

July 2, 2018
Proposed Revisions of the *2010*
RECOGNITION POLICY AND PROCEDURES
ANNOTATED

The current Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) *Recognition of Accrediting Organizations Policy and Procedures* was approved by the CHEA Board of Directors in 1998 and revised in 2006 and 2010.

The CHEA Committee on Recognition, appointed by the Board of Directors, initiated a third revision of the policy, completing a draft in spring 2018. In addition to the committee, this work also involved the CHEA Board of Directors, CHEA staff and legal counsel.

The proposed revised policy is below. New recognition requirements are noted in the text boxes by section. They are also marked as a “*new requirement*” throughout the proposed policy. In some instances, current recognition practices have now been included in the revised policy. The proposed revisions also include some language modifications to current requirements that do not alter these requirements.

To view all proposed changes, please refer to the mark-up of the 2010 policy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND	2
CHEA RECOGNITION PURPOSES.....	3
CHEA-RECOGNIZED SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION	5
RECOGNITION STANDARDS	6
COMMITTEE ON RECOGNITION.....	12
RECOGNITION REVIEW.....	13
APPLICATION PROCESS	14
ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS	20
AMENDMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	21
GLOSSARY	22

RECOGNITION OF ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

BACKGROUND

Background

- Updates language describing CHEA's background.
- Includes definition of "accreditation" from former Appendix A (*Paragraph 1*).
- Adds focus on needed flexibility and innovation for accreditation (*Paragraph 2*).

1. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) was formed in 1996 as an organization committed to enhancing higher education through strengthened accreditation. Accreditation is a process of external quality review created and used by higher education to scrutinize institutions and programs for quality assurance and quality improvement. "CHEA will serve students and their families, colleges and universities, sponsoring bodies, governments and employers by promoting academic quality through formal recognition of higher education accreditation bodies and will coordinate and work to advance self-regulation through accreditation." (CHEA Mission Statement)

2. Accrediting organizations are non-governmental organizations structured and organized to review and evaluate institutions or programs and render judgments about their accreditation status. CHEA recognizes regional, national career- or faith-related and programmatic accrediting organizations. Recognition by CHEA affirms that the standards, structures and practices of accrediting organizations promote academic quality, improvement, accountability and needed flexibility and innovation in the institutions or programs they accredit.

3. Recognition by CHEA conveys only that the accrediting organization meets the recognition standards with respect to institutions or programs included in the CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation. Such recognition is not intended to infringe on the

right of any institution or program to determine for itself whether to affiliate with an accrediting organization.

4. CHEA recognition may occur alongside and is independent of other reviews. For example, the federal government, through the U.S. Department of Education, also recognizes accrediting organizations. Federal, as distinct from CHEA, recognition aims to assure that the standards of accrediting organizations meet expectations for institutional and programmatic participation in federal initiatives, such as student aid. State licensure reviews, too, serve important public purposes, including consumer protection.

CHEA RECOGNITION PURPOSES

CHEA Recognition Purposes

- Requires accreditation judgments to be based principally on performance in relation to student achievement (*Paragraph 6*).
- Calls for accreditors to both apply and enforce all accreditation standards (*Paragraph 6*).
- Details what is to be included in description of accreditation status (*Paragraph 6*):
 - Length of a term of accreditation; reasons for awarding accreditation status; information regarding deficiencies in relation to accreditation standards and policies.
- All accreditation standards to be met in order for an institution or program to obtain and maintain accreditation status (*Paragraph 6*).
- Calls for early detection of ineffective institution or program performance, including actions to be taken (*Paragraph 6*).
- Calls for attention to innovation, where needed.

5. Recognition signifies that the accrediting organization embraces the value of periodic external review of its accreditation activities. Recognition:

- Holds accrediting organizations responsible for meeting all CHEA standards of academic quality, accountability, transparency and effective organization and practice;
- Affirms the fitness of accrediting organizations to promote academic quality and serve higher education, students and the public, now and in the foreseeable future; and
- Serves as evidence to the public that the recognized accrediting organizations are credible sources of judgment about academic quality in higher education.

6. A CHEA-recognized accrediting organization bases accreditation judgments principally on the performance of institutions or programs in relation to student achievement. In addition, an accrediting organization bases accreditation judgments on the institution's or program's structure, operation and capacity. The *Recognition Policy and Procedures* emphasizes self-study and peer review as central to judging institutions or programs and calls for use of reliable data and external verification of data as part of these processes. Accrediting organizations also sustain effective means of

communicating with the public and within the profession about their accreditation judgments. Recognized accrediting organizations provide evidence that their standards and policies are applied and enforced. A recognized accrediting organization carries out its accrediting activities while acknowledging and valuing institution or program mission and independence. *[new requirements--basis for accreditation judgments and application and enforcement]*

A CHEA-recognized accrediting organization:

- Awards or continues accredited status only for institutions or programs that demonstrate effective performance in relation to student learning and that make information on this public. Effective performance with regard to students entails evidence, as pertinent, of completion, graduation, retention, success with academic transfer, success with entry to graduate school and success in moving into the world of work. Performance expectations may emanate from the accrediting organization working with its institutions or programs, or from an institution or program or from both. *[new requirement--effective performance in relation to student learning]*
- Provides to the public readily accessible and easily understandable information about the accreditation status of institutions or programs and what this accreditation status signifies, including length of a term of accreditation, reasons for awarding accreditation status, information about any deficiencies in relation to accreditation standards and policies and reasons for conditioning or denying accreditation. *[new requirement--details about accreditation status]*
- Requires that all accreditation standards be met in order for an institution or program to obtain and maintain accredited status. *[new requirement]*
- Utilizes means to identify and act on institutions or programs that are ineffective with regard to student learning, based on expectations set by the accreditor, the institution or program or both. *[new requirement]*
- Maintains a strong quality improvement capacity. *[new requirement--explicit commitment to quality improvement]*
- Sustains ongoing attention to innovation, where needed, in institutions and programs and in the carrying out of its own standards, policies and procedures. *[new requirement]*

CHEA-RECOGNIZED SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION

CHEA-Recognized Scope of Accreditation

- Makes explicit what is considered in a change of scope (*Paragraph 8*):
 - A change in the type(s) of institutions or programs; the addition or removal of a degree level; a change in geographical boundaries; and the addition or removal of a degree area or professional field of study.
 - Non-substantive changes, e.g., editorial revisions.
- Gives Committee on Recognition responsibility for final action on change of scope (*Paragraph 8*).

