

# UNIT 6: THE CEA STANDARDS

PREPARING FOR YOUR  
ACCREDITATION WORKSHOP

Welcome to Unit 6 of the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation online preparation for your accreditation workshop. In this unit, we will discuss the CEA standards.

## PREPARING FOR THE WORKSHOP

- Watch these seven slideshows
  1. CEA's Mission
  2. Scope of Accreditation
  3. CEA's Values
  4. Specialized Accreditation
  5. Accreditation Process
  -  6. The CEA Standards
  7. Planning and Review
- Complete the worksheet for each unit
- Bring your questions to the workshop

Not surprisingly, for this unit, you will want to have access to the Standards, which were emailed to you and are also available for download from the CEA website under About CEA. You may also like to have the Accreditation Handbook.

If you have not yet downloaded the worksheet for Unit 6 or gathered the other materials, please pause the slideshow and do that now.

Remember that you can use your worksheet to note any questions or thoughts you have, even if those that are not directly related to the questions we've asked you. As you may expect, we'll be examining the standards closely during the workshop.

Are you ready to join us in an overview of the CEA standards?

## PURPOSE OF STANDARDS



- **Define** the field
- **Reflect** what is considered good practice in English language program instruction and administration
- **Drive** the accreditation process
  - the site's self-study
  - review by peer reviewers
  - review by the Commission
  - annual reporting

Let's start with some definitions. Standards are, of course, the statements of good practices against which programs and institutions compare themselves in the accreditation process. But standards, particularly those developed by a maturing field when a specialized accreditation system is emerging, are more than a set of commandments. When their related accreditation system grows from and continues to be based on peer consensus and collective professional knowledge, standards have dimensions that go beyond being baseline statements of practice.

As we've noted throughout these online units, the CEA standards were developed over a period of years by a committee of professionals with extensive experience in English language teaching and administration, and with experience in a variety of program and institutional models. The development process included public discussion and analysis of draft versions of the standards. As a result, the practices espoused by the standards set parameters and benchmarks that define the field.

The standards undergo regular review, and occasional revision, by the Commission's Standards Review Committee; this process incorporates input from the field and ample deliberation to ensure that the standards continue to reflect good practice as the field evolves.

Although they do state requirements and include some "musts", the CEA standards do not prescribe one model of practice. Rather, CEA accreditation is mission-based. That is, the standards require the program or institution to state its mission, what kinds of students are served, and what their needs are, and then the program shows how it meets that mission. So it is within the context of mission that the standards

express what constitutes good practice in each program or service area.

As we've also discussed, the standards underpin all aspects of the accreditation process. They form the basis of your self-study, which will address standard-by-standard how your site and practices measure up to the good practice described. The peer reviewers are trained to apply the standards and to draw conclusions only as aligned with the practices expressed in the standards; their report will compare your program or institution to the standards, not to their opinions or preferred approaches. Commissioners, when making accreditation decisions or preparing reporting requirements, do so by using language from the standards.

## WELL-DESIGNED STANDARDS

- Clear and easy to understand
- No more burdensome than necessary
- Fair and reasonable
- Not discriminatory
- Models of good practice
- Opportunity for outside input
- Regular review process

Do you remember in Unit 4, we talked about the fact that there are good practices for accreditation agencies ~~around~~ for the procedures and principles they use for conducting the accreditation process? Among those good practices are principles for designing standards. These principles were followed when the CEA standards were first developed, and they continue to be relevant now.

When you read the standards, you see that they are expressed in direct language that is clear and easy to understand. Regular review of the CEA standards ensures that the standards are clear, internally consistent, and without redundancies. If you're interested, the last major review and revision project, done in 2015, is on the CEA website under the "Resources" tab.

