

Chapter Thirteen

Articulation Between State and National Accreditation

Introduction

One of the objectives of the *Accreditation Framework* was to create a system of professional accreditation that enables institutions to reduce or eliminate redundancy between state and national reviews of the same programs. Institutions have an option whereby state and national accreditation of an education unit can be accomplished in a single review that is based on the Common Standards. The national and the state accreditation teams and visits are merged and the national accreditation of a credential program can substitute for the state review of that program. Central to the option is determination that the accreditation standards and processes of the two entities are comparable. Current information can be found on the Commission's [National Professional Organization Accreditation web page](#) .

The following elements of the *Accreditation Framework* govern articulation between national and state accreditation:

I. National Accreditation of an Education Unit

Upon the request of an institution, the accreditation of an education unit (school, college or department of education) by a national accrediting body may substitute for state accreditation under the Common Standards provided that the COA certifies to the Commission that the national accrediting entity fulfills the following conditions.

- The national accrediting entity agrees to use the Common Standards that have been adopted by the Commission or the national standards if deemed comparable by the COA.
- The accreditation process of the national entity includes on-site reviews.
- The team has co-leaders, one appointed according to state accreditation procedures and one appointed by the national accrediting body.
- The team members reviewing the Common Standards include members appointed by the national body and one or more California members selected according to state accreditation procedures.
- The review of all program documentation must be completed prior to the site visit, the preliminary findings on all programs will be available to the accreditation team, and the state team members will substantiate the preliminary findings at the visit.
- Accreditation teams represent ethnic and gender diversity, and include elementary and secondary school practitioners and postsecondary education members.
- The period of accreditation is consistent with a seven-year cycle and is compatible with the accreditation activities established by the state.
- The team develops a single report regarding all Common Standards and program standards which is submitted to the COA and the national accrediting body.

Implementation

Currently, the only national accrediting body that satisfies the requirements of the *Accreditation Framework* is the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

California had an agreement with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) for many years and developed an agreement with the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) in 2009. In July 2013, NCATE and TEAC unified into a single body and the national accrediting organization for educator preparation is now CAEP. Beginning with the 2016-2017 accreditation site visits, all institutions seeking national accreditation must meet the CAEP standards (<http://caepnet.org/standards/introduction>) rather than the NCATE or TEAC standards. For information about utilizing a different set of national educator preparation unit accreditation standards and processes, see Section III below. The following is the description of the status of the Partnership Agreement and the major features of the Partnership.

Partnership with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)

The Partnership Agreement between the Commission and CAEP may be found at: <http://caepnet.org/working-together/state-partners/state-partnership-agreements>. Formalized in December 2015, that allows California institutions to request joint or concurrent accreditation visits. The joint state and national accreditation team satisfies requirements for state and national accreditation under the Common Standards and the applicable program standards through a single site visit.

CAEP accreditation requires the institution to satisfy CAEP Standards in lieu of California's Common Standards, however institutions must also respond to elements of California's Common Standards that are not adequately addressed by the CAEP Standards. In January 2016, the COA adopted a Common Standards-CAEP alignment matrix for use by institutions who are seeking both state and national accreditation. The alignment matrix can be found at <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/accred-alignment.html>. Institutions are not required to submit program documents to CAEP for approval but may select one of the three sets of program standards described in Chapter 2.

The major elements of the Partnership Agreement between the COA and CAEP are as follows:

- California institutions are exempt from CAEP Program Review. California's Program Review process stands in lieu of the CAEP Program Review.
- All California visits to institutions seeking CAEP accreditation in addition to state accreditation will be joint visits.
- A single team will conduct the on-site accreditation visit. There will be co-chairs for the visit, one selected by CAEP and one selected by the Administrator of Accreditation for the Commission.
- The team will have a total of 6 to 10 members depending on the size of the institution. The team will focus on both the Common Standards (NCATE Unit Standards) and the programs offered by the institution. Selected portions of the Common Standards will supplement the five CAEP Standards.

- Team members will represent ethnic and gender diversity; and include elementary and secondary practitioners, and postsecondary education members.
- The CTC team will prepare an accreditation report that includes the findings of the CAEP Standards, the additional selected portions of the Common Standards, and program standards. The team will submit its report to the COA in the format approved by the COA. The CAEP report will be submitted to the Unit Accreditation Board of CAEP. The COA and CAEP will make separate and independent accreditation decisions.
- The period of accreditation will be consistent with a seven-year cycle.

Institutions interested in seeking CAEP accreditation must follow CAEP’s procedures for becoming CAEP accredited. In addition, the institution must submit a letter to the Commission’s Administrator of Accreditation notifying him or her of the institution’s intent to begin the CAEP accreditation process. More details on the Partnership Agreement can be found here: <http://caepnet.org/working-together/state-partners/state-partnership-agreements>.