7. CHEA-RECOGNIZED SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION. CHEA recognizes accrediting organizations for work in judging the quality of U.S. institutions and programs and, where permitted under this policy, other institutions and programs at the associate degree level or above.

The accrediting organization submits a clear statement of its proposed scope of recognition, which will be used to inform the public of the accreditation activities for which the accrediting organization holds recognition. The scope statement includes the following information about the accreditation activities for which recognition is sought: (1) types of institutions or programs; (2) degree levels; (3) geographic boundaries of accreditation activity, including specification of United States and international locations; and (4) degree areas or professional fields of study. The accrediting organization submits evidence of its capacity and competence to carry out accreditation activities identified in the scope statement. *[new requirement--outlines what is to be included in scope statement]*

Recognition is available only if a majority of institutions or programs the organization accredits grant degrees at the associate level or above. The CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation also may or may not include additional offerings, such as internships, clinical training and post-doctoral work. However, such offerings are not counted when determining whether the accrediting organization meets the degree-granting requirements. *[current practice made explicit in policy]*

Separate from the scope statement, the accrediting organization identifies any accreditation activities it conducts for which it is not seeking recognition. These activities are not part of the CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation. *[current practice made explicit in policy]*

8. CHANGES IN THE CHEA-RECOGNIZED SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION. Proposed changes in the CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation are considered by the Committee on Recognition (Committee) during or outside a regular recognition review. Changes in CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation include but are not limited to: (1) change in the type(s) of institutions and programs to be accredited; (2) addition or removal of a degree level; (3) change of geographical boundaries of accreditation activity, such as an expansion to include activity outside the United States; and (4) addition or removal of a degree area or professional field of study. *[current practice made explicit in policy]*

To be considered for a change in the CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation, the recognized accrediting organization submits:

- A. Its current statement of CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation; *[current practice made explicit in policy]*
- B. A clear statement of the proposed change in the CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation;
- C. The reasons for the proposed change, including evidence that the accrediting organization's decision-making body has authorized the change;
- D. Evidence of the accrediting organization's capacity and competence to carry out accreditation reviews under the new proposed scope, including evidence from the results of pilot reviews;
- E. A timetable for implementation of the new CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation, including impact on currently enrolled students affected by the change; and
- F. Evidence of consultation with appropriate constituencies.

The decision of the Committee with respect to a requested change in CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation will be final unless the Committee refers the matter to the Board of Directors (Board). The Board in its discretion also may act on an accrediting organization's scope of accreditation in the recognition review process or incident to a requested change of scope. *[new responsibility for Committee--final scope approval]*

If a recognized accrediting organization alters its CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation in non-substantive ways, e.g., editorial revisions, it promptly notifies CHEA staff and includes a brief description of what led the accrediting organization to make the alterations. CHEA will modify documents that include the CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation. *[new requirement--editorial revision notification]*

RECOGNITION STANDARDS

Recognition Standards (Overall)

- Reduces main standards from six to three.
- Eliminates eligibility as a separate process: Certain eligibility requirements in 2010 policy are retained in new Standard 3.
- Reaffirms requirement that all CHEA recognition standards must be met in order to obtain and maintain CHEA recognition (*Paragraph 9*).
- Calls for attention to innovation, where needed.

155 9. **RECOGNITION STANDARDS.** CHEA requires that an accrediting organization meet
156 all parts of each of three recognition standards, as administered and interpreted by
157 CHEA, in order to be recognized. A recognized accrediting organization provides
158 evidence that it:

- 159
- 160 A. Promotes academic quality and advances student achievement;
- 161 B. Demonstrates public accountability for performance and transparency; and
- 162 C. Sustains an effective accreditation structure and organization.

Standard One, Promotes Academic Quality And Advances Student Achievement

- Calls for additional attention to institutional and program performance, including student achievement (*Paragraph 10C*).

163

164 10. **STANDARD ONE. PROMOTES ACADEMIC QUALITY AND ADVANCES STUDENT**
165 **ACHIEVEMENT.** Advancement of academic quality is at the core of accreditation. To be
166 recognized, the accrediting organization provides evidence that it implements standards
167 or policies which:

- 168 A. Articulate the accrediting organization's expectations for academic quality
169 and results associated with institutional or program performance, including
170 student achievement, consistent with institution or program mission;
- 171 B. Require institutions or programs to establish and make public their
172 expectations for achievement of academic quality and indicators of student
173 success, to implement processes to determine whether students and
174 graduates meet the stated expectations and to make public, in aggregate
175 form, evidence of student success;
- 176 C. As a central part of the accrediting organization's decision-making about
177 accreditation status, address how well institutions or programs meet the
178 accrediting organization's performance expectations, including, at a
179 minimum, performance expectations consistent with institution or program
180 type; [*new requirement--importance of institution or program performance to*
181 *accredited status*]
- 182 D. Refer to institutional or programmatic resources only to the extent required
183 for students to emerge adequately prepared or to address health and safety
184 in the delivery of programs;
- 185 E. Apply its quality standards and policies in ways that respect the
186 institution's or program's prerogative to set priorities and to control how
187 the institution or program is structured and operates; and

- 188 F. Encourage and assist institutions and programs in ongoing improvement
189 of academic quality and performance, including a commitment to needed
190 flexibility and innovation.

