional service in public schools. California’s educator preparation programs are designed to meet the appropriate Commission approved program standards, which are aligned with the state adopted academic content and performance standards for K-12 students. Through the accreditation system, sponsors of educator preparation programs must provide evidence that their programs meet all standards.

Finally, the fourth purpose of the accreditation system is to support program improvement. Accreditation standards, reviews and decisions contribute to improvements in the preparation of educators. The quality of an institution/program sponsor’s policies, practices and outcomes improve as its faculty, administrators, and students strive to meet accreditation standards. The institution/program sponsor’s offerings also benefit from the quality orientation of the accreditation system. When these effects of accreditation fall short, however, specific accreditation decisions provoke needed improvements. For improvements to occur, the accreditation system must identify and describe weaknesses in the quality of an institution’s/program sponsor’s offerings in preparing professionals to serve the needs of California’s diverse student population.

Key Attributes of Accreditation of California’s Educator Preparation Programs

The key attributes described below function within the four purposes of accreditation. These attributes pertain to the development of program standards, the initial program approval process, and the subsequent reviews and accreditation of educator preparation programs.

First Attribute: The Professional Character of Accreditation. Professional educators should hold themselves and their peers accountable for the quality of professional education. Professionals should be involved intensively in the entire accreditation process. They should create accreditation standards, conduct accreditation reviews, and make accreditation decisions. Participants in these aspects of accreditation should have experience, expertise and training that are appropriate for their specific roles in accreditation. In each step of accreditation, decisions should emerge from consultative procedures, and should reflect the consensus of the professional participants.

Second Attribute: Knowledgeable Participants. The effectiveness of the accreditation system relies on the quality of the decision making at each step in the process. Quality assurances are provided initially through the participation of individuals who possess knowledge, skills and broad expertise and who participate in the system in various roles, including policy development, policy implementation, program assessment, system support technical management, and professional preparation. In order to fulfill these roles effectively, participants must receive appropriate training, evaluation and feedback that enables them to understand the underlying principles and purposes of the system as well as how to enact each of these roles effectively in meeting the needs of all learners in California’s schools.

Third Attribute: Breadth and Flexibility. For institutions/program sponsors to be effective in a dynamic state like California, they must be creative and responsive to the changing needs of prospective educators and the communities and students they serve. In a society as diverse as California, universities, colleges, and other program sponsors vary substantially in their missions and philosophies. Accreditation should not force institutions/program sponsors to conform to prescribed patterns unless these conventions have a firm basis in principles of educational quality, effectiveness and equity. The accreditation system should accommodate breadth and flexibility within and among institutions/program sponsors to support improvement.

Accreditation standards should be drawn so different institutions/program sponsors can meet them in a variety of acceptable ways. There are effective and ineffective forms of educator preparation; accreditation should differentiate between them. There are also multiple ways of effectively educating prospective educators acceptably; accreditation should not favor any of these over the others. Standards should describe levels of quality and effectiveness without stipulating how institutions/program sponsors are to comply. Explanations of the standards should clarify their meaning without making the standards overly restrictive. The training of accreditation reviewers should, moreover, emphasize the importance of understanding diversity and creativity between institutions/program sponsors.

Fourth Attribute: Intensity in Accreditation. Accreditation should focus with intensity on key aspects of educational quality and effectiveness. While allowing and encouraging divergence, the process should also be exacting in assembling key information about critical aspects of educational quality and effectiveness. The scope of accreditation should be comprehensive, and the information generated by the review processes should be sufficient to yield reliable judgments by professional educators.

Accreditation standards should encompass the critical dimensions of educator preparation. In order to recommend an institution/program sponsor for accreditation, experienced professional reviewers should be satisfied that the institution/program sponsor provides a comprehensive array of excellent learning opportunities and assurances that future educators have demonstrated that they have attained the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to be effective professionals. Accreditation decisions should be based on information that is sufficient in breadth and depth for the results to be credible and dependable. Accreditation reviewers should understand the components of the program under review and the types of standards-based evidence that substantiate its overall quality and effectiveness. To find out if broad, quality-oriented standards are met, and to make reliable judgments and sound recommendations, reviewers need to assemble a considerable body of data that is collectively significant.

Fifth Attribute: Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness. An accreditation system should fulfill its purposes efficiently and cost-effectively. Review procedures, decision processes and reporting relationships should be streamlined and economical. Participants' roles should be clearly defined, and communications should be efficient.

There are costs associated with establishing standards, training reviewers, assembling information, preparing reports, conducting meetings and checking the accuracy of data and the fairness of decisions. Containing these costs is an essential attribute of accreditation, but

efficiency must not undermine the capacity of accreditors to fulfill their responsibilities to the public and the profession. Accreditation costs, which are borne by institutions/program sponsors and the accrediting body, should be reviewed periodically by the Commission in relation to the key purposes of accreditation.

Section 1

Authority and Responsibilities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing

Pertaining to the accreditation of educator preparation, the authority and responsibilities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing include the following.

A. Responsibilities Related to Accreditation Policies

1. **Adopt and Modify the Accreditation Framework.** Pursuant to *Education Code* 44372(a), 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”. The present document is the adopted *Accreditation Framework*. *Education Code* 44372(i) establishes that the Commission may modify the *Framework* in accordance with Section 8 of the *Framework*. Modifications occur in public meetings after the Commission considers relevant information provided by the Committee on Accreditation, institutions/program sponsors, Board of Institutional Review members, the Commission’s staff, and other concerned individuals. The Commission determines when a policy modification takes effect.
2. **Establish and Modify 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.

B. Responsibilities Related to the Accreditation System

1. **Initial Institution/Program Sponsor Approval.** In accordance with *Education Code* Sections 44227(b) and 44372(c) and Section 4 of this *Framework*, the Commission determines the eligibility of an institution/program sponsor that applies for initial approval and that has not previously prepared educators for state certification in California. The Commission recognizes institutions/program sponsors that meet the Commission established criteria. This approval by the Commission establishes the eligibility of an institution/program sponsor to submit specific program proposals to the Committee on Accreditation.
2. **Hear and Resolve 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 Committee on Accreditation” *Education Code* Section 44374(e). The Commission resolves each appeal, and the Executive Director communicates the Commission’s decision to the Committee on Accreditation, the accreditation team, and the affected institution/program sponsor.

