**Discussion of the Accreditation Framework**

**Overview of this Report**

This item provides the draft *Accreditation Framework* agenda item that was presented to the Commission at its January 2020 meeting. The staff will provide an oral update on the questions and suggestions the Commissioners had regarding the *Framework*.

**Recommendation**

That the Committee review the draft framework and provide feedback to staff.

**Background**

The staff has worked to update the *Accreditation Framework* to have it more accurately reflect the Commission’s current policies regarding the accreditation of educator preparation programs. The *Framework* was presented to the Commission in January 2020 and the Commission asked that it be shared for feedback from educator preparation institutions and other stakeholders.

**Next Steps**

The *Framework* will be updated based on the Commission’s discuss and with any additional suggestions from the Committee. The Framework will then be shared for feedback. The plan is to bring the updated Framework back to the Commission at its June 2020 meeting for review and possible adoption.

# 2E

**Information**

***Educator Preparation Committee***

Potential Changes to the Accreditation Framework

**Executive Summary:** This agenda item presents potential revisions to the adopted *Accreditation Framework* for Commission discussion and consideration.

**Recommended Action:** For information only

**Presenters:** Erin Sullivan and Cheryl Hickey, Administrators, Professional Services Division

**Strategic Plan Goal**

***II. Program Quality and Accountability***

c) Promote educator preparation and lifelong development as a shared responsibility among members of the education profession, institutions of higher education, local education agencies, and state agencies.

## Potential Changes to the Accreditation Framework

### Introduction

This agenda item presents for discussion and consideration, potential changes to the *Accreditation Framework*. Between 2014 and 2016, the Commission undertook a significant initiative to strengthen and streamline accreditation on a number of fronts. These efforts have been discussed thoroughly in previous agenda items including the Committee on Accreditation (COA) annual reports presented to the Commission at the last meeting of the calendar year.

Since the adoption of the current *Accreditation Framework* in February 2016, Commission staff and the Committee on Accreditation have been implementing the new accreditation system. By reviewing the current *Accreditation Framework* at this time, the Commission can ensure the congruence of the accreditation processes and policies. This agenda item has tracked edits to identify proposed additions and deletions to the *Accreditation Framework*.

### Background

Education Code section 44371(a)(5) requires that the Commission’s accreditation system be governed by an *Accreditation Framework* that sets forth the policies of the Commission regarding the accreditation of educator preparation programs. The initial *Accreditation Framework* was adopted in 1995 and updated with major revisions in 2007. Following a two- year period of deep review and development, the Commission adopted a new *Accreditation Framework* in February 2016 to reflect the new and current system.

Some of the specific language contained in the 2016 *Accreditation Framework* reflect the system as it was envisioned at the time but as not yet implemented. Since that time, the Commission staff and COA have been able to fully implement most aspects of the new accreditation system. Some of these new aspects, such as the annual Accreditation Data System (ADS), have taken a number of years to move from conceptual to operational status. Given that it has been four years since adoption of the *Accreditation Framework* and there have been many positive developments in the implementation of the accreditation system, it is an opportune time to revisit the *Framework* to ensure that the current system is accurately reflected in the *Accreditation Framework* language.

### Summary of Proposed Changes to the *Accreditation Framework*

The proposed revised *Accreditation Framework* language is included in Appendix A and indicated by underline (for additions) and strikethrough (for elimination of current language). The table below provides a brief summary of the proposed revisions by section.

| **Accreditation Framework Section** | **Summary of Proposed Revisions** |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction | Most of the language proposed to be removed refers to the strengthening and streamlining effort that took place from 2014-16. This language has been updated to reflect and focus on the current accreditation system and not the effort to redesign the system. |
| Section 1: Authority and Responsibilities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing | Most of the language in this section is grounded in statute and therefore is not proposed to be changed. A reference to Education Code section 44372 has been added at the beginning of this section which sets for the powers and duties of the Commission regarding the accreditation system and specific Education Code sections have been added for each of the responsibilities identified in this Section. |
| Section 2: Functions of the Committee on Accreditation | Most of the language in this section is grounded in statute. Staff proposes to add references to the specific Education Code sections where appropriate. |
| Section 3: Accreditation Preconditions and Standards | This section includes updated and clarified language particularly for Preconditions and Common Standards and on national or professional standards. |
| Section 4: Initial Accreditation Policies | This section is updated significantly to reflect the revisions to the Initial Institutional Approval process made by the Commission over the past three years. Additionally, it adds detail on the final step in the process whereby the Commission may grant full accreditation to an institution. The *Framework* is currently silent on this part of the process. |
| Section 5: Continuing Accreditation Policies | This section has been updated and refined to reflect changes that have occurred as the Commission has moved from conception to implementation of the new streamlined and strengthened accreditation system.  |
| Section 6: Board of Institutional Reviewers | This section has been refined to better reflect the roles of Board of Institutional Review members in the current accreditation system. Most of the changes are intended to enhance clarity. A few changes in this section are proposed to be eliminated due to the fact that they are procedural in nature and are better placed within the Accreditation Handbook.  |
| Section 7: Articulation Between National and State Accreditation | This section has been updated significantly. At the time that this *Framework* was adopted there was only one national accrediting body for educator preparation whereas at this time there are now two. The language in this section now reflects the possibility of different types of partnerships with accrediting bodies and clarifies different purposes and processes with national accreditation and professional accreditation. |
| Section 8: Evaluation and Modification of the Framework | This section is changed to reflect the Commission’s responsibility to consult with the systems of postsecondary institutions of higher education before making changes to the *Framework.* Given that these bodies have representatives on the Commission and given that adoption of a *Framework* is the purview of the Commission, the term consultation is appropriate. |

### Staff Suggestion

Staff suggests that the Commission discuss the proposed revisions to the *Accreditation Framework* as presented in this agenda item. After the Commission discussion, staff will modify the language to include the suggestions from the Commission and discuss the topic further with the Committee on Accreditation at its next meeting. In addition, if desired by the Commission, staff can survey the field to determine whether the proposed revised language is clear, sufficient, and appropriate.

