



GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF THE APPLICATION NARRATIVE FOR CHEA RECOGNITION

2019 STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

These guidelines address selected standards and requirements in the policy.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The following information is provided as a guide to completing the Application Narrative for recognition by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Full information about the *recognition standards and requirements and the application process is available in the 2019 CHEA Recognition of Accrediting Organizations Policy and Procedures* on the CHEA Website (www.chea.org). The quality, accuracy and completeness of the Application Narrative for CHEA Recognition are critical for success in the recognition process. Please consult CHEA staff if there are questions about preparing the Narrative as noted on page 5 of these *Guidelines*.

All accrediting organizations seeking CHEA recognition are to complete and submit the Narrative. The Narrative is to include evidence that the accrediting organization meets all standards and requirements of the policy.

The application for recognition consists of three steps:

- Initial consultation with CHEA staff to determine whether to move forward with a recognition review.
- Completion of the Application Form for Recognition, accompanied by the non-refundable application fee.
- Completion of the Application Narrative for CHEA Recognition that provides evidence that the accrediting organization meets all CHEA requirements and standards.

If an accrediting organization is currently recognized by CHEA and is seeking subsequent recognition, the organization is expected to complete the recognition review by the end of the final year of the current period of recognition. CHEA may extend this time period if CHEA determines that extenuating circumstances are present.

The Application Form and Narrative, when complete, will be reviewed by the CHEA Committee on Recognition, the CHEA body charged with scrutiny of accrediting organizations for recognition and making recommendations to the CHEA Board of Directors. The CHEA Board makes the final decision with regard to whether an accrediting organization is to be recognized and any conditions associated with this decision.

GUIDANCE TO ADDRESS SPECIFIC STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

Recognition Review – Application Narrative

The standards and requirements for CHEA recognition are found in the 2019 *CHEA Recognition of Accrediting Organizations Policy and Procedures*. Address each CHEA standard and requirement with a succinct narrative that focuses on how the standard or requirement is met and provide applicable evidence. Please do not provide information pertinent to a particular CHEA standard and requirement in a place other than the narrative response to the standard. A narrative of no more than twenty (20) pages is ordinarily sufficient to complete the recognition self-evaluation submission.

Programmatic accreditors are to provide evidence at the program level; institutional accreditors are to provide evidence at the institutional level. If programs and entire institution are both accredited, the recognition processes are separate. Provide evidence at the appropriate level of accreditation for either the program or the institution.

Elaboration or examples to present evidence of meeting CHEA recognition standards and requirements are provided below. Not all standards or requirements are included in this listing.

Paragraph 6 – Evidence Related to “Recognition Purposes”

Quantitative or Qualitative Information with External Verification. Provide evidence that the accreditor bases accreditation decisions or judgments principally on the performance of the accredited institutions or programs regarding student learning or achievement. The decisions or judgments may be based on quantitative information such as measurable or numerical data or qualitative information such as characteristics or descriptors that cannot be quantified. “External verification” refers to moving beyond self-reported information to confirmation by a neutral or independent third party.

Effective Performance. As described in the policy, “effective performance regarding student learning” may include evidence of completion, graduation, retention, academic transfer, graduate school entry, employment or other indicators acceptable to CHEA. Provide examples of what the accrediting organization is doing to judge effective performance and how this information is used to determine accredited status.

Calls for All Standards to be Met to Obtain and Maintain Accredited Status. Provide evidence that the accreditor calls for all accreditation standards to be met in order to obtain and maintain accredited status, including any allowances in this regard. (See CHEA Standard 12E below.)

Paragraph 8(D) – Change of Scope

Use of Pilot Reviews in Seeking Change of Scope. Provide evidence that at least one pilot review is conducted to show that the accrediting organization has the capacity and competence to carry out and sustain the requested scope change. “Pilot Review” refers to an accreditation review that encompasses the change in scope that the accrediting organization is seeking. For example, a change to include masters-level offerings in a scope would be a review of a masters level program at a college or university. It may include an on-site evaluation or other alternative review process or consideration as determined by the accreditor. CHEA also calls for the accrediting organization to review its standards to determine whether these accommodate the change of scope or whether to make any needed standard revisions in this regard.

