

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 primary purpose of the agency is to serve as a state standards board for educator preparation for 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), California Code of Regulations, Title 5 CCR Sections 80000-80694, and further delineated in the *Accreditation Framework*.

The Commission establishes policies related to accreditation and the Committee on Accreditation 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 govern the *Accreditation Framework* and guide the development of this *Accreditation Handbook*.

This chapter identifies the specific duties of each body directly relevant to the professional accreditation process.

I. Responsibilities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing

The following list identifies duties and responsibilities of the Commission related to the initial and ongoing 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 Institutional 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 has not previously prepared educators for state certification in California. Only institutions which meet the adopted criteria may be approved by the Commission. 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 involved institution. The Appeal Procedures are found in Chapter Seven of this *Accreditation Handbook*.

E. Appointments to the Committee on Accreditation. Pursuant to Education Code 44372(d) and Section 2 of the *Accreditation Framework*, the Commission appoints members and alternate members of the COA for specific terms. The Commission selects COA members and alternate members from nominees submitted by a Nominating Panel. The Commission ensures the COA is professionally distinguished and balanced in its composition but members are not appointed 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, PK-12 and postsecondary institutions, Commission 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. 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.

The Commission also charges a fee for selected accreditation activities such as Initial Institutional Approval and new program approval fees. Information on these charges is available on the Commission's website.

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 pursuant to Section 8 of the *Accreditation Framework*.

II. Responsibilities of the Committee on Accreditation

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

A. Determining Comparability of Standards. In accordance with Sections Three and Seven of the *Accreditation 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 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 for new educator preparation programs submitted by Commission approved institutions. In accordance with Section Three of the *Accreditation 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). The COA may grant initial accreditation to the program if the COA determines that a program meets all applicable standards.

C. Continuing Accreditation Decisions. After reviewing the recommendations of accreditation teams, the COA makes decisions about the continuing accreditation of institutions and educator preparation programs, consistent with Section Five of the *Accreditation 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 *Accreditation Framework*, the COA recommends appropriate guidelines for accreditation materials and documentation to be prepared by institutions. The COA also provides guidance for accreditation team reports. The COA may provide additional guidance to institutions, accreditation teams, and the Executive Director regarding accreditation 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 report 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. Meeting agendas are published online and when possible.

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