### Next Steps

The proposed revised document will be presented to the Commission for further consideration and possible adoption at a future Commission meeting. Staff intends to put forward proposed regulatory language of the Commission’s *Accreditation Framework* after adoption of the revised *Framework*.

## Appendix A

## The *Accreditation Framework*

**Educator Preparation for California**

**Table of Contents**

(Page numbers will be added before publication. This Table of Contents is based on the previous Accreditation Framwork and should not be used to navigate this document due to track changes)

**Introduction**

 Overview of the Accreditation Strengthening and Streamlining Project

 Key Changes in the Accreditation System for 2016 and Beyond

 The Professional Character of Accreditation

 Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness of the Accreditation System

**Section 1: Authority and Responsibilities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing**

 A. Responsibilities Related to Accreditation Policies

 B. Responsibilities Related to the Accreditation System

 C. Responsibilities Related to the Committee on Accreditation

**Section 2: The Committee on Accreditation**

 A. Functions of the Committee on Accreditation

 B. Membership of the Committee on Accreditation

 C. Appointment of the Committee on Accreditation

**Section 3: Accreditation Preconditions and Standards**

 Preconditions

 Common Standards

 Program Standards

**Section 4: Initial Accreditation Policies**

 A. Stages of Initial Institutional Approval/Program Sponsor Approval

 B. Integration of Institutions into the Accreditation Cycle.

 C. Policies for Initial Program Approval

**Section 5: Continuing Accreditation Policies**

 A. Overview of the Accreditation Cycle

 B. Accreditation Cycle Activities

 C. Accreditation Reports, Recommendations and Decisions

 D. Appeals

 E. Complaints about Credential Program Quality

**Section 6: Board of Institutional Reviewers**

 A. Board of Institutional Reviewers

 B. Team Structure, Size, and Expertise

 C. Organization of Continuing Accreditation Activities

 D. Training, Orientation, and Evaluation

 E. Role of Commission Staff

**Section 7: Articulation Between National and State Accreditation**

 A. National Accreditation of an Education Unit

 B. National Accreditation of a Credential Program

**Section 8: Evaluation of and Modifications to the Framework**

 A. Evaluation of the *Accreditation Framework*

 B. Modifications to the *Accreditation Framework*

## The Accreditation Framework

## Educator Preparation for California

### Introduction

The *Accreditation Framework* documents the policies of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing for accrediting colleges, universities and local education agencies that prepare teachers and other educators for state licensure and professional practice in California’s public schools. “Accreditation” refers to the process of identifying and verifying the quality of each program that prepares educators for serving in the public schools by ensuring that the program meets state adopted standards in order to ensure that candidates who graduate from the program meet the qualifications for licensure established by the Commission.

The major purpose of state accreditation of educator preparation programs is to ensure that those who teach and provide a variety of education-related services in the public schools have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to be effective educators. Additional related purposes of accreditation are summarized below:

* 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 programs meet state standards for professional preparation programs, and, in so doing, are allowed to recommend candidates for state licensure
* 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 programs to continuously improve based on evidence of candidate outcomes, program effectiveness, and on feedback from ongoing peer review processes.

### The Commission’s Accreditation System

Beginning in 2014, the Commission conducted a full review of its accreditation system.

As a result of this comprehensive effort, the current Accreditation System incorporates the following critical attributes:

* Rigorous educator preparation program standards;
* Clearly defined performance expectations for what candidates, at the completion of their program, should know and be able to do.
* Where appropriate, valid and reliable performance assessments that ensure candidate competence;
* Consideration of a variety of reliable candidate and program outcomes measures that indicate that candidates are well prepared;
* Processes that are cost effective, efficiently managed, and able to distinguish poorly performing programs from highly effective programs and provide the Commission with the authority to act accordingly; and
* Maintain the importance of a peer review process that includes both a review of authentic documentation as well as a site visit (in person or technology assisted)
* Improved transparency for the public about educator preparation programs.

The graphic that follows illustrates the components of the conceptual framework underlying the Commission’s accreditation system. still

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Underlying the 2016 Accreditation System

### The Professional Character of Accreditation

The Commission believes that professional educators should hold themselves and their peers accountable for the quality of professional preparation. Therefore, the accreditation system’s reliance on educators to serve as peer participants is integral to the system: without their professional contributions the accreditation system would not be operable. California educators perform the following critical roles within the accreditation system:

* They serve on the Committee on Accreditation, the statutory body that reviews accreditation evidence and makes accreditation decisions
* They serve on the Board of Institutional Reviewers, the group of educators trained to review evidence of meeting the Commission’s standards and expectations, as well as serve on review teams that make site visits to educator preparation programs and accreditation recommendations to the Committee on Accreditation as part of the accreditation process
* They provide a diversity of viewpoints within the accreditation system so that the natural and expected variance in program orientation, philosophy, and operational methods across the array of educator preparation programs is both valued and appropriately addressed within the accreditation system

### Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness of the Accreditation System

The Commission’s Accreditation System is designed to maximize efficiency and cost-effectiveness by streamlining the standards that govern educator preparation; reduce the burden and costs for program sponsors responding to the Commission’s preparation program standards by reorienting programs to focus on candidate and program outcomes and essential program information; minimize the use lengthy documentation of program inputs and instead rely on authentic program documentation; conduct meetings of the Committee on Accreditation in an efficient manner; clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all participants in the accreditation process; foster efficient communication processes among all members of and participants in the accreditation system; and allocate sufficient resources to support the activities of the accreditation system. Accreditation costs which are borne by program sponsors as well as by the Commission should be reviewed periodically in relation to fulfilling the key purposes and activities of the accreditation system to maximize the cost-effectiveness and the efficiency of the system as a whole.

