

Discussion of Proposed Changes to the *Accreditation Handbook*
June 2019

Overview

This agenda item presents proposed revisions for several chapters of the *Accreditation Handbook* for COA discussion.

Recommendation

No action is needed at this time. Staff will incorporate any suggested additional revisions into future iterations of the draft *Handbook*. In addition, draft revisions to the remainder of the *Accreditation Handbook* will be brought to the Committee for discussion at a future meeting.

Background

The *Accreditation Handbook* was adopted in 2016 prior to the implementation of the revised accreditation system. The system has now been implemented for 2 years and revisions to the Handbook are now critical to ensure that the policies and practices are appropriately aligned. Several members of the COA reviewed the proposed revisions and suggested additional edits. For the discussion at this meeting, the Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 4 and Chapter 9 can be discussed. In addition, staff suggests further discussion of the current version of Initial Program Review (Chapter 3) such that any draft revisions to the *Handbook* will be consistent with the COA's direction on this topic.

Next Steps

Staff will incorporate any suggested additional revisions into future iterations of the draft *Handbook*. In addition, draft revisions to the remainder of the *Accreditation Handbook* will be brought to the Committee for discussion at a future meeting.

Introduction to the Accreditation Handbook

Overview of Accreditation in California

Under the auspices of Senate Bills 148 (Bergeson, 1988) and 655 (Bergeson, 1993), the education community in California launched an initiative to create a professional accreditation and certification system that would contribute to excellence in California public education well into the 21st Century. The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission), the nation's oldest independent teaching standards board, has long engaged in credential program reviews. The original *Accreditation Framework*, developed by the Accreditation Advisory Council to replace credential program reviews, represented a unique, pioneering effort to advance the quality of educator preparation through the creation of an integrated accreditation *and* certification system. During 2014-16, the Commission undertook efforts to strengthen and streamline the accreditation system. ~~This 2016 Accreditation Framework details the requirements of the Commission's CTC's revised accreditation system and informed this version of the Handbook.~~

~~The 2016 Accreditation Framework substantially changed the accreditation process.~~ This handbook has adopted documents the procedures the Committee on Accreditation (COA) has put in place to implement the Commission's CTC's Accreditation System. The COA encourages both approved institutions and Board of Institutional Review (BIR) members to utilize this handbook. The COA is committed to providing full disclosure of its accreditation process to all.

The purposes of this accreditation system are to ensure candidates and the public:

- ~~Accreditation assures that~~ programs meet state standards for professional preparation programs, and, in so doing, are allowed to recommend candidates for state licensure.
- ~~Accreditation assures candidates and the public that~~ educator preparation programs are of high quality and effective in preparing candidates to meet licensure requirements.
- ~~Accreditation assures candidates and the public that~~ programs are accountable for the quality and effectiveness of the preparation they provide to candidates.
- ~~Accreditation assures that~~ evidence is reviewed by peers to determine each program's quality and effectiveness in order to retain their accreditation status.
- ~~Accreditation provides the means for That~~ programs have a process for and are to continuously improve based on evidence of candidate outcomes, program effectiveness, and on feedback from ongoing peer review processes.

This accreditation system for California emphasizes the essential participation of professional educators in the development of accreditation policies and procedures, the conduct of institutional reviews, and the determination of accreditation decisions. The twelve-member COA, carefully selected from a pool of outstanding nominees, embodies the expertise, experiences, and commitment envisioned by the writers of the *Accreditation Framework*. While statutes, regulations, and Commission policies are essential to the accreditation system, so too is the professional judgement of educators and preparers of educators who serve on the COA about whether a program meets the Commission's adopted standards of quality.

A Reader's Guide to the Accreditation Handbook

The *Accreditation Framework* calls for the development of an *Accreditation Handbook* that is intended to provide information about ~~all adopted~~ accreditation procedures pertinent to both educator preparation institutions preparing for an accreditation visit and accreditation team members who will conduct the visit. Thus, this single document is written for two audiences. The *Handbook* is divided into fifteen chapters. ~~Additional information may be found on the Commission's website.~~

Chapter One provides specific information about the division of responsibility for professional accreditation matters between the Commission and the COA. Although the legislation that mandated the development of the *Accreditation Framework* gave primary responsibility for making accreditation decisions to the COA, the Commission does have certain tasks to perform in this area. These tasks are delineated in Chapter One. ~~They should be of interest to program sponsors and to team members.~~

Chapter Two discusses the role of standards in the initial and ongoing accreditation of an institution and of its educator preparation credential preparation programs.

Chapter Three provides information on the process of initial institutional and program approval.

Chapter Four provides an overview of the accreditation cycle and discusses the purposes and attributes of the cycle.

Chapters Five through Seven discuss the primary elements of the accreditation cycle. Chapter Five discusses the role of ~~reporting the~~ data ~~reporting~~ in the accreditation cycle and provides directions for identifying, analyzing, and submitting the data. Chapter Six describes the Program Review process including and the kinds of documents that will be reviewed by a team of BIR members and how the review is summarized in a Preliminary Report of Findings to the institution prior to the site visit. Chapter Seven provides information to assist institutions in preparing for the institutional site visit and to confirm information provided through data reporting, completer surveys, and the program review. This chapter gives specific information about the actual procedures followed in the conduct of an accreditation visit. These chapters are focused on the on-going activities of the accreditation process, including special circumstances affecting institutions seeking national accreditation, either for their education unit or for individual credential programs.

