

Determination of Differentiated Intervals between Site Visits for Institutions Needing Additional Oversight June 2018

Overview of this Report

This agenda item provides the Committee on Accreditation (COA) with information regarding its authority to differentiate the length of time between site visits for an institution that it deems to need additional oversight. This item also provides information about possible decision points and asks for COA discussion.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item. No action is required.

Background

When an accreditation site visit results in a determination that an institution is accredited with stipulations, for institutions that continue to operate, the COA has multiple actions it can take to ensure that that institution and its programs improve so that it is meeting the Commission's Common and program standards. Possible actions include identifying stipulations which must be met within the following year, requiring reports (quarterly, semi-annual, or 7th Year), and/or determining that a revisit must occur within the year. Additionally, the COA could take action to close an individual program, deny its ability to accept candidates, and/or notify candidates and applicants of its accreditation status. The actions taken by the COA are closely linked to the severity and pervasiveness of the issues identified by the accreditation site visit team.

In most cases, the actions of the COA results in the institution making the necessary changes to meet standards within the year following the site visit. In some cases, the institution does not take adequate action or is not able to fully implement the changes within the year following the visit. In other cases, although the institution may have made the needed improvements, the COA lacks confidence in their ability to sustain the changes or the issues were of a level of severity that the COA feels that it warrants additional oversight from staff.

As part of the Accreditation Strengthening and Streamlining project, the Commission indicated its interest in allowing the COA the ability to differentiate the length of time between accreditation site visits for institutions that it believes needs greater oversight. The Committee on Accreditation could shorten the length of time between site visits if it determines that it is needed to ensure that the institution continues to meet standards. It seems appropriate that this decision would be made at the conclusion of Year 7 follow-up activities when the COA is able to determine the institution's likelihood of sustaining high quality programs. Staff seeks guidance as to whether this is indeed the right time for this decision.

If the COA determined that a site visit needed to occur sooner than in year 6, the Administrator of Accreditation would move the institution to the accreditation cohort with site visits occurring at the time of the site visit determined by the COA. This would ensure that the institution

participates in all accreditation activities leading up to the visit, including Program Review and Common Standards Review. Both of these Year 5 activities are essential to the work of the team in preparing for a site visit. Staff recommends that there be at least 3 years between site visits.

Institutions would continue to have visits during Year 6 of the 7-year accreditation cycle, unless the COA determined that a visit needed to occur sooner.

Next Steps

If it is determined that the decision point requiring the length of time between visits occurs at the conclusion of Year 7, staff would include this recommendation and discussion in their report to the COA. In addition, staff will propose additional handbook language on this topic for consideration and possible adoption at a future COA meeting.