## Section 1

## Authority and Responsibilities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing

Pertaining to the accreditation of educator preparation and pursuant to Education Code Section 44372, the authority and responsibilities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing include the following:

### A. Responsibilities Related to Accreditation Policies

**1.** **Adopt and Modify the *Accreditation Framework.*** Pursuant to Education Code section 44372(a), 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.” The present document is the adopted *Accreditation Framework.* Education Code section 44372(i) establishes that the Commission may modify the *Framework* in accordance with Section 8 of the *Framework*. Modifications occur in public meetings after the Commission considers relevant information provided by the Committee on Accreditation, institutions, Board of Institutional Review members, Commission staff, and other concerned individuals. The Commission determines when a policy modification takes effect. *(Reference: Education Code §44372 (a))*

**2.** **Establish and Modify 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. *(Reference: Education Code §44372 (b))*

### B. Responsibilities Related to the Accreditation System

**1.** **Initial** **Institution Approval.** In accordance with Education Code sections 44227(a) and 44372(c) and Section 4 of this *Framework*, the Commission determines the eligibility of an institution that applies for approval when it is not currently approved to prepare educators for state certification in California. The Commission recognizes institutions that meet the Commission-established criteria. This approval by the Commission establishes the eligibility of an institution to submit a proposal to offer an educator preparation program to the Committee on Accreditation. *(Reference: Education Code §44372 (c))*

1. **Hear and Resolve 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 Committee on Accreditation” Education Code section 44374(e). The Commission resolves each appeal, and the Executive Director communicates the Commission’s decision to the Committee on Accreditation, the accreditation team, and the affected institution. *(Reference: Education Code §44372 (f))*

**3.** **Allocate Resources Annually for Accreditation Operations.** The Commission annually allocates resources for accreditation operations to implement this *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 section 44374.5, the Commission implements a fair and consistent fee policy that is reviewed periodically. *(Reference: Education Code §44372 (i))*

**4.** **Review and Sponsor Legislation Related to Accreditation.** The Commission reviews legislative proposals to amend the Education Code sections related to the accreditation of educator preparation institutions. As the need arises, the Commission sponsors legislation related to accreditation, after considering the advice of the Commission's professional staff, the Committee on Accreditation, educational institutions, program sponsors, and professional organizations. *(Reference: Education Code §44372 (i))*

### C. Responsibilities Related to the Committee on Accreditation

**1.** **Establish a Nominating Panel.** In collaboration with the Committee on Accreditation, the Commission establishes a Nominating Panel to solicit and screen nominations and recommend educators to serve on the Committee on Accreditation. *(Reference: Education Code §44373 (b))*

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

**3.** **Address Issues and Refer Concerns Related to Accreditation.** The Commission considers issues and concerns related to accreditation that it identifies, as well as those brought to the Commission’s attention by the Committee on Accreditation, 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 Committee on Accreditation for examination and response. *(Reference: Education Code §44372 (e))*

**4.** **Review Annual Reports by the Committee on Accreditation.** The Commission reviews an *Annual Accreditation Report* submitted by the Committee on Accreditation. The *Annual Accreditation Report* includes, but is not limited to, information about the dimensions and results of the accreditation process. *(Reference: Education Code §44372 (e))*

## Section 2

## The Committee on Accreditation

The functions, membership, and appointment of the Committee on Accreditation are set forth in Education Code section 44373 and this section of the *Framework.*

### A. Functions of the Committee on Accreditation

**1.** **Comparability** **of Standards.** In accordance with Section 3 of this *Framework*, the Committee on Accreditation determines whether standards submitted by institutions under Option 2 (National or Professional Program Standards) or Option 3 (Experimental Program Standards), taken as a whole, provide a level of program quality comparable to standards adopted by the Commission under Option 1 (California Program Standards). If the Committee determines that the proposed standards are collectively comparable in breadth and depth, when taken as a whole, to the Commission-adopted standards, the Committee may approve the proposed standards as Program Standards in California. (*Reference: Education Code §44373 (c) (3))*

**2.** **Initial** **Approval of Programs.** The Committee on Accreditation reviews proposals for the initial accreditation of programs submitted by institutions that have been determined to be eligible by the Commission. New programs of educator preparation may be submitted under Options One, Two, or Three as defined in Section 3 Category II (Program Standards) of this *Framework*. If the Committee determines that a program meets all applicable standards, the Committee grants initial approval to the program. *Reference: Education Code §44373 (c) (2))*

**3.** **Continuing** **Accreditation Decisions.** After reviewing the recommendations of accreditation teams, the Committee makes decisions about the continuing accreditation of educator preparation institutions and programs, consistent with Section 5 of this *Framework*. With respect to each institution, the Committee makes one of three decisions: Accreditation, Accreditation with Stipulations, or Denial of Accreditation. *(Reference: Education Code §44373 (c) (1) and 44374 (d))*

**4.** **Accreditation Procedures.** Consistent with the terms of Section 5, the Committee recommends appropriate guidelines for reports as well as other accreditation materials and exhibits to be prepared by institutions. The Committee also adopts guidelines for all accreditation activities.The Committee may provide additional guidance to institutions, site visit teams and the Executive Director regarding accreditation procedures. The procedural guidelines of the Committee are published by the Commission as an *Accreditation Handbook.(Reference: Education Code §44373 (c) (4))*

**5.** **Monitor the Accreditation System.** The Committee monitors the performance of accreditation teams and oversees other activities associated with the accreditation system. *(Reference: Education Code §44373 (c) (4))*

**6.** **Communication With and Reporting to the Commission.** The Committee provides updates on accreditation decisions, activities, implementation matters or other items on an “as needed” basis to ensure the Commission is kept apprised of the effectiveness of its accreditation policies and procedures.*(Reference: Education Code §44373 (c) (5))*

**7. Evaluation of Accreditation Policies and Practices.** The Committee shares responsibility with the Commission for the ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of the accreditation system. Evaluation and monitoring of the system as well as modification to that system will be conducted in a manner consistent with Section 8 of this Framework. *(Reference: Education Code §44373 (c) (4))*

**8. Conduct Business in an Open, Transparent Manner.** The Committee conducts its business and makes its decisions in meetings that are open to the public, except as provided by statute. All meeting agendas, team reports, and final accreditation decisions will be available to the public on the Commission’s website. (*Reference: Article 9 Government Code, §11120 (Bagley Keene Open Meeting Act)*

