

Guidelines for Accreditation Recommendations

Professional Services Division

October 2008

Overview of this Report

At the May 2008, COA meeting, the Committee adopted the following Accreditation Decision Options for use beginning with the 2008-09 Site Visits:

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

At the August 2008 COA meeting, the Committee began discussing the definitions of each of these decision categories and their operational implications. Draft language for definitions and operational implications were provided and discussed by the Committee. This agenda item reflects changes suggested by the COA at its August meeting and is provided here for adoption and inclusion in the *Accreditation Handbook*.

Staff Recommendation

This is an action item. Upon adoption by the Committee, the information in this agenda item will be incorporated, as appropriate, into the *Accreditation Handbook* for use beginning with the Spring 2009 accreditation visits.

Background

At the May 2008 COA meeting, the Committee took action to adopt the five Accreditation Decision Options listed above. In addition, the Committee adopted possible institution actions that would be required following each accreditation decision (Table 1). This table was discussed further at the COA's meeting in August. The table was revised to delete the column related to Denial of Accreditation, pursuant to Committee direction in August 2008.

Table 1: Accreditation Decisions and Consequent Institution Activities

Institution Actions Following an Accreditation Site Visit	Accreditation			
	Accreditation	with Stipulations	with Major Stipulations	with Probationary Stipulations
No required follow-up beyond the routine accreditation activities, i.e. Biennial Reports and Program Assessment.	✓			
Submit 7th Year Follow-up Report addressing all identified area(s) of concern and/or questions.	✓			
Submit 7th Year Follow-up Report addressing all stipulation(s), identified area(s) of concern and/or questions.		✓	✓	✓

Institution Actions Following an Accreditation Site Visit	Accreditation			
	Accreditation	with Stipulations	with Major Stipulations	with Probationary Stipulations
Submit periodic Follow-up Reports (30 days, 90 days, as determined by the COA) to ensure that appropriate action is being taken in a timely manner.			✓	✓
Report on the stipulation(s) through the next accreditation cycle's activities.			✓	✓
Re-visit by Commission staff and team leader.		✓	✓	✓
Re-visit by Commission staff, team leader, and 1 or more team members.			✓	✓
Institution must notify all current and prospective candidates of the institution's accreditation status.				✓
Institution is prohibited from accepting new candidates in one or more programs until the stipulation(s) has been met.				✓
Institution is prohibited from proposing new programs until the stipulation has been met.				✓

✓ Suggested follow-up activity

✓ Possible follow up activity

COA Discussion on Guidance for the Team Recommendation

The site visit team's recommendation for an Accreditation Decision is a holistic decision based on the Common Standard findings, and on the number and severity of "Met with Concerns" or "Not Met" findings for the specific programs offered at the institution. The COA's discussion at the June 2008, meeting indicated that it might be helpful to provide consultants and site visit teams guidance about the type of accreditation decisions the COA might make based on the type and number of standards that are less than fully met. This topic was also discussed at the August 2008 meeting.

The COA makes one accreditation decision for the institution and all of its approved educator preparation programs. This accreditation decision reflects to a great degree the team's findings on the Common Standards. If one or more programs have significant issues, these issues usually rise to the level of one or more Common Standards being 'Met with Concerns' or 'Not Met.'

Table 2 below was discussed by the Committee at the August meeting. The table is an attempt to provide some guidance to site visit teams for when a specific accreditation decision might be made by the Committee, and therefore recommended by the team.

When teams are deliberating to make the accreditation recommendation, they must consider the findings on the Common Standards, as well as the number and severity of standards found to be

less than fully met for the programs offered by the institution. If an institution has very few, to no, program standards found to be ‘Met with Concerns’ or ‘Not Met,’ then the accreditation recommendation would most likely be towards the left hand side of the options identified in Table 2, below. If on the other hand, there are a number of program standards found to be “Met with Concerns’ or ‘Not Met,’ then the team’s accreditation recommendation would most likely be in the middle or towards the right hand side of the range identified below.

Clearly, the number of educator preparation programs an institution offers must be taken into account when considering the impact of program standards on an accreditation recommendation. If an institution offers a small number of programs, then a smaller number of program standards found to be less than fully met is significant. On the other hand, if an institution offers a large number of programs, then a few program standards found to be less than fully met might not be as significant.

At the August meeting of the Committee, the Committee indicated general agreement with the placement of the guidance lines in the table below for accreditation teams. The chart has been updated to reflect changes requested by the Committee during its deliberation in August.