Standard Two, Demonstrates Public Accountability For Performance and Transparency

- Makes explicit requirements to inform the public regarding accreditation actions: grant, reaffirm, deny, withdraw, or defer, or to impose notice, warning, show cause, or probation status (*Paragraph 11A1*).
- Calls for procedure and options for action regarding underperforming institutions or programs (*Paragraph 11A3*).
- Details requirements for providing information to the public about institutional or programmatic performance, including student achievement (*Paragraph 11B1*).
- Expands requirements regarding U.S. accreditors operating internationally:
 - Requires evidence of capacity to engage internationally (*Paragraph 11C2*).
 - Requires information to be provided to the public when accommodating local conditions and using alternative evaluation standards (*Paragraph 11C4*).

191
192 **11. STANDARD TWO. DEMONSTRATES PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY FOR**
193 **PERFORMANCE AND TRANSPARENCY.** Public accountability for performance and
194 transparency includes expectations related to the following three elements: (A)
195 performance of accrediting organizations, (B) performance of accredited institutions or
196 programs, and, if applicable, (C) performance of accrediting organizations engaged in
197 international activity.

- 198
199 A. The accrediting organization establishes and implements standards,
200 policies or procedures that:

201 1. Inform the public of the reason(s) for the accrediting organization's
202 accreditation actions (i.e., decision made by the accrediting
203 organization, as the result of an institution or program review, to
204 grant, reaffirm, deny, withdraw or defer accreditation, or to impose
205 notice, warning, show cause or probation status) in a timely and
206 readily accessible manner, including the institutional or program
207 response, if any; [*new requirement--further delineation of accreditation*
208 *actions*]

209 2. Provide for substantive and timely response by the accrediting
210 organization to legitimate public concerns and complaints about an
211 institution, program or the accrediting organization;

212 3. Provide a procedure for the accrediting organization to take timely
213 action to prevent substantially underperforming institutions or
214 programs from achieving or maintaining accredited status. The
215 procedure includes application of indicators to determine institution
216 or program performance weakness, procedure for intervention and
217 options for action by the accrediting organization in such cases; and
218 [*new requirement--timely action for underperforming institutions or*
219 *programs*]

- 220 4. Include ongoing attention to innovation, where needed. *[new*
221 *requirement]*
- 222 B. Institutions and programs accredited by the recognized accrediting
223 organization:
- 224 1. Provide timely, readily accessible, accurate and consistent
225 aggregate information to the public about institutional or
226 programmatic performance and student achievement, as such
227 information is determined by the institution or program; *[new*
228 *requirement--additional expectations of information to the public]*
- 229 2. Distinguish accurately between programs that are accredited and
230 those that are not; and
- 231 3. Provide evidence of ongoing attention to innovation, where needed.
232 *[new requirement]*
- 233 C. Recognized accrediting organizations, with respect to institutions or
234 programs located outside the United States:
- 235 1. Communicate and consult with appropriate in-country governmental
236 and non-governmental accreditation or quality assurance entities
237 regarding the accrediting organization's current and proposed
238 activities;
- 239 2. Provide evidence of the accrediting organization's capacity and
240 competence to engage in international accreditation activities,
241 including language and cultural differences, consideration of on-
242 going quality assurance activities in the country, national and local
243 factors that would affect the accreditation process and attention to
244 the safety of all those involved; *[new requirement--evidence of capacity*
245 *to accredit internationally]*
- 246 3. Provide evidence of substantially comparable application of
247 standards, practices, capacity and expectations of results to U.S.
248 and non-U.S. institutions and programs alike; and
- 249 4. When describing the accreditation status of international institutions
250 and programs, provide to the public notice of the nature and content
251 of the accommodations that were made for local conditions and
252 alternative evaluation standards or practices that were used as part
253 of the accreditation process and decision-making. *[new requirement--*
254 *public notice for accommodating international differences]*

255

Standard Three, Sustains an Effective Accreditation Structure and Organization

- Requires accrediting organization to have legal authority to operate (*Paragraph 12A*).
- Adds explicit requirements for a published directory of all currently accredited institutions or programs that include:
 - Level(s) of accreditation and status, conditions (e.g., restrictions, warning, show cause, suspension, other) (*Paragraph 12D3*).
- Expands procedural due process requirements to include effectively administered conflict of interest policy (*Paragraph 12I*).
- Requires aggregate information regarding student achievement, including evidence of its collection and review, for purposes of promoting effective practice (*Paragraph 12L(1-2)*).

12. STANDARD THREE. SUSTAINS AN EFFECTIVE ACCREDITATION STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION. A recognized accrediting organization provides evidence that it implements standards, policies and practices and sustains organizational characteristics consistent with CHEA requirements. To be recognized, the accrediting organization demonstrates that it:

A. Has legal authority to operate. [new requirement]

B. Accredits institutions or programs that have legal authority to operate as higher education institutions or programs and to confer higher education degrees at the associate degree level or above. For non-U.S. institutions in countries in which legal authority to award degrees is not available, the U.S. accrediting organization meets this requirement if it demonstrates that it accredits only those institutions that have standing and significant support in the local community or other communities of interest, e.g., well-known professional organizations and other respected entities that support the institution.

