Update on the Accreditation Handbook
June 2009

Overview of this Report
This report provides an update on the work to revise the *Accreditation Handbook* for discussion and input. The item contains a chapter that was updated following input from the Committee on Accreditation (COA) at the May 2009 meeting.

Staff Recommendation
Staff recommends that the COA discuss, provide guidance to staff and then adopt Chapter 7: Preparation for an Accreditation Site Visit. Staff, furthermore, recommends that the COA direct staff to post the adopted Chapter 7 and bring additional updated chapters of the Handbook to the August 2009 COA meeting for approval.

Proposed Changes to the Site Visit Chapter of the Accreditation Handbook
During the May 2009 COA meeting, members and staff discussed the need to update the *Accreditation Handbook* to reflect the revised accreditation system. In particular, edits for Chapter 7: Preparation for an Accreditation Site Visit, were identified that would conform the chapter to current accreditation practices so that the chapter would be useful for institutions preparing for an accreditation site visit in fall and Spring 2009-10.

The revised Chapter 7 is attached to the item. Staff considered showing the proposed edits as track changes, but realized that including the track changes made the document very hard to read. Members are referred to Item 18 from the May 2009 agenda if they wish to see the original copy.

Staff identified two unclear phrases for which it requests COA guidance. On page 4 of this item, "**unusual staffing patterns"** (shown in bold in the attachment) is identified as a special characteristic of an institution. Staff requests help in understanding what unusual staffing patterns means so that the *Handbook* can be more informative.

Similarly, on page 18, "**Institutional representatives will be present and will have an opportunity to respond to the report and recommendations**" is unclear. Staff asks that the COA define the parameters of the response. For instance, what kind of response is appropriate? Should the institution provide an update on progress made? What time limit, if any, should the institution be given?

Next Steps
Consistent with directions provided to staff at the May 2009 COA meeting, staff will continue to revise chapters in the *Accreditation Handbook* and will bring proposed revised chapters to the COA for its approval at future COA meetings.

Chapter Seven
Preparation for an Accreditation Site Visit

Introduction

The chapter provides detailed information on the procedures, activities, and decisions that precede the actual accreditation site visit which is intended as a guide for those who are charged with the administrative tasks of an accreditation site visit. The responsibilities of the consultant provided by the CTC to the institution are listed and the pre-visit meetings are also described. For more information about the accreditation team, see Chapter 10.

The goals of the site visit are to:

a. determine findings for the Common Standards
b. confirm/disconfirm the findings of Program Assessment, and
c. make an accreditation recommendation to the Commission on Accreditation.

I. Scheduling an Accreditation Visit

Accreditation visits occur during the sixth year of the accreditation cycle. The Committee on Accreditation (COA) retains the right to schedule more frequent site visits as a stipulation of institutional accreditation or based on reviews of the Biennial Reports or Program Assessment.

The institution should identify the most appropriate dates from a series of dates proposed by the CTC. The COA and the CTC must schedule the year's accreditation visits in a manner that does not adversely impact the staff. The Administrator of Accreditation will confirm the dates for the site visit and the assignment of a CTC consultant at least 15 months prior to the site visit.

The institution will want to consider the following criteria in order to select possible dates for the site visit:

1. Select a time period when candidates are on campus and student teachers are in classrooms. Be certain to avoid local school holidays, testing schedules when possible, major academic conferences and other times that will draw faculty away from campus or otherwise impede collection of information from candidates, program completers, employers of program completers, cooperating schools, or community members.

2. The visit, if it is a merged accreditation visit, must be coordinated with the national accrediting body. If the visit will involve a national or professional accrediting body for one or more credential programs, early planning must be initiated to allow the institution and CTC staff time to study the alignment of the national or professional organizations' standards with California's standards, and to report the results of the alignment study to the COA for its determination of alignment.

3. As a rule, the first full day of an accreditation visit will be a Monday, and team members will arrive on Sunday around noon. Exceptions are permitted to this rule, but they should be requested early in the process by the institution. Institutions with multiple sites, unusual class schedules, or other issues should also make these circumstances known early in the planning process.