### B. Membership of the Committee on Accreditation

1. **Membership Composition.** The Committee on Accreditation consists of twelve members. Six members are from postsecondary education institutions, and six are certificated professionals in public schools, school districts, or county offices of education in California. Selection of members is based on the breadth of their experience, the diversity of their perspectives, and their “distinguished records of accomplishment in education" (Education Code section 44373(a). All members serve as members-at-large. No member serves on the Committee as a representative of any organization, institution, or constituency. To the maximum extent possible, Committee membership is balanced according to ethnicity, gender, geographic regions and across credentials awarded by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The Committee includes members from the public K-12 school system and from public and private postsecondary institutions. The elementary and secondary school members include certificated administrators, teachers, and at least one member involved in a professional educator preparation program. The postsecondary members include administrators and faculty members, all of whom must be involved in professional educator preparation programs. *(Reference: Education Code §44373 (a))*
2. **Membership Criteria.** The criteria for membership on the Committee are: evidence of achievement in the education profession; recognized professional or scholarly contributions in the field of education; recognition of excellence by peers; experience with and sensitivity to issues of human diversity; distinguished service in the field of educator preparation; knowledge of issues related to the preparation and licensing of education professionals; length of professional service; and possession of appropriate educational degrees and professional credentials. *(Reference: Education Code §44373 (a))*
3. **Membership Orientation and Training.** Members of the Committeewill receive an orientation and training to adequately prepare them to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities on the Committee on Accreditation.

### C. Appointment of the Committee on Accreditation

1. **Nominating Panel.** A Nominating Panel of four distinguished members of the education profession in California identifies and nominates individuals to serve on the Committee on Accreditation. The Nominating Panel is comprised of two educators appointed by the Committee on Accreditation and two educators appointed by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Each entity will appoint one college or university member and one K-12 public school member to the Nominating Panel. The terms of Nominating Panel members are four years. Members of the Nominating Panel may not serve more than one term. *(Reference: Education Code §44373 (b))*
2. **Nomination of Committee Members.** To select members for the Committee, a vacancy notice is posted on the Commission website and nominations are solicited in writing from a broad base of professional organizations, agencies, institutions, and individuals in education. Each nomination must be submitted with the consent of the individual. A written endorsement from the nominee’s employer confirming understanding of, and agreement to, the nominee’s participation on the Committee must be submitted (The Commission provides travel, per diem, and substitute reimbursement, if needed). The nominee's professional resume must be submitted. Self-nominations are not accepted.
3. **Selection of Committee Members.** Based on the membership criteria and the principles of balanced composition set forth in this section, the Nominating Panel screens the professional qualifications of each nominee and recommends for appointment at least two highly qualified nominees for each vacant seat on the Committee. The Commission selects and appoints the members and alternate members of the Committee by selecting from the nominations submitted by the Panel. *(Reference: Education Code §44373 (b))*
4. **Terms of Appointment.** The Commission appoints members of the Committee on Accreditation to four-year terms. A member may be re-nominated and reappointed to a second term of four years. A member may serve a maximum of two terms on the Committee. Terms of appointment shall commence on July 1, or the date of the appointment, whichever is later, and shall expire on June 30. *(Education Code §44373 (b)*
5. **Committee Vacancies.** When a seat on the Committee becomes vacant prior to the conclusion of the member's term, the Executive Director fills the seat for the remainder of the term by appointing a replacement from the list of alternate members.

## Section 3

## Accreditation Preconditions and Standards

**Preconditions** are foundational requirements grounded in statute, regulations and/or Commission policy. Institutions and their programs must provide a response to each precondition and include appropriate supporting evidence and/or documentation. Institutions and the programs they sponsors must be in compliance with preconditions at all times.

**Common Standards** focus on ensuring appropriate institutional infrastructure, capacity, and processes are in place to support the successful implementation of all approved educator preparation programs. They address aspects of program quality that span all approved educator preparation programs sponsored by an institution. n. An institution must respond to each Common Standard by providing pertinent information and supporting documentation. Institutions and the programs they sponsor must meet the Common Standards at all times.

**Program Standards** address the quality of program features that are specific to preparation for a given credential, such as curriculum, field experiences, and knowledge and skills to be demonstrated by candidates in the specific credential area. Programs must be in alignment with all applicable program standards at all times. The institution responds to the standards by providing program-specific information for review in accordance with Commission processes and procedures specified in the *Accreditation Handbook.* When institutions prepare for initial program approval and continuing accreditation activities, they may consider the following options for program-specific standards:

• **Option 1.** **California Program Standards.** The Commission adopts California Program Standards for the initial and continuing accreditation of educator preparation programs. When revised program standards are adopted, institutions using this option will be required to meet the new set of California Program Standards.

• **Option 2. National or Professional Program Standards.** California institutions may develop and implement programs that are aligned to and accredited by national or state organizations. In these cases, programs must also address any areas in the Commission-adopted standards that are not included in the national or state organization’s standards. To the extent possible, the Commission will attempt to determine if the national standards are in alignment with the California standards and what additional information would be needed. A crosswalk can be developed, reviewed, and approved by the Committee on Accreditation noting where the national or professional program standards are deemed to be aligned to the Commission adopted standards. If the Committee determines that the national or professional program standards do not adequately address one or more aspects of California’s standards (Common and/or Program), the Committee may approve the requested standards and require institutions to address the missing portions contained within the California standards. Institutions will still participate in the Program Review and Common Standard submission processes.

• **Option 3.** **Experimental Program Standards**.For initial accreditation, an institution may present an experimental, pilot, or exploratory program that meets the Experimental Program Standards adopted by the Commission pursuant to Education Code section 44273. Experimental, pilot, or exploratory programs are designed to allow for the examination of focused research questions intended to contribute to the body of knowledge around key aspects of the field of education including the identification of model strategies, delivery methods, and programs that lead to improved teaching and learning. Institutions that sponsor experimental, pilot, or exploratory programs must have a research component that examines how the program contributes to the development of quality teaching and, more specifically, to the acquisition and mastery by educator preparation candidates of appropriate performance expectations. In addition, experimental, pilot, or exploratory programs are required to report their findings on a biennial basis to the Commission. Upon consultation with the institution and with the Committee on Accreditation, the Commission retains the authority to determine whether the findings support continuance of the experimental, pilot, or exploratory program under the experimental standards.

## Section 4

## Initial Accreditation Policies

This section governs the Initial Institutional Approval and Initial Program Approval processes.