C. Accredits institutions or programs, a majority of which grant degrees at the associate level or above.

D. Has written bylaws, policies, procedures and standards readily accessible to the public that describe officially:

1. The scope of accreditation that may be granted, evaluative standards used and levels of accreditation status conferred;

2. The organization's operating and decision-making processes, policies and procedures; and

3. Publishes a readily accessible directory of all currently accredited institutions or programs and the corresponding levels of accreditation and accreditation status, including any accreditation status conditions imposed by the accrediting organization (i.e., restrictions or other specifications affecting an accreditation status,

- 285 including but not limited to, time limitation of the accreditation cycle,
286 warning, show cause, suspension or other conditions defined in the
287 accrediting organization's policy). *[new requirement--published*
288 *directory]*
- 289 **E. Maintains clearly described and published operational separation from any**
290 **parent or sponsoring organizations, including with respect to accreditation**
291 **standards, policies and procedures, the conduct of all accreditation**
292 **reviews, functions, operations and all accreditation actions.**
- 293 **F. Is operational and has conducted accreditation reviews for each type of**
294 **institution or program identified in the proposed statement of CHEA-**
295 **recognized scope of accreditation.**
- 296 **G. Has adequate financial, staff and operational resources to perform its**
297 **accreditation functions efficiently and effectively.**
- 298 **H. Makes clear distinctions between actions required of institutions or**
299 **programs necessary for accreditation and actions that are suggestions for**
300 **institution or program improvement.**
- 301 **I. Assures procedural due process in accreditation activities, including (1)**
302 **publication of an appeals policy that informs the institution or program of**
303 **the process to be used and actions that may be taken (i.e., the grounds for**
304 **appeal, the process by which the appeal will be conducted and heard by**
305 **individuals independent of the body that made the decision to deny or**
306 **remove accreditation and any costs associated with an appeal) and (2) an**
307 **effectively administered conflict of interest policy that covers all**
308 **accrediting organization staff, site visitors and members of accreditation-**
309 **recommending and decision-making bodies.** *[new requirement--effectively*
310 *administered conflict of interest policy]*
- 311 **J. Requires participation by higher education professionals, practitioners**
312 **where appropriate and the public in accreditation reviews, decision-**
313 **making, and policy setting, including review, revision and adoption of**
314 **accreditation standards.**
- 315 **K. Fosters reasonable consistency in accreditation reviews of, and**
316 **accreditation actions about, institutions or programs, while allowing for**
317 **varying institution or program missions, purposes and operations.**
- 318 **L. For purposes of promoting effective practice in the future, engages in**
319 **regular critical self-evaluation of its performance, standards, policies and**
320 **impact by the:**

321 1. Review of aggregate information regarding the extent to which the
322 accredited institutions or programs are achieving their expectations for
323 student learning; and *[new requirement]*

324 2. Collection and review of evidence that the accrediting organization's own
325 performance promotes academic quality and student success and serves
326 both higher education and the public. *[new requirement]*

327 COMMITTEE ON RECOGNITION

Committee On Recognition

- Gives Committee on Recognition responsibility for final action on change of scope (*Paragraph 13*).
- Expands CHEA Board involvement in recognition reviews through informal consultation with the Committee prior to a formal recommendation from the Committee (*Paragraph 28*).

328
329 **13. COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE BOARD OF**
330 **DIRECTORS.** The Committee reviews applications for recognition of accrediting
331 organizations and makes recommendations to the Board. With due regard for the
332 Committee's advice and applying a presumption of regularity, the Board reviews the
333 Committee's recommendations and makes the final determinations as to the recognition
334 of the accrediting organizations. The Committee reviews and makes the final
335 determination with respect to editorial modifications to the CHEA-recognized scope of
336 accreditation, interim reports and requests by the Committee for information. The
337 Committee reviews and makes the final determination with respect to changes to CHEA-
338 recognized scope of accreditation, in accord with the provisions of Paragraph 8. *[new*
339 *responsibility for Committee--final scope approval]*

340
341 **14. MEMBERSHIP.** The Committee is appointed by the Board upon recommendation by
342 the President of CHEA in consultation with CHEA-recognized accrediting organizations and
343 others. The Committee will consist of nine (9) members, each serving a three (3)-year
344 term, and each of whom may be reappointed to one or more three (3)-year terms. The
345 Committee includes public members, members from regional, national career- or faith-
346 related and programmatic accrediting organizations and members from colleges and
347 universities. CHEA will seek participation that reflects the diversity of the accrediting
348 community and higher education institutions. Current Board members are ineligible for
349 service on the Committee.

350
351 **15. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS.** The Committee, in consultation with the President of
352 CHEA, will establish the time, place and procedures for its meetings. The Committee will
353 consider all materials it deems pertinent.

RECOGNITION REVIEW

Recognition Review

- Eliminates eligibility as a separate process: certain eligibility requirements in 2010 policy are retained in new Standard 3.
- Changes recognition period to seven (7) years, including focused mid-point review (*Paragraph 16*).
- Adds “functions” and “operations” when reporting on major changes during the interim review (*Paragraph 17*).
- A review out of sequence may occur with evidence of ongoing deficient performance of accredited institutions and programs (*Paragraph 18A*).
- Gives Committee on Recognition authority to conduct full recognition review or take other action at any time when there is evidence of ongoing deficient performance (*Paragraph 18*).

