



CTC's Accreditation

System - Biennial Reports

Frequently Asked Questions

The Commission adopted a revised accreditation system in 2006 and a revised Accreditation Framework in December 2007. An underlying expectation of the revised accreditation system is that all accredited credential programs are engaged in continuous program improvement that is grounded in the collection and analysis of data about their candidates. This includes on-going data collection about candidate competence and program effectiveness, analyses data, and requires that institutions and programs implement programmatic improvements based upon that data. The biennial report is the means by which each accredited institution demonstrates that it engages in such activity and that information about candidate competence in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of the credential, in fact, informs appropriate programmatic improvements and refinements.

- 1. What role does the biennial report play in the revised accreditation system?** The biennial report is a mechanism that demonstrates how a credential-granting institution is utilizing data to assess candidate competencies and to review its program. The biennial report processes are closely related to revised Common Standard 2 (Unit and Program Evaluation System), revised Common Standard 9 (Assessment of Candidate Competence)
See <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/CommonStandardsTeacherPrep.pdf>, and all program standards related to candidate competencies.
- 2. Who needs to participate in the biennial reporting process?** Any institution, district, county office or other entity approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to offer a credential or certificate program in California must participate in the accreditation system, and, therefore, must participate in all components of that system – biennial reporting, program assessment, and site visits.
- 3. Which programs need to submit a biennial report?** Every accredited institution, district, county office, or entity must submit a biennial report that includes information for every one of its approved credential programs as well as an overarching analysis/statement about all the programs it offers. In essence, each biennial report must include two sections: 1) *Section A* must be completed by each approved credential or certificate program that is offered by an institution, and 2) A single *Section B* that addresses all programs, summarizes findings across the institution, and identifies any institutional change proposed or planned across programs must be completed and signed by the Unit leader.

The biennial report process begins with academic year 2007-08, however, institutions must submit biennial reports only in years 1, 3, and 5 of the 7 year accreditation cycle.

For information specific to an institution's placement in the accreditation cycle, see www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/accred-files/Accred-Activities-by-Cohort.pdf. The specific years in

which a particular institution is required to submit a report will depend upon its placement in the accreditation cycle.

Institutions in the Orange, Green, and Violet cohorts are required to submit biennial reports beginning with 2008.

Institutions in the Red, Yellow, and Indigo cohorts are required to submit biennial reports beginning with 2009.

4. What is the definition of a program for the purposes of the biennial report?

A program is a particular course of study leading to a credential or certificate that has been approved by the Committee on Accreditation. All candidates enrolled in the same course of study are in the same program.

5. Can institutions combine program information for purposes of the biennial report? Yes, in appropriate circumstances and with appropriate disclosure. If an institution operates two programs that are very similar, but differ slightly in coursework or field experience, it would be acceptable for the institution to combine these two programs into a single biennial report. However, the institution must include a brief statement that clarifies which programs are represented in the data and a brief statement of the similarities and differences in program structure (a rationale for why the institution chose to combine the reporting of the data).

6. What about institutions that offer a program at multiple sites? Can each site send in its own report? No. An institution must submit one biennial report Section A for each approved credential program it operates. This means that if a program is offered at different sites, the data must be aggregated across all sites for analysis and inclusion in the biennial report. Accreditation looks at the institution as a whole and all its programs together. The biennial reporting process is no different in approach. The location of all programs will be noted in Section A of the report.

7. When are the biennial reports due? Institutions must choose one of three possible reporting dates. They are: August 15, October 15, or December 15. The reports include data from the prior academic year. For instance, reports submitted on December 15, 2009 should include data on candidates enrolled in academic year 2008-09.

8. For which candidates should assessment data be provided in the biennial report? The biennial report requires institutions to report candidate assessment data for the prior two academic years. However, because the 2007-08 year is the first year of implementation of the biennial reporting component of the accreditation system and institutions need to begin to collect data, those required to submit reports in 2008 and 2009 will be expected to submit data for only one academic year. After that time, all biennial reports must include two years of data.

9. What data should be included in the biennial reports? The reports should focus on assessments that are used to ensure that candidates have the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of credential holders and on assessments the program uses to improve its instructional and support services. Programs do not need to provide data for every type of assessment that is used with candidates, but should focus on **4-6 key** assessments.

10. Should TPA data be included for reports completed by Multiple and Single Subject programs? Yes. Data from the teaching performance assessment is an ideal assessment to include for biennial reporting purposes for Multiple and Single Subject programs. At this point in time, the Commission expects MS and SS programs to include first time pass rates by Task or event and aggregated scores by Task or event. Examples of ways to report this data will be available early in 2008 on the Commission’s website at:

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/program-accred-biennial-reports.html>.

The Commission advises checking this website periodically for updates.

As the TPA is implemented, the Commission will continue to work with the field to determine the appropriate TPA-related data for purposes of biennial reporting and accreditation. The Commission advises institutions to check the webpage listed in the above paragraph for updates on this topic.

11. For non-teaching credentials in particular, what kinds of data can be submitted?

For credential programs for which there are no “TPA-like” assessments, data from key assessments such as key course assignments, observations, PRAXIS scores, and portfolio reviews, for example, can be aggregated and used to reflect candidate competency and program effectiveness.

