

Chapter Nine

Activities during the Seventh Year of the Accreditation Cycle

Introduction

Once an accreditation decision has been made by the COA, institutions still have an on-going responsibility to attend to accreditation matters in the seventh year of the accreditation cycle. Depending on the accreditation decision, these activities can range from simply continuing routine accreditation activities, such as collection and analysis of candidate and program data, to major revisions of programs to bring them into alignment with state-adopted standards. The specific activities will depend upon the issues identified by the review team and the accreditation decision rendered by the COA. Many, but not all, institutions will be required to submit a seventh year report. This chapter clarifies the expectations for the seventh year of the cycle and the seventh year reporting requirement.

I. Accreditation Decisions and Consequent Institution Activities

As described in the Chapter 8, the COA can make one of five accreditation decisions. These include the following:

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

Chapter 8 delineated the operational implications for each of the possible accreditation decisions, and summarizes some, but not all, of the required activities for each of the various accreditation decisions. Chapter 8 should be consulted for specific information about the definition and operational implications of each accreditation decision. Ultimately, the specific actions required of any given institution in the seventh year will be set forth in the action taken by the COA.

Expectations for All Institutions in the Seventh Year of the Cycle

Underlying the various components of the current accreditation system is the expectation that all institutions will be vigilant in addressing issues of program quality on an on-going basis. In the current system, this expectation does not cease with the completion of the site visit in the sixth year. On the contrary, the seventh year of the cycle is critical to the achievement of the purposes of accreditation (ensuring accountability, ensuring quality programs, adherence to standards, and fostering program improvement). Not only does the current system require that the institution act in a timely manner to address issues identified during the accreditation review, it assumes that all institutions engage in on-going program improvement that does not begin nor end with the site visit, regardless of the accreditation status of the institution.

For institutions for which stipulations were determined, action must be taken to address the stipulations in one calendar year. For this reason, the activities undertaken in the seventh year are particularly critical. Institutions with Major Stipulations or Probationary Stipulations that do not sufficiently address the stipulations could be faced with Denial of Accreditation.

All Institutions in the Seventh Year

Institutional follow-up is required of all approved institutions in the seventh year of the cycle, although a follow-up *report* is not necessarily required of all institutions. In the seventh year of the cycle, all institutions are expected to address issues raised during the accreditation process by the review teams and the COA. This means taking action within the policies and procedures of the institution to rectify and/or address issues related to Commission adopted standards. If an institution has no specific issues identified by the review teams and all standards were found to be met, it is expected that institutional personnel will continue to review candidate assessment data and available program effectiveness data with the objective of program improvement.

Accreditation

The *Accreditation Framework* provides the COA with the flexibility to require follow-up regardless of the accreditation decision, including those with a decision of Accreditation. The COA may require institutions with accreditation to provide a follow-up report that addresses how the institution is addressing standards not met or met with concerns, and the progress being made to address any other issues raised in the accreditation report or raised during the presentation to COA. The COA has broad flexibility to request a follow-up report on any topic or issue identified in the accreditation report. The COA may require that the information requested be provided in the form of a seventh year report. If follow-up reporting is required, the COA must specify this in the action taken at the time of the accreditation decision.

If the COA does not specify the need for a seventh year report from the institution receiving a decision of accreditation, then the institution, at a minimum, should participate in routine accreditation activities such as collection, analysis, and program improvement activities related to candidate assessment data and program effectiveness.

Accreditation with Stipulations

Any institution granted Accreditation with Stipulations must complete a report in the seventh year as part of the accreditation review process. This report should address the action taken by the institution to address any stipulations as well as the standards determined by the review team to be not met or met with concerns. In addition, the COA may require that the report address any other issue identified in the team report or raised during COA deliberations. All institutions with Accreditation with Stipulations must continue to work with a Commission consultant during the seventh year. In cases where the determination of Accreditation with Stipulations has been rendered, the COA will indicate whether the process for removal of stipulations includes a revisit to the institution.

No Revisit Required

In the cases where a revisit was determined unnecessary by COA, the consultant, and in some cases the team lead, will review the responses provided in the report submitted by the institution in the seventh year that identifies actions take to address stipulations. These responses will be summarized in an agenda item for the COA to consider in making its determination as to whether or not sufficient progress has been made to remove the stipulations. COA considers the recommendation of the Commission consultant and, if appropriate, the team lead in determining the removal of the stipulations at a regularly scheduled meeting. Institutional representatives should attend the meeting to ensure all questions and concerns of COA are addressed at the meeting as the members consider the removal of stipulations.

Required Revisit

If a site visit has been deemed necessary by the COA, it will be scheduled for approximately one year after the original site visit. The institution should continue working with a Commission staff consultant to plan for the revisit and to ensure common understanding of what is expected to be addressed at the revisit. If COA has determined a revisit or a focused site visit is necessary, the report submitted in the seventh year by the institution will be provided to the review team to help the team's assessment of the progress being made in addressing the findings of the review. The Commission consultant will work with the institution to determine the specific revisit needs as directed by the COA action and help guide the institution in determining the type of evidence and progress expected at the time of the site visit.

Upon the conclusion of the revisit, the revisit team will determine whether those standards deemed not met or met with concerns are now found to be met. A report of the revisit team will be provided to the COA and the COA, at one of its regularly scheduled public meetings, will discuss with the staff consultant, team lead, and institutional representatives the progress made in addressing the standards. If it is determined that sufficient progress has been made in meeting the standards, then the COA will remove the stipulations. If sufficient progress has not been made, the COA may change the accreditation decision and/or may impose additional stipulations with new timelines and expectations for compliance with the state adopted educator preparation standards.