355 **16. FREQUENCY OF RECOGNITION REVIEW.** A CHEA-recognized accrediting
 356 organization will undergo a recognition review every seven (7) years, or such other
 357 period as the Board approves. *[new requirement--7-year recognition review]*

358 **17. INTERIM REVIEWS.** A recognized accrediting organization submits an interim
 359 report, normally at the mid-point of the term of recognition. The major purpose of the
 360 interim report is to inform the Committee of organizational changes, e.g., changes in
 361 governance, financial condition, functions, operations, relationship with parent or
 362 sponsoring organization, standards, policies or procedures. The Committee will review
 363 such changes to determine that the accrediting organization continues to meet the
 364 recognition standards. In keeping with the expectations regarding academic quality,
 365 student success, public accountability and transparency, the interim report is to include
 366 information to demonstrate that the accrediting organization meets CHEA requirements
 367 in this regard (per Standard Two, A1 and B1). *[new requirement--fewer interim reviews and*
 368 *additional report information]*

369 In the event that the accrediting organization experiences major change(s) to its
 370 governance, financial condition, functions, operations, relationship with parent or
 371 sponsoring organization, standards, policies or procedures outside the scheduled
 372 interim review, the accrediting organization is expected to provide timely information to
 373 CHEA on the change(s). *[new requirement--major changes clarified]*

374 **18. REVIEW OUT OF SEQUENCE.** At its discretion, CHEA may elect to review a
 375 recognized accrediting organization at any time when:

- 376 **A.** There is evidence of ongoing deficient performance of accredited
 377 institutions and programs; *[new requirement]*
- 378 **B.** There are documented concerns received by CHEA staff that, in the
 379 Committee’s judgment, indicate that the accrediting organization may not
 380 be meeting one or more recognition standards; or

- C. There are changes in the organizational structure or operations of the accrediting organization which may alter the conditions upon which recognition was granted.

When CHEA staff receives such information, it will disclose the concerns to the Committee and the accrediting organization and invite a response from the accrediting organization. The Committee will examine the information received and the accrediting organization's response, if any. The Committee may decide to conduct a full recognition review; determine that the matter does not warrant a review out of sequence; request additional information; or take other action it deems appropriate, such as a review limited in scope to the area in which there is evidence of ongoing deficient performance. *[new responsibility for Committee--full recognition review out of sequence]*

19. WITHDRAWAL OF APPLICATION. An accrediting organization may withdraw an application at any time in the process prior to consideration by the Board at a formal meeting. If an application is withdrawn before Committee action (i.e., recommendation from the Committee to the Board), the Committee and the Board will be informed in executive session. If an application is withdrawn after Committee action, the withdrawal and the Committee's action will be reported at the next public Board meeting. If an accrediting organization withdraws an application for recognition, it cannot reapply until at least one full year from the formal date of withdrawal of the application.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Application Process

- Calls for staff consultation prior to seeking CHEA recognition (*Paragraph 20*).
- Expands Observation Visit (*Paragraph 23*):
 - Allows for experts as needed, including specific questions related to performance.
 - Includes opportunity to sample or survey accredited institutions or programs.
- Calls for consultation with CHEA Board of Directors, including informal feedback, prior to formal recommendation by Committee on Recognition (*Paragraph 28*).
- Gives Committee on Recognition authority to recommend withdrawal of recognition or other action (*Paragraph 29E and Paragraph 29F*).
- Accreditor response to Committee recommendation is limited to the record before the Committee at the time of its review (*Paragraph 31A*).
- Board may request additional information apart from Committee's review (*Paragraph 33*).
- Modifies conditions associated with deferral of CHEA recognition (*Paragraph 35*):
 - Single opportunity for deferral.
 - One-year response timeframe.

20. INQUIRIES ABOUT RECOGNITION: INITIAL STAFF CONSULTATION. Before pursuing a recognition review, an accrediting organization shall consult CHEA staff about the recognition policy, process and CHEA expectations. CHEA staff will initially advise an accrediting organization about applicable recognition requirements set forth in this *Recognition Policy and Procedures*. Accrediting organizations may include non-governmental, U.S.-based membership organizations and such other organizations as the Board from time to time may determine to be considered for recognition. *[current practice made explicit in policy]*

410 **21. LETTER OF INTENT TO CHEA.** To initiate the formal process either for an initial
411 recognition review or for a continuing review, the chief executive officer of the
412 accrediting organization submits a letter of intent that includes documentation that the
413 decision-making body of the accrediting organization authorizes the application. Upon
414 receipt of the letter of intent, CHEA will inform the Committee and the public that the
415 accrediting organization is seeking initial or continuing recognition.

416 **22. SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION FOR RECOGNITION.** Applications are
417 submitted in accordance with the *CHEA Guidelines for Preparation of a Recognition*
418 *Application*. The fee for recognition review is sent at the time of the submission of the
419 application. A self-evaluation that provides evidence that the accrediting organization
420 meets all the recognition standards is required. CHEA will consider a range of processes
421 for conducting the self-evaluation and for providing expected evidence. *[current practice*
422 *made explicit in policy]*

423 **23. OBSERVATION VISITS.** During a recognition review, CHEA conducts an
424 observation visit to a decision-making meeting of the accrediting organization. The
425 purposes of the visit are (1) to review the accrediting organization's application of its
426 standards and policies, including those related to institution and program performance,
427 and decision-making activities related to the recognition standards, and (2) to report
428 relevant information to the Committee. The observation visit includes attention to
429 deliberations concerning policies, procedures and standards and to decisions on
430 accreditation status. The visit may include experts in areas where additional focus is
431 needed, as determined by CHEA, with such experts' findings included as part of the
432 observation visit report. CHEA may elect to survey a sample of the institutions or
433 programs that, at the time of an observation visit, are under review and may request to
434 observe an on-site evaluation. *[new requirement--allows for use of experts and surveys]*

435 Observers and experts are chosen by CHEA in consultation with the accrediting
436 organization. The accrediting organization has the opportunity to review the visit report
437 and provide comments. The full report of any visit, with comments from the accrediting
438 organization, is distributed to the Committee. CHEA deems reports of observation visits
439 confidential to CHEA and the accrediting organization unless otherwise, in CHEA's
440 judgment, required by law.

441 **24. COSTS.** Accrediting organizations bear all fees and costs for the recognition
442 review and observation visit expenses.