Chapter Eight discusses the different kinds of accreditation recommendations that can be made by a team depending on the evidence reviewed by the team and as a result of the team's deliberations. The chapter presents the operational implications of each decision and describes what an institution must do to address issues identified by the accreditation process ~~improve its accreditation status.~~

Chapter Nine addresses the ~~possible~~ follow-up activities that might take place in Year Seven of the accreditation cycle.

Chapters Ten and Eleven describe what team members do before and during a visit. These chapters will be of particular interest to individuals who are trained, or wish to be trained, as Board of Institution Review (BIR) members. Training is required for all potential BIR members and may includes online and in-person training, ~~which includes~~ simulations and other instructional activities, as well as the information provided in this chapter. Chapter Eleven focuses on the role of BIR members who are ~~working as a site~~ visit team members and includes information about performing the various team member tasks. The chapter also describes the data collection procedures utilized by team members.

Chapter Twelve discusses the role of the team lead and ~~articulates~~ the particular responsibilities of the team lead while preparing for and conducting a ~~site~~ accreditation site visit, and providing the final report to the COA. This chapter focuses on the substantially enhanced role of the ~~t~~Team Lead.

Chapter Thirteen discusses articulation between the state and national accreditation systems and is of primary importance to institutions interested in national accreditation. Institutions may host opt for a joint state and national accreditation visit. All institutions are urged to review these options carefully before determining if this option is appropriate for their own accreditation needs.

Chapter Fourteen discusses the on-going evaluation of the accreditation system.

Chapter Fifteen provides information regarding revisits. The COA may determine that a revisit is necessary during Year Seven of the accreditation cycle for institutions that had significant issues during the Year Six site visit.

The Accreditation Handbook is available on the Commission website and is divided in separate chapters. The *Accreditation Handbook* has been produced in a manner that will foster revisions and updates. The COA intends this document to reflect its procedures and expects to make revisions periodically in those procedures as the professional accreditation process continues. ~~The Handbook will be revised periodically.~~ The COA welcomes comments and suggestions for improving its *Accreditation Handbook*.

Chapter One: Responsibilities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing And the Committee on Accreditation

Introduction

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) is responsible for ensuring that educators for California’s public schools – from preschool through high school and adult education – are prepared in rigorous, high quality programs. The major purpose of the agency is to serve as a state standards board for educator preparation for the California public schools, the licensing and credentialing of professional educators in California, the enforcement of professional practices, and the discipline of California credential holders. The Commission works in tandem with its appointed committee of professional educators, the Committee on Accreditation (COA), to implement California’s accreditation system for educator preparation. Each of these bodies has specific responsibilities outlined in California law (California Ed Code sections 44000-44393), the California Code of Regulations, Title 5 CCR Sections 80000-80690.1, and further delineated in the *Accreditation Framework* (Attachment G).

The Commission establishes policy related to accreditation and the COA implements the policies. The statutes that distinguish the roles and responsibilities of these two bodies are found in California Education Code, Sections 44370 through 44374. These provisions, further, govern the *Accreditation Framework* and guided the development of this *Handbook*.

This chapter identifies the specific duties of each body that relate directly to the professional accreditation process. ~~Institutions that prepare educators or that wish to add new credential programs under the Accreditation Framework should read this chapter.~~

I. Responsibilities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing

The following list identifies duties and responsibilities of the Commission that are related to the initial approval and accreditation of educator preparation programs.

A. Adoption and Modification of the *Accreditation Framework*. The Commission has the authority and responsibility to adopt an *Accreditation Framework*, “which sets forth the policies of the Commission regarding the accreditation of educator preparation in California” (Education Code Section 44372(a)). The *Accreditation Framework* can be found [here](#). The Commission may modify the *Framework* in accordance with Section 8 of the *Framework*.

B. Establishing and Modifying Standards for Educator Preparation. Pursuant to Education Code Section 44372(b), the Commission has the authority and responsibility to establish and modify standards for educator preparation in California.

C. Providing Initial Approval of Institutions. In accordance with Education Code Sections 44227(a) and 44372(c) and Section Two of the *Framework*, the Commission determines the eligibility of an institution that applies for initial accreditation and that has not previously prepared educators for state certification in California. The Commission approves institutions that meet its adopted criteria. Institutional approval by the Commission establishes the eligibility of an institution to submit proposals for specific programs to the COA.

D. Hearing and Resolving Accreditation Appeals. The Commission hears appeals of accreditation decisions, which must be based on evidence that accreditation procedures or decisions were “arbitrary, capricious, unfair, or contrary to the policies of the Commission or the procedural guidelines of the COA” (Education Code Section 44374(e)). The Commission resolves each appeal, and the Executive Director communicates the Commission’s decision to the COA, the accreditation team, and the affected institution. The Appeal Procedures are found in Chapter Seven of this *Handbook*.

E. Appointments to the Committee on Accreditation. Pursuant to Education Code 44372(d) and Section 2 of the *Framework*, the Commission appoints members and alternate members of the COA for specific terms. The Commission selects the COA members and alternate members from nominees submitted by the Nominating Panel. The Commission ensures the COA is professionally distinguished and balanced in its composition but does not appoint members to represent particular institutions, organizations, or constituencies.