Editorial Changes in CHEA-recognized Scope of Accreditation. “Editorial changes” refers to alterations of the CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation that may occur at any time during the CHEA recognition period. Editorial changes may include, but are not limited to, updates to reflect changes in current field or nomenclature or terminology, or

changes in current practice, if described in the scope statement. Editorial changes *do not* alter the substantive content of the scope statement that includes (1) change in the type(s) of accredited institutions or programs; (2) addition or removal of a degree level; (3) change of geographical boundaries; and (4) addition or removal of a degree area of professional field.

Paragraph 10 – Evidence Related to Promoting Academic Quality and Advancing Student Achievement

Evidence of Implementation and Enforcement of Standards, Policies or Procedures. The accreditor is to provide evidence that its accreditation standards, policies or procedures are both implemented and enforced. Such evidence may include information about how on-site evaluation practice or procedures, accreditation decision actions or other practices address implementation and enforcement. This may also include information about additional requirements such as special reviews, reporting conditions, monitoring procedures or other obligations that institutions or programs are to address.

10(B) Evidence of Aggregate Information and Indicators of Student Success and Availability to the Public Required by the Accrediting Organization. Provide evidence that an accrediting organization requires its accredited institutions or programs to provide and make public, in aggregate form, evidence of student success. Student success may include completion, graduation, retention, academic transfer, graduate school entry, employment or other indicators acceptable to CHEA. “Aggregate information” refers to compilations of data or material about what happens to students.

10(F) Evidence of Accrediting Organization’s Commitment to Appropriate Innovation. Provide evidence that the accrediting organization encourages and assists institutions and programs in ongoing improvement of academic quality and performance, including a commitment to flexibility and appropriate innovation in promoting academic quality. “Innovation” refers to something new or a major change to an existing practice, institution or program. Examples may include, but are not limited to, establishing alternative delivery methods or new credentialing.

Paragraph 11 – Evidence Related to Demonstrating Accountability for Performance and Transparency

11(A)(3) Evidence that an Accrediting Organization Addresses Substantially Underperforming Institutions or Programs. Provide evidence that the accreditation standards, policies or procedures are used to take timely action to prevent substantially underperforming institutions or programs from achieving or maintaining accredited status. “Substantially underperforming” refers to institutions or programs that fail to demonstrate effectiveness of performance as described in Paragraph 6. Evidence may include the application of indicators used to determine performance weakness, procedures for intervention and options for action that the accrediting organization takes to not prolong or extend accredited status when an accredited institution or program fails to meet accreditation requirements on an ongoing basis.

11(B)(1) Evidence that an Accrediting Organization Requires and that Institutions and Programs Provide Aggregate Public Information on Performance and Student Achievement, with External Verification, as Appropriate. Provide evidence that accredited institutions and program have and provide the public with information on performance and student achievement such as completion, graduation, retention, academic transfer, graduate school entry, employment or other indicators acceptable to CHEA.

Website links or other information submitted to document the implementation of this standard are to lead directly to information regarding institutional or program outcomes. Materials that are unrelated to student performance or malfunctioning links to Websites will be returned to the accrediting organization for resubmission.

CHEA will only accept as evidence information that it considers both relevant and reflective of student achievement. The following *do not* provide the needed information or meet CHEA's expectations regarding evidence of student achievement: (1) descriptors of the expectations of student learning without evidence of meeting specific student learning outcomes or other defined thresholds, (2) student satisfaction survey results or (3) graduation data absent a frame of reference by which to determine effectiveness (e.g., graduation data unaccompanied by information on the total student population or time-frame). While these may provide helpful information, they do not meet CHEA student achievement requirements.

For programmatic accreditation, the Website links lead directly to program-specific performance information, including student achievement, on the accredited program's Website or landing page. A link to general information or to an institutional Website is not acceptable.

11(B)(3) Evidence of Ongoing Attention to Appropriate Innovation – Institutions and Programs. Provide evidence that accredited institutions and programs address appropriate innovation. "Innovation" refers to something new or a major change to an existing practice, program, institution or program. Examples may include, but are not limited to, establishing alternative delivery methods or new credentialing.

Paragraph 12 – Evidence Related to Sustaining an Effective Accreditation Structure and Organization.

12(A) Evidence of Accrediting Organization's Legal Authority to Operate. Provide evidence that the accrediting organization has legal authority to operate. "Legal authority" refers to either a free-standing accrediting organization, e.g., operating with a 501C3 or 501C6 status, or parent entity or association with such status.

12(E) Evidence that an Accrediting Organization Requires that All Standards Are to be Met to Obtain and Maintain Accredited Status. Provide evidence that the accrediting organization requires all standards are to be met, allowing for provisional or conditional accredited status, as long as this includes assurance that, over time, all accreditation standards are to be fulfilled and maintained.