443 **25. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF PENDING RECOGNITION REVIEW AND CALL FOR**
444 **THIRD-PARTY COMMENT.** CHEA makes public through its Website that the accrediting
445 organization has undertaken a recognition review. The CHEA public notice also calls for
446 third-party comments and identifies the period during which third-party comment will be
447 received. The accrediting organization is required to (A) publicize (using the CHEA
448 public notice statement) that the organization has asked CHEA to conduct a recognition
449 review and the time period during which CHEA will receive third-party comments about
450 the organization's recognition review and (B) inform CHEA staff of compliance with this
451 requirement.

452 **26. THIRD-PARTY WRITTEN OR ORAL COMMENT.** The substance of third-party
453 comment is limited to whether the accrediting organization meets the recognition
454 standards. All third parties requesting the opportunity to make written comment are to
455 provide the text of the comment, including the name and affiliation of the person(s)
456 making the comment, by the announced deadline. After review by CHEA staff for
457 confirmation that the comment addresses the recognition standards, written comment
458 will be provided to the Committee and the accrediting organization. Accrediting
459 organizations will have the opportunity to review and respond, which response will be
460 provided to the Committee.

461 Oral comment is heard by the Committee in public session. CHEA staff will notify
462 all concerned parties of the location, date and time of the accrediting organization's
463 public presentation to the Committee where third-party oral comment may also be given.
464 Third parties who wish to give oral comment shall provide an outline of the proposed
465 comment, including the name and affiliation of the person(s) making the comment, by the
466 announced deadline. After review by CHEA staff for confirmation that the comment
467 addresses the recognition standards, CHEA staff will forward the outline to the
468 Committee and the accrediting organization. At the public meeting, the accrediting
469 organization will have the opportunity to respond.

470 **27. ACCREDITING ORGANIZATION PUBLIC PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE.**
471 The Committee will hold a public meeting at which the accrediting organization may
472 make an oral presentation concerning the qualifications of the accrediting organization
473 for recognition and how the accrediting organization meets the recognition standards.
474 Ordinarily, the accrediting organization is expected to be represented by the executive
475 officer of the accrediting unit and the chair of the decision-making body. Committee
476 members may ask questions of the accrediting organization and third parties, if any.
477 Persons questioned will be given an opportunity to respond. If, in the judgment of the
478 Committee, participation by observation visitors or experts would be useful, the
479 Committee may ask such persons to attend and respond to questions related to the visit
480 report. The accrediting organization will be given opportunity to respond to any
481 observation visitor or expert comment. The Committee will make a transcript of the
482 public meeting and will provide it to the accrediting organization upon request.

483 Consideration of change in the CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation and
484 interim reports and other responses to requests for additional information are reviewed
485 in executive session and do not require a public presentation by the accrediting
486 organization. *[current practice made explicit in policy]*

487 **28. COMMITTEE PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS, COMMITTEE AND BOARD CONSULATION.**
488 For applications for recognition, following the public presentation, the Committee meets
489 in executive session to consider the qualifications of the accrediting organization for
490 recognition. The Board then meets in executive session with the Chair of the Committee
491 to consider the Committee's preliminary analysis. *[new requirement--board involvement]*
492

493 **29. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING APPLICATIONS FOR**
494 **RECOGNITION.** Following the Board meeting, the Committee meets, reviews the Board's
495 informal feedback and makes a recommendation for Board action, which may include:

- 496 A. Recognition of the accrediting organization.
- 497 B. Recognition of the accrediting organization with a requirement of one or
498 more written reports to the Committee that address issues identified in
499 relation to the recognition standards.
- 500 C. Deferral of action on recognition pending receipt and review of, and action
501 by CHEA on, additional information from the accrediting organization. The
502 information required will be clearly specified by the Committee and related
503 to one or more of the recognition standards. The deferral will be
504 accompanied by deadlines for receipt of information and for a response by
505 the Committee.
- 506 D. Denial of recognition, including reason(s) for the denial.
- 507 E. Withdrawal of recognition as a consequence of situations that have been
508 addressed per Paragraph 18; or *[new responsibility for Committee--*
509 *recommending withdrawal]*
- 510 F. Such other action as the Committee deems appropriate. *[new responsibility*
511 *for Committee--recommending other actions]*

512 **30. WRITTEN NOTICE BY THE COMMITTEE.** Within thirty (30) calendar days after the
513 Committee meeting, the Committee will notify the accrediting organization of the
514 Committee's recommendation. If the Committee finds that an accrediting organization
515 does not meet one or more of the recognition standards, the notice will identify the
516 recognition standard(s) that the accrediting organization does not meet and the
517 reason(s) for that determination. Any suggestions for improvement or other commentary
518 by the Committee will be distinguished from requirements for recognition under the
519 recognition standards.

520 **31. ACCREDITING ORGANIZATION RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE**
521 **RECOMMENDATION.** An accrediting organization wishing to respond to the Committee's
522 recommendation must do so within thirty (30) calendar days after the date of receipt of
523 the formal notification of the Committee's recommendation. The accrediting
524 organization's written response, if any, will be provided to the Board and to the
525 Committee. The scope of the response is limited to:

- 526 A. Information in the record before the Committee at the time of review;
527 *[current practice made explicit in policy]*
- 528 B. Any asserted procedural errors in the recognition process; and
- 529 C. Any asserted factual errors.

530 The accrediting organization has a right to appear before the Board only in the
531 case of a recommendation to deny recognition.

532 **32. REVIEW BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS.** The Board will act on a recommendation of
533 the Committee by:

- 534 A. Accepting the recommendation;
- 535 B. Rejecting the recommendation;
- 536 C. Returning the matter to the Committee for further consideration; or
- 537 D. Taking such other action as the Board deems appropriate.