Table 2: General Guidance for Initial Site Visit Team Recommendation*

Common Standards Less than Fully Met		Accreditation				Denial of Accreditation
# Met with Concerns	# Not Met	Accreditation	with Stipulations	with Major Stipulations	with Probationary Stipulations	
0	0	•				Not a recommendation for an initial site visit. The recommendation of ‘Denial of Accreditation’ is appropriate after a Revisit.
1-2	0	●	●			
1-2	1-2		●	●		
1-2	3-4			●	●	
3-4	0		●	●		
3-4	1-2		●		●	
3-4	3-4			●	●	
3-4	5+				•	
5+	0-2			●	●	
5+	3+				•	

* Findings on Program Standards must be considered by the team in making the accreditation recommendation

Next Steps

The draft language in Appendix A is presented for Committee discussion and possible adoption. The Committee may adopt the language as presented, amend and adopt the language, or continue to discuss this topic further at the January meeting. Upon adoption, the Commission staff will incorporate this language into the *Accreditation Handbook* for use in the Spring 2009 accreditation site visits.

Appendix A

Definitions of Accreditation Decision Options and Operational Implications

Accreditation

The recommendation of *Accreditation* means that the accreditation team verified that the institution and its programs, when judged as a whole, met or exceeded the Commission's adopted Common Standards and the Program Standards applicable to the institution. The institution (including its credential programs) is judged to be effective in preparing educators and is demonstrating overall quality in its programs and general operations. The status of *Accreditation* can be achieved even if there are one or two Common Standards identified as "met with concerns" or one or more areas of concern are identified within its credential programs.

Operational Implications

An institution that receives the status of *Accreditation* **must**:

- Participate in the accreditation activities required of its assigned cohort, which are Biennial Reports, Program Assessment, and Site Visits.
- If specified in Commission action, respond to any required follow up related to concerns identified as a result of the accreditation site visit, as determined by the Committee on Accreditation. This follow up may take place in the Biennial Report or in a 7th Year Follow Up report, as determined by the COA.
- Abide by all Commission and state regulations.

An institution that receives the status of *Accreditation* **may**:

- Continue all accredited credential programs and propose new credential programs to the Committee on Accreditation at any time.
- Indicate in all publications and documents that it is accredited by the Commission.

The Committee on Accreditation will note the accreditation status in the Committee's annual report to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The report of the accreditation team and the action taken by the Committee on Accreditation will be posted on the Commission's website.

Accreditation with Stipulations

The recommendation of *Accreditation with Stipulations* means that the accreditation team verified that the institution and some of its programs have "not met" or "met with concerns" some Common Standards or Program Standards applicable to the institution and action is required to address these deficiencies. The institution is judged to be generally effective in preparing educators and in its general operations apart from the identified areas of concern. The concerns or problems identified are confined to specific issues that minimally impact the quality of the program received by candidates or completers.

Operational Implications

An institution that receives the status of *Accreditation with Stipulations* **is required to**:

- Participate in the accreditation activities required of its assigned cohort, which are Biennial Reports, Program Assessment, and Site Visits.

- Respond to all stipulations noted by the Committee on Accreditation and prepare a written 7th year report with appropriate documentation within one year that indicates how all stipulations have been addressed.
- Abide by all Commission and state regulations.

An institution that receives the accreditation status of *Accreditation with Stipulations* may:

- Continue all accredited credential programs and propose new credential programs to the Committee on Accreditation at any time.
- Indicate in all publications and documents that it is accredited by the Commission.

The Committee on Accreditation will note the accreditation status in the Committee’s annual report to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The report of the accreditation team and the action taken by the Committee on Accreditation will be posted on the Commission’s website.

Removal of Stipulations

The written 7th year report by the institution is sent to the Committee on Accreditation within one calendar year of the visit. Typically, the Commission consultant, in consultation with the team lead assigned to the original visit, will review the report, verify the accuracy and completeness of the institution’s response, analyze the progress made by the institution in meeting the standards, and make a recommendation to the Committee on Accreditation regarding the removal of the stipulations. In some instances, the Committee on Accreditation may require a revisit by the Commission consultant or the team lead.

The Committee on Accreditation may act to remove the stipulations and change the status of the institution from *Accreditation with Stipulations* to *Accreditation*.

The Committee on Accreditation will note the change in the accreditation status in the Committee’s annual report to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The report of the team leader and Commission consultant and the action taken by the Committee on Accreditation will be made available on the Commission’s website.