12. What kinds of information could institutions provide in addition to candidate assessment data? In all credential areas, the biennial report could include information collected by institutions on their candidates during the program and once out in the field. Retention data, data from local BTSA programs, employer survey data, and other types of data that reflect program efficacy could be included in the report.

13. The report asks for “program completer” data. Is the term defined the same as in the Title II report?

Not necessarily. The Title II requirements are very specific, for a particular federal reporting purpose, and tied to federal statutes. The CTC accreditation process is interested more broadly in the efficacy of the programs in preparing well qualified candidates and the program improvement process undertaken by institutions and programs. Therefore, in reporting data that an institution and a program uses to make programmatic decisions, the institution may define “recent program completer” more flexibly than the federal statutes. In essence, the biennial report asks what data programs collect on their candidates once they have earned their credential and are practicing in the profession.

14. Should institutions report candidate-level scores? No. Programs should report aggregated data for their candidates and recent program completers/graduates.

15. Should institutions include admissions data? No. Because the biennial report is focused on efforts to assess candidates who are enrolled in a program and once they are out in the field, please do not include admissions data in the report. Rather, the admissions standard will be reviewed during the program assessment phase and during the site visit.

16. What level of analysis is required? The Commission does not prescribe a particular level of analysis as long as the analyses reported are useful for determining whether or not candidates are developing the appropriate competencies, and for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the credential program. The reports must show that the institution’s personnel analyzed the data and used

the results to identify programmatic changes and improvements. In general, inclusion of the possible response or score options, the range of responses or scores, the mean (or mode(s)) and standard deviation, along with limited narrative if desired, are sufficient analyses for describing candidate and program information.

17. What's the best way to display candidate or program data? Please do not report individual candidate data. Aggregated data can be reported in table or chart format. Different chart options include bar charts and pie charts. If you display the data in one format, do not also display it in another format. Some limited narrative may be included, but the Committee on Accreditation asks that this narrative be brief and concise.

18. How should an institution report its candidate data when very few candidates (less than 10) are enrolled? Programs with very small enrollments (less than 10) can report aggregated data as long as student identification cannot be inferred by the data. When feasible, these programs might wish to combine data from more than one year into one analysis to gain a better measure of student growth towards competency. This method would not be appropriate if significant programmatic changes had been made between the different cohorts.

19. Do approved programs that are not operating need to submit a biennial report? Yes. Using the biennial template, please identify the program and then, in Section A.I., indicate that the program is not currently operating.

20. What is the review process for the reports? The review process for the reports happens at several levels. Upon submission, the report is reviewed by Commission staff. Staff reviews the reports 1) for completeness, 2) for the inclusion of candidate data, 3) for the analyses of candidate and program data, and 4) to ensure that the next steps or action plan reflects the data analyses and is aligned with program and common standards. Staff will summarize the information for the Committee on Accreditation.

When an institution submits documents for the program assessment (year 4 of the accreditation cycle) and when preparing for a site visit (year 6 of the cycle), the biennial report will also be sent to the appropriate review team to provide them with a more comprehensive representation of the institution's activities.

21. What would happen if an institution does not submit a report? Biennial reporting is now an integral part of the revised *Accreditation Framework* adopted by the Commission at its December 2007 meeting. If an institution does not submit a report by the designated due date, the Commission staff will contact the institution to ensure that the report will be forthcoming. If these further efforts fail to result in the submission of a report in a timely manner, the Committee on Accreditation may review the accreditation status of the institution and, ultimately, remove approval of its credential programs.

22. Would information from the biennial report ever result in removal of accreditation? It is possible that information provided by an institution in a biennial report could reveal a significant concern with the operation or efficacy of a credential program. In such cases, the Committee on Accreditation would likely request additional information from the institution, direct staff to hold a technical assistance meeting with the institution to address the concerns, or schedule a focused site

visit to be conducted by members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR) apart from the regularly scheduled accreditation visit. However, only after an accreditation site visit by a review panel of experts would the institution be subject to stipulations or denial of accreditation.

23. May institutions use information provided for NCATE, ASHA, or other national accrediting body in biennial reports? Yes. Information prepared for national or professional accrediting bodies may certainly be used for the biennial report as long as the resulting report satisfies requirements of the biennial report.

24. How long should it take institutions to complete the report? Different institutions have reported different amounts of time required to complete the biennial report. The first time through may be somewhat time-consuming, particularly if the program has not been collecting and managing candidate data in an easily accessible, electronic form. Once the data systems and processes are in place, subsequent reports should be less burdensome.

25. Are there examples of reports institutions can review to help us develop our reports? The Commission's Professional Services Division will maintain a web page dedicated to each of the three components (biennial reports, program assessment, and site visits) of the accreditation system on its main webpage:

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/accred-implementation.html>.

On the page devoted to biennial reports, one can find the report template as well as sample biennial reports from institutions that participated in the pilot process. As the process continues, samples from the first year of implementation as well as mock reports will be posted to assist institutions in understanding what is expected. Checking the webpage periodically for updates is advised.

26. Who can institutions contact with questions related to biennial reporting? While any of the Commission accreditation staff can answer questions about biennial reports, the two individuals with direct responsibility for the biennial report process are:

Cheryl Hickey chickey@ctc.ca.gov and Rebecca Parker at rparker@ctc.ca.gov