3. **Allocate Resources Annually for Accreditation Operations.** The Commission annually allocates resources for accreditation operations to implement this *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.
4. **Review and Sponsor Legislation Related to Accreditation.** The Commission reviews legislative proposals to amend the *Education Code* related to the accreditation of educator preparation institutions/program sponsors. As the need arises, the Commission sponsors legislation related to accreditation, after considering the advice of the Commission's professional staff, the Committee on Accreditation, educational institutions, program sponsors and professional organizations.

C. Responsibilities Related to the Committee on Accreditation

1. **Establish a Nominating Panel.** In collaboration with the Committee on Accreditation, the Commission establishes a Nominating Panel to solicit and screen nominations and recommend educators to serve on the Committee on Accreditation.
2. **Appoint the Committee on Accreditation.** Pursuant to *Education Code 44372(d)* and Section 2 of this *Framework*, the Commission appoints members and alternate members of the Committee on Accreditation for specific terms. The Commission selects the Committee members and alternate members from nominees submitted by the Nominating Panel. The Commission ensures that the Committee on Accreditation is professionally distinguished and balanced in its composition, but does not appoint members to represent particular institutions, organizations or constituencies.
3. **Address Issues and Refer Concerns Related to Accreditation.** The Commission considers issues and concerns related to accreditation that it identifies, as well as those brought to the Commission’s attention by the Committee on Accreditation, 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 Committee on Accreditation for examination and response.
4. **Review Annual Reports by the Committee on Accreditation.** The Commission reviews an *Annual Accreditation Report* submitted by the Committee on Accreditation. *The Annual Report* includes, but is not limited to, information about the dimensions and results of the accreditation process.

Section 2

Functions of the Committee on Accreditation

The functions, membership and appointment of the Committee on Accreditation are set forth in *Education Code* Section 44373 and this section of the *Framework*.

A. Functions of the Committee on Accreditation

1. **Comparability of Standards.** In accordance with Section 3 of this *Framework*, the Committee determines whether standards submitted by institutions/program sponsors under Option 2 (National or Professional Program Standards) or Option 3 (Experimental Program Standards), taken as a whole, provide a level of program quality comparable to standards adopted by the Commission under Option 1 (California Program Standards). If the Committee determines that the proposed standards are collectively comparable in breadth and depth, when taken as a whole, to the Commission-adopted standards, the Committee on Accreditation may approve the proposed standards as Program Standards in California.
2. **Initial Approval of Programs.** The Committee on Accreditation reviews proposals for the initial accreditation of programs submitted by institutions/program sponsors that have been determined to be eligible by the Commission. New programs of educator preparation may be submitted under Options One, Two, or Three as defined in Section 3 Category II (Program Standards) of this *Framework*. If the Committee on Accreditation determines that a program meets all applicable standards, the Committee on Accreditation grants initial approval to the program.
3. **Continuing Accreditation Decisions.** After reviewing the recommendations of accreditation teams, the Committee makes decisions about the continuing accreditation of educator preparation institutions/program sponsors and programs, consistent with Section 5 of this *Framework*. Pertaining to each institution/program sponsor, the Committee makes one of three decisions: Accreditation, Accreditation with Stipulations, or Denial of Accreditation.
4. **Accreditation Procedures.** Consistent with the terms of Section 5, the Committee recommends appropriate guidelines for reports as well as other accreditation materials and exhibits to be prepared by institutions/program sponsors. The Committee also adopts guidelines for all accreditation activities, which emphasize the use of narrative, qualitative explanations of team recommendations. The Committee may provide additional guidance to institutions/program sponsors, site visit teams and the Executive Director regarding accreditation procedures. The procedural guidelines of the Committee are published by the Commission as an *Accreditation Handbook*.
5. **Monitor the Accreditation System.** The Committee monitors the performance of accreditation teams and oversees other activities associated with the accreditation system.

6. **Communication With and Reporting to the Commission.** The Committee provides updates on accreditation decisions, activities, implementation matters or other items on an “as needed” basis to ensure the Commission is kept well apprised of the effectiveness of its accreditation policies and procedures.
7. **Evaluation of Accreditation Policies and Practices.** The Committee shares responsibility with the Commission for the on-going evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of the accreditation system. Evaluation and monitoring of the system as well as modification to that system will be conducted in a manner consistent with Section 8 of this Framework.
8. **Conduct Business in an Open, Transparent Manner.** The Committee conducts its business and makes its decisions in meetings that are open to the public, except as provided by statute. All meeting agendas, team reports, and final accreditation decisions will be available on the public on the Commission’s website.

B. Membership of the Committee on Accreditation

1. **Membership Composition.** The Committee consists of twelve members. Six members are from postsecondary education institutions, and six are certificated professionals in public schools, school districts, or county offices of education in California. Selection of members is based on the breadth of their experience, the diversity of their perspectives, and "their distinguished records of accomplishment in education" (*Education Code* Section 44373-a). All members serve as members-at-large. No member serves on the Committee as a representative of any organization, institution/program sponsor, or constituency. To the maximum extent possible, Committee membership is balanced according to ethnicity, gender, geographic regions and across credentials awarded by the Commission. The Committee includes members from the public K-12 school system, and from public and private postsecondary institutions. The elementary and secondary school members include certificated administrators, teachers, and at least one member involved in a professional educator preparation program. The postsecondary members include administrators and faculty members, both of whom must be involved in professional educator preparation programs.
2. **Membership Criteria.** The criteria for membership on the Committee are: evidence of achievement in the education profession; recognized professional or scholarly contributions in the field of education; recognition of excellence by peers; experience with and sensitivity to issues of human diversity; distinguished service in the field of educator preparation; knowledge of issues related to the preparation and licensing of education professionals; length of professional service; and possession of appropriate educational degrees and professional credentials.
3. **Membership Orientation and Training.** Members of the Committee will receive an orientation and training to adequately prepare them to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities on the Committee on Accreditation.

