CHEA TOWN HALL: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED REVISED RECOGNITION STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

August 23, 2021
CHEA TOWN HALL AGENDA

- Recognition Review Team (RRT)
- Overview of Review and Revision Process
- Summary of Changes
- Organization of Recognition Standards and Procedures
- Recognition Overview
- Committee on Recognition
- Discussion of Standards 1-4
- Discussion of Procedures A-E
- Next Steps and Implementation Schedule
- Submitting Comments
- Questions
COMPOSITION OF RRT

The RRT is composed of 13 individuals, representative of the Committee on Recognition, which includes members of the academy, accrediting organizations; and the CHEA Board of Directors and staff.
OVERVIEW OF REVIEW AND REVISION PROCESS

- Fall 2020- staff review of 2019 Recognition Policy
- January 2021- Appointment of Recognition Review Team (RRT)
- February-June 2021- Multiple RRT Meetings were held via Zoom
- June/July 2021-Draft document was Formatted
- July/August 2021- Legal Counsel Reviewed Draft Recognition Standards and Procedures
- August 13, 2021- Call for Comment Issued
- August 23, 2021- CHEA Town Hall Meeting to Discuss Revisions
- September 10, 2021- Call for Comment Closes
- October 4, 2021- Anticipate CHEA Board of Directors Approving Revised Recognition Standards and Procedures
SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Document Revisions:

The document has been:

- renamed the *CHEA Standards and Procedures for Recognition* (formerly the *Recognition of Accrediting Organizations Policy and Procedures*);
- reorganized by separating the Standards for Recognition from the Procedures for Recognition; and
- updated to include CHEA’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement.
SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Standards for Recognition Revisions:

- The Recognition Standards are now numbered 1-4 (previously numbered 10-12).
- The role and responsibilities of the Committee on Recognition have been revised.
- The standard for publishing the reason(s) for the accreditation decision offers flexibility as to how the information is provided to the public.
- A standard for ethical practice and a commitment to inclusion of diversity, equity, and inclusion has been added.
- The glossary has been revised with new terms added and other terms revised for clarity.
- Duplication and redundancies among the Standards have been eliminated.
SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Procedures for Recognition Revisions:

- Eligibility requirements for CHEA recognition have been clarified.
- Clarifies requirements for CHEA Scope of Recognition.
- Clarification regarding actions for deferral.
- Eliminates required observation visit.
- Eliminates preliminary analysis.
- Application and Recognition processes are streamlined.
- Process for reconsideration of Board action is clarified.
- Defines reporting requirements. Including clarification of the purpose of the Interim Report.
- Includes a process for the submission of Substantive Change notification.
- Defines the CHEA Grievance Policy.
RECOGNITION OVERVIEW

PURPOSES

Recognition signifies to the higher education community and the public that the accrediting organization:

A. serves institutions and programs with the highest regard for integrity of practice and ethical behavior and demonstrates a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion;

B. promotes academic quality and continuous improvement;

C. serves higher education, students, and the public by communicating its accreditation decisions;

D. makes determinations about academic quality in higher education;

E. implements and enforces its standards and policies; and

F. acknowledges and affirms the institution and program mission and purposes.
RECOGNITION OVERVIEW

SCOPE OF RECOGNITION

The accrediting organization’s scope of recognition statement is used to inform the higher education community and the public of its CHEA-recognized accreditation activities. The scope statement must include the following information:

A. types of institutions or programs;

B. degree levels—CHEA recognition is available to accrediting organizations only if a majority of institutions or programs the organization accredits grant degrees at the associate degree level or higher; and

C. geographic boundaries of accreditation activity.

Only information related to degree-granting accreditation activities are included in the recognition scope statement. Non-degree accreditation activities should not be included in the recognition scope statement.
RECOGNITION OVERVIEW

TERM OF RECOGNITION

The maximum term of CHEA recognition is seven years.

A CHEA-recognized accrediting organization undergoes a recognition review every seven years or such other period as designated by the Board.

REQUIREMENTS FOR RECOGNITION

The accrediting organization, regardless of whether it is seeking initial or continued recognition, must meet all CHEA standards and requirements and prescribed timelines throughout the period of recognition. Noncompliance can result in the withdrawal of recognition in accordance with these procedures.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTINUED RECOGNITION

A CHEA-recognized accrediting organization is required to submit an Interim Report at the midpoint of the recognition term.