F. Addressing Issues and Referring Concerns Related to Accreditation. The Commission considers issues and concerns related to accreditation. Issues may be identified by Commission members, the COA, postsecondary institutions, ~~the~~ Commission's staff, or other concerned individuals or organizations. At its discretion, the Commission may refer accreditation issues and concerns to the COA for examination and response.

G. Reviewing Annual Reports by the Committee on Accreditation. The Commission reviews Annual Accreditation Reports submitted by the COA. Annual Accreditation Reports include information about the accreditation process, findings from accreditation site visits, and the outcome of COA deliberations.

H. Annual Allocation of Resources for Accreditation Operations. The Commission annually allocates resources for accreditation operations to implement the Accreditation Framework. Consistent with the Commission’s general practice, staff assignments to accreditation operations are made by the Executive Director, in accordance with state budgets, laws, and regulations.

Pursuant to Education Code 44374.5, the Commission implements a fair and consistent fee policy that is reviewed periodically. The Annual Accreditation fee is composed of two parts: 1) an institution fee based on the average number of recommendations over the past 3 years and 2) a program fee based on the number and type of Commission-approved educator preparation programs offered by the institution.

There is also a [Cost Recovery Fee Plan](#) for selected accreditation activities such as Initial Institutional Approval and new program approval fees. ~~These fees include an Initial Institutional Approval fee, an Initial Program fee that is dependent on the number of standards in the program, late program submission fees, and fees for Full Program reviews when the Program Review documents were not complete.~~

I. Jointly Sponsoring an External Evaluation of Accreditation Policies and Practices. The Commission shares responsibility with the COA for the design and implementation of a comprehensive evaluation of the accreditation process, including policies, data reporting requirements, program review, site visits, training of Board of Institutional Review (BIR) members, and selection of an external evaluator to conduct the evaluation, pursuant to Section 8 of the *Framework*.

II. Responsibilities of the Committee on Accreditation

The following list identifies duties and responsibilities of the COA that are related to the initial approval and continuing accreditation of educator preparation programs.

A. Determining Comparability of Standards. In accordance with Section Three of the *Framework*, the COA determines whether standards submitted by institutions under Option Two (National or Professional Program Standards) provide a level of program quality comparable to standards adopted by the Commission under Option One (California Program Standards). If the COA determines that the proposed standards are collectively comparable in breadth and depth to the Commission-adopted standards, the COA may approve the proposed standards as program standards in California.

B. Providing Initial Accreditation of Programs. The COA reviews proposals submitted by Commission approved institutions (Initial Program Review-IPR) ~~that have been determined eligible by the Commission~~. In accordance with Section Three of the *Framework*, new programs of educator preparation may be submitted under Options One (California Program Standards), Two (National or Professional Program Standards), or Three (Experimental Program Standards). Based on the panel's recommendation and evidence presented, the COA may grant initial accreditation to the program ~~if the COA determines that a program meets all applicable standards, the COA grants initial accreditation to the program.~~ [\(Reference Chapter 3: Initial Program Review\)](#)

C. Continuing Accreditation Decisions. After reviewing the recommendations of accreditation teams, the COA makes decisions about the continuing accreditation of educator preparation institutions and programs, consistent with Section Six of the *Framework*. Pertaining to each institution, the COA makes one of three decisions: Accreditation, Accreditation with Stipulations, or Denial of Accreditation.

D. Developing Accreditation Procedures. Consistent with the terms of Section Six, the COA recommends appropriate guidelines for ~~self-study reports and other~~ accreditation materials and documentation exhibits to be prepared by institutions. The COA also adopts guidelines for accreditation team reports, ~~which emphasize the use of narrative, qualitative explanations of team recommendations~~. The COA may provide additional guidance to institutions, teams, and the Executive Director regarding accreditation visit procedures. The procedural guidelines of the COA are published by the Commission in this *Accreditation Handbook*.

E. Monitoring the Accreditation System. The COA monitors the performance of accreditation teams and oversees other activities associated with the accreditation system.

F. Submitting Annual Reports, Recommendations and Responses to the Commission. Each year, the COA presents its *Annual Accreditation Report* to the Commission. The *Annual Accreditation Report* includes standard information about the dimensions and results of the accreditation process. The COA also advises the Commission about policy changes to improve the quality and integrity of the accreditation process.

G. Holding Meetings in Public Sessions. The COA conducts its business and makes its decisions in meetings that are open to the public, except as provided by statute.

H. Jointly Sponsoring an External Evaluation of Accreditation Policies and Practices. The COA shares responsibility with the Commission for the design and implementation of a comprehensive evaluation of the accreditation process, including policies, data reporting, program review, site visits, training of Board of Institutional Review (BIR) members, and the selection of an external evaluator to conduct an evaluation, pursuant to Section 8 of the *Framework*.