II. Pre-Visit Meetings

Year Out Pre-Visit Meeting

Approximately twelve to eighteen months prior to the scheduled accreditation visit, the CTC consultant will contact the institution to schedule a pre-visit meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to acquaint the administration and faculty of the institution with the accreditation cycle, to provide assistance in the development of the Preconditions Report (due 10-12 months before the scheduled site visit) and the Institutional Self Study Report (ISSR) (due two months prior to the actual accreditation visit), and to answer other questions that may arise. The institution may invite anyone it chooses to attend this meeting.

Two Month Out Pre-Visit Meeting

Approximately two months before the visit, the consultant and team lead visit the institution. For the visit they stay in the hotel to be used during the visit, review progress of document organization and review the first draft of the interview schedule making suggestions to institutional leadership.

III. Logistical and Budgeting Arrangements

The CTC will enter into a contract with the institution through which the lodging and meal expenses of the team members will be paid.

The CTC is responsible for all direct expenses of the state accreditation team, including lodging, per diem, and travel expenses. The CTC is also responsible for (a) the direct expenses incurred by the Team Lead and the consultant in working with the institution on arrangements for the visit, (b) direct expenses involved in a focused site visit and any re-visits related to noted stipulations from the original visit and, (c) the substitute expenses for team members who are classroom teachers, if requested.

If the institution is planning a merged accreditation visit, the institution is responsible for the costs associated with the national accrediting body. This is also true if the institution elects to have one or more of its credential programs accredited by a national professional association.

The institution is responsible for covering the costs of assigned time to its faculty and staff for the development of reports or documents. If the institution elects to have a reception for the team or to provide snacks to the team during the visit, the institution bears the cost of these items.

The institution is responsible for preparing all necessary documents including, but not limited to the *Preconditions Report* and the *Institutional Self-Study Report* (ISSR) with sufficient access—either in hard copy or electronically of these reports for team members, all necessary back-up documents and files to support the *ISSR*, and any other materials deemed useful to the team by the institution. All materials sent to the CTC and to team members should be considered the property of the CTC. Any materials of value should be kept on campus in the document room.

The institution is responsible for providing sufficient space on campus for the following:

- a private room for the team to meet in,
- a document room for all files and materials,
- private space for all team members to conduct their interviews,
- access to telephones for team members required to make telephone interviews, and

- computers to facilitate team writing.

The institution is also responsible for assisting the CTC consultant in identifying an acceptable hotel in close proximity to the campus, arranging for meals for the team, and arranging parking permits or other forms of transportation during the visit for team members.

The institution is responsible for making all necessary arrangements regarding the interview schedules. This includes providing parking for interviewees, assigning campus guides to direct individuals to their interview locations, arranging for back-up interviews, and ensuring that an adequate number of interviews are scheduled for the institution and all its programs. When necessary, institutions are encouraged to propose innovative arrangements for handling interviews (e.g., interactive audio and video connections or dispersed interview sites) and must ensure that sufficient numbers of interviews are scheduled across all key groups.

The institution is responsible for all expenses involved in attending a COA meeting, including the meeting at which that institution's accreditation is scheduled for discussion and decision. With advanced notification and preparation, it is possible to have an institutional representative attend the meeting in person while other key leaders attend via videoconference.

In the case of a re-visit or the visit of a focused site team, the institution is responsible for making the same type of arrangements as noted above for an original visit. In the event of an appeal, the institution must bear the cost of making the appeal and attending any appeal hearings or meetings. If a re-visit is required as a result of the appeal, the standard division of responsibilities and costs as noted above will apply.

IV. Preparation of Materials for a Site Visit

Several documents are used to provide background information and to prepare the institution and the team members for the site visit. Information from those documents will also influence the composition of the team and the breadth of the site visit. The institution's *Preconditions Report* provides current information about its responses to preconditions, and provides information about the context in which the institution operates. The *ISSR,* which includes the response to the Common Standards, is provided to all team members prior to the site visit to inform their evidence gathering at the visit.