12(F) Evidence of Operational Separation of Accrediting Unit and Any Parent Organization. Provide evidence that the accrediting organization or unit is independent from any parent entity, or sponsoring entity for the conduct of accreditation activities and determination of accreditation status. "Operational Separation" refers to independence in decision-making with respect to accreditation standards, policies and procedures, in the conduct of all accreditation reviews, functions, operations and all accreditation actions. Provide evidence that both the parent organization and the accreditation unit have formally agreed to and respect this independence. This may be accomplished through, e.g., a Memorandum of Understanding or Bylaws or Procedures that address the operation of both the parent and accrediting unit.

12(H) Evidence of Adequate Financial and Other Resources. Provide the accrediting organization or unit operating budget as of the year of application for CHEA recognition and the immediately prior fiscal year, including revenues and expenditures of the accrediting organization. Describe how the budget is sufficient to support the accreditation functions, including a brief narrative describing any variances between the two most recent financial year-ends.

If affiliated with a parent entity, the budget information is to include the revenues and expenditures of the accrediting unit and not the budget of any parent or other sponsoring organization. However, detailed information about direct funding or in-kind support provided by a parent or sponsoring organization is required. A template for submitting budget information is provided at the end of these *Guidelines*.

12(K) Evidence of Participation by Appropriate Individuals in Accreditation Reviews, Decisions and Policy Setting. Provide evidence that the accrediting organization requires participation by higher education professionals, practitioners where appropriate and the public in

accreditation reviews, decisions and policy setting. “Higher Education Professionals” refers to individuals holding positions in colleges or universities. “Practitioners” refer to individuals working in fields related to the work of an accrediting organization such as nursing, opticianry, pharmacy, psychology, social work, veterinary science or other areas. The “public” refers to students, parents, business or those not engaged in either higher education or the field that the accrediting organization addresses.

Paragraph 12(M) – Evidence that the Accrediting Organization Engages in Self-Evaluation that Addresses the Impact of Its Standards as this Relates to:

12(M (1) Aggregate Information – Student Learning. Provide evidence of how the accrediting organization reviews aggregate information about its accredited institutions or programs to determine whether its expectations for student learning are being met. “Aggregate information” refers to compilations of data or material about what happens to students, including the items in Paragraph 10B.

12(M (2) Academic Quality – Student Success. Provide evidence that the accrediting organization collects and reviews evidence of its own performance to promote academic quality and student success in order to serve both higher education and the public.

Paragraph 23 – Observation Visits

Use of Experts. CHEA may call for experts where additional focus may be required during the observation visit review process. “Experts” may include individuals with in-depth and long-term experience in specific fields as needed such as finance, student learning outcomes, distance education or other areas as needed.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

When preparing the narrative for responses that refer to information from organization documents, incorporate the specific passages or pages within the narrative. Please provide the source of the incorporated material and include a specific reference for where the passage is found in the supporting documents (e.g., document title and page number, Website address). Assertions that a standard is met, followed only by a citation or reference to a policy statement or document, are not sufficient nor accepted.

The goal is to submit the narrative as a self-contained document and limit the inclusion of supporting materials to those essential to understanding the narrative. The narrative is to be no more than 20 pages in length.

The Application Narrative is to be submitted electronically and in keeping with the CHEA *Guidelines for an Electronic Submission*. The preferred formats are Word or PDF documents sent as email attachments; hard copies are no longer necessary.

Email all materials to: Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Attention: Recognition Services
recognition@chea.org

For questions, please contact the CHEA offices at:

One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20036-1135
P: 202-955-6126 • www.chea.org

CHEA Budget Submission Form

	Year of CHEA Submission Fiscal Year	Immediate Prior Fiscal Year
Accreditation Revenue	\$	\$
Accreditation Fees		
Accreditation Visits		
Accreditation Workshops		
Annual Dues or Sustaining Fees		
Publications		
Other (e.g., grants)		
Total Accreditation Revenue	\$	\$
Parent Contribution		
Direct (direct financial payment(s))		
In-Kind (e.g., services, time, staff or facilities provided by parent)		
Total Revenue	\$	\$
Expenditures		
Salaries and Benefits		
Office Operations (supplies, telephone, rent, etc.)		
Accreditation Travel		
Accreditation Meetings		
Accreditation Workshops		
Other		
Total	\$	\$
Expenditures		
Revenue Over Expenditures	\$	\$