C. Appointment of the Committee on Accreditation

1. **Nominating Panel.** A Nominating Panel of four distinguished members of the education profession in California identifies and nominates individuals to serve on the Committee on Accreditation. The Nominating Panel is comprised of two educators appointed by the Committee on Accreditation and two educators appointed by the Commission. Each entity will appoint one college or university member and one K-12 public school member to the Nominating Panel. The terms of Nominating Panel members are four years. Members of the Panel may not serve more than one term.
2. **Nomination of Committee Members.** To select members for the Committee on Accreditation, a vacancy notice is posted on the Commission website and nominations are solicited, in writing, from a broad base of professional organizations, agencies, institutions, and individuals in education. Each nomination must be submitted with the consent of the individual. A written endorsement from the nominee's employer confirming understanding of and agreement to the nominee's participation on the Committee must be submitted (The Commission provides travel, per diem, and substitute reimbursement, if needed). The nominee's professional resume must be submitted. Self-nominations are not accepted.
3. **Selection of Committee Members.** Based on the membership criteria and the principles of balanced composition set forth in this section, the Nominating Panel screens the professional qualifications of each nominee and recommends for appointment at least two highly qualified nominees for each vacant seat on the Committee. The Commission selects and appoints the members and alternate members of the Committee by selecting from the nominations submitted by the Panel.
4. **Terms of Appointment.** The Commission appoints members of the Committee on Accreditation to four-year terms. A member may be re-nominated and re-appointed to a second term of four years. A member may serve a maximum of two terms on the Committee. Terms of appointment shall commence on July 1, or the date of the appointment, whichever is later, and shall expire on June 30.
5. **Committee Vacancies.** When a seat on the Committee becomes vacant prior to the conclusion of the member's term, the Executive Director fills the seat for the remainder of the term by appointing a replacement from the list of alternate members.
6. **Transition of Committee Membership.** In the first year of the implementation of the revised *Framework*, three new members will be appointed to the Committee for four year terms. Nine members of the prior Committee will continue to serve: three for one additional year, three for two additional years, and three for three additional years. Each subsequent year, three additional members will be appointed to the Committee. These changes will transition the membership from the *Accreditation Framework (1995)* to the revised *Framework (2007)*.

Section 3 Accreditation Standards

There are two categories of accreditation standards for institutions/program sponsors that prepare professional educators in California: 1) Common Standards and 2) Program Standards. An accredited institution/program sponsor is expected to satisfy the standards in both categories.

Category I. Common Standards relate to aspects of program quality that are the same for all educator preparation programs. This category includes standards relevant to the overall leadership and climate for educator preparation at an institution/program sponsor, as well as standards pertaining to quality features that are common to all programs. An institution/program sponsor responds to each Common Standard by providing pertinent information, including information about individual programs.

Category II. Program Standards address the quality of program features that are specific to a credential, such as curriculum, field experiences, and knowledge and skills to be demonstrated by candidates in the specific credential area. Different options may be exercised by different credential programs at an institution/program sponsor. Options that are selected will be the basis for the review of specific programs and will guide the selection and orientation of program reviewers. Pertaining to each program, the institution/program sponsor responds to each standard in the selected option by providing program-specific information for review by the program reviewers. When institutions/program sponsors prepare for initial program approval and continuing accreditation activities, they may consider the following options for program-specific standards.

- **Option 1. California Program Standards.** The Commission relies on panels of experts from colleges, universities and schools to develop standards for specific credential programs. These panels are guided by current research findings in the field of the credential and the California K-12 academic content standards. They also consider standards developed by appropriate national and statewide professional organizations. If the national or professional standards are found to be appropriate for California, a panel may recommend that the Commission adopt them in lieu of developing new standards or revising the Commission's existing standards. After reviewing the recommendations of advisory panels and other experts, the Commission adopts California Program Standards for the initial and continuing accreditation of credential preparation programs. When revised program standards are adopted, institutions/program sponsors may be required to meet the new set of California Program Standards.
- **Option 2. National or Professional Program Standards.** California institutions may propose program standards that have been developed by national or state professional organizations. Such a proposal may be submitted to the Committee on Accreditation with a statement of the institution's reasons for requesting this option and the requested National or Professional Program Standards. If the Committee determines that the requested standards, taken as a whole, provide a level of professional quality comparable to the standards adopted by the Commission under Option 1 (California Program Standards), the Committee approves the proposed standards for use as Program Standards in the initial or continuing accreditation

of credential program. If the Committee determines that the requested standards do not adequately address one or more aspects of California Standards (Common and/or Program), the Committee may approve the requested standards but also require the institution/program sponsor address the missing portions of the California Standards.

- **Option 3. Experimental Program Standards.** For initial accreditation, an institution may present an experimental, pilot, or exploratory program that meets the Experimental Program Standards adopted by the Commission pursuant to *Education Code* Section 44273. Experimental, pilot, or exploratory programs are designed to allow for the examination of focused research questions intended to contribute to the body of knowledge around key aspects of the field of education including the identification of model strategies, delivery methods, and programs that lead to improved teaching and learning. Institutions that sponsor experimental, pilot, or exploratory programs must have a research component that examines how the program contributes to the development of quality teaching and specifically, the acquisition and mastery by teacher candidates of appropriate performance expectations, such as the Teaching Performance Expectations for the Multiple and Single Subject Credentials. In addition, experimental, pilot, or exploratory programs are required to report their findings on a biennial basis to the Commission. Upon consultation with the institution and with the Committee on Accreditation, the Commission retains the authority to determine whether the findings support continuance of the experimental, pilot, or exploratory program under the experimental standards.

Section 4 Initial Accreditation Policies

This section governs the initial recognition of institutions and approval of programs.

A. Responsibility for Two Phases of Initial Accreditation

1. **Initial Institution/Program Sponsor Approval.** A postsecondary education institution or local education agency (LEA) or other entity that is not currently preparing educators for California’s public schools must submit an application to the Commission for initial eligibility to submit programs. The application must indicate evidence of accreditation by either the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) or another of the regional accrediting bodies. In the case of an application from a Local Education Agency (LEA) or other entity, the governance board’s approval or sponsorship of the program must be noted. The Commission may establish additional procedures and criteria for the initial approval of institutions/program sponsors to prepare and recommend candidates for state credentials in education.
2. **Initial Approval of Programs.** The Committee on Accreditation decides the initial approval of new credential or certificate programs at an eligible institution/program sponsor. New credential or certificate program proposals by institutions/program sponsors that have been determined to be eligible by the Commission must fulfill preconditions established by state law and the Commission, the Common Standards, and the appropriate set of Program Standards. Descriptions of new programs include evidence of involvement in program design and planning by elementary and secondary school practitioners and members of diverse local communities.

B. Policies for Initial Approval of Programs

1. **Review of New Programs.** Prior to being presented to the Committee on Accreditation for action, new programs proposed by eligible program sponsors are reviewed in relation to the Common Standards in Appendix 2 and the selected Program Standards as specified in Section 3 of this *Framework*. The Committee on Accreditation considers recommendations by the staff and/or the external reviewers regarding the approval of each proposed program.

C. Integration of Institutions/Program Sponsors into Accreditation Cycle. After initial approval of programs, the institution/program sponsor will be notified of its assignment to a specific cohort schedule. The institution/program sponsor will then participate in accreditation activities at the scheduled times.