Preconditions Report

Program sponsors will prepare a *Preconditions Report* to be submitted to the CTC staff consultant 10 to 12 months before the site visit. This brief report describes the institutional mission and includes information about the institution's demographics, special emphasis programs, and other unique features of the institution. The institution must include the following information in its *Preconditions Report:*

1. **Special Characteristics of the Institution:** The institution notes any special characteristics about its credential programs that would affect the composition of the team, the organization of the visit, or the development of the team schedule. Offering programs at multiple sites, the use of alternative delivery formats (on-line, distance learning) and/or **unusual staffing patterns** are of particular interest to the CTC and may require particular expertise among the review team members. Institutions with multiple sites must include specific information about the administrative relationships among the various locales, and include a table that

shows, for each site, each program, and each delivery model (intern or student teaching), the program completers from the prior year and the current enrollment.

2. **Response to Preconditions:** In its *Preconditions Report*, the institution includes its response to accreditation preconditions established by state laws and the CTC. The institution must respond to preconditions for all credential programs offered by the institution. The Preconditions may be found on the Site Visit web page (http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/program-accred-site-visits.html) or within each approved program's standards handbook.

Institutional Self-Study Report

The Institution's *Self-Study Report* is the second major document that must be provided by the institution in the year prior to the site visit. The *ISSR* must include, at a minimum, the following items:

- Letter of Transmittal by President
- Letter of Verification by Dean or Director
- Background of the Institution and its Mission and Goals
- Education School or Department Mission and Goals
- Responses to the Commission's Common Standards

All other background material and data should be placed in the document room—either in electronic for or hard copy on campus and referenced in the *ISSR*. Institutions are encouraged to use graphic representations and other visual information in the *ISSR* document. Institutions planning to use multi-media presentations should confer with the CTC consultant early in the planning process. The institution should distribute copies of its *ISSR* to each the team member, either electronically or mailed in hard copy, no less than 40 days before the beginning of the visit.

The CTC encourages institutions and agencies preparing for site visits to utilize their electronic capacity and create a document room that is primarily electronic. This can be done by creating websites with links to all documents, including minutes of meetings, course syllabi, candidate evaluations, and samples of candidate work, such as portfolios. Although the *Preconditions Report* and the *ISSR* may be submitted in paper form, institutions are encouraged to utilize electronic transmission.

Preparing Campus Exhibits

The site team uses a three-part process of evidence collection and evaluation. The *ISSR* constitutes the first element, the institution's assertion as to how it meets the Common Standards. The team's review and analysis of supporting documentation is the second element. The third element is the array of interviews conducted with individuals who know each program best -- its faculty, candidates, program completers, cooperating educators, and employers of program completers.

Supporting Documentation Required

In the document room on campus or the electronic document room, the institution is required to assemble detailed materials that verify and support the assertions made in the *ISSR*. The following list of supporting documentation is not exhaustive; it is intended to be illustrative. The institution should tailor its supporting materials to its own mission and goals, organizational structure, and array of credential programs. The institution is also encouraged to utilize alternate means of presenting supporting materials including, CD-ROMs, wall displays, interactive computer programs and web pages. If the institution makes use of alternate approaches to providing support, its representatives should confer with the assigned consultant and the Team Lead to ensure that sufficient time is allocated within the master schedule to permit the full review and appraisal of the developed materials. These materials include but are not limited to:

1. Complete *vitae* from full-time and part-time faculty who work at the institution.
2. Information regarding recruitment and retention procedures for full-time and part-time faculty.
3. Information on support for full-time and part-time faculty including research, travel, and staff development support.
4. Information on recruitment and admissions procedures including the actual selection process for admission.
5. Copies of all advisement materials used in all credential programs.
6. Copies of candidate handbooks, supervisor handbooks and other relevant credential publications.
7. Copies of relevant budgets, including departmental budgets and program budgets, if available.
8. Institutional procedures on budget and faculty allocations.
9. Copies of recent catalogues and individual course syllabi. (Note: Where multiple sections of credential courses are offered, institutions should provide additional evidence that all sections of the required credential courses attend to the relevant standards.)
10. Internship programs should provide evidence of district and bargaining representative agreements and other evidence that internship standards are being met. Copies of all Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) should be available in the document collection.
11. Minutes of advisory group meetings or other evidence of collaboration and community involvement.
12. Evidence of on-going, systematic, comprehensive program evaluation and improvement with specific evidence of changes made or contemplated as a result of this evaluation process.
13. Candidate assessment instruments and procedures with summary information on candidate evaluation results as appropriate.
14. Evidence of institutional commitment to and assessment of all field supervisors (individuals serving as cooperating teachers or others who serve as non-employee evaluators of candidates).
15. Evidence of leadership within the institution and leadership among the elements of the institution with particular attention to articulating a vision, fostering collegiality,