### A. Stages of Initial Institutional Approval

In order to offer educator preparation that leads to a California license or certificate to serve in a public school in California an entity must first be approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. A postsecondary education institution, local education agency (LEA), or other entity that is not currently approved by the Commission to prepare educators for California’s public schools must submit a proposal and complete the Initial Institutional Approval process. Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), are subject to the Commission’s Initial Institutional Approval Process under SBX5 1 and will need to seek approval through that route. The Commission may establish additional procedures and criteria as it deems necessary for the initial approval of institutions.

Applicants must successfully address each of the following stages in sequence:

**1. Prerequisites**

1. Regional Accreditation and Academic Credit: Each institution of higher education seeking Initial Institutional Approval must provide evidence that it is accredited by one of the six regional accrediting bodies approved by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). LEAs must demonstrate governing board approval to offer an educator preparation program.
2. Participation in “Accreditation 101: Expectations and Responsibilities for Commission-approved Program Sponsors.” A specified team of representatives from the institution must attend the Commission’s Accreditation 101 training prior to beginning the initial institutional review process.

**2. Eligibility Requirements.** Eligibility requirements, which are adopted by the Commission, are comprised of criteria related to the institution’s resources and capacity to support educator preparation programs. A report of the institution’s responses to the prerequisites and eligibility requirements will be presented to the Commission at a regularly-scheduled meeting. The Commission will determine if the institution has sufficiently met the requirements for eligibility. Once the Commission determines that an institution is eligible, the institution must demonstrate “Alignment with Common Standards and Preconditions,” as described below.

1. **Alignment with Common Standards and Preconditions.** An institution would be required to demonstrate that in operating a credential program, it will align its initial program and operations to all Common Standards and provide evidence that it will comply with all relevant Preconditions. During the Initial Institutional Approval process Common Standards and relevant Preconditions including supporting documents are reviewed to determine alignment.
2. **Provisional Approval or Denial.** Following completion of the first three stages of the Initial Institutional Approval process, the Commission will determine at a regularly scheduled meeting if all requirements have been adequately addressed and if so, may then grant Provisional Approval. Provisional Approval will be for a period of 2 to 4 years, whichever amount of time the Commission determines is sufficient to gather data about the institution’s new program and ensures a least one initial group of completers of that program.
3. **Initial Submission of Educator Preparation Programs**
Once Provisional Approval is granted, the institution may submit one or more new program proposals, limited to the programs identified in their original application. Prospective programs will be reviewed by members of the Board of Institutional Review and considered for approval by the Committee on Accreditation. During the Provisional Approval period, the institution will participate in submission of annual data. No additional educator preparation programs may be added while the institution has Provisional Approval.
4. **Granting Full Institutional Approval.** Full Institutional Approval will be determined by the Commission at a regularly-scheduled public meeting. The institution holding Provisional Approval will host a focused site visit in its final year of provisional approval. The determination of full approval will be informed by data collected during the 2 to 4 year Provisional Approval period and information gathered during the focused site visit in accordance with the *Accreditation Handbook*.. The focused site visit report will be presented to the Committee on Accreditation which will make a recommendation as to the accreditation decision that the institution would have received if the focused site visit was instead a regularly scheduled Year 6 site visit. Any issues raised in the report and identified by the Committee as necessitating follow up will also be noted. If the recommendation is a finding other than full Accreditation, the Committee will also identify the stipulations it would have placed on the institution. The site visit team report and the Committee’s recommendation will be presented to the Commission in the agenda item about full institutional approval.

### B. Integration of Institutions into the Accreditation Cycle

Once the Commission grants full institutional approval, the Administrator of Accreditation will assign an institution to a specific cohort within the 7-year accreditation cycle. The institution will then participate in accreditation activities as defined by the seven-year accreditation cycle including the ability to submit additional programs for review and approval. In addition, the institution and its program will be subject to annual accreditation fees.

### C. Policies for Initial Program Approval for Commission Approved Institutions

New educator preparation program proposals by institutions that have been approved by the Commission must complete responses to 1) all relevant Preconditions established by state law and by the Commission; 2) Common Standards that address how the new program will integrate into the existing education unit structure; and 3) the appropriate set of Program Standards for the program being proposed. Following the review of these submissions and the determination that the proposed program is aligned to applicable standards and preconditions, the Committee on Accreditation considers the approval of the proposed program. The specific procedures and requirements for submission of new program proposals are included in the *Accreditation Handbook.*

## Section 5

## Continuing Accreditation Policies

This section outlines the policies of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing for institutions that are approved to offer educator preparation programs leading to a credential or authorization in California.. The specific procedures and requirements for implementing these policies are included in the *Accreditation Handbook.*

### A. Overview of the Accreditation Cycle

Contained in this *Framework* are the goals for the Commission on Teacher Credentialing’s accreditation system. Under this system, accreditation is an ongoing process that fosters greater public accountability, continuous attention to program improvement, adherence to standards, and high quality programs. The accreditation system and its interrelated set of activities of annual data review, program review, site visits, and follow up throughout the 7 year cycle is designed to support these goals.

The major components of the seven year accreditation cycle include:

1. **Years 1 through 7:** Ongoing data collection and annual data reporting by all institutions
2. **Years 1 and 4:** Preconditions submission and review

3) **Year 5**: **Program ~~Document~~ Review** and Common Standards submission and review

4) **Year 6:** Institutional site visit to determine alignment with preconditions, Common Standards and all applicable program standards.