- a. **Accreditation Activities.** Institutions/program sponsors will complete Biennial Reports according to their cohort schedule. They will complete a Program Assessment eighteen months after initial program approval.

- b. Technical Assistance Site Visit. Two years prior to the scheduled Site Visit, a Technical Assistance Site Visit will be made to the institution/program sponsor. The purpose of the Technical Assistance Site Visit is to prepare new institutions or program sponsors for the Committee on Accreditation Site Visit that will follow (to provide an opportunity for a limited review of all approved programs by a small team of experts in the field) and to provide feedback to the institution/program sponsor based upon that limited review.

Section 5 Continuing Accreditation Policies

This section outlines the Commission’s policies for institutions/program sponsors that have been approved to offer educator preparation credential programs and are seeking continuing accreditation. The specific procedures and requirements for implementing these policies are included in the *Accreditation Handbook*.

Overview of the Accreditation Cycle

Contained in this *Framework* are the goals for the Commission’s accreditation system. Under this system, accreditation is an on-going process that fosters greater public accountability, continuous attention to program improvement, adherence to standards, and high quality programs. The accreditation system and its interrelated set of activities of Biennial Reports, Program Assessment, Site Visits, and follow up throughout the 7 year cycle – is designed to support these goals.

The major components of the seven year accreditation cycle include:

- 1) Ongoing Data Collection by the Institution/Program Sponsor
- 2) Biennial Program Reports in years one, three, and five.
- 3) Program Assessment in year four
- 4) Institutional Site Visit in year six
- 5) Follow Up on areas of concern in year seven and beyond, if necessary

Accreditation Cycle Activities

The following section describes the various activities within the accreditation cycle in general terms. Specific procedures and requirements about all aspects of the accreditation cycle are set forth in the *Accreditation Handbook*. Charts illustrating the various activities in the 7 year accreditation cycle can be found in Appendix C.

1. Ongoing Data Collection by the Institution/Program Sponsor

Each institution/program sponsor is required to collect data for each approved credential and certificate program related to candidate competence and program effectiveness on an annual basis. Further, it is an expectation that all CTC accredited institutions or program sponsors will use these data to inform programmatic decision-making.

2. Biennial Report

The accreditation system requires that the institution provide evidence, through submission of the Biennial Report that it is collecting, analyzing, and using data for programmatic decision making. The Biennial Report process will include the submission of contextual information, candidate assessment, a brief statement of analysis, an action plan based on the analysis, and an institutional summary identifying trends across the programs or critical issues. The Biennial Report will be reviewed, may result in further questions or review, and will be part of the documentation made available to the program and site visit reviewers. The specific activities related to the Biennial Report are as follows:

Submission, Review and Feedback

- a. **Submission.** Each institution/program sponsor must annually collect data and submit biennial reports. The data collection and submission must be related to the Commission standards. All program reports from the institution are submitted together with an institutional summary. The institutional summary identifies trends across the programs or critical issues for the program sponsor. The specific requirements of these reports are defined in the *Accreditation Handbook*.
- b. **Review.** Commission staff review the Biennial Report. Commission staff evaluates the Biennial Report for completeness and sufficiency. If the report is not submitted, is incomplete or is inadequate, Commission staff will contact the institution/program sponsor. If the report has been submitted but the data do not demonstrate measures of candidate competence or have deficiencies, the Committee on Accreditation and Commission staff will request additional information from the institution/program sponsor. Data review procedures are set forth in the *Accreditation Handbook*. Staff will report on the Biennial Report to the COA.
- c. **Feedback.** Institutions/Program Sponsors will be notified of receipt and review of the Biennial Report. Based on review of the Biennial Report, the Committee on Accreditation may request additional information or schedule a site visit prior to the scheduled time period for a site visit to the institution/program.

3. Program Assessment

In the 4th year of each cohort cycle, an institution/program sponsor prepares and submits a Program Assessment document for each approved program. The specific activities related to Program Assessment are as follows:

- a. **Program Assessment Document.** Each institution/program sponsor ensures that each approved program that is offered by an institution/program sponsor prepares and submits a Program Assessment Document. The document includes the following elements: 1) the most recently approved program document which includes modifications in the program since its approval, 2) current course syllabi and faculty vitae, 3) information on assessments used at key points in the program in order to determine candidate competence. The specific procedures and requirement for the Program Assessment Document are included in the *Accreditation Handbook*.

- 1. Review.** Trained reviewers will determine whether the standards for each program area continue to be met. If there are questions, or more

information is needed, Commission staff will communicate with an institution or program sponsor to request additional information. A professional dialogue will then take place between program sponsors and reviewers (facilitated through CTC staff) in order to ascertain the most complete sense of candidate competence and the ongoing program improvement efforts that are made. This process allows for a more complete understanding of the program prior to determining the findings.

2. Preliminary Report of Findings. Trained members of the BIR serve as readers and consider all information and come to “preliminary findings” for all program standards as well as recommendations and questions for the site visit. Program Standard findings are ‘Standard Met’, ‘Met with Concerns’, and ‘Not Met’. Document review procedures are set forth in the *Accreditation Handbook*.

3. Use of Results. The report from the readers is forwarded to the Committee on Accreditation. Readers submit any outstanding questions or areas of concern to the Committee on Accreditation and the Committee will ensure that the site review team investigates the issue(s). The Committee on Accreditation reviews the program reports, preliminary findings, and questions/areas of concern to assist in determining the size and composition of the site review team.

The preliminary findings of the reviewers will influence the size, scope, and nature of the 6th year site visit. If reviewers find no issues or concerns through program assessment, it may be determined that it is unnecessary to review the program in detail at the site visit. If reviewers identify issues that warrant further review or if questions remain unanswered at the conclusion of the Program Assessment, the 6th year site visit may include a more detailed review of such programs.

Specific documentation required in the Program Assessment is set forth in the *Accreditation Handbook*.

4. Site Visit

An accreditation team visits each institution/program sponsor in the sixth year of the accreditation cycle. The institution/program sponsor prepares for a site visit that focuses mainly on the Common Standards, but may include any program areas identified in advance by the Committee on Accreditation (COA) as a result of the program assessment process. The Biennial Reports, Program Assessment Documents and Preliminary Report of Findings will be made available to the site review team. The site visit will result in an accreditation recommendation for consideration and action by the COA.