II. National Accreditation of Credential Programs

Upon the request of an institution, the accreditation of a credential program by a national accrediting entity may substitute for state review of the program provided that the COA certifies to the Commission that the national accreditation entity satisfies the following conditions:

1. The accrediting entity agrees to use either:
 - a. The adopted California program standards for the specific credential under Option 1, or
 - b. The standards used by the national entity once they are determined by the COA to be equivalent to those adopted by the Commission under Option 2.
2. The accreditation team represents ethnic and gender diversity.
3. The accreditation team includes both postsecondary members and school practitioners; a minimum of one voting member is from California.
4. The period of accreditation is consistent with a seven-year cycle and is compatible with the accreditation activities established by the state.
5. Nationally accredited credential programs participate in the unit accreditation process. The national accreditation of the program may serve as part of the state’s Program Review process.

Implementation

Under this provision of the *Accreditation Framework*, an institution may request initial program approval and continued accreditation through a national professional entity as long as the conditions identified above are met. For information about utilizing a different set of national educator preparation program accreditation standards and processes, see Section III below. As of January 2016, the COA has adopted alignment matrices with four professional organizations:

*Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy Standards and Accreditation Standards (CSWE-EPAS);
Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP);
National Association of School Psychologists (NASP); and
American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA).*

III. Steps in the Process to 'Substitute' National Professional Accreditation for some part of the California Accreditation Process

Alignment of Standards

The first step in utilizing a national professional organization's accreditation in lieu of California's accreditation procedures is to complete an alignment study of the national professional organization's standards and the adopted California standards. If an institution or program sponsor is interested in working with an organization that is not listed on the Commission's National Accreditation web page (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/accred-alignment.html>), the process may be initiated by submitting a request (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/accred-files/Application-N-P-O-S-A.doc>).

In order to determine the comparability of national professional organization accreditation standards and processes, the COA took action in May 2008 to approve the following procedures:

1. The Commission must receive a request for an analysis of the alignment between a national professional organization's program standards and California's standards. This request can be submitted by an institution in preparation for its accreditation activities or can be from a national professional organization.
2. The alignment analysis can be performed in two ways:
 - a. The institution or national professional organization submitting the request can choose to conduct the analysis of alignment and submit a preliminary alignment matrix for approval by the COA. This process is estimated to take between 3 and 6 months; or
 - b. The institution or national professional organization submitting the request can request that the Commission convene a panel to develop an alignment matrix. When the request is submitted, it will be important for the request to identify upcoming accreditation activities that would utilize this alignment. This will serve to prioritize the requests for alignment to those that will actually be used for accreditation activities. This option could take up to one year to complete.
3. In accordance with its statutory responsibility to determine comparability of standards, the COA must make a determination of comparability and, if satisfied, approve the matrix. Alternatively, the COA may identify concepts or elements in the California standards that are missing in the national professional standards. The COA may choose to approve an alignment matrix that identifies these additional concepts and requires institutions to address the national professional standards AND the identified elements from the California standards that are not fully addressed in the national standards.
4. Upon approval by the COA, the alignment matrix may be used by the institution when submitting its response to the standards. The matrix will show where the response used

for the national professional organization may be used, and where it will need to be supplemented to ensure that all aspects of the California standards are addressed.

5. Upon approval by the COA, the alignment matrix may be used by other institutions. An institution would notify the CTC of its desire to use national professional standards via its response to the preconditions. The matrix would no longer be valid at any time there are adopted revisions to either the state standards or the national professional organization's standards.

Alignment of Professional Organization's Accreditation Activities

The second step in utilizing a national professional organization's accreditation process is to conduct a study of the accreditation activities utilized by the professional accrediting organization. Once the study of the accreditation activities has been completed, the COA will make a determination of which, if any, of California's accreditation procedures may be waived or amended due to the organization's accreditation procedures.

Annual Data Submission

Interim reporting required by the organization **may** be utilized for some or all of the annual data reporting requirements, if the COA has determined that the interim reporting required by the national professional organization addresses the critical aspects of California's Annual Data Submission.

Program Review

If the COA has determined that the national professional organization's procedures address the critical aspects of California's Program Review process, the institution may elect to utilize the national professional accreditation in lieu of Program Review. If the alignment matrix adopted by the COA identifies elements of some of the California program standards that are not adequately addressed by the national program standards, the institution must address the identified California program standards.

Site Visit

The Commission will be involved in site visits designed to assess the institution or program sponsor's institutional capacity to offer educator preparation programs. These visits focus on the Commission's Common Standards but information from the national professional organization's review could be considered instead of the *Report of Preliminary Findings* from California's Program Review.