delegating responsibility and authority, and advancing the stature of professional education within the institution.

16. Copies of the last three Biennial Reports.
17. Copies of each program's findings from Program Assessment.

Preparing, Organizing and Presenting Supporting Materials

Supporting materials serve as verification of the assertions made in the *ISSR*. Institutions are encouraged to ensure that the display of these materials is clearly linked to the appropriate standards. Institutional planners should encourage faculty and staff to begin to collect documents, hand-outs, and other programmatic materials early in the development process. Sorting and selecting materials is easier once all possible documents have been pulled together. As institutions reduce their use of paper documents, the CTC will encourage them to develop electronic exhibits when planning for site visits. This will allow members of the review teams to review documents well in advance of the site visit. In assembling the document room on campus, or the display of documents electronically, institutions may wish to use one or more of the following organizational schemes:

1. Color-coding files or sets of documents by Common Standard
2. Organizing documentation across the four meta-categories of the Commission's program standards: Program Design, Curriculum, Field Experience and Assessment.
3. Providing a graphic organizer for aspects of the institution and its credential programs. Examples: the assessment and evaluation system, organization of the leadership at the institution. The graphic organizer can be posted on the web and/or available in the document room.
4. Sorting materials in banker's boxes or crates by credential. If using an electronic presentation mode, organize materials in a similar fashion into files and folders.
5. Developing a website where team members will be able to find the documents and supporting evidence
6. Providing team members with "look-up only" capacity on campus computer systems or computers provided to the team
7. Providing information presented in the order in which candidates' experience the credential program (i.e., recruitment and admission materials presented first, then curriculum materials)
8. Providing redacted candidate files that clearly show how curriculum, field experience, and candidate competence standards are met.
9. Developing story boards, organizational charts, or other visual display devices that depict aspects of the institution and its various credential programs

Institutions are encouraged to use other presentation devices and approaches that may assist team members in understanding how the institution meets or exceeds all common and any program standards that were not met through the Program Assessment process.

Scheduling Interviews
It is the institution's responsibility to set up the interview schedule in consultation with the CTC consultant. Since the time available to the team is limited and COA policy dictates that sufficient numbers of individuals from all constituent groups be interviewed, **creating a workable interview schedule is a critical task for the institution and should receive as much attention as the preparation of the *ISSR*.** A matrix identifying interviewees can be found in Appendix B.

It is very important that the interviews occur in a room that is secure and private. Interviewees who believe their comments might be overheard by others may be less willing to identify concerns or problems they are experiencing in the program. The same consideration needs to be made for phone interviews; team members need to feel that their responses and questions are not being overheard by anyone associated with the program, institution, or agency.

Stakeholders Who Should be Scheduled for Interviews
Team members interview persons involved in the development and coordination of the programs, the preparation of the candidates, and the employment of program completers. These interviewees come from the credential program and surrounding school districts. A list of persons who are typically scheduled for interviews is noted below:

Candidates
Beginning Candidates (small number)
Middle of Program Candidates (larger number than Beginning Candidates)
Candidates who are nearing completion, especially those in student teaching and/or field experiences (majority of candidates interviewed)

Master Teachers/Supervisors
Currently working with candidates or have worked with a candidate in the past year. If the professional development school model is used, then the bulk of the interviews should be with the cooperating faculty from participating schools.

Program Completers
Completers from the two previous years. In cases where most program completers leave the area, it may be necessary to go back one more year to ensure that a sufficient number of interviews are conducted. If necessary, the team will call completers who have left the area to ensure that the interviews adequately represent individuals who have completed the credential program.