Preparation for Site Visit

- a. **Preliminary Program Assessment Report of Findings.** No less than twelve months before the scheduled site visit, Program Assessment reviewers will submit the preliminary findings on program standards and any additional questions or areas of concern to the Committee on Accreditation. The Program Assessment reviewers make a recommendation to Committee on Accreditation whether the issue(s) needs to be further reviewed at the site visit.
- b. **Preliminary Report.** Ten to twelve months before the scheduled site visit, institutional/program sponsors submit a Preliminary Report to the Commission. This brief report describes the institutional mission and includes information about institutional demographics, special emphasis programs, and other unique features of the institution/program sponsor. The institution/program sponsor includes its response to accreditation preconditions established by state laws and the Commission.
- c. **Determination by the Committee on Accreditation.** The Committee on Accreditation uses the Preliminary Report, along with the preliminary findings from the Program Assessment, to determine the type, size and complexity of the programs to be reviewed and the structure, size and expertise of the site visit review team to be selected. All institutions/program sponsors will be subject to a Common Standards review, and the Committee on Accreditation will make case by case determinations, based on the findings of the Program Assessment, as to which programs will be subject to a more detailed review during the site visit at an institution.
- d. **Self Study.** No fewer than 60-90 days before the site visit, the institution/program sponsor submits its Institutional Self-Study which focuses on the Common Standards to the team and the Commission. In responding to each applicable standard, the self-study report should emphasize quality considerations, educational rationales, and thoughtful program analyses.

On-site Activities

1. **Collection of Information.** The accreditation site visit team, composed of 3 to 7 members, focuses its review primarily on the Common Standards and on any specific programs designated by the Committee on Accreditation that require additional review at the site visit. In addition, the site visit team is responsible for reviewing evidence that will substantiate and confirm or contradict the preliminary findings of the Program Assessment.

The site visit team gathers information about the quality of the education unit and credential programs at the institution/program sponsor from a variety of sources representing the full range of stakeholders, including written documents and interviews with representative samples of significant stakeholders. The site visit team will gather all relevant information related to all the Common Standards and the standards applicable to the program areas under review. During the site visit, each program in operation participates fully in the interview schedule. The Committee on Accreditation may add additional members to the team with expertise in the specific program areas(s) identified as needing additional study during the site visit. Data collection procedures are set forth in the *Accreditation Handbook*.

2. **Procedural Safeguards.** The accreditation site visit team provides ample opportunities during the site review for representatives of the institution/program sponsor to (a) be informed about areas where the standards appear not to be fully satisfied, and (b) supply additional information pertaining to those standards. These opportunities include, at a minimum, a meeting at approximately mid-visit between representatives of the team and the institution's/program sponsor's credential programs, after which additional written information or interviews are utilized by the team in reaching its conclusions.
3. **Focused Site Visit and a Specialized Credential Program Team.** It is possible that the site visit team may uncover a program concern or issue not previously identified by the Program Assessment. When this occurs, the team may recommend a Focused Site Visit addressing the concerns or issues that have arisen if the accreditation site visit team determines that the team lacks expertise to make sound decisions for a particular program. In such a situation, the Focused Site Visit is scheduled to resolve the uncertainty before the accreditation team's final report and recommendation is submitted to the Committee on Accreditation. In this event, there would be no accreditation recommendation until after the Focused Site visit has been completed.
4. **Exit Interview and Report.** The accreditation site visit team conducts an exit interview with representatives of the institution/program sponsor, at which time the team presents its draft report for the Committee on Accreditation. Such a report will include the findings on all Common Standards, all program standards, and an accreditation recommendation. As noted in the previous section, it is possible that the site visit team may uncover a program concern or issue not previously identified by the Program Assessment reviewers. When this occurs, the site visit team may recommend a follow up focused program review of the concerns or issues that have arisen. In this event there would be no accreditation recommendation until after the focused

review has been completed. If further review is needed of program experts not currently on the site review team, the accreditation status recommendation is not reported during the exit interview. The Committee on Accreditation will review the site visit team report prior to making an accreditation decision.

Accreditation Reports, Recommendations and Decisions

- a. **Accreditation Team Reports.** Each accreditation site visit team makes its report and recommendations to the Committee on Accreditation. Accreditation site visit team reports indicate whether each applicable standard is met, include summary findings and a recommendation to the Committee, and may include professional recommendations for consideration by the institution/program sponsor.
- b. **Accreditation Team Recommendations.** An accreditation site visit team recommends *Accreditation*, *Accreditation with Stipulations*, or *Denial of Accreditation*. The team makes its recommendation based on the overall quality of the education unit and the credential programs at the institution/program sponsor. The team does not recommend separate accreditation decisions for each program. The team may recommend Accreditation but recommend required follow-up for the institution and/or one or more of its programs. Alternatively, a team may recommend Accreditation with Stipulations, which may (if adopted by the Committee on Accreditation) require the institution/program sponsor to provide evidence that the program(s) has made modifications that address the stipulation(s). The Committee on Accreditation may require additional progress reports from the institution/program sponsor beyond one year even if the stipulations have been removed. The Committee on Accreditation has discretion to allow an institution/program sponsor additional time to address issues. Stipulations may (if adopted) require the discontinuation of severely deficient programs at the institution/program sponsor.
- c. **Accreditation Decisions.** After reviewing the recommendation of an accreditation site visit team the Committee on Accreditation makes a decision about the accreditation of educator preparation at the institution/program sponsor. The Committee makes one of three decisions pertaining to each institution: *Accreditation*, *Accreditation with Stipulations*, or *Denial of Accreditation*. The Committee's Annual Accreditation Reports summarize these decisions.
- d. **Required Follow-up.** The Committee on Accreditation may grant full accreditation to an institution/program sponsor, but require follow-up by one or more programs or the institution/program sponsor as a unit. The required follow-up will be documented in reports submitted to the Committee on Accreditation.

- e. **Accreditation with Stipulations.** The Committee on Accreditation allows an institution/program sponsor one year to remove all stipulations or to discontinue deficient program(s). COA may require additional progress reports beyond one year even if stipulations have been removed. The Committee on Accreditation has discretion to allow an institution/program sponsor additional time to address issues. An additional period to remedy severe deficiencies may be granted by the Committee on Accreditation if the Committee determines that (a) substantial progress has been made and/or (b) special circumstances described by the institution justify a delay. The Committee also determines how the institution's/program sponsor's response to adopted stipulations is to be reviewed. The Committee may require a second site visit for this purpose. Failure to remove all stipulations may result in the denial of accreditation to the entire institution/program sponsor.