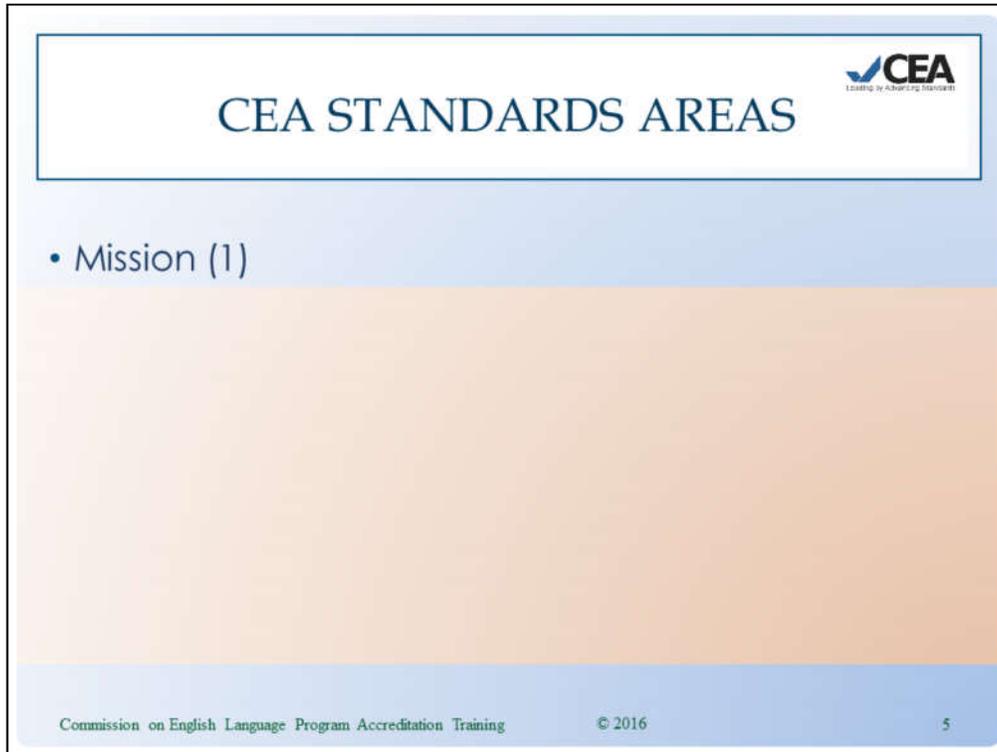
Standards, especially those that promote quality practices, should not be more burdensome than is necessary to achieve the desired outcome. You'll note that while the CEA standards do require evidence that practices are in place, very few require documentation or paperwork that is not generated in the course of normal good work. Their purpose is not to put programs through hoops just for the sake of imposing or controlling, but to encourage actual good practices.

Well-designed standards are fair and reasonable, and do not require unrealistic levels of compliance. Programs can certainly demonstrate that they meet standards in an excellent or exceptional way, but the standards themselves should express achievable good practice.

Particularly important to our field, which has many different models of programs

and institutions – with many different missions, target student populations, and curricular approaches – the standards should not include inherent biases for or against any type of applicant program or prescribe only one kind of mission, approach, or practice. As expressed in CEA’s values, we believe good quality can exist in a variety of instructional programs and administrative structures. (And over time, accreditation decisions have proven that this is true!)

In sum, the CEA standards and the process by which they were developed are sound, having been developed in accordance with principles and good practices of standards development.

