

Discussion of Possible Refinements of Stage V of the Initial Institutional Approval Process August 2021

Overview of this Report

This agenda item presents an opportunity for staff to share some of the possible refinements that could be made to Stage V of the Initial Institutional Approval (IIA) process and gather some input from the COA.

Staff Recommendation

This item is for discussion only. No action is needed.

Background

California Education Code §44372(c) sets forth the Commission's responsibility to rule on the eligibility of an applicant for initial accreditation for the purpose of offering a program of educator preparation. The Commission has established the IIA process whereby an institution seeking to offer one or more educator preparation programs in California must first become an approved program sponsor by satisfactorily completing the five stages of the IIA process.

At its December 2015 meeting, the Commission approved a new IIA process as part of the Strengthening and Streamlining Accreditation project. Updates to the IIA process were subsequently approved during the February 2017 Commission meeting. An institution that is granted Provisional Approval by the Commission in Stage III of IIA, and subsequently approved by the COA to offer its proposed credential program(s) in Stage IV, is required to host a Provisional Site Visit the year after its first cohort of candidates completes the program. The conclusion of the IIA process is the determination by the Commission of whether to grant or deny the institution Full Approval (Stage V).

Pursuant to the Accreditation Framework, "The Commission may grant or deny full institutional approval or may grant institutional approval with a requirement that the COA's draft stipulations must be addressed and presented to the COA for action within a designated timeframe." There are four levels of action that can be taken on an institution seeking full institutional approval at the conclusion of Stage V of the IIA process:

1. **Full Approval:** If the Commission grants full approval, the Administrator of Accreditation will assign the institution to one of the seven established accreditation cohorts, and the institution will participate in all activities of the seven-year accreditation cycle established by the Commission.
2. **Granting full approval with a requirement that COA's draft stipulations must be addressed** will remand the issues back to the COA for follow up to ensure that the program has sufficiently addressed all concerns raised by the site visit team.
3. Alternatively, the Commission may **keep the institution in the provisional stage of the approval process for another year** while the institution works with staff to address all stipulations. In this case, the COA will consider any quarterly or year-out reports on the

institution's progress in meeting stipulations, as it does with fully approved institutions, and, within one year, make a new accreditation determination. At that time, the new decision of the COA will come back to the Commission for its decision.

4. **Denial:** If the Commission denies full approval, the Administrator of Accreditation will inform the institution that it is no longer permitted to admit additional candidates to its programs and will work with the institution to develop a teach-out plan for any current candidates.

Issues for Discussion

The IIA process is still relatively new and only a small number of institutions have completed the final stage. In working with these institutions, staff has encountered a few issues with respect to the Stage V process that could benefit from refinement. Staff will discuss with and gather feedback from the COA regarding some ideas for refining this final stage of IIA. While the authority for IIA rests with the Commission, as does establishing policy in this area, the COA policies and procedures regarding site visits and decision-making are critical to this part of the process. Comments and suggestions from COA members would be constructive to staff going forward.

Five Stages of the Initial Institutional Approval Process

IIA Process	Stage I	Stage II	Stage III	Stage IV	Stage V
Action	Prerequisites	Eligibility Requirements	Preconditions & Common Standards	Program Standards	Provisional Site Visit
Purpose	Ensures legal eligibility of institution in California Ensures institution understands requirements of Commission’s accreditation system	Ensures that institution has capacity to sponsor effective programs	Ensures institution meets all relevant preconditions Ensures institution meets all Common Standards	Ensures all proposed programs meet all relevant program standards	Program operates for 2-4 years and hosts a provisional accreditation site visit
Requirements	Institution must: 1. Have legal eligibility 2. Attend Accreditation 101 with institutional team	Submit responses to: • 12 Eligibility Criteria	Submit responses to: • Preconditions • Common Standards	Submit responses to: • Program Standards	Institution must: • Collect data • Host provisional site visit
Reviewed By	Staff	Staff	Preconditions: Staff Common Standards: BIR	BIR	Site Visit Team and COA
Authority	Staff	Commission	Commission	COA	Commission
Decision	Determine Eligibility for Stage II	Eligibility: 1. Grant 2. Deny	Provisional Approval: 1. Grant 2. Deny	Program(s): 1. Approve 2. Deny	1. Grant Full Approval 2. Grant Full Approval, Remand to COA to Address Stipulations 3. Continue Provisional Status for 1 Year to Address Stipulations 4. Deny
IIA Status*	Not Approved	Not Approved	Provisional Approval**	Provisional Approval***	Full Approval

*At conclusion of stage

**Institutionally approved but cannot offer programs

***May begin offering approved programs