Appeals

- a. **Appeals to Committee on Accreditation.** Within thirty days after an accreditation site visit, the institution/program sponsor may submit evidence to the Committee on Accreditation that the site visit team demonstrated bias or acted arbitrarily or capriciously or contrary to the policies of this *Framework* or the procedural guidelines of the Committee on Accreditation. (Information related to the quality of a program or the education unit that was not previously provided to the accreditation site visit team may not be considered by the Committee on Accreditation.) The Committee on Accreditation may use this evidence to make a different decision than was recommended by the site visit team. If the Committee on Accreditation makes such a decision, the leader of the team may file a dissent with the Commission. If the Committee on Accreditation decides that an incorrect judgment was made by a team and that the result leaves some doubt about the most appropriate decision to be made, the Committee on Accreditation may assign a new site visit team to visit the institution/program sponsor and provide a recommendation on its accreditation.
- b. **Appeals to the Commission.** Pursuant to *Education Code* Section 44374-e, an institution/program sponsor has the right to appeal to the Commission a decision by the Committee on Accreditation to deny accreditation or accredit with stipulations. Such an appeal must be based on evidence that accreditation procedures by the site visit team or decisions by the Committee on Accreditation were arbitrary, capricious, unfair, or contrary to the policies in this *Framework* or the procedural guidelines of the Committee on Accreditation. Information related to the quality of a program or the education unit or LEA that was not previously provided to the accreditation site visit team may not be considered by the Commission. The Commission resolves each appeal pursuant to *Education Code* Section 44372-f.

Complaints about Credential Program Quality

When one or more complaints about a credential program indicate that the program may not be meeting Commission adopted standards, the Executive Director of the Commission may investigate the basis for the concerns, provide technical assistance to the institution/program sponsor, or refer the concerns to the Committee on Accreditation for consideration of possible action.

Section 6 Board of Institutional Reviewers

This section governs both initial and continuing accreditation reviewers.

A. Board of Institutional Reviewers

To conduct reviews for the initial and continuing accreditation of institutions/program sponsors, the Executive Director of the Commission maintains a pool of trained reviewers consisting of California college and university faculty members, staff and administrators; elementary and secondary school teachers and other certificated professionals, pursuant to *Education Code* Section 44374(b). These reviewers may participate as reviewers in Program Assessment documents and/or Site Visits. Individuals may serve in one of those capacities or both. The pool consists of individuals who are geographically and culturally diverse, and who represent gender equity and who have expertise across the spectrum of credential areas. The Committee on Accreditation establishes criteria for membership in the pool. The Executive Director adds new members to the pool when necessary.

Conflict of Interest Care is exercised to avoid conflicts of interest involving accreditation team members and the institution/sponsor being reviewed, such as current, or past enrollment; programmatic collaboration; past, prospective or present employment; or spousal connections.

B. Team Structure, Size and Expertise

1. **Initial Program Approval:** New programs may be reviewed by Commission staff members who have expertise in the credential area. If the Commission staff does not possess the necessary expertise, the program proposals may be reviewed by external experts selected by the Executive Director. New programs are reviewed by one to two reviewers.
2. **Continuing Program Review (Program Assessment Reviewers):** For each program being considered for continuing accreditation, the Executive Director appoints Program Assessment reviewers. Reviewers are responsible for reviewing a credential program from the program sponsor. The document reviewers will prepare a report to the Committee on Accreditation containing preliminary findings on all standards and a recommendation regarding the site visit. Reviewers with appropriate experience and qualifications are responsible for professional judgments about credential programs. Reviewers should have sufficient expertise to make sound judgments about the program under review. Each program document should have at least two reviewers and a team leader should be designated to serve as a contact for the Commission to ensure appropriate communication to the site visit review team.
3. **Continuing Institutional Accreditation (Site Visit Reviewers):** For an institution/sponsor being considered for continuing accreditation, the Executive

Director appoints a site visit team and designates a team leader. The accreditation team members have responsibility for reviewing the Common Standards and either confirming or altering the findings from the Program Assessment. The size of the site visit team will be determined based upon factors such as: enrollment, complexity of programs, and satellite locations. One to three members will have primary responsibility for the program findings. Where issues have been identified for further review by the Program Assessment about particular credential programs, and agreed to by the Committee on Accreditation, additional members with expertise in the specific areas will be added to the site visit team.

- 4. Team Expertise.** The range of credential programs at an institution/sponsor must be reflected in the expertise of the reviewers, but there need not be a one-to-one correspondence between credential programs and reviewer specializations. Student enrollments in programs, the complexity of programs, and/or the numbers of specialized programs offered by an institution/program sponsor will all be considered when both Program Assessment reviewers and Site Visit teams are created. The nature of the preliminary findings will also be considered in establishing the site visit team.

C. Organization of Continuing Accreditation Activities

- 1. Coordination and Communication between the Program Assessment Reviewers and the Site Visit Teams.** Clear and timely communication from the Program Assessment Reviewers to the Committee on Accreditation and from the Committee on Accreditation to the sponsor and site visit team is essential. To support a comprehensive and complete review of the program sponsor and all its programs, members of the site visit team may have previously served as Program Assessment Reviewers for the institution/program sponsor.
- 2. Team Leader.** The Executive Director appoints an experienced reviewer as the leader of a sponsor's Site Visit team for continuing accreditation. The leader's roles are to assist the Commission's staff consultant in planning the review, participate in team size and composition decisions, and provide leadership in team training, orientation and support during the site visit. The team leader and the Commission's staff consultant are jointly responsible for management of the program assessment and site visit.

D. Training, Orientation and Evaluation

Prior to participation in accreditation review activities, all Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR) members participate in two kinds of in-depth training and orientation. All training and orientation is evaluated by participants to guide later training and orientation.

- 1. Training.** To ensure that accreditation review activities examine issues of quality in educator preparation, prospective BIR members participate in an intensive training program, which focuses on document review, data analysis, team skills, interview

techniques, accreditation procedures, and the consistent application of standards. In adopting an *Accreditation Handbook*, the Committee on Accreditation will attend to appropriate differentiation in the training of new and returning team members and team leaders and training and calibration for the different types of review activities: Initial Program Approval, Continuing Program Assessment, and Site Visits. The Board of Institutional Reviewers will have members who are involved in all types of review activities but not all BIR members must be trained in all types of reviews. All reviewers must be trained in the specific activity or activities in which he or she will be participating.

2. Orientation.

Initial Program Approval: As new programs are submitted by eligible institutions or new program standards are adopted, documents are submitted by eligible institutions/program sponsors. A Commission staff member will be assigned to the program area. The staff member will work to ensure calibration of reader responses to the standards and work with all reviewers to ensure that all program documents submitted for initial program approval are reviewed in an equitable manner.