Additionally, a CHEA-recognized accrediting organization submits a Substantive Change notification as detailed in the Recognition Procedures.
COMMITTEE ON RECOGNITION

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD. The Committee shall recommend one of the following actions:

A. recognition of the accrediting organization: The applicant demonstrates substantial compliance with the CHEA standards;

B. denial of recognition: The applicant for initial recognition does not demonstrate substantial compliance with the CHEA standards; or

C. withdrawal of recognition: The recognized accrediting organization no longer demonstrates that it meets the CHEA standards for recognition.
COMMITTEE ON RECOGNITION

INDEPENDENT ACTIONS. The Committee has the authority to:

A. approve submitted materials (e.g., Request for Change in Scope, Interim Reports, Follow-up Reports);

B. request additional information;

C. defer decision-making specific to recognition;

D. modify the review cycle (e.g., review out of sequence); and

E. take action as approved by the Board.
CHEA RECOGNITION STANDARDS 1-4

STANDARD 1 - Academic Quality and Student Achievement
STANDARD 2 - Accountability and Transparency
STANDARD 3 - Accreditation Structure and Organization
STANDARD 4 - Capacity and Compliance for International Accreditation
CHEA RECOGNITION STANDARD 1

STANDARD 1. ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Advancement of academic quality and continuous improvement are at the core of accreditation. To be recognized, the accrediting organization provides evidence that it implements and enforces standards, policies, and procedures which:

1.A. advance academic quality using quantitative and/or qualitative measures;

1.B. detail in its policies, procedures, and/or standards how it supports the autonomy of an institution or program in determining academic quality as it relates to the mission of the institution or program;

1.C. require resources that only are specific to ensuring adequate student preparation and health and safety; and

1.D. support implementation of innovative practices.
STANDARD 2. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

The accrediting organization implements and upholds standards, policies, or procedures that require:

2.A. the accrediting organization to inform the public of the institution’s or program’s accreditation status and the reason(s) for the accreditation action(s) in a timely and readily accessible manner;

2.B. accredited institutions and programs to provide timely, readily accessible, accurate data to the public regarding student learning outcomes and/or achievement data;

2.C. a timely response by the accrediting organization to public concerns and complaints regarding an institution, a program, or the accrediting organization; and

2.D. the accrediting organization to take timely action to prevent substantially underperforming institutions or programs from maintaining accreditation.
STANDARD 3. ACCREDITATION STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

A recognized accrediting organization demonstrates that it:

3.A. manifests a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and ensures ethical practices in its operations;

3.B. bases its accreditation decisions on how well an institution or program meets its accreditation standards;

3.C. requires that all standards be met within a specified period of time;

3.D. makes clear distinctions between required actions and suggested actions for institution or program improvement;

3.E. has a process for consistency in accreditation reviews and accreditation actions while allowing for varying institutional or programmatic mission, purpose, and operation;

3.F. engages in regular self-evaluation of its performance, standards, procedures, and policies and, where warranted, uses that information for improvement;
CHEA RECOGNITION STANDARD 3 (CONTINUED)

STANDARD 3. ACCREDITATION STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

A recognized accrediting organization demonstrates that it:

3.G. maintains independence from any sponsoring and/or parent organization with respect to all accreditation reviews and all accreditation actions and decisions;

3.H. has sufficient financial, staff, and operational resources to perform and sustain its accreditation functions efficiently and effectively;

3.I. ensures procedural due process in accreditation activities;

3.J. publishes an appeals policy that informs the institution or program of the process to be used and actions that may be taken;

3.K. has a conflict-of-interest policy that covers all accrediting organization staff, site visitors, and members of accreditation-recommending and decision-making bodies; and

3.L. requires opportunities for participation by higher education professionals, the public, and practitioners in accreditation activities, such as accreditation reviews, decision making, policy setting, and review and revision of accreditation standards.
STANDARD 4. CAPACITY AND COMPLIANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

In addition, to demonstrating compliance with Standards 1-3, the accrediting organization that accredits outside of the United States is required to demonstrate that it:

4.A. has the capacity and competence to engage in international accreditation activities;

4.B. notifies the appropriate international authorities of its intent and seeks guidance regarding the accrediting organization’s current and proposed activities; and

4.C. applies standards that are substantially comparable to U.S. institutions and programs and if modifications are necessary, that information will be made public.
RECOGNITION PROCEDURES
RECOGNITION PROCEDURES

SECTION A: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR RECOGNITION

The Committee may defer a decision to forward a recommendation regarding recognition to the Board when it finds an application for recognition to be incomplete or insufficient to make a recommendation.

The following policies govern deferral:

A. An applicant for recognition can only be deferred once. The applicant has a maximum of one year to respond to the deferral.

B. If an initial applicant is unable to respond to the Committee’s request within one year, the accrediting organization may withdraw its application and re-apply in 12 months. If the accrediting organization chooses not to withdraw its application, the Committee may recommend a denial of recognition to the Board.

C. A deferral of recognition for an accrediting organization seeking continued recognition results in the extension of the term of recognition by one year. If an applicant for continued recognition is unable to respond to the Committee’s request within one year, the accrediting organization may voluntarily withdraw from CHEA recognition and re-apply in 12 months. If the accrediting organization chooses not to withdraw its application, the Committee may recommend a denial of recognition to the Board.
SECTION B: THE APPLICATION AND RECOGNITION PROCESS

8. WITHDRAWAL OF RECOGNITION APPLICATION. An application may be withdrawn by the accrediting organization up to 48 hours prior to the meeting where the Board is scheduled to take action. If an accrediting organization withdraws an application for recognition, a new application cannot be submitted for at least one full year from the formal date of withdrawal of the application.