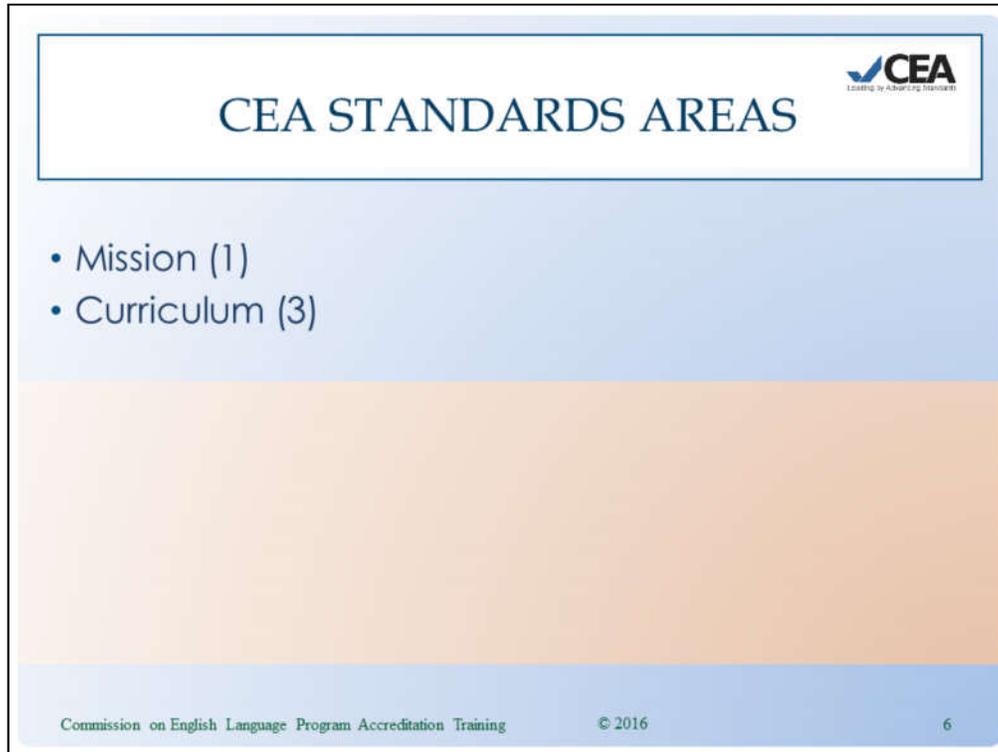


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**So let's return to the CEA standards.** You'll remember that CEA was originally organized with eventual U.S. Department of Education recognition in mind, and one step in this direction was to adopt the Standards areas called for by the USDE. One USDE standards area, "federal student funding" was not included in CEA's standards, since it does not apply in our arena.

With the 2010 standards revisions, CEA further customized the remaining USDE standards areas to include an area of Program Development, Planning, and Review, which is not a separate USDE required area.

The 44 CEA standards are arrayed into the 11 areas that have been appearing on your screen. The number of individual standards in each area is noted in parentheses.

A presentation slide titled "CEA STANDARDS AREAS". The title is in a large, blue, serif font at the top center. In the top right corner, there is a logo for CEA (Commission on English Language Accreditation) with the tagline "LEADING BY ADVANCING EDUCATION". Below the title, there is a list of two items: "• Mission (1)" and "• Curriculum (3)". The slide has a light blue background with a white header box and a light orange section below the list. At the bottom, there is a footer with the text "Commission on English Language Program Accreditation Training", "© 2016", and the number "6".

CEA STANDARDS AREAS

- Mission (1)
- Curriculum (3)

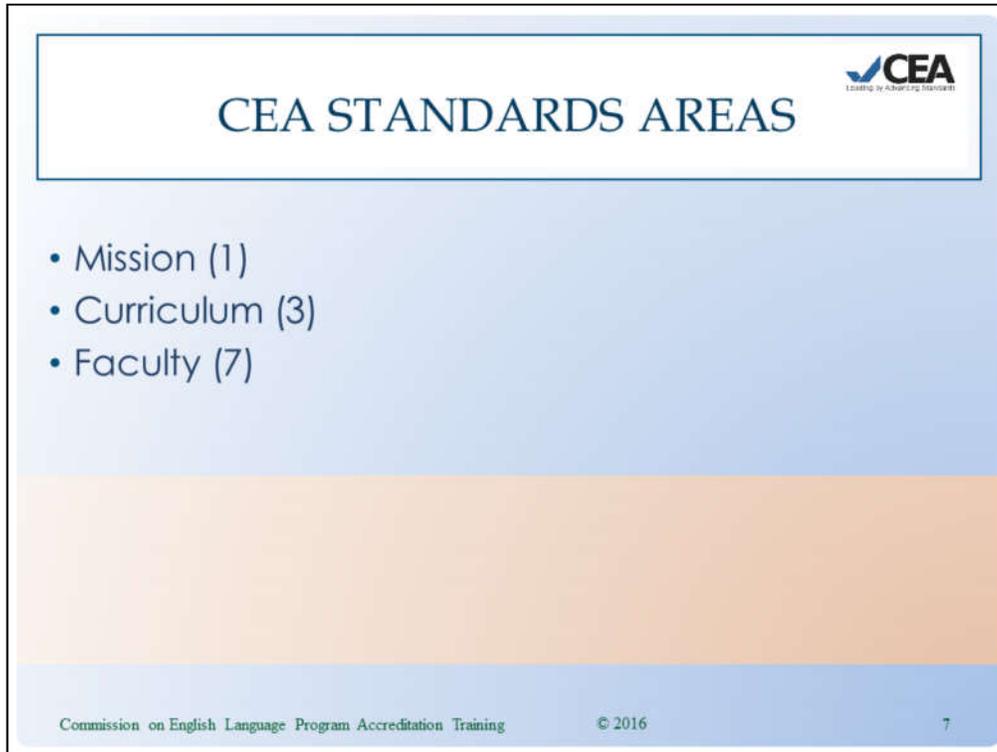
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**CEA STANDARDS AREAS**

