

Chapter Fourteen

Evaluation of the Accreditation System

Introduction

This chapter provides information about the evaluation of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing's Accreditation System. Data for each activity of the accreditation system is collected and analyzed and the results used to make ongoing improvements to both the individual activity and the system as a whole. Results of the analyses are reported to the Committee on Accreditation (COA) and, in some cases, are included in the Annual Report presented to the Commission. In this way, evaluation results are available to provide input on policy issues and inform the larger educator preparation system.

For each major activity of the accreditation system, information is gathered to inform the following questions:

1. How well is the component being implemented?
2. Does the activity provide useful information for other activities in the system and in making accreditation decisions?
3. Is the activity serving the objectives of the accreditation system?

This chapter describes when and how the evaluation system operates to collect, analyze, and report information pertinent to each of the questions. This information is useful to the COA as it manages the accreditation system, to the Commission as it deliberates about policy related to the accreditation system, and to Commission staff responsible for administering the accreditation cycle.

How well is the component being implemented?

Every component of the accreditation system has training activities. For program sponsors, Commission staff provides technical assistance for each accreditation activity in a variety of formats. For reviewers, there are several trainings: the initial Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR) training occurs several times annually for new reviewers, training and calibration for team leads occurs typically in fall and spring, and training and calibration of review teams for Program Review and Common Standards Review submissions are provided at the beginning of each review session. Additional training is also provided, as needed.

Technical assistance for program sponsors and follow-up trainings for BIR members are often provided through webcasts. The benefit of webcasts is that they are archived and can be viewed as needed. Following every training event, participants receive a link to an online evaluation survey and an invitation to provide feedback about the training through the survey. These surveys ask respondents to rate the effectiveness of particular aspects of the trainings, including the trainers, and always include multiple opportunities for respondents to provide written comments. These data are immediately available to consultants and the Administrator

of Accreditation and are used to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement when developing subsequent trainings.

Feedback from program sponsors, team leads, team members, and Commission consultants is elicited after each site visit and provides additional perspectives on the implementation and effectiveness of accreditation activities. These surveys ask questions about the effectiveness of activities that prepare institutions for a site visit, the effectiveness and objectivity of the team lead, team members, and Commission consultant during the site visit, and provides an opportunity for team members to recommend one or more of their team colleagues for promotion to a role of greater site visit responsibility. Each year, the COA receives summary information from these site visit surveys.

Does the activity provide useful information for other activities in the system and in making accreditation decisions?

Following completion of accreditation site visits, team members and program sponsors also have the opportunity through surveys to provide feedback about the usefulness of the various accreditation activities in preparing them for the site visit. For example, site visit team members provide insight into how the annual data submission and Program Review and Common Standards Review documents and reviewers' feedback supported their work prior to and during the visit. Similarly, program sponsors are asked to describe whether completing the annual data submission and analysis and Program Review and Common Standards Review processes affected their preparation for the site visit and, if so, how and what were the results. Administrators review these data and use the information to consider improvements to the system.

Is the activity serving the objectives of the accreditation system?

Each year the COA's Annual Report to the Commission addresses the COA's work plan, which is structured around the objectives outlined in the Accreditation Framework. Summary information includes data about the frequency and effectiveness of:

- Activities completed by Commission staff to increase and maintain public access to the COA, including electronic newsletters, program sponsor alerts, and the website.
- Professional accreditation of institutions and their educator preparation programs, including initial institutional approval, initial program review, accreditation site visits, and BIR trainings.
- Technical assistance activities, program review activities, the integration of additional programs into the Commission's accreditation system, and dissemination of information related to the Commission's standards.
- Ongoing program improvement activities including annual data collection, the evaluation system for the accreditation system, and developing partnerships with national and professional accrediting organizations.