11. PUBLIC NOTICE. Board actions are made public and include a summary of the reason(s) for the decisions. If the Board decision is to deny or withdraw recognition, the decision is not final or made public until the period for reconsideration has lapsed.
12. RECONSIDERATION OF BOARD ACTION. An accrediting organization may request reconsideration of the Board’s action based on any of the following:

A. any asserted procedural errors in the recognition process; and/or
B. any asserted factual errors.

The request for reconsideration must be received, in writing, by CHEA within 21 calendar days of receiving notification of the Board’s action. The Board reserves the right to grant or deny the accrediting organization’s request for reconsideration. If the reconsideration request is granted, the accrediting organization must appear before the Board. A time for appearance before the Board will be scheduled by CHEA. The accrediting organization may have counsel present to advise during its appearance before the Board, but counsel may not speak unless requested to do so by the Board.

Only decisions to deny or withdraw recognition may be reconsidered.
SECTION C: REPORTS FOR CONTINUED RECOGNITION

14. INTERIM REPORT. A recognized accrediting organization submits the Interim Report at the midpoint of the term of recognition. The due date of the Interim Report is provided in the Board letter granting CHEA recognition. A reminder of the Interim Report deadline is provided six months prior to the due date of the report.

The Interim Report provides information:

A. regarding its capacity to fulfill the accrediting organization’s CHEA-recognized scope;

B. that it continues to make public the reasons for its accreditation decisions; and

C. that student learning outcomes and/or achievement data are readily accessible to the public.
SECTION C: REPORTS FOR CONTINUED RECOGNITION (CONTINUED)

15. FOLLOW-UP REPORT. A recognized accrediting organization may be required to submit a Follow-up Report if its Interim Report or Application Narrative is insufficient.

Note: An accrediting organization is subject to withdrawal of recognition if it fails to submit the Interim or Follow-up Report by the required deadline. The recommendation of the Committee to withdraw recognition is submitted to the Board for action. The accrediting organization will be notified in writing of the pending recommendation prior to it being submitted to the Board.
RECOGNITION PROCEDURES

SECTION D: SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

16. CHANGES REQUIRING NOTIFICATION. The accrediting organization is required to notify CHEA of substantive change(s) to the following:

A. governance;
B. financial condition;
C. mission;
D. operations;
E. relationship with parent or sponsoring organization;
F. standards, policies, or procedures; and
G. editorial changes to the CHEA-recognized scope.

Accrediting organizations must notify CHEA of all substantive changes (A.-G.) within 60 days of implementation of the change(s). Substantive changes will be reviewed by CHEA to determine if such changes affect compliance with the standards. CHEA notifies the accrediting organization of the review status of the substantive change(s).
SECTION D: SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES (CONTINUED)

17. CHANGES REQUIRING COMMITTEE APPROVAL. Change in scope requires approval by the Committee. Proposed changes can be submitted at any time.

Substantive changes to the CHEA-recognized scope include:

A. change in the type(s) of institutions and programs;
B. addition or removal of a degree level;
C. change of geographical boundaries of accreditation activity (i.e., United States and international locations); and
D. addition or removal of a professional field of study.

A change in the CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation requires that the accrediting organization submit the following:

A. current CHEA-recognized scope statement;
B. proposed CHEA-scope statement;
C. reasons for the proposed change(s);
D. evidence that the proposed change(s) were made public;
E. evidence that the decision-making body has approved the change;
F. evidence that the new proposed scope has been effectively implemented at a minimum of two institutions or programs; and
G. evidence that the accrediting organization’s capacity is adequate to accommodate the proposed change in scope.

The Committee reviews the request at its next scheduled meeting providing that the request is received at least 45 days prior to the scheduled meeting. CHEA notifies the accrediting organization of the Committee’s decision to approve, deny or seek additional information.
SECTION E: GRIEVANCE POLICY

GRIEVANCE POLICY. CHEA only reviews grievances that are in writing, signed and dated by the complainant, and specific to alleged non-compliance of the CHEA Standards and Procedures. As appropriate, the written grievance is provided to the accrediting organization with the complainant’s identifying information redacted.

Response(s) from the accrediting organization must be submitted to CHEA within 30 business days. CHEA reviews the grievance and the accrediting organization’s response, which may result in further action in accordance with CHEA’s Recognition Standards and Procedures. All grievances and accrediting organization responses are provided to the Committee.

Upon review, CHEA provides all parties with its findings and recommendations for resolution.
The Call for Comment was initially published on August 13, 2021, and will be held open until Close of Business, September 10, 2021.

All submitted comments will be reviewed and considered by the RRT.

The proposed revised Recognition Standards and Procedures will be presented to the CHEA Board of Directors at its October 4, 2021, meeting.

Staff are suggesting an implementation date of January 1, 2022. All accrediting organizations currently engaged in the CHEA recognition process, will be provided additional guidance regarding which standards (2019 or 2021) to address.
SUBMITTING COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED REVISED RECOGNITION STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

All comments must be submitted by the Close of Business, September 10, 2021. Comments must be submitted using the provided form.

The proposed revised Recognition Standards and Procedures are available on the CHEA website.
Questions?

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