- Mission (1)
- Curriculum (3)
- Faculty (7)

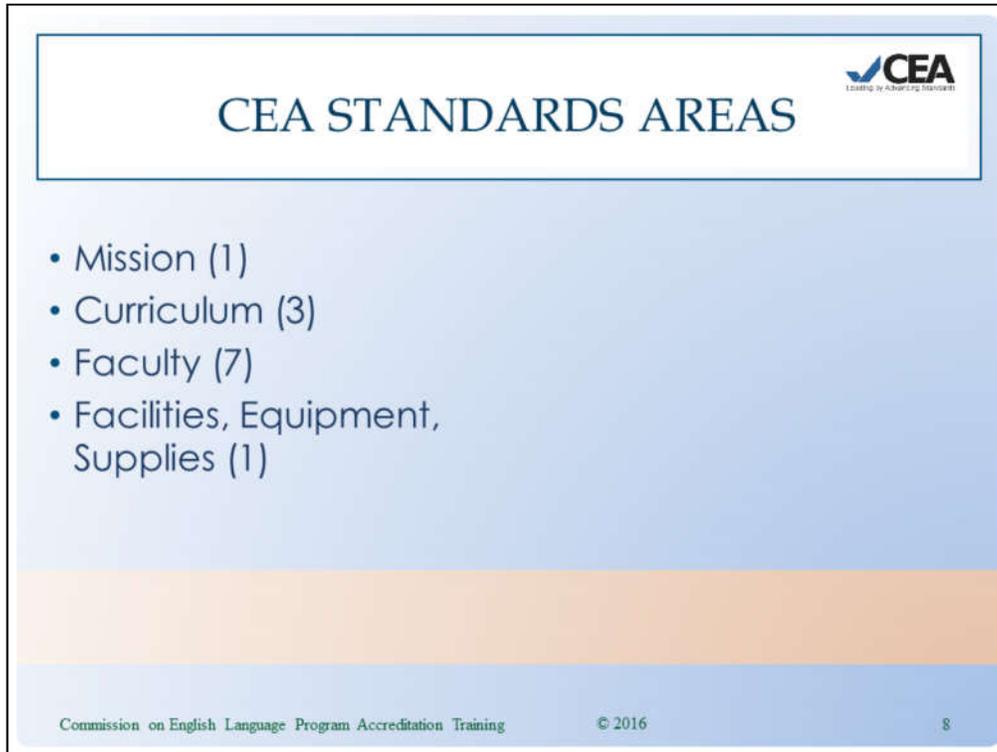
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A presentation slide titled "CEA STANDARDS AREAS" with the CEA logo in the top right corner. The slide lists four categories of standards: Mission (1), Curriculum (3), Faculty (7), and Facilities, Equipment, Supplies (1). The slide has a light blue background with a white header box and a light orange horizontal band near the bottom. At the very bottom, there is a footer with the text "Commission on English Language Program Accreditation Training", "© 2016", and the number "8".