Chapter Two: Standards in Accreditation

Introduction

This chapter describes the role of the Preconditions, Common Standards, and Program Standards in the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) accreditation system. The chapter also discusses how standards are developed, how standards are revised, and how institutions and other program sponsors are affected when standards are revised. ~~Institutions¹ that prepare educators and Board of Institutional Review (BIR) members will be interested in this chapter.~~

I. Preconditions, Common and Program Standards

There are foundational requirements that institutions and credential programs that prepare professional educators in California are expected to address at all times: 1) Preconditions, 2) Common Standards, and 3) Program Standards.

- A. **Preconditions** are requirements grounded in statute, regulations and/or Commission policy. ~~Therefore, it is expected institutions and programs be in compliance at all times with preconditions.~~ Programs must provide documentation that demonstrates it is complying with a response to each General preconditions and all specific preconditions for each Commission approved program offered by the institution and include appropriate supporting evidence and/or documentation. ~~Although a review of the preconditions takes place in years 1 and 4 of the accreditation cycle by staff, if an institution is found to be out of compliance at any time by any review team member, the COA or staff, then COA may take appropriate action against the institution such as place stipulations upon the institution or deny accreditation.~~
- B. **Common Standards** address aspects of program quality that should be common across all educator preparation programs in an institution. This category includes standards relevant to the institution's overall vision for, and leadership of, educator preparation programs within ~~the institution's organization~~. The Common Standards also embody expectations about the distribution of resources across different programs, the quality of faculty, and the adequacy of admissions and advising procedures. An institution provides documentation describing how it responds to each Common Standard, including information about individual programs when necessary.
- C. **Program Standards** address the quality of program features that are specific to a credential. These include assessments, curriculum, field experiences, and the knowledge and skills to be demonstrated by candidates in the specific credential area. There are three program standards options available to institutions intending to offer

¹ "Institutions" will be used to refer to all institutions or other entities that sponsor educator preparation programs.

an educator preparation program: Commission adopted program standards, national professional association standards, and experimental standards. —While most programs are aligned to the Commission adopted standards, there are particular situations in which one of the other options is appropriate. The institution must select the type of program standards it will use to seek initial program approval and future program accreditation. This selection will also guide the assignment and orientation of program reviewers. Once a program standard option has been chosen, the institution must respond to each standard in the selected option by providing program-specific information for review by the program reviewers. Institutions may select from the following options for program-specific standards.

- **Option 1. California Program Standards.** The Commission appoints panels of experts from colleges, universities and local education authorities (LEAs) to develop program standards for specific credential programs. These panels are guided by current research findings pertinent to that credential, the California K-12 academic content standards, and the most current edition of the curriculum frameworks. They also consider standards developed by appropriate national and statewide professional organizations. If the national or professional standards are found to be appropriate for California, the panel may recommend that the Commission adopt them in lieu of developing new standards or revising the Commission's existing standards. After reviewing the recommendations of advisory panels and other experts, the Commission adopts ~~California~~ Program Standards for the initial and continuing accreditation of credential preparation programs. When revised program standards are adopted, institutions offering programs aligned to the former standards must be aligned to the revised standards within a timeline set by the Commission. Staff provides information and technical assistance regarding transitioning to new standards, including a timeline to institutions sponsoring the affected programs.
- **Option Two. National or Professional Program Standards.** California institutions may propose to use program standards that have been developed by national or state professional organizations. These standards must be approved for use by the Committee on Accreditation (COA) to the extent that the proposed standards are comparable to those adopted by the Commission under Option One (California Program Standards). The analysis of comparability between national and California standards can be performed by the institution prior to submitting a request to the COA, by the national or professional organization, or by Commission staff following a request to use the National or Professional Standards. Such a proposal may be submitted to the COA with a statement of the institution's reasons for requesting this option and a copy of the proposed national or professional program standards.

If the COA determines that the proposed standards are comparable to the California Program Standards, the COA will approve the proposed standards for use as program standards in the initial and continuing accreditation of the credential program. If the COA determines that the requested standards do not adequately address one or more aspects of the California Standards (Common and/or Program), the COA may approve the requested standards but also require the institution to address the additional aspects found in the California Standards. An institution would be required to submit an alignment matrix that provides any information not included in the national program standards. The COA could also determine that the national or professional standards are not appropriate and deny their use for initial and ongoing accreditation purposes.

- **Option Three. Experimental Program Standards.** For initial accreditation, an institution may present an experimental program proposal that meets the Experimental Program Standards adopted by the Commission pursuant to Education Code Section 44273. The Experimental Program Standards were designed to facilitate the development of innovative programs that are likely to expand the knowledge base about effective educator preparation practices. Experimental programs must have a research component to allow the investigation of focused research questions about key aspects of educator preparation. For a copy of the Experimental Program Standards and additional information about this option, see the [Commission's website](#). In addition to a research focus, experimental program proposals must ensure that candidates completing the experimental program would possess the same knowledge and skills required by the Commission-adopted ~~California~~ Program Standards (Option One) for the same credential. Approved experimental programs must report findings related to their research component on a biennial basis to the Commission. Upon consultation with the institution and with the COA, the COA retains the authority to determine whether the findings support continuance of the experimental program under the experimental standards.

II. Process of Program Standards Development and Revision

The initial development of the Preconditions, Common and Program Standards utilizes panels of experts in educator preparation and practicing educators from colleges, universities, school districts and other educational entities. The panel members use information from current, respected research in the relevant areas, California's adopted K-12 academic content standards, and current curriculum frameworks to craft standards that ensure that credential holders will be able to work effectively with California's highly diverse students and families. As appropriate, the panel also reviews standards developed by national and statewide professional organizations.

