


## UNIT 3: CEA'S VALUES

PREPARING FOR YOUR  
ACCREDITATION WORKSHOP

Welcome to Unit 3 of the CEA online preparation for your accreditation workshop. In this unit, we will look at CEA's values.

## PREPARING FOR THE WORKSHOP

- Watch the seven preparation unit 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

So far, you have learned about CEA's mission, thought about the role of mission in your own program or institution, and been introduced to the idea of scope and the special terminology of programs and institutions.

Before we take a look at CEA's values, let me remind you that nearly everything in these units is available in writing. For this slideshow, you may like to have the CEA website open so you can access resources available there, including CEA's values statements.

If you want to pull up the website or if you have not yet downloaded the worksheet for Unit 3, please pause the slideshow so you can get those items ready.

Remember that your worksheet is a great place to note any questions or thoughts you have, even if they are not related to the questions we'll ask you. Then you'll have them at the workshop when we meet face-to-face.

So without further ado, let's talk about values!



The CEA values statements that we will see in the slides of this unit are abbreviated versions. As we mentioned a moment ago, you can find complete versions on the CEA website under About CEA.

The complete versions convey very important perspectives. We encourage you to review the full statements now, so please pause this video and take a look. It will only take a moment, so we'll wait!

## CEA'S VALUES



- Leading through advancing standards
- Advocating for students
- Respecting differences
- Supporting success
- Promoting continuous improvement, development, and learning
- Acting with integrity and care
- Embracing collaborative judgment

Here you can see the seven CEA values.

Like CEA's mission, the values statements speak for themselves but also have deeper implications for you as you go through the self-study process. We'll point out those implications as we go along.

Also like CEA's mission, CEA's values statements were developed through ample discussion by the CEA commissioners and reflect principles and philosophies underpinning CEA's work as an accrediting agency serving our professional field.

So let's talk briefly about each one of these values.

## CEA VALUES: ADVANCING STANDARDS



- Good practice in teaching and learning
- Good practice in administration
  
- Standards are properly designed
- Standards are accepted by the field
- Standards drive self-study, review, decisions

As noted in earlier units, CEA exists to advance standards in the field at large. And we've noted that this includes standards related to the whole educational enterprise, focusing on both the academic quality of the programs you conduct, as well as on administrative practices and student services.

We'll be focusing on the standards throughout the workshop, so for now we'll just say that the standards are designed in an intentional way, were developed and accepted by the field, and are regularly reviewed.

Most importantly, the accreditation process is based on the Standards at every juncture:

Your self-study will be a compilation of your practices related to the 44 standards;  
All reviewers are trained to apply the standards throughout the review process; and  
All commission decisions are premised on language in the Standards.

As a practical matter, this means that there is no situation where the loudest voice or a single opinion or an individual bias can sway the accreditation process. The Standards form the rubric against which all practices are tested. And everyone involved is required – and CEA processes are designed – to ensure that all decisions and actions are related to the Standards and the application of those standards.

## CEA VALUES: ADVOCATING FOR STUDENTS



- Accreditation serves students
- Provides student services and programs as promised
- Has the resources to deliver services and programs

Just as important as the Standards, CEA believes that an accreditation-worthy program serves students well. The CEA Policies and Procedures say quote, “the focus of CEA accreditation is students.” This is the bottom line for CEA!

An underlying premise of the whole process is:

That students are accurately informed about a program or institution they choose to attend,

That they are well-served while there both by the academic program and by the student services provided,

That the program delivers the services and student outcomes which were promised,

And that there are resources to ensure this.

Advocating for students, as a practical matter, means that in evaluating the accreditation-readiness of a program’s or institution’s practice, we ask, does it serve students well?

When a decision must be made, the commission’s thinking will turn to whether the program or institution is effectively serving its students.

## CEA VALUES: RESPECTING DIFFERENCES



- Quality comes in many forms
- Different
  - Types of programs and institutions
  - Missions, goals, target populations
  - Educational philosophies and approaches
  - Economic and cultural environments

In a field that has many models of programs and institutions delivering programs and services in many different settings and under many different missions, it is important that these differences be valued rather than be viewed with bias. We believe that excellent programs and institutions exist in many forms.

CEA does not have a school of thought on educational philosophies or approaches; it does not have a bias for or against any particular program model. Its processes and standards, in fact, are designed to emphasize that a program or institution declares its mission and then demonstrates that it fulfills its mission for its students through good practices as outlined in the standards. There are many missions and models, and there are many ways to meet student needs; CEA does not prescribe a particular approach.

As a practical matter, this value goes back again to the fact that the accreditation process and decisions are based on the standards, not on the type of the program or the kind of students it serves. The process is designed to ensure that the wide range of program and institution models and missions in our field – and that includes yours! – get addressed in a fair way.

## CEA VALUES: SUPPORTING SUCCESS



- Published Standards, not opinions
- Commitment to all IEP types
- Focus on guidance and information
- Peer support and collaboration
- Staff availability

Moving to our next statement, another of CEA's values is a commitment to the success of the programs and institutions that it accredits. The accreditation and the standards are constructed in such a way that they are achievable.

What kind of support, you may ask, does CEA actually provide?

Well, we begin the process with information and guidance. That's where you are now, engaged with these online units and soon to be with us in person at the accreditation workshop.

Following the workshop, when you file your self-study plan or timeline, we provide staff support for any questions you have about how to organize and accomplish the self-study process.

Then, throughout the self-study period, we help when you have questions about the standards and their application relative to your particular program or institution.