538 Except for actions to deny recognition, the Board may take any of the above
539 actions without further submission or appearance by the accrediting organization.

540 **33. PRESUMPTION OF REGULARITY.** In addressing the recognition of an accrediting
541 organization, the Board will consider the preliminary analysis and recommendation of
542 the Committee, the response, if any, of the accrediting organization and the record
543 before the Committee. The Board will presume that the findings of the Committee are
544 accurate unless the accrediting organization demonstrates to the Board's satisfaction
545 that a finding material to the Committee's recommendation is clearly erroneous based on
546 the record before the Committee at the time of the Committee review.

547 In making a decision, the Board also may consider and include in its findings
548 additional information that may be available apart from the Committee's review, including
549 the work of outside experts the Board may retain. *[new practice for Board--calls for*
550 *additional information]*

551 **34. WRITTEN NOTICE BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.** The Board will notify an
552 accrediting organization of its action on the recommendations of the Committee as to
553 recognition within thirty (30) calendar days after taking such action. If the Board
554 recognizes an accrediting organization, the notice will specify the accrediting
555 organization's CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation, the period of recognition and
556 any requirement of one or more written reports. If the action is to defer, deny or
557 withdraw recognition, the notice will reference a statement of the reason(s) for that
558 action. The statement of reasons will identify the recognition standard(s) that the
559 accrediting organization does not meet.

560 **35. DEFERRAL OF ACTION ON RECOGNITION.** There can be only one deferral of
561 action in the course of a recognition review. The Committee will review the information
562 provided by the accrediting organization and make a recommendation to the Board. *[new*
563 *requirement--single opportunity for deferral]*

564 An accrediting organization that has been deferred for action on an application for
565 recognition shall respond to the Board's notice within one year after the date of the
566 Board action. In exceptional circumstances, the accrediting organization may request an
567 extension of the time allowed for responding to the deferral of action on recognition. The
568 Committee will consider the request and supporting rationale and determine whether an
569 extension is warranted. Unless an extension has been granted, the Board will deem the

accrediting organization to have withdrawn its application if the accrediting organization does not respond to the deferral of action within one year of the Board decision. CHEA will notify the accrediting organization that its application is withdrawn. *[new requirement-one-year timeframe to respond]*

36. ACTIONS TO DENY RECOGNITION. The Board will not act on a recommendation to deny recognition before providing the accrediting organization with notice and an opportunity to appear before the Board. At the request of the accrediting organization, the accrediting organization will be afforded the opportunity to appear in person before the Board. The appearance of an accrediting organization will include an opportunity to present its written response to the recommendation of the Committee as provided in Paragraph 31. The response is limited to information available to the Committee at the time of Committee review. The accrediting organization may have legal counsel present to advise it during its appearance before the Board, but counsel may not speak unless requested to do so by the Board.

37. WITHDRAWAL OF RECOGNITION. The Board may withdraw recognition of an accrediting organization for cause the Board deems sufficient, including a determination that the accrediting organization no longer meets one or more of the recognition standards. CHEA will withdraw recognition in accordance with procedures deemed sufficient by CHEA to afford the accrediting organization appropriate notice and opportunity to respond.

38. RECONSIDERATION BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. Within thirty (30) calendar days following the receipt of the notification of the action taken by the Board, the accrediting organization may request, in writing, reconsideration by the Board. The Board will determine in its discretion whether reconsideration is warranted. The Board ordinarily will not reconsider an action unless, in its judgment, the accrediting organization has submitted in writing substantial reason to believe that there was plain and material error in the review, abuse of process, or both. In the event the Board decides to reconsider an action, the accrediting organization will be afforded the opportunity to appear in person before the Board and may have legal counsel present to advise it during its appearance before the Board, but counsel may not speak unless requested to do so by the Board.

39. PUBLIC NOTICE. All actions of the Board to recognize, defer, deny or withdraw recognition of an accrediting organization, including initial and continued recognition of accrediting organizations, will be public information after such actions become final. CHEA will publish the action of the Board, including a summary of the reason(s) for decisions to recognize, deny or withdraw recognition.

40. APPLICATION AFTER DENIAL OR WITHDRAWAL OF RECOGNITION. An accrediting organization that has sought recognition and has been unsuccessful may not reapply until at least one full year from the date of denial or withdrawal of recognition.

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

Additional Provisions

- No change in requirements.

610 **41. *CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.*** CHEA upholds the principle that members of the
 611 Committee and the Board and consultants, such as readers, observation site visitors and
 612 experts (collectively, for purposes of this Paragraph, “CHEA representatives”), will be
 613 impartial and objective in considering the recognition of accrediting organizations.

- 614 **A.** When there is an actual or apparent conflict of interest, CHEA expects its
 615 representatives to recuse themselves from consideration of an accrediting
 616 organization as a matter of personal and professional integrity. The CHEA
 617 representative will have primary responsibility for compliance with this
 618 policy.
- 619 **B.** CHEA representatives will recuse themselves from consideration of an
 620 accrediting organization where the CHEA representative receives monetary
 621 compensation from the accrediting organization as an employee or
 622 consultant or otherwise or holds a position of authority or governance role
 623 with the accrediting organization, such as commission member, director or
 624 officer, whether paid or unpaid.
- 625 **C.** In deciding whether to recuse themselves from consideration of an
 626 accrediting organization, CHEA representatives will take into account
 627 whether they (i) had in the recent past, or expect to have, a financial
 628 relationship or governance role with the accrediting organization applying
 629 for recognition; (ii) are participating in an accreditation review by the
 630 accrediting organization applying for recognition; (iii) have a financial
 631 relationship or governance role with an accrediting organization that is a
 632 direct competitor of an accrediting organization applying for recognition;
 633 (iv) have or have expressed a predisposition concerning an accrediting
 634 organization applying for recognition that would impair objectivity in the
 635 recognition process; (v) have a close relative with a pertinent relationship,
 636 role or predisposition concerning an accrediting organization applying for
 637 recognition; and (vi) other considerations they deem pertinent.
- 638 **D.** In the event a CHEA representative, with respect to an apparent or actual
 639 conflict of interest, does not voluntarily recuse himself or herself, the
 640 Board may take such action as the Board considers appropriate.