~~The Commission adopts, and will continue to modify as necessary, a schedule for the regular review and revision of all adopted standards. The Commission follows established procedures~~

~~for the use of expert panels, stakeholder comment, and field review to develop and revise standards. For information on the schedule of standards review and revision, please consult the Commission's [Accreditation webpage](#).~~

III. Requirements for Institutions When Standards are Revised

Institutions with educator preparation programs aligned to previous standards will be required to update their programs in accordance with the Commission's established timeline for transitioning to new standards, and program documents to reflect any newly adopted standards depending on the institution's location within the seven-year accreditation cycle. As each set of program standards is updated, specific directions will be provided to institutions about the transition requirements and timeline in which they must update their program and program documents. At the time of adoption, the Commission will determine whether the changes are significant and warrant requiring institutions to update their documents for a review process outside of the regularly scheduled accreditation activities; if not, allow institutions to update their documents within the current accreditation cycle.

Chapter Four

The Accreditation Cycle

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the accreditation cycle which is comprised of several major activities. These activities and their purposes are briefly described below. In the following chapters each activity is reviewed in more detail. The underlying expectation of the accreditation process is that all accredited programs are implemented such that they align with the Commission's adopted standards and that institutional and program personnel are engaged in continuous, on-going collection of data about candidate competence and program effectiveness, are analyzing the data, and are using the results to make programmatic improvements. Taken as a whole, the elements of the accreditation cycle prepare the institution and the accreditation review team to identify an institution's strengths and any areas needing improvement.

I. Purpose

The overarching goal of the accreditation system is to ensure that educator preparation programs are aligned with the Preconditions, Common Standards and all relevant Program Standards which require, among other things, that institutions develop comprehensive data collection systems to support continuous program improvement and to demonstrate candidates' knowledge and skills for educating and supporting all students in meeting the state-adopted academic standards. The graphic on the next page (Figure 1) emphasizes the continuous nature of the accreditation system.

Four primary purposes are achieved through the accreditation system. First, the process creates a mechanism by which educator preparation programs, their institutions, and the COA are held accountable to the public and to the education profession. Through participation in the accreditation process, educator preparation programs document their adherence to educator preparation standards and their use of data for on-going analyses of program effectiveness. Second, the cycle supports institutions' adherence to appropriate program standards, generally the Commission-adopted teacher preparation standards. Third, by requiring institutions to use data to identify areas needing improvement, the accreditation process helps ensure high quality educator preparation programs. Fourth, the accreditation cycle encourages institutions to create and utilize systematic and comprehensive evaluation processes to ensure their candidates are well prepared qualified for teaching or specialist services credentials and that their programs are providing the rigorous content and pedagogical preparation new ~~teachers and other~~ educators need to be successful.

II. Overview

The accreditation process is a seven-year cycle of activities. Figure 1, below, illustrates the accreditation cycle of activities. These activities include annual data analysis, preconditions review, Common Standards review, program review, the site visit, and seventh-year follow up

activities. Each educator preparation institution has been assigned to a cohort. Each cohort is on a specific seven-year cycle. Therefore, institutions are at different points in the accreditation cycle depending on their assigned cohorts. A list of ~~c~~Cohort assignments as well as summaries of accreditation activities (cohort maps) for each cohort can be found on the Commission's [accreditation webpage](#). ~~Institutions are, therefore, at different points in the accreditation cycle, depending on their assigned cohort.~~ The cohort model distributes the workload of the Commission, its staff, and the Board of Institutional Review (BIR) members, which is composed of trained education professionals who review program documents and conduct the accreditation site visits. A brief overview of each activity will be provided in this chapter. For a full description and guidance on preparing for each activity, please see the appropriate chapters for each activity.

Figure 1 Accreditation cycle of activities

CHART OF ACCREDITATION CYCLE



Annual Data Collection, Analysis, and Use for Continuous Improvement

~~The purpose of annual data analysis is to ensure that~~ The Commission’s accreditation system requires that institutions ~~are collecting and,~~ analyze, and using candidate and program data on a regular basis and that program improvement activities are being identified based on the results of that datae analysis.

The Commission’s standards require that each approved institution have a well developed comprehensive unit and program improvement system. Data and analysis collected by an institution will be reported annually, and uploaded to the Commission data warehouse. Each program is responsible for analyzinges its their data and identifies program strengths and concerns in regard to candidate competence and program effectiveness, to determine if any programmatic changes are needed. Documentation of the kinds of Subsequent analysis will give the institution an opportunity to report on changes that were implemented as a result of prior

analysis is an important feature of demonstrating that the institution is considering data when making programmatic changes and improvements.

Annual Accreditation Data System (ADS)

In addition to its own institutional data collection process, each Commission approved institution is required to participate in the Commission's Annual Accreditation Data System (ADS). Program specific data that is collected by institutions in addition to ADS Specific types of data collected by an institution will be reported annually, and uploaded to the Commission's Accreditation Data System.

