

Discussion of Possible Handbook Language Related to Inactive Programs Being Withdrawn October 2014

Overview

This item provides information about the process that will be followed should a program sponsor not request withdrawal or reactivation of a program once it has been inactive for the maximum amount of time allowable by the commission (5 years).

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the information presented below be discussed and the proposed Accreditation Handbook language be approved.

Background

For a variety of reasons, an institution or program sponsor may decide to declare a Commission approved program 'inactive'. For inactive programs, the COA has defined five years as the maximum amount of time a program may be inactive. Prior to 5 years from declaring a program inactive the program sponsor is required to determine whether the program will be withdrawn permanently or reactivated. The COA does not have a formal policy or process to be followed when a program sponsor fails to withdraw or reactivate the program after this 5 year period. Currently there are two programs that have been inactive for 6 years, four programs that have been inactive for 5 years, 16 programs that have been inactive for 4 years, and 21 programs that have been inactive for 3 years. As the program nears the 5 year maximum for inactive status, staff sends inquiries to the institution to alert its leadership to the impending deadline. However, the current processes are silent about the consequences if no action is taken by the institution to reactivate the program or to request withdrawal of the program.

Staff proposes adding a section to the *Accreditation Handbook* that clarifies that institutions will be notified of any inactive programs that are nearing the 5 year maximum for inactive status and provided an opportunity to determine whether to request reactivation or withdrawal of the program. Further, the *Handbook* language would clarify that should the Commission not receive a communication from the institution of its intention, the program will be automatically withdrawn.

In addition, the Commission staff recommends the adoption of an appeal process. To appeal an automatic withdrawal, an institution will be given 90 days from the date of notification of withdrawal to submit a formal letter requesting reconsideration and reactivation of the inactive program. The appeal letter must be on formal letterhead and should be addressed to the Administrator of Accreditation. It must state the reasons for wanting the program reactivated and must follow all procedures outlined in the Accreditation Handbook for reactivation of programs. Once the letter is received, the issue will be placed on the next regularly scheduled Committee on Accreditation meeting agenda for consideration.

The proposed language below is provided for COA discussion and possible adoption for inclusion in the *Accreditation Handbook*. The proposed additional language is included in tracked changes.

Chapter 3: Inactive Program

An institution or program sponsor may decide to declare a program that has been previously approved by the CTC or accredited by the COA as 'inactive.' The following procedures must be followed:

- The institution or program sponsor notifies the Administrator of Accreditation of its intention to declare the program inactive. The program can be deemed inactive when it no longer accepts new candidates into the program and then is recognized only to exist to complete the program for current candidates.
- The notification to the Administrator must include the anticipated date that the inactive status will begin (i.e. the date from which candidates will no longer be admitted to the program).
- Candidates already admitted to the program are notified in writing by the institution or program sponsor that the program is being declared inactive.
- The institution assists enrolled candidates in planning for the completion of their program. A plan regarding how current candidates will complete the program must accompany the inactive request.
- The institution or program sponsor determines a date by which all enrolled candidates will be able to finish the program, not to exceed a maximum of one year after the normative completion date...
- Following the date after which all current candidates will be able to complete the program, as determined by the institution, the program may no longer operate and the institution may no longer recommend candidates for the credential until such a time as the program is re-activated. The program will not be listed on the CTC's public web page for approved programs. The program will appear as inactive in the Credential Information Guide (CIG) web page (http://134.186.81.79/fmi/xsl/CIG_apm/PPPM_all.xsl).
- An inactive program will be included in accreditation activities in a modified manner as determined by the Administrator of Accreditation.
- An inactive program may be re-activated only when the institution submits a request to the COA and the COA has taken action to reactive the program. If the program standards under which the program was approved have been modified, the institution or program sponsor must address the updated standards before the program may be re-activated.
- An inactive program may stay on inactive status for no longer than 5 years; after which, the program sponsor should determine whether the program should be withdrawn permanently or reactivated.
- Programs that have been on Inactive status will be notified as the 5 year maximum approaches. Programs that do not respond by notifying the Commission of their intention to withdraw or reactivate the program will be placed on a COA Agenda immediately following the 5 year maximum date and automatically withdrawn as of the date of the COA meeting.

- To appeal an automatic withdrawal, an institution is given 90 days from the date of notification of withdrawal to submit a formal letter requesting reconsideration. The appeal letter must be on formal letterhead and should be addressed to the Administrator of Accreditation. Any institution requesting reactivation must follow the existing reactivation processes and procedures. Once the received and all appropriate documentation reviewed, it will be placed on the nearest upcoming Committee on Accreditation meeting agenda for consideration.

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Next Steps

If the COA adopts the policy and the language included above for *Chapter 3, Institutional and Program Approval* staff will revise the document and repost the *Accreditation Handbook*.