You'll find that the CEA process is neither a hand-holding exercise, nor a sink-or-swim trial, nor a check-listed inspection. We believe success is continuous improvement as well as compliance, a virtuous circle of earning accreditation and then continuing to have good practice. It is not simply surviving a CEA inspection.

As a practical matter, you are not out there on your own. Whenever you have questions, you can contact us. And by the end of the workshop, you will know who to call with your questions and how to find the answers you need.



## CEA VALUES: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



- Quality comes from reflective self-study and planned improvement
- Involves all personnel
- Learning and growth for CEA volunteers and staff

CEA believes – and its processes support – that good quality is a journey as well as a destination. Achieving accreditation is the goal, but improving along the way is necessary and desirable. After accreditation, it is a commitment to *maintaining* quality, beyond achieving it. In fact monitoring and responding flexibly to the changes and trends in our field and within your program or institution is critical and an important dynamic in quality assurance.

Yes, CEA requires compliance with standards, but in doing this, its history and its ethos – and continuing commitment – is also about improving services to students, as well as the overall quality of student achievement and the administration of programs and institutions. Site by site, CEA is focused on improvement of the field.

If you haven't noticed already, you'll find that many of the 44 standards reference regular review and continuous improvement.

As a practical matter, this means that everyone associated with the program or institution can and should be involved in continuous improvement because providing quality teaching and administration is best accomplished when everyone contributes. Regarding your self-study and review, you will need to show evidence of planned regular review for many of the standards, and for two, those regarding program development, planning, and review, you will be asked to provide written plans that ensure regular review of programming and practices.

This value also reflects CEA's commitment to professional development and learning for those involved in accreditation, and not only at the site undergoing

accreditation but also for CEA's Commissioners, peer reviewers, and staff. Intentional continuous improvement is a hallmark of CEA engagement.

## CEA VALUES: INTEGRITY AND CARE



- Professionalism required from all involved
- Open communication and transparency
- Accountability
- Consistent and fair processes and decisions
  
- Protections for you, reviewers, commissioners, and CEA

What comes to mind when you read that CEA values integrity and care?

These are the kind of words that can sound so earnest but feel hollow –we’re committed to being professional, aren’t we special!

It will not surprise you, though, that these words mean much more in the CEA context.

For CEA, integrity and care is not just about being nice, professional people. Because CEA accreditation is peer-driven and relies on the engagement, wisdom, and knowledge of others in the field, the need for clear principles governing the approach to handling materials, doing reviews, shaping standards, etc., is particularly strong.

Throughout the process you will hear about CEA’s strict compliance with protocols that ensure that everyone’s interests are properly protected. Because of the importance we place on integrity and care, you can have confidence in CEA’s management of *your* materials in particular and of the overall process in general.

In addition, reviewers and commissioners will function as prudent people. In this context, “prudent” is a legal term. It does not mean simply that they will be judicious and careful, it means that they have agreed to follow those CEA protocols, and *that* means, among other things, that they’re applying the standards and may not indulge any biases.

So as a practical matter, you can have confidence that your reviewers have been thoroughly trained, and that staff, reviewers, and commissioners will treat your

materials and information and any decisions made with utmost confidentiality. Information about your program will not be distributed anywhere else except for the required public notifications, and no-one will discuss it outside of CEA-directed settings.

## CEA VALUES: EMBRACING COLLABORATION



- Value the expertise of members of the profession – peer-driven
- Collective knowledge of good practice
- Processes to ensure collaboration
- Self-study involves all personnel
- Multiple perspectives

The final value we'll discuss will come as no surprise to you. You've heard about collaboration several times already!

With its peer-driven accreditation approach, CEA requires not only the expertise of individual professionals but also the ability for them to come into agreement about what constitutes good practice.

This doesn't happen spontaneously; CEA deliberately brings together groups of professionals to build collective knowledge of good practice through training, meetings, task forces, and professional development events.

Relative to your accreditation process, for instance, we conduct group training for reviewers and then always send 2 reviewers on a site visit, where we require them to work together in specific ways and come to consensus on their decisions.

Similarly, the Commission goes through orientation and training and follows rather elaborate protocols to ensure that they have each met the responsibility to apply the standards while sharing their expertise in the decision-making process.

And we rely on input and feedback from the field to improve or change the Standards and all of CEA processes. In fact, you will see that input and feedback received from programs and institutions that have been through the review process have helped to shape the review process itself.

In addition, we widely solicit reviewers and commissioners from the field, so that new people are continually becoming familiar with CEA's collaborative processes as they themselves contribute to improving the field.

As a practical matter, the value of embracing collaboration is another way that we ensure that CEA is aware of changes in the field, the many program models, and it also, again, ensures that a single loud voice doesn't win the day, that there is collective decision-making at each point in the process.

Beyond the practical matter, there is this building of a community and a body of common knowledge around good practice that comes only when collaboration is intentional and required.

## REVIEW: CEA'S VALUES

- Which of the CEA values most resonate with you?
- How do CEA's values impact your view of the accreditation process you are undertaking?
- How did looking at the CEA values change the way you think about your own organization?
- What questions or thoughts do you want to raise at the workshop about CEA's values?

If you haven't been using your worksheet already, please turn to it now.

Take some time to consider these review questions and write down your answers, as well as your own questions and thoughts that you would like to bring to the workshop.

## QUESTIONS AND THOUGHTS

Bring your questions and thoughts about CEA's values to the workshop or send them in advance to [info@cea-accredit.org](mailto:info@cea-accredit.org).



After you have had time to reflect on CEA's values, feel free to send us your thoughts and questions before the workshop, if you like. If you do, we'll be prepared to respond!

Thank you again for your participation! When you are ready, you can move on to Unit 4: Specialized Accreditation.