Preconditions Review

Institutions and their ~~and its~~ programs are expected to be in compliance with all preconditions at all times. During Year One and Year Four of the accreditation cycle institutions must submit information ~~respond~~ related to all relevant preconditions, this includes General Preconditions and all preconditions associated with each credential program offered by the institution. Preconditions ~~which~~ are grounded in statute, regulations and/or Commission policy, ~~for each approved program.~~

During years one and four, sStaff will review responses to all preconditions. If it is determined that an institution is out of compliance with one or more preconditions, the institution will be notified as soon as possible with a requirement that the institution act within 30 ~~10~~ days of the date of notification to rectify the matter. The report finding will be presented to the COA to determine what additional action should be taken in the event that the review finds that one or more responses do not comply with preconditions or the institution fails to act within the 310 days to comply. Action will depend on the severity and/-or type of noncompliance, up to and including the determination of the need for a Focused Site Visit ~~or rescinding of accreditation.~~ or suspension of credential recommendations.

The precondition reviews in years one and four, however, are not the only times in which an institution may be found to be out of compliance. If it comes to light in any manner that an institution is out of compliance with a precondition at any point during the 7 year cycle, action may be taken by the COA against the institution. Staff ~~or review teams, including site visit teams,~~ may identify issues that indicate that an institution is not complying with preconditions.

Common Standards and Program Review

During Year Five of the accreditation cycle institutions must submit required information for ~~respond to~~ the Common Standards Review and ~~complete~~ Program Review.

Common Standards Review

Common Standards Review is the activity during which key information is provided by the institution and reviewed by reviewers to determine whether the institution is sufficiently addressing the Common Standards and whether additional information is needed for the site visit.

a. Submission of Common Standard Evidence

Each institution in Year 5 submits evidence as required by the Commission that relates the Commission adopted Common Standards. Each institution submits one response that reflects all of its educator preparation programs, regardless of whether the institution's programs are housed within different colleges, schools, division, or departments within the institution.

b. Review of Common Standards Evidence and Preliminary Report of Findings

Trained members of the BIR serve as reviewers and consider all information and determine preliminary findings for all Common standards. Submissions will be reviewed once with feedback in the form of the *Preliminary Report of Findings* provided to the institution. An institution must prepare an addendum based upon the preliminary findings and make the addendum available to the site visit team prior to the accreditation site visit.

c. Use of Results

The Preliminary Report of Findings along with the institutional addendum provided prior to the site visit provides a basis for an accreditation site visit team's review of the Common Standards implementation in year six.

Review of Program Submission

Program Review is the activity during which key program evidence to documents is are submitted and reviewed by reviewers to determine whether the educator preparation program appears to be aligned to program standards or whether additional information is needed for the site visit.

~~During an institution's Program Review, each of its educator preparation programs submit documents demonstrating how the program meets the relevant program standards. The Program Review includes:~~

- a. **Submission of Program Documents.** An Institution/program sponsor submits required documentation including, but not limited to, the key categories: Program ~~Summary~~Description, Organizational Structure, Qualifications of Faculty and Instructional Personnel, Course Sequence, Course Matrix, Fieldwork and Clinical Practice. Additional evidence documentation may be required specific to each credential area.
- b. **Review of Program Evidence Document and Preliminary Report of Findings.** Trained members of the ~~BIR~~Board of Institutional Reviewers serve as reviewers and consider all information and determine preliminary findings for all program standards. Documents will be reviewed once with feedback in the form of the *Preliminary Report of Findings* provided to the institution. An institution must prepare an addendum based upon the preliminary findings and make the addendum available to the site visit team prior to the accreditation site visit.

- c. **Use of Results.** The Preliminary Report of Findings provides a basis for ~~the~~ accreditation site visit team's review of the program's implementation in year six. Findings in the Preliminary Report of Findings will be used to determine the type, size and complexity of the programs to be reviewed and the structure, size and expertise of the site visit review team to be selected.

Site Visit

The ~~s~~Site ~~v~~isit takes place in year six of the accreditation cycle. The site visit allows a BIR team to ~~consider~~ ~~verify~~ information ~~gathered~~ from the ~~institution's annual data analysis~~, Preconditions, Common Standards ~~review and responses~~, and Program Review processes, ~~as well as any~~ ~~Any~~ and all required data about the institution and its programs, including those data ~~within the ADS system~~, will also be considered. ~~for the~~The purpose of ~~the site visit is to make a determination~~ ~~making findings about~~ regarding the extent to which an institution and its programs meet the Preconditions, Common Standards and Program Standards and to ~~develop~~ ~~generate~~ an accreditation recommendation. The ~~site visit~~ team ~~conducts~~ ~~performs~~ interviews with ~~samples of~~ stakeholders from each of an institution's programs and completes ~~limited~~ document reviews ~~as needed~~ to confirm or refute information from the other sources. The team also examines evidence about the institution's policies and practices as they impact educator preparation programs. Based upon the findings of these activities, an accreditation recommendation is made to the COA.

Institutions are assigned a state consultant approximately ~~nine months to~~ one year in advance of the site visit in order to ~~assist the institution in help them~~ ~~preparing~~ ~~ing~~ for the visit. ~~The Administrator of Accreditation works with each institution to establish the visit dates, site team size and configuration.~~ During the ~~time leading up to the site visit is time~~, the institution ~~organizes~~ ~~prepares~~ ~~documentation and evidence that will be accessed by the site visit team on the institution's accreditation webpage.~~ ~~electronic copies of all its documentation which can be accessed by the entire site visit team.~~

Follow Up

In year seven of the accreditation cycle, institutions provide follow up information from the site visit findings per the COA's accreditation decision.