Accreditation with Major Stipulations

The recommendation of *Accreditation with Major Stipulations* means that the accreditation team concluded that the institution and some of its programs have “not met” or “met with concerns” multiple standards in the Common Standards, and/or Program Standards applicable to the institution, or that the team found areas of concern such as matters of curriculum, field experience, or candidate competence that substantially impacts, or are likely to substantially impact, the preparation of credential program candidates. The team identified issues that impinge on the ability of the institution to deliver high quality, effective programs. The review team may have found that some of the institution’s credential programs are of high quality and are effective in preparing

educators, or that the general operations of the institution are adequate, but that these areas of quality do not outweigh the identified areas of concern.

Operational Implications

An institution receiving a recommendation of *Accreditation with Major Stipulations* **must:**

- Respond to all stipulations noted by the Committee on Accreditation by preparing a written 7th year report with appropriate documentation demonstrating that all stipulations have been addressed and by preparing for a focused revisit by the team lead and consultant and/or members of the accreditation team.
- Work with the Commission consultant to plan the revisit that will address the stated concerns identified by the original accreditation team.
- Participate in the accreditation activities as required of its assigned cohort, which are Biennial Reports, Program Assessment, and Site Visits.

An institution receiving a recommendation of *Accreditation with Major Stipulations* **may:**

- Continue to offer all approved credential programs.
- Indicate in all publications and documents that it is accredited by the Commission.
- Be required to notify students of its accreditation status. The COA will determine whether student notification is required, and if so, whether all students or students in particular credential programs are to be notified.

Revisit Procedures for Institutions with Major Stipulations

As noted above, the institution must respond to all stipulations imposed by the Committee on Accreditation by preparing a written 7th year report with appropriate documentation demonstrating that all stipulations have been addressed and, if applicable, by preparing for a focused revisit by an accreditation team. The institution will work with its Commission consultant to plan the revisit that will address the concerns identified by the original accreditation team and the stipulations placed upon the institution by the COA. The report of the revisit team will be submitted to and acted upon by the Committee on Accreditation within one calendar year of the original visit.

If all stipulations are removed within the year, the institution is granted accreditation and is permitted to continue all accredited credential programs and to propose new credential programs to the Committee on Accreditation at any time. The revisit report of the team, the action of the Committee on Accreditation to remove the stipulations, and the new accreditation decision will be posted on the Commission's website. The institution may notify its constituency of its change of accreditation status as appropriate.

On some occasions, significant progress may have been made, but additional time beyond the one calendar year is needed to remedy the identified deficiencies. If this is the case, the Committee on Accreditation may continue stipulations or adopt revised stipulations. The COA would also specify the amount of additional time the institution has to address the remaining stipulations. If the COA believes that sufficient progress has been made

towards meeting standards but believe some stipulations should be maintained, the COA may adopt an accreditation decision of *Accreditation with Stipulations*. In such cases, the COA may determine appropriate follow up by the institution and timeline for COA action to remove the remaining stipulations.

In the event that the institution does not respond appropriately to the stipulations according to the timeline set by the COA, the institution will be brought back to the Committee on Accreditation for consideration of *Denial of Accreditation*.

Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations

The recommendation of *Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations* indicates that an accreditation team identified serious and pervasive deficiencies in the institution's implementation of the Common Standards and the Program Standards applicable to the institution, or the team found areas of concern such as matters of curriculum, field experience, or candidate competence that impact the preparation of credential program candidates. The team identified issues that prevent the institution from delivering high quality, effective programs. The review team may have found that some of the institution's credential programs are of high quality and are effective in preparing educators and/or that its general operations are adequate, but that these areas of quality do not outweigh the identified areas of concern.

Operational Implications

An institution receiving a recommendation of *Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations* is permitted to continue all accredited credential programs for a period of one calendar year. The institution **may not**:

- Propose new programs of professional preparation or expand existing programs.

An institution receiving a recommendation of *Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations* **is required to**:

- Respond to all stipulations imposed by the Committee on Accreditation by preparing a written 7th year report with appropriate documentation demonstrating that all stipulations have been addressed and by preparing for a focused revisit by an accreditation team.
- Notify all students in all credential programs in writing of its accreditation status.
- Abide by all Commission and state regulations.
- Work with the original consultant to plan the revisit that will address the concerns identified by the original accreditation team.
- Participate in the accreditation activities as required of its assigned cohort, which are Biennial Reports, Program Assessment, and Site Visits.