**CEA STANDARDS AREAS**

- Mission (1)
- Curriculum (3)
- Faculty (7)
- Facilities, Equipment, Supplies (1)

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## CEA STANDARDS AREAS



- Mission (1)
- Curriculum (3)
- Faculty (7)
- Facilities, Equipment, Supplies (1)
- Administrative and Fiscal Capacity (12)

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## CEA STANDARDS AREAS



- Mission (1)
- Curriculum (3)
- Faculty (7)
- Facilities, Equipment, Supplies (1)
- Administrative and Fiscal Capacity (12)
- Student Services (8)

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- Mission (1)
- Curriculum (3)
- Faculty (7)
- Facilities, Equipment, Supplies (1)
- Administrative and Fiscal Capacity (12)
- Student Services (8)
- Recruiting (3)

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- Curriculum (3)
- Faculty (7)
- Facilities, Equipment, Supplies (1)
- Administrative and Fiscal Capacity (12)
- Student Services (8)
- Recruiting (3)
- Length and Structure of Program of Study (2)

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- Curriculum (3)
- Faculty (7)
- Facilities, Equipment, Supplies (1)
- Administrative and Fiscal Capacity (12)
- Student Services (8)
- Recruiting (3)
- Length and Structure of Program of Study (2)
- Student Achievement (4)

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- Faculty (7)
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- Administrative and Fiscal Capacity (12)
- Student Services (8)
- Recruiting (3)
- Length and Structure of Program of Study (2)
- Student Achievement (4)
- Student Complaints (1)

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- Administrative and Fiscal Capacity (12)
- Student Services (8)
- Recruiting (3)
- Length and Structure of Program of Study (2)
- Student Achievement (4)
- Student Complaints (1)
- Program Development, Planning, and Review (2)

Do you have your copy of the standards handy? Let's take a moment to look at the standards themselves. You will note, that the first page of each standard area opens with a Context statement. Then, the individual standard is stated, each followed by a Discussion. Together, these parts of the document – the context for the standards area, the individual standard, and the discussion for the individual standard – provide a complete picture of the intent of the standard. You will also find the Glossary at the end of the Standards useful.

At the workshop, we will review all standards, and focus on 18 to 20 of them. We will look at sample responses, and we will review the standards that are often unmet or frequently lead to reporting requirements. We will also spend time analyzing the practices outlined within the important areas of curriculum and student achievement.

## STANDARDS FAMILIARIZATION

- Before the workshop:
  - Read through the 44 standards
  - Note any that you want to discuss
  - Note any questions they raise for you
- At the workshop:
  - Review 18-20 in depth
  - Focus on those most commonly unmet

Before you arrive at the workshop, you will want to be sure you have read through the 44 standards and written down any standards-related matters that you want to discuss during the workshop. Your worksheet is a great place for these questions and thoughts!

## REVIEW: CEA STANDARDS

- Which of the CEA standards do anticipate being difficult for you to evaluate?
- What questions do you have about specific standards? Note any that don't seem to apply to your organization.
- How do the CEA values relate to the 44 standards?
- How does your organization's mission relate to the 44 standards?

And speaking of the worksheet, here are the questions we'd like you to consider for Unit 6, in addition to your own ideas and questions.

Take some time now to jot down your answers and ideas.

As always, if you are not sure about the answers to any of these questions, you can review this unit and the Standards, or email CEA for clarification or guidance.

## QUESTIONS AND THOUGHTS

Bring your questions and thoughts about the CEA standards to the workshop. If you have questions in advance, email them to [info@cea-accredit.org](mailto:info@cea-accredit.org).



We hope this unit has been helpful and interesting for you as you prepare for the accreditation workshop and process. We'll be ready to focus on the standards, and answer your questions, then. In the meantime, remember that you are free to review all of the online units as often as you need in the coming months.

Thank you for your participation! We are glad to have you joining or continuing with the CEA community!

When you are ready, you can move on to Unit 7: Planning and Review.