III. Cohort Activities

All approved educator preparation sponsors are assigned to one of seven cohorts. Each institution can find its cohort assignment and corresponding accreditation activity by year at the Commission's [Accreditation Schedule and Activities](#) webpage.

Chapter Nine

Activities during the Seventh Year of the Accreditation Cycle

Introduction

Once an accreditation decision has been made by the COA, institutions still have an on-going responsibility to attend to accreditation matters in the seventh year of the accreditation cycle. Depending on the accreditation decision, these activities can range from simply continuing routine accreditation activities, such as collection and analysis of candidate and program data, to major revisions of programs to bring them into alignment with state-adopted standards. The specific activities will depend upon the issues identified by the review team and the accreditation decision rendered by the COA. Many, but not all, institutions will be required to submit a ~~seventh year~~ report one year after COA action. This chapter clarifies the expectations for the seventh year of the cycle ~~and the seventh year reporting requirement~~.

I. Accreditation Decisions and Consequent Institution Activities

As described in the Chapter 8, the COA can make one of five accreditation decisions. These include the following:

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

Chapter 8 delineated the operational implications for each of the possible accreditation decisions, and summarizes some, but not all, of the required activities for each of the various accreditation decisions. Chapter 8 should be consulted for specific information about the definition and operational implications of each accreditation decision. Ultimately, the specific actions required of any given institution in the seventh year will be set forth in the action taken by the COA.

Expectations for All Institutions in the Seventh Year of the Cycle

Underlying the various 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 sixth year. On the contrary, the seventh 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.

For institutions for which stipulations were determined, action must be taken to address the stipulations in one calendar year. For this reason, the activities undertaken in the seventh year are particularly critical. Institutions with stipulations that do not sufficiently address the stipulations, particularly those institutions with Major Stipulations or Probationary Stipulations, ~~that do not sufficiently address the stipulations~~ could be faced with Denial of Accreditation.

All Institutions in the Seventh Year

Institutional follow-up is required of all approved institutions in the seventh year of the cycle, although a follow-up *report* is not necessarily required of all institutions. In the seventh 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 *Accreditation Framework* provides the COA with the flexibility to require follow-up regardless of the accreditation decision, including those with a decision of Accreditation. The COA may require institutions with accreditation to provide a follow-up report (7th Year 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 accreditation 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 in the form of a seventh year report. If follow-up reporting is required, the COA must specify this in the action taken at the time of the accreditation decision.

If the COA does not specify the need for a seventh year report from the institution receiving a decision of accreditation, then the institution, at a minimum, should participate in routine accreditation activities such as collection, analysis, and program improvement activities related to candidate assessment data and program effectiveness.

Accreditation with Stipulations

Any institution granted Accreditation with Stipulations must complete a report in the seventh year 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 report address any other issue identified in the team report or raised during COA deliberations. All institutions with Accreditation with Stipulations must continue to work with a Commission consultant during the seventh year. In cases where the determination of Accreditation with Stipulations has been rendered, the COA will indicate whether the process for removal of stipulations includes a revisit to the institution.

No Revisit Required

In the cases where a revisit was determined unnecessary by COA, the consultant, and in some cases the team lead, will review the responses provided in the report submitted by the institution in the seventh year that identifies actions take to address stipulations. These responses will be summarized in an agenda item for the COA to consider in making its determination as to whether or not sufficient progress has been made to remove the stipulations. COA considers the recommendation of the Commission consultant and, if appropriate, the team lead in determining the removal of the stipulations at a regularly scheduled meeting. Institutional representatives should attend the meeting to ensure all questions and concerns of COA are addressed at the meeting as the members consider the removal of stipulations.

Required Revisit

If a ~~revisit~~ site visit has been deemed necessary by the COA, it will be scheduled for approximately one year after the original site visit. The institution should continue working with a Commission staff consultant to plan for the revisit and to ensure common understanding of what is expected to be addressed at the revisit. If COA has determined a revisit or a focused site visit is necessary, the report submitted in the seventh year by the institution 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. The Commission consultant will work with the institution to determine the specific revisit needs as directed by the COA action and help guide the institution in determining the type of evidence and progress expected at the time of the site visit.

Upon the conclusion of the revisit, the revisit team will determine whether the stipulations and the related ~~those~~ standards deemed not met or met with concerns that led to the stipulations are now found to be addressed ~~met~~. A report of the revisit team will be provided to the COA and the COA, at one of its regularly scheduled public meetings, will discuss with the staff consultant, team lead (if necessary), and institutional representatives the progress made in addressing the standards. If it is determined that sufficient progress has been made in meeting the standards, then the COA may act to ~~will~~ remove the stipulations. If sufficient progress has not been made, the COA may change the accreditation decision and/or may impose additional stipulations with new timelines and expectations for compliance with the state adopted educator preparation standards.

Accreditation with Major Stipulations

Any institution granted Accreditation with Major Stipulations must submit a report in the seventh year addressing stipulations 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 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 addressing the stipulations and meeting the standards that led to the stipulations.