An institution receiving a recommendation of *Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations* **may**:

- Continue all accredited credential programs for a period of one calendar year, although the COA may place limitations on particular programs.

- Be required to submit an action plan describing the institution's plan to address the stipulations and provide updates at specified intervals, as determined by the COA.
- Be required to demonstrate to the COA satisfactory progress in addressing particular areas of concern, prior to one calendar year, as determined by the COA.

The Committee on Accreditation will note the accreditation status of the institution in the Committee's annual report to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing and the accreditation team report will be posted on the Commission's website as will the action taken by the Committee on Accreditation.

Revisit Procedures for Institutions with Probationary Stipulations

As noted above, the institution must respond to all stipulations imposed by the Committee on Accreditation by preparing a written 7th year report within one year with appropriate documentation demonstrating that all stipulations have been addressed and by preparing for a focused revisit by an accreditation team. The institution will work with its Commission consultant to plan the revisit that will address the concerns identified by the original accreditation team and the stipulations placed upon the institution by the COA. The report of the revisit team will be submitted to and acted upon by the Committee on Accreditation within one calendar year of the original visit.

If all stipulations are removed within the year, the institution is granted accreditation and is permitted to continue all accredited credential programs and to propose new credential programs to the Committee on Accreditation at any time. The revisit report of the team, the action of the Committee on Accreditation to remove the stipulations, and the new accreditation decision will be posted on the Commission's website.

On some occasions, significant progress may have been made, but additional time beyond the one calendar year is needed to remedy the identified deficiencies. If this is the case, the Committee on Accreditation may continue stipulations or adopt revised stipulations. The COA would also specify the amount of additional time the institution has to address the remaining stipulations.

In the event that the revisit team determines that the institution has not made significant progress in addressing the stipulations according to the timeline set by the COA, a recommendation of *Denial of Accreditation* will be made to the Committee on Accreditation.

Denial of Accreditation

If an accreditation team is conducting a revisit to an institution that received major or probationary stipulations as a result of a previous accreditation visit and the revisit team finds that the stipulations have not been adequately addressed or remediated, or determines that significant and sufficient progress has not been made towards addressing the stipulations, the COA may vote to deny accreditation or may, if requested by the institution, permit an additional period to remedy severe deficiencies if the Committee

finds that: (a) sufficient progress has been made, and/or (b) special circumstances described by the institution justify a delay. If the COA votes to deny accreditation, all credential programs must close at the end of the semester or quarter in which the decision has taken place. In addition, the institution's institutional approval ceases to be valid at that time and therefore, the institution is no longer a Commission approved program sponsor.

Operational Implications

An institution receiving *Denial of Accreditation* **must**:

- Take immediate steps to close all credential programs at the end of the semester or quarter in which the Committee on Accreditation decision took place.
- Announce that it has had its accreditation for educator preparation denied. All students enrolled in all credential programs must be notified that accreditation has been denied and that all programs will end at the end of the semester or quarter in which the Committee on Accreditation decision took place.
- File a plan of discontinuation within 90 days of the Committee's decision. The plan must give information and assurances regarding the institution's efforts to place currently enrolled students in other programs or to provide adequate assistance to permit students to complete their particular program.
- Upon the effective date of the closure of credential programs, as determined by the COA, remove from all institutional materials and website any statements that indicate that its programs are accredited by the Commission.

The revisit report of the team, the action of the Committee on Accreditation, and the new accreditation decision will be posted on the Commission's website.

Since, Denial of Accreditation means automatic loss of initial institutional approval, an institution that has received *Denial of Accreditation* would be enjoined from re-applying for institutional approval for a minimum of two years.

Process of Re-applying for Initial Institutional Accreditation

If the institution were to wish to provide educator preparation programs at a future date, it would be required to make a formal application to the Commission for initial institutional approval. This would include the submission of a complete self study report including responses to the Preconditions, Common Standards, and Program Standards. The self-study must show clearly how the institution attended to all problems noted in the accreditation team revisit report that resulted in Denial of Accreditation. The Commission would make a decision on the status of the institution and would be made aware of the previous action of Denial of Accreditation by the COA. If the Commission grants initial institutional approval to the institution, the Committee on Accreditation would review, and if appropriate, approve its programs. An accreditation site visit would be scheduled within two years to ensure the newly approved programs adhered to the Common and Program Standards.