Program Assessment: Program Assessment Document reviewers may meet regionally to review program documents. At such a meeting, a Commission staff consultant will be present. Program Assessment Document reviewers will receive training on all standard updates and changes.

Site Visit Reviewers: On the day prior to the beginning of an accreditation site visit, team members meet to discuss their observations about the institutional self-study report, the preliminary program standard findings, and review their prior training as site visit reviewers. They thoroughly plan the team activities for the site visit under the team leader.

3. Evaluation of Training and Accreditation Activities. To ensure that future team training and orientations are as effective as possible, all team members will be asked to evaluate training and orientation activities. The Committee on Accreditation will analyze the responses and modify the training appropriately.

4. Evaluation of BIR Members. To ensure that accreditation activities are as effective as possible, free of bias and in accordance with high standards of professionalism, BIR members will be evaluated by accreditation team members and institutional representatives. This feedback will be considered in determining assignment to future accreditation activities.

E. Role of Staff

Professional expertise of staff will be used in accreditation activities and staff members will be assigned to facilitate accreditation activities. Prior to participation in accreditation review activities, staff will participate in the appropriate training and orientation.

Initial Accreditation Activities:

1. **Initial Institution/Program Sponsor Approval** - Staff reviews the response to the Preconditions and verifies that all the legal requirements and the requirements set by the Commission have been met by the prospective program sponsor.
2. **Initial Approval of Programs** - Staff facilitates the review of initial program documents using members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR) or if staff has the expertise required, completes the review of the initial program document.

Continuing Accreditation Activities:

3. **Biennial Reports** - Staff will review all Biennial Reports and prepare a summary report for the Committee.
4. **Program Assessment** - Staff facilitates the review of program documents in the fourth year of the accreditation cycle using members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR).
5. **Site Visit** - Staff is assigned to facilitate the site visit. The assignment takes place a minimum of one year prior to the site visit and begins with the 'Year-Out Pre-visit'. In the year of the site visit, staff makes an additional pre-visit to assist in planning the site visit. The team members are members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR) and staff is responsible to ensure that the accreditation procedures as developed by the Committee are followed.

Section 7

Articulation Between National and State Accreditation

Upon the request of an institution, the accreditation of an education unit (school, college or department of education) or program by a national accrediting body shall substitute for state accreditation provided that the Committee on Accreditation certifies to the Commission that the national accrediting entity fulfills the following conditions (*Education Code 44374 (f)*):

A. National Accreditation of an Education Unit

1. The national accrediting entity agrees to use the Common Standards that have been adopted by the Commission.
2. The accreditation process of the national entity includes on-site reviews.
3. The team has two co-leaders, one appointed according to state accreditation procedures and one appointed by the national accrediting body.
4. The team members reviewing the Common Standards include members appointed by the national body and at least one California member selected according to state accreditation procedures.
5. The review of all program documentation must be completed prior to the site visit, the preliminary findings on all programs will be available to the accreditation team, and the state team members will substantiate the preliminary findings at the visit.
6. Accreditation teams represent ethnic and gender diversity, and include elementary and secondary school practitioners and postsecondary education members.
7. The period of accreditation is consistent with a seven-year cycle and is compatible with the accreditation activities established by the state.

B. National Accreditation of a Credential Program

1. The accrediting entity agrees to use the adopted California Program Standards for the specific credential under Option 1, or the standards used by the national entity are determined by the Committee to be equivalent to those adopted by the Commission under Option 1.
2. The accreditation team represents ethnic and gender diversity.
3. The accreditation team includes both postsecondary members and elementary and secondary school practitioners; a minimum of one voting member is from California.
4. The period of accreditation is consistent with a seven-year cycle and is compatible with the accreditation activities established by the state.
5. Nationally accredited credential programs participate in the unit accreditation process. The national accreditation of the program serves in lieu of the state's Program Assessment process.

Section 8 Evaluation and Modification of the *Framework*

This section governs the evaluation and modification of the *Accreditation Framework*.

A. Evaluation of the *Accreditation Framework*

1. **Evaluation of Accreditation System.** The Commission and the Committee on Accreditation are jointly responsible, in consultation with educational institutions/program sponsors and organizations, for establishing, maintaining, and continually refining a system of on-going evaluation of the accreditation system for educator preparation.
2. **Evaluation Report and Recommendations.** The Commission and the Committee on Accreditation shall implement a process of continual evaluation and improvement to its accreditation system.

B. Modification of the *Accreditation Framework*

1. **General Provisions Regarding Modifications.** The Commission will consult with the Committee on Accreditation and educational institutions, program sponsors, and organizations regarding any proposed modifications of the *Framework*. Modifications will occur in public meetings of the Commission, after the Commission has considered relevant information provided by the Committee on Accreditation, postsecondary institutions, accreditation team members, the Commission's professional staff, and other concerned individuals. The Commission will determine the date when a policy modification is effective.
2. **Refinements and Clarifications of the *Framework*.** The Commission may modify the *Accreditation Framework* to refine or clarify its contents, as needed. The Commission retains the authority to reconsider and modify the Program Standards for Options 1, 2 or 3 as the need arises.
3. **Significant Modifications of the *Framework*.** The Commission will maintain without significant modifications the *Framework's* major features and options, unless there is compelling evidence that a significant modification is warranted. The determination of compelling evidence and the warranted significant modification will be made by the Commission with the concurrence of the Committee on Accreditation and the Chancellor of the California State University, the President of the University of California, and the President of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities.

Appendix A

Accreditation Activities Summary Charts

Accreditation Cycle and Activities

	Institution or Program Sponsors		CTC and COA	Accreditation Activities
	At the Institution	Submit		
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Gathering & Analysis 	Biennial Report Year 6,7 & 1	Review report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biennial Data Report: Staff review of the report could result in a request for additional information and/or a focused site visit. In addition, institution may be completing follow-up from the site visit in Year 6. All institutions will continue data gathering and analysis annually.
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Gathering & Analysis 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data gathering and analysis is on-going at the institution No report unless there was follow-up from questions generated from the Year 6, 7 and 1 Biennial Report.
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Gathering & Analysis Prepare program document updates 	Biennial Report Years 2 & 3	Review report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biennial Data Report: Staff review of the report could result in a request for additional information and/or a focused site visit.
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit Program Document(s) Data Gathering & Analysis 	Program Assessment*	Review Assessment Document (s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program reviewers are assigned to review each program's documentation and pose questions for institution. Program review teams agree on preliminary findings for program standards.
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Gathering & Analysis Prepare Common Standards self-study for site visit 	Biennial Reports Years 4 & 5	Preliminary Program Review questions for sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biennial Data Report: Staff review of the report could result in a request for additional information and/or a focused site visit. Program reviewers submit preliminary findings and remaining questions or concerns to the COA, with recommendations for any needed follow-up at the site visit. COA determines which, if any program(s) need to be included in the site visit and notifies institution at least one year prior to the site visit date.
Year 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Gathering & Analysis Complete preparations for site visit Host site visit 	Common Standards Self-Study	Conduct Site Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site team is provided with preliminary findings from program review teams and all previous documentation from this cycle. Team is also provided with prior accreditation team report. Site team visits the institution reviewing all Common Standards and program(s) identified by the Program Reviews. Site team submits an accreditation report to COA, with recommendations. COA makes an accreditation decision and specifies required follow-up if necessary.
Year 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Gathering & Analysis Follow-up to site visit if necessary 	Site visit response	Follow-up to site visit, if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COA reviews follow-up, if warranted, asks further questions. Follow up may exceed one year at the discretion of the COA. After completing the seven year cycle, the institution begins the cycle again