Required Revisit

In many nearly all cases of Accreditation with Major Stipulations, a revisit to the institution will be required. This revisit should take place approximately one year after the original site visit. ~~The COA will indicate in its action whether~~ the revisit will be conducted by a Commission consultant and team lead, and may include additional team members as deemed necessary or with a full team. The size of the revisit team will largely depend on the number and type of stipulations and the number and type of programs with areas of concern identified.

During this seventh year, the institution should continue working with its Commission consultant to plan for the revisit and to ensure common understanding of what is expected to be addressed at the revisit. A report addressing stipulations and relevant standards must be provided by the institution which will, in turn, be provided to the review team to help the team's assessment of the progress being made in addressing the findings of the review. The Commission consultant will work with the institution to determine the specific revisit needs as directed by the COA and help guide the institution in determining the type of evidence and progress expected at the time of the site visit.

Upon the conclusion of the revisit, the revisit team will determine whether the stipulations have been addressed sufficiently and whether those standards associated with the stipulations which were deemed not met or met with concerns in the original visit are now fully met. A report of the revisit team will be provided to the COA and the COA, at one of its regularly scheduled public meetings, will discuss with the staff consultant, team lead, and institutional representatives the progress made in addressing the standards. If it is determined that sufficient progress has been made in meeting the standards, then the COA may remove the stipulations. If sufficient progress has not been made, the COA may adopt a decision of Denial of Accreditation. If, in some cases, it determines that some progress has been made and it is appropriate to allow additional time for the institution to address the remaining stipulations, the COA could change the accreditation decision and/or may impose additional stipulations with new timelines and expectations for compliance with the state adopted educator preparation standards.

Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations

Like Accreditation with Stipulations and Accreditation with Major Stipulations, an institution given Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations is required to submit a report in the seventh year documenting how it has addressed all stipulations. However, numerous additional requirements are imposed on an institution with Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations during that seventh year of the cycle.

Plan to Address Stipulations

A determination of Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations requires that the institution submit an action plan describing the steps the institution will take to address the stipulations and provide updates at specified intervals, as determined by the COA. The COA determines the timeline for submitting the plan (see Chapter 8). The Commission staff consultant and the Administrator of Accreditation determine the sufficiency of the plan and provide updates to the COA as appropriate or as specified by the COA.

Revisit

A revisit is required for any institution with Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations. This revisit should take place approximately one year after the original site visit. During the seventh year, the institution should continue working with its Commission staff consultant to plan for the revisit and to ensure common understanding of what is expected to be addressed at the revisit. A report must be provided by the institution in the seventh year identifying how it has addressed the stipulations which will, in turn, be provided to the review team to help the team's assessment of the progress being made in addressing the findings of the review. The Commission consultant will work with the institution to determine the specific revisit needs as directed by the COA action and help guide the institution in determining the type of evidence and progress expected at the time of the site visit.

The team lead, team members, and staff consultant will participate in the revisit and provide a report to the COA about the progress that has been made in addressing standards. The report will include an updated decision on standards findings. COA will make a determination whether sufficient progress has been made to remove the stipulations and change the accreditation decision. If COA determines that sufficient progress has not been made, it could act to Deny Accreditation.

If, in some cases, it determines that some progress has been made and it is appropriate to allow additional time for the institution to address the remaining stipulations, the COA could change the accreditation decision and/or may impose additional stipulations with new timelines and expectations for compliance with the state adopted educator preparation standards.

Denial of Accreditation

If after a revisit, the COA determines that sufficient progress has not been made, the COA could recommend *Denial of Accreditation*.

The COA can deny accreditation upon either an initial visit or a revisit to an institution. Although a recommendation of Denial of Accreditation typically comes after a finding of probationary status at an initial visit and after the institution has been provided with an opportunity to institute improvements, a review team can recommend Denial of Accreditation at **any time** if the situation warrants the finding in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Handbook.

Furthermore, an institution receiving a *Denial of Accreditation* would be prohibited from re-applying for institutional approval for a minimum of two years.

Institutional Requirement for a Report in the Seventh Year

The following chart clarifies which institutions are required to submit a report to the COA in the seventh year. Please note that the chart below only addresses the seventh year report, it does not list the numerous other possible requirements and limitations placed upon an institution as a result of a particular accreditation decision.

Accreditation Decision and Requirements for Submitting a Report in the Seventh Year

Activity	Accreditation	Accreditation with Stipulations	Accreditation with Major and Probationary Stipulations
Report Submitted to Commission	COA discretion	Yes	Yes
Type of <u>Institutional Follow Up</u> Report	One of two options as determined by COA: 1) No report 2) Seventh Year Report	Report Addressing Stipulations	Report Addressing Stipulations
To be addressed in Report	(If required by COA) * Standards Not Met (if applicable) * Standards Met with Concerns (if applicable) Any other areas included in COA action at the time the accreditation decision is made.	* All Stipulations * Standards Not Met (if applicable) * Standards Met with Concerns (if applicable) Any other areas included in COA action at the time the accreditation decision is made.	* All Stipulations * Standards Not Met (if applicable) * Standards Met with Concerns (if applicable) Any other areas included in COA action at the time the accreditation decision is made.
Review Process	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.