Employers of Program Completers
School District Personnel Office Administrators
School Site Principals
Although not Employers, Department Chairs of program completers may be helpful in providing information about candidate preparation

Administration and Faculty of the Institution
President (optional unless merged NCATE/COA visit)
Academic Vice-President

Chief Financial Officer of Institution
Dean of the College or School of Education
Chairs of the involved Departments
Program Coordinators of each credential program
Field Supervisors in each credential program
Professors and Instructors from each credential program (Full-time and Part-time)
Credential Analyst

Other Stakeholders
Advisory Committee members for credential programs
Lab School faculty and administration
Others appropriate to the specific institution

It is essential that representation from all stakeholder groups (faculty, staff, candidates, program completers, employers, and district-employed supervisors) for each approved credential program be available for interview. In addition, if the program is provided at satellite locations or through distance learning, stakeholders from these locations must be included. A matrix of interviewees by Common Standard is shown in Appendix B.

Institutions that have satellite locations must ensure that a representative sample of each category of stakeholder is scheduled for interviews. If the satellite locations cannot be readily accessed by car, it might be necessary to establish a telephone or electronic connection to permit the interviews to occur. Review teams cannot, with confidence, develop program findings or accreditation recommendations if they have not interviewed enough candidates, faculty, completers, and others from satellite locations. The responsibility rests with the institution to anticipate the need to for adequate interviews with off-campus constituencies. If the dean or director of an institution has concerns about off-campus interviews, that person must talk with the institution's assigned consultant.

NOTE: The number of individuals to be interviewed will vary by category and program, and will depend upon program size, relative "importance" to the credential preparation program, availability, and location of the interviewees. For a small credential program, generally everyone associated with the program will be interviewed. Specific problems with interview sample size must be discussed well in advance of the visit with the Team Lead and the CTC consultant.

Selection of Interviewees
The institution should begin assembling lists of potential interviewees at least the semester before the visit. Placement and Alumni offices should be consulted along with the Credential Analyst for the names of program completers, district-employed supervisors and other personnel. The names of current candidates should be assembled as soon as practicable in the semester of the visit. Faculty who teach in the program should be alerted to the visit dates to prevent them from being off-campus. Special arrangements may be necessary for part-time faculty or faculty on early retirement or sabbatical leave. Not all interviews will be conducted one-on-one. Candidates can be interviewed in small groups (3-10 candidates). Faculty and administrators should be interviewed individually. Telephone interviews, closed-circuit television, videoconferencing, off-campus interview sites, and other innovative means of conducting the

interviews are strongly encouraged, particularly on campuses where parking and travel are difficult or where program completers work at significant distances from the campus.

Review of Interview Schedules by Team Lead

Once the first draft of the interview is reviewed at the two month out pre-visit, subsequent drafts are shared with the consultant and team lead. Interview schedules should be completed and reviewed approximately three weeks before a visit. If an institution does not get the interview schedule completed in time for consultant and Team Lead review before the visit, the schedule will be reviewed on the afternoon or evening before the interviews begin. This may cause complications if changes are requested, so institutions are urged to avoid this problem. Once any changes are made by the Team Lead, the schedule will be followed as amended. Late additions to the schedule, if needed, should be clearly noted.

Additional Notes on Creating an Interview Schedule

The interview schedule could be thought of as a table with one column for each team member (see Appendix B for a Sample Interview Schedule). A time frame on the left margin gives the number of allowable slots for the interviews. Since faculty and institutional administration should have individual interviews whenever possible, the scheduler should be cognizant of teaching and travel schedules. Generally, all faculty who teach full-time in the program should be on campus for interviews during the visit. Programs with heavy afternoon and evening classes will need to work with the CTC consultant to balance the time commitments of the team. If getting to the institution is a challenge, interviews may take place at a school site or other location, depending on the amount of travel required. This could be very helpful to campuses where parking is difficult or where getting to campus is a problem. Institutions selecting this option should discuss the specific needs with the CTC consultant well in advance of the visit.

