

# **7<sup>th</sup> Year Follow-Up Report Procedures**

## **Professional Services Division**

### **October 2008**

#### **Overview of this Report**

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) discussed draft policies and procedures related to the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the accreditation cycle at its August 2008 meeting. This report presents proposed policy and procedures related to the 7<sup>th</sup> year follow up and reporting requirements. The proposed language incorporates the suggested changes recommended by the COA. If adopted by the COA, it would be included in the *Accreditation Handbook*.

#### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the COA adopt the proposed language for the *Accreditation Handbook* that clarifies policies and procedures related to the 7<sup>th</sup> year follow up and reporting requirements.

#### **Background**

The revised accreditation system is comprised of a seven year cycle of accreditation activities. On an on-going basis, each institution is expected to collect, analyze, and use data on candidate outcomes, performance, and program effectiveness for program improvement and for reporting this information to the Commission in the biennial reports in years 1, 3 and 5 of the cycle. In year 4, a program assessment is conducted to ascertain whether an institution is meeting the adopted program standards. In year 6, a site visit is conducted reviewing the institution's adherence to the Common Standards as well as confirming or rejecting the findings from the preliminary program assessment reports conducted in the 4<sup>th</sup> year. In establishing this cycle, the COA and the Accreditation Study Work Group determined that institutions must address issues raised during the accreditation site visit in the year following the site visit. As such, the possibility of follow up was built into the accreditation cycle in the 7<sup>th</sup> year. The COA noted its desire to have greater assurance than in the past that institutions were taking the necessary steps to address issues raised in the accreditation team's reports.

An assumption of the new accreditation system is that all institutions, in the year following the site visit, will resolve all issues raised during their accreditation visit. However at this point in time, no procedures have been formally adopted to explain the 7<sup>th</sup> year follow up process; under what conditions an institution will need to submit a report, what should be addressed in the report, and how it will be reviewed. It is critical that these policies and procedures be formalized prior to the 2008-2009 accreditation visits.

#### **Proposed Policies and Procedures Regarding 7<sup>th</sup> Year Follow Up**

At the August 2008 COA meeting, the COA discussed draft language related to the 7<sup>th</sup> year follow up and reporting activities. The following proposed language attempts to incorporate the comments of COA members, including the need for a general explanation of the purpose and intent of the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the accreditation cycle.

### *Proposed Accreditation Handbook Language: 7<sup>th</sup> Year Follow Up and Reporting Requirements*

Underlying the various major 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 6<sup>th</sup> year. On the contrary, the 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

### *All Institutions in the 7<sup>th</sup> Year*

For the revised accreditation system, it is agreed that institutional follow up is required of all approved institutions in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the cycle, while a follow-up *report* is not necessarily required of all institutions. In the 7<sup>th</sup> 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 revised *Accreditation Framework* provides the COA with the flexibility to require follow up regardless of the accreditation decision, including “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 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 either in the form of a 7<sup>th</sup> year report, or be included as part of the institution’s next biennial report in if the type of information desired is consistent with the purpose of biennial reports and the COA determines the timing to be sufficient. If follow up reporting is required, the COA must specify this in the action taken at the time of the accreditation decision.

### *Accreditation with Stipulations*

Any institution granted “Accreditation with Stipulations” must complete a 7<sup>th</sup> year report 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 7<sup>th</sup> year report address any other issue identified in the team report or raised during COA deliberations. Typically, for all institutions granted “accreditation with stipulations,” the 7<sup>th</sup> year report will be reviewed by Commission staff and the progress made reported to the COA in order for its consideration removal of stipulations. In the possibility that the COA has determined a revisit or a focused site visit is necessary, the 7<sup>th</sup> year report 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.

*Accreditation with Major Stipulations*

Any institution granted “Accreditation with Major Stipulations” must complete a 7<sup>th</sup> year report 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 7<sup>th</sup> year 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. The following chart summarizes the 7<sup>th</sup> year reporting process.

	<b>Accreditation</b>	<b>Accreditation with Stipulations</b>	<b>Accreditation with Major Stipulations</b>
<b>Follow Up at the Institution</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Follow Up Report Submitted to CTC</b>	COA discretion	Yes	Yes
<b>Type of Report</b>	One of three options as determined by COA: 1) No report 2) 7 <sup>th</sup> Year Report 3) Biennial Report	7 <sup>th</sup> Year Report	7 <sup>th</sup> Year Report
<b>To be addressed in Report</b>	(If required by COA) * Standards Not Met * Standards Met with Concerns Any other areas included in COA action at the time the accreditation decision is made.	* All Stipulations * Standards Not Met * Standards Met with Concerns Any other areas included in COA action at the time the accreditation decision is made.	* All Stipulations * Standards Not Met * Standards Met with Concerns Any other areas included in COA action at the time the accreditation decision is made.
<b>Review Process</b>	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.

Staff will ensure appropriate monitoring and follow through by each institution to ensure that all issues identified by COA are addressed within the timeframe set forth by COA.

**Next Steps**

If approved by the Committee on Accreditation, staff will incorporate language related to the 7<sup>th</sup> year follow up and reporting requirements into the *Accreditation Handbook* and communicate these policies and procedures to the field through a variety of sources. These sources may include, but are not limited to, the Commission's website, technical assistance meetings, and discussions with institutions about the accreditation system.