

Chapter Nine

Activities during the Seventh Year of the Accreditation Cycle

Introduction

Once an accreditation decision has been made by the Committee on Accreditation (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 continuing routine accreditation activities, such as collecting and analyzing candidate and program data, to major revisions of programs to address stipulations and bring programs into alignment with state-adopted standards. Specific activities will depend upon the issues identified by the accreditation site visit team and the accreditation decision rendered by the COA. Some institutions will be required to submit a report and some will be required to also undergo a revisit one year after COA action. This chapter clarifies the expectations for the seventh year of the accreditation cycle.

I. Accreditation Decisions and Consequent Institution Activities

As described in Chapter 8, the COA can make one of five accreditation decisions. They are:

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

Chapter 8 delineates the operational implications for each of the possible accreditation decisions, and summarizes some, but not all, of the required activities for each accreditation decision. 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 accreditation system is the expectation that all institutions will be vigilant in continuing to address issues of program quality. This expectation does not cease with the completion of the accreditation 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 (i.e., ensuring accountability, program quality, adherence to standards, and fostering program improvement). To this end, the system requires that institutions act in a timely manner to address issues identified during the accreditation site visit. It also requires institutions to engage in ongoing program improvement that does not begin nor end with the site visit, regardless of the accreditation status of the institution.

For those institutions for which stipulations were determined, action must be taken to address the stipulations within one calendar year. In these situations, the activities undertaken in the seventh year are particularly critical. Institutions with stipulations that do not sufficiently address the issues identified as a result of the accreditation site visit, particularly those institutions with Major Stipulations or Probationary 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 accreditation site visit team 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 no issues were raised by the site visit team, then continued focus on improvement, efficiency and effectiveness are warranted as even the most efficient and effective programs have room for growth.

Accreditation

The *Accreditation Framework* provides the COA with the flexibility to require follow-up regardless of the accreditation decision, including a decision of Accreditation. If an institution has no specific issues identified by the accreditation site visit team 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. The COA may require institutions with accreditation to provide a follow-up report (i.e., a 7th Year Report) that addresses how the institution is addressing standards that may have been 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. 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 data collection and 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 accreditation site visit team as not met or met with concerns. In addition, the COA may require 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 staff 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 responses provided in the report submitted by the institution in the seventh year which identifies actions taken to address stipulations. These responses will be summarized in an agenda item for the COA to consider in making its determination as to whether sufficient progress has been made to remove the stipulations. COA considers the recommendation of the Commission staff consultant and, if appropriate, the team lead in determining the removal of the stipulations at a regularly scheduled COA 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 revisit 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 ensure common understanding of revisit expectations. If the COA has determined a revisit 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 the stipulations and the related standards deemed not met or met with concerns that led to the stipulations are now found to be addressed. 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 (if necessary), and institutional representatives the progress made in meeting the standards. If it is determined that sufficient progress has been made in meeting the standards, then the COA may act to 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 is required to submit a report in the seventh year addressing stipulations as part of the accreditation review process. This report should address the actions 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 the report address 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 a revisit, to determine the progress being made in addressing the stipulations and meeting the standards that led to the stipulations.

Required Revisit

In many 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 revisit will be conducted by a Commission staff consultant and team lead and may include additional team members as deemed necessary. The size of the revisit team will largely depend on the number and type of stipulations and the number and type of programs with identified areas of concern.

During this 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 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 staff 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 the stipulations have been addressed sufficiently and whether those standards associated with the stipulations which were deemed not met or met with concerns in the original visit 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 the stipulations have been addressed, then the COA may remove the stipulations. If they have not been addressed and if the COA believes that sufficient progress toward addressing the stipulations 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 or as specified by the COA.

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 revisit team to help the team's assessment of the progress being made in addressing the findings of the review. The Commission staff 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 Commission staff consultant will participate in the revisit and provide a report to the COA about the progress that has been made in addressing stipulations. The report will include an updated decision on standards findings. COA will make a determination whether the stipulations have been addressed and if so, may 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 accreditation site 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 for institutional improvements, a revisit team can recommend Denial of Accreditation at **any time** if the situation warrants the finding in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Accreditation 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 Requirements 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 Institutional Follow-up 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 on actions taken by the institution to address any areas specified in COA action.in report. | If no revisit required, Commission staff reviews and reports progress made to COA. If revisit required, revisit team reviews report, along with information collected during the revisit to determine whether progress has been made in meeting standards. Revisit team report is presented 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 new findings on standards. COA determines whether to remove stipulations and change accreditation decision. |