The campus may also wish to combine an alumni event or some special activity with group interviews to encourage program completers, master teachers, and district-employed supervisors to come to the campus. A reception or some other professional development activity, particularly when planned in conjunction with local schools, can increase attendance, make the whole process more useful, and build productive relationships with area schools.

The most frequent concerns expressed by team leads/members relate to lengthy introductions which delay the onset of the interviews, gaps in the interview schedule, significant imbalances in the numbers of interviews scheduled with program completers, employers of program completers, and other off-campus constituents, and insufficient privacy for sensitive interviews. Institutions are urged to attend to these concerns.

Schedulers are urged to have additional people available to be interviewed in the event some individuals may not make the interview. Schedulers are urged to avoid, if possible, scheduling one constituency (e.g., program completers) into only one afternoon, and are encouraged to offer inducements to entice off-campus constituents to make the journey to campus.

Given the importance of the interview process to the final team recommendation and the complexities of bringing large numbers of people on and off campus, institutional planning teams should begin early to develop plans for facilitating this element of the program evaluation.

V. The Accreditation Site Team Daily Schedule

Sunday afternoon

Accreditation team visits are scheduled for four days. The team arrives at its hotel site on Sunday, typically around noon. (Merged NCATE/COA visits typically begin a day earlier for the Team Lead and the Common Standards Cluster members. The remainder of the team begins on Sunday.) Institutions may request another schedule if they believe it will be beneficial to them.

The team holds an organizational meeting at the hotel, may attend a campus orientation/reception provided by the institutional sponsor, spends some time in the document room, and reconvenes as a group to prepare for Monday, completing its business normally by 9:00 p.m.

Institutions are encouraged to schedule an event late Sunday afternoon at the hotel or on the campus for the accreditation team. This event provides an opportunity for general remarks by senior administrators, an introduction to the dean and program directors, and an overview of the institution for the team. Poster sessions that describe the different educator preparation programs at the institution provide team members with a valuable overview of each program and create an informal setting for team members to talk with candidates, completers, faculty, and community members. Institutions may want to have community members or other guests included in this event, including adjunct faculty and program completers who may not be available during the week. Details of this optional part of the visit should be arranged during preliminary discussions with the CTC consultant.

Monday

The first full day of the accreditation visit is devoted to document review and interviews with samples of all major interest groups -- faculty, administration, candidates, program completers, employers of program completers, district-employed supervisors, cooperating school personnel, and community members. Monday morning interviews should be with Program Coordinators for approximately one hour. The team schedule created by the institution must allow sufficient time during the day for document review, team meetings and break time for reviewers. Interviews should not be scheduled after 6:00 p.m. unless the individuals cannot be available earlier in the day or by phone. Scheduling interviews later than 5 or 6 pm MUST be checked with the team lead and staff consultant prior to the beginning of the site visit.

Tuesday

The second full day of the accreditation visit can duplicate the first full day or it may include visits to important collaboration sites or other facilities deemed essential by the institution. The team schedule created by the institution must include time for a mid-visit meeting early in the morning to permit the Team Lead to share with representatives of the institution (a) areas where the standards appear not to be fully satisfied, and (b) requests for additional information pertaining to those standards. Interviews should conclude by 4 or 5:00 p.m. to ensure the team will have sufficient time to conclude its activities.

Tuesday evening

The evening of the second day is set aside for report writing by the team and no other activities can be scheduled. During this time, individual members will report their findings about each program and the team will deliberate about its accreditation recommendation. Once the team agrees on the common standards findings and accreditation recommendation, the program reviewers, cluster leads, team lead, and consultant will write their various portions of the report. Whenever possible, a complete draft of the report will be completed this evening.

Wednesday
The morning of the third day, the team meets at the hotel so that all members have an opportunity to read and comment on the draft report. As soon as all edits are completed, the team and consultants will prepare to present the team's findings and accreditation recommendation to the institution.

Report to Institution
By mid-morning or early afternoon, the team presents a summary of its findings and the recommendation to the institution. The institution may invite anyone to attend this presentation of the report. In some instances, the senior administrators and unit director will schedule a private session with the team lead and consultant for a preview of the report.