5) **Year 7 and beyond**: Follow up on areas of concern, as needed

### B. Accreditation Cycle Activities

The following section describes the various activities within the accreditation cycle in general terms. Approved institutions are assigned to one of seven color cohorts and are subject to the following accreditation activities based on their cohort’s schedule. Specific procedures and requirements about all aspects of the accreditation cycle are set forth in the Accreditation Handbook*.*

1. **Years 1 through 7 of the Accreditation Cycle: Ongoing Data Collection and Annual Data Reporting by the Institution** Accreditation decisions must be based on a body of evidence that, indicate whether an institution and its programs are in alignment with Commission standards and of quality. This includes consideration and analysis of a variety of data including, but not limited to:

* Survey Data
* Candidate Performance Assessment Data
* Program Effectiveness Data
* Annual indicators included in a data warehouse and data dashboard, as determined by the Commission
* Information provided by a variety of stakeholders in interviews
	1. Common Standards Review. Institutions submit required documentation that BIR members will review to help determine whether the institution continues to meet the Common Standards. Members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers who are trained and calibrated to review Common Standards submissions and provide feedback on the Common Standards Preliminary Report of Findings. The institution creates an addendum to the Common Standards document responding to the preliminary findings. Members of the site visit team determine whether the Common Standards are met. Document review procedures are set forth in the *Accreditation Handbook*.
	2. Use of Results. The Preliminary Report of Findings from both Program Review and Common Standards Review provide a basis for the site visit team’s review of the program‘s implementation in Year 6. If reviewers identify issues that warrant further examination or if questions remain unanswered at the conclusion of the Program Review and Common Standards Review processes, the site visit in Year 6 may include a more detailed and/or focused review of such programs. Findings from the Program Review and Common Standards Review in Year 5 will be used, along with the type, size, and complexity of the programs to be reviewed, to determine the structure, size, and expertise of the site visit team to be selected.

4 **Year 6 of the Accreditation Cycle: Institutional Site Visit**

Site visits are convened at an institution in Year 6 of the accreditation cycle. A site visit team comprised of Common Standards reviewers and Program Standards reviewers is selected for the site visit from the Board of Institutional Reviewers.. The site visit team analyzes all available information about the quality and effectiveness of the education unit and educator preparation programs at the institution and, based on its findings on the Common Standards, all applicable program standards, and Preconditions, the team makes a recommendation for an institution’s accreditation status to the Committee on Accreditation.

As a result of its decision in Year 6 following the site visit the Committee on Accreditation may assign additional follow up activities to the institution based on any areas of concern identified during the site visit activities. Accreditation with Stipulations require institutional action in Year 7 as specified by the Committee’s action. See Section C below.

### C. Accreditation Recommendations and Decisions

Each site visit team will make its report and recommendations to the Committee on Accreditation at the Committee's regularly-scheduled meetings. Site visit team reports indicate whether each applicable standard is met and include a narrative of the teams’ findings along with an accreditation recommendation to the Committee. The Committee makes the final accreditation decision.

1. **Accreditation** **Team Recommendations.** A site visit team recommends an accreditation status of *Accreditation, Accreditation with Stipulations,* or *Denial of Accreditation* for consideration and possible adoption by the Committee*.* The team makes its recommendation based on the overall quality of the education unit and the credential programs at the institution. The team may recommend Accreditation but also recommend required follow up for the institution and/or one or more of its programs. Alternatively, a team may recommend Accreditation with Stipulations, which may require the institution to provide evidence that the program(s) has made modifications that address the stipulation(s). Stipulations may require the discontinuation of one or more severely deficient programs at the institution. The team may also determine that the overall quality of all programs at the institution are severely deficient and recommend Denial of Accreditation for the institution as a whole.
2. **Accreditation Decisions.** After reviewing and discussing the recommendation of a site visit team, the Committee on Accreditation makes a decision about the accreditation of educator preparation at the institution. The Committee makes one of three decisions pertaining to each institution: *Accreditation, Accreditation with Stipulations,* or *Denial of Accreditation*. The Accreditation decision is posted on the Commission's website along with the final report of the site visit team. Additionally, the Committee's Annual Accreditation Report to the Commission summarizes these decisions.
3. **Required Follow Up.** The Committee may require follow up activities for one or more programs or for the institution as a unit. The institution's required follow up will be documented in in formal correspondence informing the institution of the Committee’s decisions.

**4**. **Accreditation Stipulations.** The Committee allows an institution one year to address all stipulations except for those related to preconditions which require prompt attention. The Committee has the discretion to grant an institution *Accreditation with Stipulations* that calls for closing a program with severe deficiencies. The Committee may require additional progress reports beyond one year even if stipulations have been removed. The Committee has discretion to allow an institution additional time to address issues. An additional period to remedy severe deficiencies may be granted by the Committee on Accreditation if the Committee determines that (a) substantial progress has been made, and/or (b) special circumstances described by the institution justify a delay. The Committee also determines how the institution's response to adopted stipulations is to be reviewed up to and including a second site visit for this purpose. Failure to address all stipulations may result in the denial of accreditation to the entire institution. The Committee has the authority to decide that an institution should host its next site visit sooner than seven years. In cases where the institution has significant stipulations it has addressed and the Committee wants to continue to monitor its progress, the Committee may require a site visit in 2, 3, or 4 years instead of the 7 years.

### D. Appeals

* 1. **Appeals to the Committee on Accreditation.** Within thirty days after an accreditation site visit, the institution may submit evidence to the Committee on Accreditation that the site visit team demonstrated bias or acted arbitrarily or capriciously or contrary to the policies of this *Framework* or the procedural guidelines of the Committee on Accreditation. (Note: Information related to the quality of a program or the education unit that was not previously provided to the site visit team may not be considered by the Committee on Accreditation.) The appeal will be addressed at the next regularly-scheduled meeting of the Committee on Accreditation. The Committee on Accreditation may use this evidence to make a different decision than was recommended by the site visit team. If the Committee on Accreditation makes such a decision, the leader of the site visit team may file a dissent with the Commission. If the Committee on Accreditation decides that an incorrect judgment was made by a team and that the result leaves some doubt about the most appropriate decision to be made, the Committee on Accreditation may assign a new site visit team to visit the institution and provide a recommendation on its accreditation.
	2. **Appeals to the Commission.** An institution has the right to appeal to the Commission a decision by the Committee on Accreditation to deny accreditation or accredit with stipulations. Pursuant to Education Code section 44374(e), such an appeal must be based on evidence that accreditation procedures conducted by the site visit team or decisions made by the Committee on Accreditation were arbitrary, capricious, unfair, or contrary to the policies in this *Framework* or the procedural guidelines of the Committee on Accreditation. Information related to the quality of a program or the education unit or LEA that was not previously provided to the site visit team may not be considered by the Commission. The Commission resolves each appeal pursuant to Education Code Section 44372(f).The process for appeals is outlined in the Accreditation Handbook.

