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8. Maintaining Accredited Status

8.1. Constituent Council responsibilities

All accredited programs and institutions are considered constituents of CEA and together comprise the Constituent Council. General information about the Constituent Council's role in governance is described in Section 3: Commission Governance, Administration, and Evaluation.

Each accredited site is represented within the Constituent Council by a primary contact. Complete information about the Constituent Council, including information about designation of the primary contact, is described in Section 19: Constituent Council Governing Rules.

For the site to maintain accredited status, the primary contact is responsible for fulfilling a number of obligations to CEA. Failure to meet these obligations during the period of accreditation may result in an accredited site being placed on warning, probation, or show cause, or having accreditation withdrawn following the due process described in Section 12: Advisory and Adverse Actions.

8.2. Notifications to CEA

An accredited site must promptly notify CEA of the following events:

a. Change of primary contact

b. Change of program or institution name

   A change to the program or institution's name will be amended on the CEA Directory of Accredited Sites on the CEA website, with the name under which the site was originally accredited included in the listing for six months.

c. Closure of an accredited site

   Closure of an accredited program or institution will be accepted by the Commission and public and agency notifications will be made. The closure will be included in notifications of Commission decisions within 10 days following the closure effective date.

d. Closure of an auxiliary location

e. Intent to let the current term of accreditation expire at least one year prior to the end date of the site's current term of accreditation

f. Any substantive change as described in Section 9: Substantive Change

g. Any change in state licensure or exemption status

h. Any adverse action against the site by other accrediting agencies, or federal or state agencies. An accredited program must notify CEA of any such pending or final actions against the institution in which it resides.

i. Any change that may affect the site's compliance with CEA's eligibility requirements, including extended operational hiatus.

CEA may withdraw the eligibility of a site, withdraw accreditation of a site, or take other action based on such notification if compliance with CEA's policies is affected by the notification, and if necessary, after implementing the due process procedures described in Section 12: Advisory and Adverse Actions.

8.3. Extended hiatus

An accredited site may maintain eligible status during periods of extended operational hiatus. In cases when an educational program is not on offer based on the published instructional calendar, approval of extended operational hiatus is required from CEA's executive director.

8.4. Adverse action notification

8.4.1. Requirements

Accredited institutions must promptly notify CEA of the following events. An accredited program must notify CEA of any pending or final actions listed against the institution in which it resides.

a. a pending or final action brought by a federal agency for non-compliance with the law.

b. a pending or final action brought by a state agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in the state.

c. a pending or final decision by a recognized agency to deny accreditation or reaccreditation; suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's accreditation or reaccreditation; or to impose probation or an equivalent status.

8.4.2. Content

The site must provide CEA with the appropriate explanatory information and documentation, including but not limited to the following:

a. the name of the federal or state agency, the accrediting body, or licensing authority.

b. the type of action, the date of the action, and its underlying reasons, including copies of any official documents related to any such actions.

c. the anticipated or actual date of any final decisions related to the adverse action.

8.4.3. Process

All information will be reviewed by the Executive Committee, which may take one of several actions:

a. conclude, following review of the documentation, that the adverse action in question does not affect the accreditation of the site.

b. ask for additional information to be received within 15 working days.

c. require a site visit by staff or a review team within 30 working days.

Following receipt of additional information or completion of the site visit, the Executive Committee will review the status of the program or institution to determine if CEA should also take adverse action. If the Executive Committee concludes that CEA should also take adverse action, the matter will follow the procedures outlined in Section 12: Advisory and Adverse Actions.

8.4.4. Reporting

Should the Executive Committee find that the adverse action does not affect the program or institution's ability to continue to meet the *CEA Standards*, CEA will notify the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education within 30 days of the CEA action and will provide a thorough and reasonable explanation, consistent with the *CEA Standards*, why the action of the other body does not preclude continued accreditation by CEA.

8.5. Reporting requirements

The Commission may issue reporting requirements as part of an accreditation decision, site visit, or as follow-up to substantive change, the annual report, the interim report, or special investigation. Reporting requirements specify a standards-related deficiency and a due date for reporting compliance. Accredited sites must respond to each reporting requirement by the due date in order to maintain accredited status. Failure to respond by the stated deadlines may result in advisory or adverse action, as described in Section 12: Advisory and Adverse Actions.