VI. Special Circumstances

According to the *Accreditation Framework*, the COA makes a single decision about the continuing accreditation of educator preparation at each institution, including a decision about the specific credentials for which an institution may recommend candidates. Because of that, the following special circumstances need attention:

1. **Off-Campus Programs, Distance Learning Programs, Extended Education Programs and Professional Development Centers** - Information about all sites where programs are offered must be a part of the planning for the accreditation visit. Interviews must be scheduled to represent participants at all sites. If necessary, members of the accreditation team may be asked to conduct visits to off-campus sites prior to the accreditation visit. In some cases, the team size may be increased to facilitate the gathering of data from multi-site institutions. It is expected that the CTC's standards are upheld at all sites where the programs of the institution are offered. Information from the various sites will be a part of the accreditation decision made about the institution.

2. **Programs Not Assigned to the Education Unit** - Even though a particular credential program may reside outside of the education unit at an institution, it will be included in the accreditation visit and will be affected by the single accreditation decision that is made about the institution. Pertinent information about these programs must be included in the *ISSR.* The education unit is considered, by the CTC, to be responsible for assuring program quality for all credential preparation programs.

3. **Cooperative Programs Between Institutions** - Since the accreditation decision is made about the institution and all of its related programs, cooperative programs between institutions must be included in the accreditation visit and treated as a part of each institution's accreditation visit. An accreditation decision made at one institution that co-sponsors a cooperative program may be different than the decision made at another institution that co-sponsors the same program.

As other special circumstances arise, the COA will develop policies and procedures to address them.

VII. Accreditation Findings, Accreditation Recommendations and Team Report

The accreditation team report consists of three main parts. The first part includes a statement about the team's accreditation recommendation, summary information about the findings of the team, and summary information about the institution and its programs. This part includes a table that identifies for each program how many standards apply to the program, and, separately, how many of those standards were met, met with concerns, and not met.

Accreditation Team Recommendations

Once the team reaches consensus about program and common standards findings, the team must deliberate on its accreditation recommendation. For a thorough discussion of the accreditation recommendations and their operational implications, see Chapter 8. The team lead and consultant will support the team as it determines whether the findings of the institution and its programs support a recommendation for accreditation or whether the findings are substantive enough to warrant a recommendation of accreditation with stipulations. There are three levels of accreditation with stipulations:

Accreditation with Stipulations

Accreditation with Major Stipulations

Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations

In the event an institution fails to address stipulations assigned by the COA within the time period determined by the COA, a subsequent review team may recommend Denial of Accreditation.

VIII. Activities after the Site Visit

Report to the COA

Following the site visit, the consultant will assist the Team Lead in preparing the team report for submission to the COA. During a publically noticed meeting of the COA, the team lead and consultant will present the report and the accreditation recommendation. **Institutional representatives will be present and will have an opportunity to respond to the report and recommendations**. The COA will deliberate about the report and act upon the recommendation: whether to accept or modify the recommendation. The COA will include in its accreditation action any stipulations placed on the institution, the due date by which the institution must remedy any stipulations, and whether a seventh year report or a follow-up team visit should occur. For a thorough discussion of Seventh Year follow up, see Chapter Nine.

Appeal Procedures

In the event the institution believes the site review team demonstrated bias or acted arbitrarily or capriciously or contrary to the policies of the *Framework* or procedural guidelines, it may appeal the team recommendation to the COA. The CTC's consultant for the institution will assist the team as it prepares for and presents its appeal.

The institution may also file a dissent with the CTC regarding the action of the COA. In that case, the consultant will help the Team Lead prepare for and present the review team perspective.

Committee on Accreditation Actions

Every member of the COA receives a copy of the institutional review at least ten days prior to a scheduled meeting. Members study the materials in advance of the meeting and are prepared to ask for clarification and to discuss their perspectives of the report and the findings. The COA may not refute the findings of the site review team. The COA's task is to review the findings and to discuss the accreditation recommendation in light of the findings. Following deliberations, the COA will vote on an accreditation status and will specifically identify any stipulations to be placed on the institution and the means by which the stipulations may be removed.