### E. Complaints about Credential Program Quality

The accreditation system includes a process for individuals to submit complaints for the purpose of consideration in accreditation decisions. When one or more complaints about a credential program indicate that the program may not be meeting Commission-adopted standards, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing may investigate the basis for the concerns, provide technical assistance to the institution, and/or refer the concerns to the Committee on Accreditation for consideration of possible action. Only those complaints that indicate a pattern of issues of program quality or raise questions about whether a program is aligned to Commission standards apply to this section. Individual candidate issues such as whether a particular candidate has satisfied all program requirements, disputes about grades or examinations results, or other similar issues will continue to be within the jurisdiction of the program and the institution’s grievance process.

## Section 6

## Board of Institutional Reviewers

This section governs both initial and continuing accreditation reviewers.

### A. Board of Institutional Reviewers

To conduct reviews for the initial and continuing accreditation of institutions and their programs, the Executive Director of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing maintains a pool of trained reviewers consisting of California college and university faculty members, staff, and administrators, as well as elementary and secondary school teachers and other certificated professionals, pursuant to Education Code section 44374(b). These reviewers may participate in the various accreditation activities discussed in this section. The pool consists of individuals who are geographically and culturally diverse, who represent gender equity, and who have expertise across the spectrum of credential areas. The Committee on Accreditation establishes criteria for membership in the pool. At least once per year, the Professional Services Division trains new members to maintain adequate numbers of active members in the pool.

**Conflict of Interest:** Care is exercised to avoid conflicts of interest involving accreditation team members and the institution/program sponsor being reviewed, such as current or past enrollment; programmatic collaboration; past, prospective, or present employment; and/or spousal connections.

### B. Team Structure, Size, and Expertise

**1. Initial Program Approval:** Institutions that have established eligibility with the Commission may seek to sponsor a credential program by submitting a proposal that is reviewed by Board of Institutional Review members who provide feedback to the institution. Institutions respond to the feedback until the reviewers determine that the program meets the requirements of the standards. New programs may also be reviewed by Commission staff members who have expertise in the credential area. Once all the standards are met, the Committee on Accreditation may approve the institution to sponsor the program.

**2. Continuing** **Program Review:** Under the auspices of the Executive Director, Board of Institutional Review members are appointed to review each program being considered for continuing accreditation. Reviewers are responsible for reviewing a credential program’s alignment with the standards’ requirements. After reviewing the Program Review submission, reviewers prepare a report containing preliminary findings on all program standards. The institution then provides an addendum to address the findings and makes the addendum available to the site visit team in advance of the site visit. Reviewers with appropriate experience and qualifications are responsible for professional judgments about credential programs. Reviewers are required to have sufficient expertise to make sound judgments about the program under review.

**3.** **Continuing Institutional Accreditation (Site Visit Reviewers):** Under the auspices of the Executive Director, a site visit team and team lead are appointed for an institution being considered for continuing accreditation. The accreditation team members have responsibility for reviewing all evidence and documentation available and determining findings for the Common Standards, program standards, and, Preconditions, and making a recommendation for accreditation to the Committee on Accreditation. The size of the site visit team will be determined based upon factors such as: enrollment, complexity of programs, number of satellite locations, and the preliminary findings from Program Review and Common Standards Review.

**4.** **Team Expertise.** The range of credential programs at an institution must be reflected in the expertise of the reviewers, but there need not be a one-to-one correspondence between credential programs and reviewer specializations. Candidate enrollments in programs, the complexity of programs, and/or the numbers of specialized programs offered by an institution will all be considered in establishing the site visit teams. The nature of the preliminary findings from Program Review and Common Standards Review will also be considered in establishing the site visit team.

### C. Training, Orientation, and Evaluation

Prior to participation in accreditation review activities, all Board of Institutional
Review (BIR) members complete in-depth training and orientation. All training and orientation is evaluated by participants to guide future training and orientation.

**1.** **Training.** To ensure that accreditation review activities examine issues of quality in educator preparation, prospective BIR members participate in an intensive training program which focuses on document review, data analysis, team skills, interview techniques, accreditation procedures, and the consistent application of standards. In adopting an *Accreditation Handbook*, the Committee on Accreditation will attend to appropriate differentiation in the training of new and returning team members and team leads, and to training and calibration for the different types of review activities: Initial Program Approval, Program Review, Common Standards Review, and Site Visits. The BIR will have members who are involved in all types of review activities but not all BIR members must be trained in all types of reviews. All reviewers must be trained in the specific activity or activities in which he or she will be participating.

**2.** **Orientation**

**a. Initial Program Approval**: As new program proposals are submitted by eligible institutions or documents are submitted in response to new program standards, a Commission staff member with expertise in the program area is assigned to ensure calibration of reader responses to the standards and work with all reviewers to ensure that all program documents submitted for initial program approval are reviewed in a fair and equitable manner.

**b. Program Reviewers:** A Commission staff consultant will provide reviewers of programs with training on all standards or standards updates and changes, and calibrate reviewers on decisions related to a program’s preliminary alignment to the standards.

**c. Site Visit Reviewers:** Prior to the beginning of an accreditation site visit, team members meet to discuss their observations about the institutional reports as well as the preliminary program standards and common standards findings, and to review their prior training as site visit reviewers. The team activities for the site visit are planned under the direction of the team lead and the Commission’s staff consultant.

**3. Evaluation of Training and Accreditation Activities.** To ensure that future team training and orientations are as effective as possible, all team members will be asked to evaluate training and orientation activities. The Committee on Accreditation will analyze the responses and modify the training appropriately, as needed.

**4. Evaluation of the Performance of BIR Members**. To ensure that accreditation activities are as effective as possible, free of bias and in accordance with high standards of professionalism, the performance of BIR members will be evaluated by other accreditation team members and institutional representatives. This feedback will be considered in determining assignment to future accreditation activities.

### D. Role of Commission Staff

The professional expertise of Commission staff will be used in accreditation activities and staff members will be assigned to facilitate accreditation activities. Prior to participation in accreditation review activities, staff will participate in the appropriate orientation and training.