Accreditation with Major Stipulations

Any institution granted Accreditation with Major Stipulations must submit a report in the seventh year addressing stipulations as part of the accreditation review process. This report should address the action taken by the institution to address any stipulations as well as the standards determined by the review team to be not met or met with concerns. In addition, the COA may require that the report address any other issue identified in the team report or raised during COA deliberations. This report will be used by the revisit team, along with any information collected during the revisit, to determine the progress being made in meeting the standards.

Required Revisit

In nearly all cases of Accreditation with Major Stipulations, a revisit to the institution will be required. This revisit should take place approximately one year after the original site visit. The COA will indicate in its action whether the revisit will be conducted by a Commission consultant and team lead, or with a full team. The size of the revisit team will largely depend on the number and type of stipulations and the number and type of programs with areas of concern identified.

During this seventh year, the institution should continue working with its Commission consultant to plan for the revisit and to ensure common understanding of what is expected to be addressed at the revisit. A report addressing stipulations and relevant standards must be provided by the institution which will, in turn, be provided to the review team to help the team's assessment of the progress being made in addressing the findings of the review. The Commission consultant will work with the institution to determine the specific revisit needs as directed by the COA and help guide the institution in determining the type of evidence and progress expected at the time of the site visit.

Upon the conclusion of the revisit, the revisit team will determine whether those standards deemed not met or met with concerns are now fully met. A report of the revisit team will be provided to the COA and the COA, at one of its regularly scheduled public meetings, will discuss with the staff consultant, team lead, and institutional representatives the progress made in addressing the standards. If it is determined that sufficient progress has been made in meeting the standards, then the COA may remove the stipulations. If sufficient progress has not been made, the COA may adopt a decision of Denial of Accreditation. If, in some cases, it determines that some progress has been made and it is appropriate to allow additional time for the institution to address the remaining stipulations, the COA could change the accreditation decision and/or may impose additional stipulations with new timelines and expectations for compliance with the state adopted educator preparation standards.

Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations

Like Accreditation with Stipulations and Accreditation with Major Stipulations, an institution given Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations is required to submit a report in the seventh year documenting how it has addressed all stipulations. However, numerous additional requirements are imposed on an institution with Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations during that seventh year of the cycle.

Plan to Address Stipulations

A determination of Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations requires that the institution submit an action plan describing the steps the institution will take to address the stipulations and provide updates at specified intervals, as determined by the COA. The COA determines the timeline for submitting the plan (see Chapter 8). The Commission staff consultant and the Administrator of Accreditation determine the sufficiency of the plan and provide updates to the COA as appropriate.

Revisit

A revisit is required for any institution with Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations. This revisit should take place approximately one year after the original site visit. During the seventh year, the institution should continue working with its Commission staff consultant to plan for the revisit and to ensure common understanding of what is expected to be addressed at the revisit. A report must be provided by the institution in the seventh year identifying how it has addressed the stipulations which will, in turn, be provided to the review team to help the team's assessment of the progress being made in addressing the findings of the review. The Commission consultant will work with the institution to determine the specific revisit needs as directed by the COA action and help guide the institution in determining the type of evidence and progress expected at the time of the site visit.

The team lead, team members, and staff consultant will participate in the revisit and provide a report to the COA about the progress that has been made in addressing standards. The report will include an updated decision on standards findings. COA will make a determination whether sufficient progress has been made to remove the stipulations and change the accreditation decision. If COA determines that sufficient progress has not been made, it could act to Deny Accreditation.

If, in some cases, it determines that some progress has been made and it is appropriate to allow additional time for the institution to address the remaining stipulations, the COA could change the accreditation decision and/or may impose additional stipulations with new timelines and expectations for compliance with the state adopted educator preparation standards.

Denial of Accreditation

If after a revisit, the COA determines that sufficient progress has not been made, the COA could recommend *Denial of Accreditation*.

The COA can deny accreditation upon either an initial visit or a revisit to an institution. Although a recommendation of Denial of Accreditation typically comes after a finding of probationary status at an initial visit and after the institution has been provided with an opportunity to institute improvements, a review team can recommend Denial of Accreditation at **any time** if the situation warrants the finding in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Handbook.

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

Institutional Requirement for a Report in the Seventh Year

The following chart clarifies which institutions are required to submit a report to the COA in the seventh year. Please note that the chart below only addresses the seventh year report, it does not list the numerous other possible requirements and limitations placed upon an institution as a result of a particular accreditation decision.

Accreditation Decision and Requirements for Submitting a Report in the Seventh Year

Activity	Accreditation	Accreditation with Stipulations	Accreditation with Major and Probationary Stipulations
Report Submitted to Commission	COA discretion	Yes	Yes
Type of Report	One of two options as determined by COA: 1) No report 2) Seventh Year Report	Report Addressing Stipulations	Report Addressing Stipulations
To be addressed in Report	(If required by COA) * Standards Not Met (if applicable) * Standards Met with Concerns (if applicable) Any other areas included in COA action at the time the accreditation decision is made.	* All Stipulations * Standards Not Met (if applicable) * Standards Met with Concerns (if applicable) Any other areas included in COA action at the time the accreditation decision is made.	* All Stipulations * Standards Not Met (if applicable) * Standards Met with Concerns (if applicable) Any other areas included in COA action at the time the accreditation decision is made.
Review Process	Commission staff reviews. Reports to COA that areas to be addressed were appropriately addressed in report.	If no revisit required, Commission staff reviews and reports progress made to COA. If revisit required, revisit review team reviews report, along with information collected during the revisit to determine whether progress has been made in meeting standards. In both cases, progress is reported to COA to determine whether to remove stipulations and change accreditation decision.	Revisit team reviews report along with information collected during the revisit to determine whether progress has been made in meeting standards. Revisit team makes findings on standards in light of this new information and COA determines whether to remove stipulations and change accreditation decision.