8.6. Annual reporting

8.6.1. Annual report package

a. All accredited programs and institutions must submit annual reports and sustaining fees throughout the periods of both initial accreditation and reaccreditation. The annual report package comprises three components:

1. The annual review form, including confirmation of continued eligibility for CEA accreditation, data on enrollment and faculty, confirmation of regulatory compliance, and data on student achievement
2. Annual financial reports, including a Summary Report, a Balance Sheet, and a Revenues and Expenditures Statement
3. Sustaining fee payment forms and fees

b. The substantive change policy is distributed with the annual report package each year.

c. Annual reports are due in February of each year of accredited status, regardless of other dates which may be in place for reporting requirements:

    1. All sites are required to file sustaining fee payment forms and pay annual sustaining fees each year.

    2. Sites submitting an interim report the year of the annual report are not required to submit the annual review form.

    3. Certain sites are not required to submit the annual review form or the financial report form, including those that

        i. received an initial accreditation decision at the Fall Commission meeting

        ii. have site visits scheduled in the Fall cycle of the year preceding the year of the annual report or in the first two cycles of the year of the annual report deadline.

8.6.2. Staff review of annual report content

Annual report content is reviewed by CEA staff. The review establishes continued eligibility and regulatory compliance. Significant changes in student enrollment and numbers of faculty may prompt further investigation into faculty workload and the ability of the site to carry out its operations. A review of pass/fail rates may prompt further investigation into aspects of curriculum and assessment practices. Based on the findings, staff may accept an annual report as complete or recommend further consideration by the Standards Compliance Committee of the Commission.

Annual financial reports are reviewed by CEA's financial manager who may accept the report as complete or request further information. Any concerns that arise as a result of the financial review will be forwarded to the Standards Compliance Committee for additional review.

8.6.3. Standards Compliance Committee action on the annual report

If it appears that a program or institution may no longer meet eligibility requirements or any specific standards, the Standards Compliance Committee (SCC) will determine follow-up actions. Eligibility matters will be referred to staff for review of compliance with CEA's eligibility requirements. Regarding standards matters, depending on the evidence and on which standards may be affected, the SCC may require a follow-up report or a special site visit. In cases where a substantive change has occurred but has not been reported, the site will be required to submit a substantive change report. The results of any further review will be reported to the Commission, which will determine what action to take, including whether an advisory action should be initiated.

8.6.4. CEA staff action on the annual report

CEA staff may place a program or institution on administrative warning for failure to submit a complete annual report package and pay sustaining fees by the deadline. As specified in Section 12: Advisory and Adverse Actions, following a warning action and after consideration of the accredited site's response, the Commission will determine whether the issue for which the warning action was taken is resolved, or the issue is unresolved and the next step in the advisory action hierarchy will be taken. Advisory actions, which include warning, probation, and show cause actions, culminate in the adverse action of withdrawal of accreditation.

8.7. Interim reports for reaccredited sites

In the fifth year of the 10-year accreditation period or in the fourth year of nine-year accreditation, an interim report is due. Through the interim report, accredited sites verify that the program or institution continues to be eligible and continues to meet the *CEA Standards*. The interim report requires responses to each of the *CEA Standards* and is equivalent to a self-study. Detailed instructions for completing the interim report are sent to sites one year before the submission deadline. A fee is due for the interim report, payable prior to submission of the report upon invoicing by CEA. Failure to file an interim report or apply for an extension prior to the due date may result in an advisory action (see Section 12: Advisory and Adverse Actions). Extensions may be granted by CEA's executive director in cases where there are extenuating circumstances.

Interim reports are reviewed by the Standards Compliance Committee (SCC). The committee will make recommendations to the Commission, which may accept the report as complete, require additional reporting from the site, and/or require a special site visit within 90 days, at the expense of the site.

a. If either additional information from the site or a special site visit is required, the Commission will review the information at its next scheduled meeting following receipt of the additional information or submission of the site visit report.

b. The Commission may

    i. accept the interim report and grant a continuance of accreditation for the site's remaining term, with or without reporting requirements. If reporting requirements are issued, the site must come into compliance within one year.

    ii. initiate advisory action against the site for failure to comply with the standards. Advisory actions, which include warning, probation, and show cause actions, culminate in the adverse action of withdrawal of accreditation.