**1. Initial Accreditation Activities:**

**a. Initial** **Institution Approval.** Staff facilitates the Initial Institutional Approval process. An institution must complete all aspects of the Initial Institutional Approval process as outlined in Section 4 of the *Framework.* The Commission determines if an institution has satisfactorily met the Prerequisites, Eligibility Requirements, Common Standards, and data reporting requirements related to the program’s operations during the Provisional Approval period before considering the institution for Final Approval. Once an institution receives Final Approval, the Administrator of Accreditation determines which cohort within the accreditation cycle the institution will be placed.

**b. Initial** **Program Approval.** Staff facilitates the review of initial program documents using members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR) or, if staff has the expertise required, completes the review of the initial program document.

**2. Continuing Accreditation Activities:**

1. **Annual Data Reports.** Staff will monitor all annual data reports, summarizing information for the Committee on Accreditation as appropriate and bringing to the Committee’s attention any data that could raise questions about alignment with standards or program quality.
2. **Program Review Submissions.** Staff facilitates the review of program documents in the fifth year of the accreditation cycle using members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR) to accomplish the reviews.
3. **Common Standards Review.** Staff facilitates the review of Common Standards documents in the fifth year of the accreditation cycle using members of the BIR to accomplish the reviews.
4. **Site Visit.** Staff who will be facilitating the site visit are assigned approximately one year prior to the site visit. Staff work with the institution to prepare for the site visit. Approximately two months prior to the visit, staff conducts a pre-visit to assist in finalizing the plans for the site visit. The site visit team members are members of the BIR; staff is responsible to ensure that the accreditation procedures as developed by the Committee on Accreditation are followed by all site visit team members.

## Section 7

## Articulation Between National and State Accreditation

Upon the request of an institution, the accreditation of an education unit (school, college or department of education) or of a program by a national accrediting body shall substitute for state accreditation provided that the Committee on Accreditation certifies to the Commission that the following conditions are present (Education Code section 44374 (f)):

### A. National Accreditation of an Education Unit

1. The institution is responsible for meeting the Commission’s Common Standards. National standards may be used in lieu of Common Standards where they have been found to be equivalent with the Common Standards. Where no equivalency has been determined by the COA, the institution must demonstrate that it meets the Commission’s Common Standards.

2. In order to be used in substitution the national accrediting body must have determined that those standards deemed to be equivalent have been found to be met by the institution. If the national accrediting body has identified issues of concern, it must be determined how those issues impact the findings on the Commission’s Common Standards that have been deemed to be equivalent.

3. The accreditation process of the national entity includes on-site reviews.

4. The Commission may develop an agreement as to the manner in which the national accrediting body for an education unit and the Commission’s accreditation system will coordinate their reviews. These reviews may be independent, concurrent, or joint.

5. For joint reviews, the team has co-leads, one appointed according to state accreditation procedures and one appointed by the national accrediting body. The team members reviewing the Common Standards include members appointed by the national body and at least one California member appointed according to state accreditation procedures. The two teams coordinate the interviews and share information. Two separate reports are generated from a joint site visit.

6.. For concurrent reviews, the Commission’s site visit team will conduct the California site visit at the same time as the national accrediting body but the two teams will work independently. The two teams may share some information, if appropriate. Two separate reports are generated from a concurrent site visit.

7. Every effort should be made to ensure that accreditation teams represent ethnic and gender diversity, and include both school practitioners and postsecondary education members.

8. The period of accreditation of the national accrediting body is consistent with a seven-year cycle and is compatible with the accreditation activities established by the state.

### B. Professional Accreditation of an Educator Preparation Program

1. The institution requests to use the professional standards in lieu of Commission adopted program standards and submit evidence that it has earned professional accreditation for the specific program area. The standards used by the professional accrediting body must be determined by the Committee on Accreditation to be equivalent to those adopted by the Commission.

2. A crosswalk is developed and approved by the COA noting where the professional program standards are deemed to be aligned to the Commission’s adopted program standards. If there are any concepts in the Commission’s program standards that the professional accrediting body do not address, the program must submit evidence of meeting the Commission’s program standards.

3. The institution must submit the required documents for Program Review. The Board of Institutional Review members will review this information for those standards that have not been deemed by the COA to be equivalent to the professional standards. Preliminary findings for these standards will be issues as per the usual process for Program Review.

4. The site reviewer(s) for the Commission’s accreditation team will focus its review primarily on those standards for which equivalency with professional accrediting bodies has not been determined. However, if issues arise during any part of the accreditation process for any of the Commission’s program standards, the reviewers may identify these areas of concern and issue findings for any relevant state program standards.

## Section 8

## Evaluation of and Modifications to the *Accreditation Framework*

This section governs the evaluation of the Accreditation system and modification of the *Accreditation Framework*.

### **A. Evaluation of Accreditation System.**

The Commission and the Committee on Accreditation are jointly responsible, in consultation with educational institutions and organizations, for establishing, maintaining, and continually refining a system of ongoing evaluation of the accreditation system for educator preparation. The Commission and the Committee on Accreditation will implement a process of continual evaluation and improvement to its accreditation system.

### B. Modifications to the Accreditation Framework

1. **General Provisions Regarding Modifications.** The Commission will consult with the Committee on Accreditation and educational institutions, program sponsors, and organizations regarding any proposed modifications to the *Framework*. Modifications will occur in public meetings of the Commission, after the Commission has considered relevant information provided by the Committee, postsecondary institutions, accreditation team members, the Commission’s professional staff, and other concerned individuals. The Commission will determine the date when a policy modification is effective.
2. **Refinements and Clarifications of the *Framework*.** The Commission may modify the *Accreditation Framework* to refine or clarify its contents, as needed. The Commission has the authority to reconsider and modify the Program Standards for Options 1, 2 or 3 as the need arises.
3. **Significant Modifications of the *Framework*.** The Commission will maintain the *Framework*’s major features and options without significant modifications, unless there is compelling evidence that a significant modification is warranted. The determination of compelling evidence and the warranted significant modification will be made by the Commission inconsultation with the Committee on Accreditation and the California State University, the University of California, and the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities*.*