

Discussion of Process and Procedures Regarding Denial of Accreditation March 2012

Overview of this Report

This agenda item continues the discussion begun at the February 2012 COA meeting regarding the possibility of changing the Commission's policies and processes related to denying accreditation after an accreditation site visit. This agenda item proposes that the COA begin to develop a definition for Denial of Accreditation and continues the discussion about possible processes related to a new policy.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item. Staff proposes that the COA continue its discussion from the February meeting and begin to shape the development of a definition for inclusion in the *Accreditation Handbook* to guide teams and institutions undergoing accreditation. Because of the serious implications for this decision, staff seeks to work closely with the COA on the development of the definition and implications, rather than staff proposing a definition and COA responding to that draft. The COA may wish to work in subgroups on the development of the definition and identifying implications at this meeting.

Background

The COA discussed the topic of Denial of Accreditation at its February 2012 meeting. The url to that item is as follows: <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/coa-agendas/2012-02/2012-02-item-15.pdf>.

The February agenda item on this topic asked two critical questions:

- Does the COA believe the Accreditation Handbook needs to be changed to allow teams to recommend denial of accreditation as a result of an accreditation site visit?
- Does the COA believe it should change the Accreditation Handbook to allow the COA the ability to deny accreditation to an institution as a result of an accreditation site visit?

The COA responded in the affirmative to both the above questions.

As a result, a definition needs to be drafted, and ultimately adopted by the COA, and procedures need to be developed and clarified as the current procedures apply only to when a denial of accreditation is recommended after a revisit.

Developing a Definition

Chapter 8 of the *Accreditation Handbook*, outlines the Accreditation Decisions Options and Implications. Below are the excerpts from the definitions of each of the various accreditation decision options: Accreditation, Accreditation with Stipulations, Accreditation with Major Stipulations, and Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Denial of Accreditation

The COA would deny accreditation only 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 program sponsor.

Staff requests that the COA work at this meeting to develop a draft revised definition. In particular, COA should discuss the following:

- 1) Should any of the definition above be retained?
- 2) Would denial of accreditation continue to be an option for one population of institutions after a revisit and after the opportunity to address standards?
- 3) What language would be appropriate for denial of accreditation after an initial accreditation?
- 4) What language should be used to identify the severity of the issues that would have to be identified in order to warrant denial of accreditation? How can that level of severity be captured in the definition?
- 5) Should there be language in the definition that covers fraud or misrepresentation of facts to candidates or to the Commission?

Implications of Denial of Accreditation

Currently, the following implications are listed in the *Accreditation Handbook*. Staff asks that the COA review the implications to determine whether revisions to the implication of denial of accreditation after the initial accreditation would be necessary and if so, in what ways.

Operational Implications

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 that accreditation has been denied and that all programs will end at the end of the semester, quarter, or within 3 months of when the COA decision occurs.
- 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 programs or to provide adequate assistance to permit students to complete their particular 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 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 enjoined from re-applying for institutional approval for a minimum of two years.

Next Steps

Based on the COA's discussion and preliminary draft language developed at this meeting, staff will prepare an additional item for future COA meetings.