* Data related to approved subject matter programs is submitted in Year 4

Appendix B

Common Standards

To be added later

Appendix C

California Education Code

To be added later

Appendix D

Glossary

<i>Accreditation Framework</i>	The document that sets forth the policies of the Commission regarding the accreditation of educator preparation in California.
<i>Accreditation Handbook</i>	The document that details the procedures that implement accreditation according to the <i>Accreditation Framework</i> .
Annual Accreditation Report	A document presented to the CTC by the COA that summarizes information regarding each year's accreditation activities.
Biennial Reports	An institutional report that summarizes data on candidate competence for each program within an institution/program sponsor. The Biennial Report also provides information about how those data informs program improvement.
Board of Institutional Reviewers	To conduct reviews for the initial and continuing accreditation of institutions/program sponsors, the Executive Director of the Commission maintains a pool of trained reviewers consisting of California college and university faculty members, staff and administrators; elementary and secondary school teachers and other certificated professionals, pursuant to <i>Education Code</i> Section 44374(b). These reviewers may participate as reviewers in Program Assessment documents and/or Site Visits. Individuals may serve in one of those capacities or both. The pool consists of individuals who are geographically and culturally diverse, and who represent gender equity and who have expertise across the spectrum of credential areas. The Committee on Accreditation establishes criteria for membership in the pool. The Executive Director adds new members to the pool when necessary.
Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC)	The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing is an agency in the Executive Branch of California State government. It was created in 1970 by the Ryan Act and is the oldest of the autonomous state standards boards in the nation. The major purpose of the agency is to serve as a state standards board for educator preparation for the public schools of California, the licensing and credentialing of professional educators in the State, the enforcement of professional practices of educators, and the discipline of credential holders in the State of California.
Committee on Accreditation (COA)	A Committee of twelve members (six from institutions of higher education and six from K-12 public schools) established by <i>Education Code</i> and appointed by the Commission to oversee the implementation and effectiveness of accreditation activities.
Common Standards	The Common Standards deal with aspects of program quality that are the same for all credential programs. The institution responds to each Common Standard by providing pertinent information, including information about individual programs. Common standards can be found within each program's standard

	document.
Ed Code	Statutes, laws and regulations dealing with education.
Educator Preparation Program Standards	Program standards address aspects of program quality and effectiveness that apply to each type of educator preparation program offered by a program sponsor. Program standards contain overall summary statements describing the nature and purpose of each standard, plus required elements that further clarify required aspects subsumed within the domain of the standard. Program sponsors must meet all applicable program standards and required elements before the program application may be approved by the Commission.
Experimental Standards	Standards submitted by institutions/program sponsors used for program development, submission and approval with a focus on a research question.
Initial Institution /Program Sponsor Approval	An institution/program sponsor that would like to offer educator preparation programs must first be granted this approval by the CTC.
Initial Program Approval	The approval to begin a program that has not already been operational at an institution/program sponsor.
Institutional Report (IR)	The term that NCATE uses for the document prepared by the institution prior to the site visit. The IR serves the same purpose as the Common Standards Self Study.
National or Professional Program Standards	California institutions may propose program standards that have been developed by national or state professional organizations. Such a proposal may be submitted to the Committee on Accreditation with a statement of the institution's reasons for requesting this option and the requested National or Professional Program Standards. If the Committee determines that the requested standards, taken as a whole, provide a level of professional quality comparable to the standards adopted by the Commission under Option 1 (California Program Standards), the Committee approves the proposed standards for use as Program Standards in the initial or continuing accreditation of credential program. If the Committee determines that the requested standards do not adequately address one or more aspects of California Standards (Common and/or Program), the Committee may approve the requested standards but also require the institution/program sponsor address the missing portions of the California Standards.
Ongoing Data Collection by Institutions/Program Sponsors	A variety of data collection activities, determined by the institution/program sponsor and the subsequent analysis and sharing of the data for program improvement.
Preconditions	Preconditions are requirements that must be met in order for an accrediting association or licensing agency to consider accrediting a program sponsor or approving its programs or schools. Some preconditions are based on state laws, while other preconditions are established by Commission policy. Preconditions can be found within each program's standard document.

Preliminary Report	An activity of the Site Visit (Year 6) due no less than 12 months before the site visit. This brief report describes the institutional mission and includes information about institutional demographics, special emphasis programs, and other unique features of the institution/program sponsor—including its response to accreditation preconditions established by state laws and the Commission.
Program Assessment	Program Assessment is the feature of the accreditation system that asks institutions/program sponsors to report on their ongoing improvement efforts at the program level. It is designed so that institutions/program sponsors mirror the reflective practices that are taught to candidates. Program Assessment asks institutions/program sponsors to consider how they measure candidate competence and how those measures inform instruction, assessment and program design/implementation. Program Assessment examines each program individually and informs the Site Visit that will take place in two years—year 6 of the accreditation cycle.
Self Study	An activity of the Site Visit (Year 6) due no fewer than 60-90 days before the Site Visit. The report focuses on the Common Standards for the team leader and the Commission staff consultant,
Site Visit	An accreditation team visits each institution/program sponsor in the sixth year of the accreditation cycle. The institution/program sponsor prepares for a site visit that focuses mainly on the Common Standards, but may include any program areas identified in advance by the Committee on Accreditation (COA) as a result of the program review process. The Biennial Reports, Program Assessment Document and Preliminary Report of Findings will be made available to the site review team in order to confirm the Preliminary Report of Findings from the Program Assessment. The site visit will result in an accreditation recommendation for consideration and action by the COA.