

Policy on Review of Standards

Proposed changes are primarily editorial to remove unnecessary context and increase consistency across all policy statements.

Introduction

~~For many years now, the~~ USDE regulations for recognizing accrediting bodies ~~has required~~ require agencies to maintain a comprehensive systematic program of review that involves all relevant constituencies and that demonstrates that its standards are adequate to evaluate the quality of the education or training provided by the institutions and programs it accredits and relevant to the educational or training needs of students. ~~maintain a systematic program of review of their accrediting standards. The purpose of this review has been to ensure that standards are valid and reliable indicators of educational quality and relevant to the needs of students. Regulations written for the implementation of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments eliminated the use of the terms “validity” and “reliability” as found in previous versions of the regulations because of the technical meanings of these terms in the field of statistics. Nevertheless, accrediting agencies are expected to maintain an ongoing or cyclical review of their standards.~~ In light of this expectation, the ABHE Commission on Accreditation (COA) will:

1. Maintain a process that ~~will~~ typically results in ~~a~~ review of at least one major standard per year during its regular meeting. Consideration of standards will ~~be rotated~~ so that over a 10-year period all standards ~~will be~~ are reviewed.
2. Maintain forms and procedures that ~~will~~ encourage team evaluators to comment on existing standards regarding any difficulties experienced in applying them in the field. Team members will be instructed to rate standards regarding both their importance and their clarity. They will be encouraged to offer revisions to existing standards, suggest new standards, or recommend deletion of existing standards based upon their experience in the field. The COA Standards and Policies Committee will review all comments and recommendations from team members.
3. At 10-year intervals, the COA will initiate a comprehensive review of standards. It is anticipated that, at the conclusion of such a review, the standards may be completely recast to ensure that they reflect quality educational expectations according to current practices in the fields of instruction offered by accredited institutions or programs.
4. Upon receipt of evidence that a standard no longer assures the quality of education in a manner that meets the needs of students, ABHE will, within 12 months, initiate action to change the standard. The procedure will be consistent with the COA's *Policy on Changes to the* ~~COA's~~ Commission on Accreditation's *Policies, Procedures, and Standards.*
- ~~5.~~ When proposing a revision to standards, an effort will be made to afford all relevant constituencies (e.g., students, member institutions, states, provinces, other recognized

accrediting bodies, and the public) a meaningful opportunity to provide input into the review and revision process. ~~One of the important constituencies that will have opportunity for input into the revision process will be the students of accredited member institutions or programs. They will be especially encouraged to comment on the relevance of a proposed standard to their specific needs.~~

5.

~~6.~~

~~7.6.~~ ~~It will be the goal of the COA to m~~ Maintain standards that are of sufficient clarity to ensure similar decisions where similar conditions exist. In other words, the standards should enable the COA to be consistent in its decision-making processes.

Applicable Policies: *Policy on Changes to the COA's Policies, Procedures, and Standards*

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