641 **42. *PERSONAL GAIN.*** In the course of their CHEA service, CHEA representatives will
 642 observe high standards of personal integrity. For example, CHEA representatives will
 643 not solicit or accept, for themselves or any other person, gifts, gratuities, entertainment,
 644 loans or other consideration from persons who are associated with an accrediting
 645 organization applying for recognition, an institution or program accredited by the
 646 accrediting organization, a direct competitor of the accrediting organization or any other
 647 third party that the CHEA representative knows intends to comment on the accrediting

organization in the recognition review; provided that this Paragraph does not bar acceptance of items of insubstantial value, consistent with personal integrity, in the ordinary course of service as a CHEA representative.

43. COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFIDENTIALITY. CHEA representatives will maintain the confidentiality of information pertaining to the recognition process. During the recognition process, a CHEA representative will not discuss any confidential aspect of an application for recognition with the accrediting organization applying for recognition, an institution or program accredited by the accrediting organization, a direct competitor of the accrediting organization or any other third party that intends to comment on the accrediting organization, except as required in order to discharge the responsibilities of the CHEA representative in the recognition review. CHEA representatives will refer inquiries concerning the recognition process to CHEA staff. CHEA will communicate the results of the recognition review to the accrediting organization and the public as provided in Paragraphs 34 and 39.

AMENDMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Amendment and Implementation

- States Board's ability to determine implementation date of CHEA policy (*Paragraph 44*).

44. AMENDMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION. CHEA reserves the right to amend this *Recognition Policy and Procedures*, in whole or part, from time to time when, in its judgment, the interests of sound and reliable accreditation, recognition of accreditors or CHEA administration are served by doing so. Revisions of the *CHEA Recognition Policy and Procedures* are effective at such date as the Board sets and implemented based on a timeframe established by CHEA.

Appendix A, Accreditation Defined

- Eliminated; essential information included in Background section of policy.

Appendix B, Institutional Eligibility and Recognition Policy

- Eliminated; essential information included in CHEA Standard Three.

Appendix C, Steps in Recognition Review

- Eliminated; essential information to be outlined in *CHEA Guidelines for Preparation of the Recognition Application*.

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Appendix A

Glossary

Appendix A, Glossary (formerly Appendix D)

- Definitions added, removed, or modified in keeping with new draft policy.

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This Glossary defines key terms in the CHEA *Recognition Policy and Procedures*. The definitions apply only to the *Recognition Policy and Procedures* and are not intended for use with any other statement or policy.

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Academic Quality: The results associated with teaching, learning, research, and service, including the integrated way in which learning, practice and discovery are fostered by institutions and programs. Intellectual rigor, honesty and integrity, as well as the thoughtful linking of mission and goals to pathways toward achieving those goals, are critical characteristics of academic quality. Academic quality includes the nature of the expectations institutions or programs have of their students, and the attention, expertise, and effort those institutions and programs give to engendering student success.

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Accountability: The responsibility of an accrediting organization to (1) have standards, policies, and procedures that require accredited institutions and programs to provide, at a minimum, readily accessible, accurate, and consistent aggregate information to the public about institutional or program performance, student achievement, and the reasons for accreditation decisions; and (2) make its accreditation standards, policies, processes and decision-making outcomes readily accessible to the public.

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Accreditation Action: The decision made by the accrediting organization, as the result of an institution or program review, to grant, reaffirm, deny, withdraw, or defer accreditation, or to impose notice, warning, show cause, or probation status.

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Accreditation Status: The accreditation granted to an institution or program by the accrediting organization as a result of a review, including the period of time accreditation is expected to be in effect. Such status may include, but is not limited to, candidacy, pre-accreditation, accreditation, probationary accreditation, provisional accreditation, or other classification defined in the accrediting organization's policy.

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Conflict of Interest: A set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgment or actions may be inappropriately influenced. A conflict of interest includes all significant conflicts of interest, financial and other, and is deemed to exist if reasonable observers, having knowledge of all the relevant circumstances, would conclude that the individual has an actual or apparent conflict of interest in the matter.

708 **Institutions and Programs:** Colleges, universities, and if and to the extent permitted by
709 CHEA, other degree-granting providers (i.e., organizations or other entities, other than
710 colleges or universities, which offer degrees at the associate or higher level upon
711 completion of educational activities).

712 **Readily Accessible:** The ease with which information provided on institution or program
713 or accrediting organization Websites can be identified, located and obtained by the
714 public. Ease of access includes obvious and accurate labeling of links to pertinent
715 information, no required self-identification or membership, and as few steps as possible
716 needed to access the information.

717 **Recognition or Recognized:** The status granted by the Board after an accrediting
718 organization successfully completes the CHEA review process.

719 **Recognition Standards:** The basis on which CHEA considers an application for
720 recognition and renders its decision.

721 **Sponsoring Organization:** An organization with a direct or indirect affiliation or
722 agreement, including any management or financial or other oversight capacity, with the
723 accrediting organization. Such organizations may not limit, influence, or control
724 development of accreditation standards, policies or procedures, conduct of accreditation
725 reviews, functions, or operations or determination of accreditation status.

726 **Transparency:** Public accessibility to information about the accreditation process, the
727 results of accreditation reviews, and student achievement.

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