



***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:  
CHEA RECOGNITION OF ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS***

**What is CHEA?**

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental institutional membership organization that “recognizes” accrediting organizations or periodically reviews their effectiveness in assuring and improving quality in higher education. CHEA, as a national coordinating body for U.S. accreditation, also serves as an advocacy organization, an accreditation research and policy body and a convener and partner to address international quality assurance issues.

CHEA currently recognizes approximately 60 regional, national career-related, national faith-related and programmatic accrediting organizations.

Click [here](#) for a list of CHEA-recognized accrediting organizations.

**What is the Purpose of CHEA Recognition?**

The purpose of CHEA recognition is to provide assurance to the public that accrediting organizations are competent to engage in quality review of institutions and programs based on the standards that CHEA has developed, which are presented in the 2021 [CHEA Standards and Procedures for Recognition](#).

**Is Recognition by CHEA a Requirement?**

CHEA recognition is voluntary, as is accreditation itself. However, accrediting organizations that accredit thousands of institutions and programs have chosen to be CHEA-recognized as an affirmation that they meet the quality expectations of the higher education community. CHEA was established by college and university presidents as a means of affirming the quality of peer review, formative evaluation and a mission-based approach to judging higher education, as well as placing primary emphasis on quality improvement.

**How Does an Accreditor Become CHEA-Recognized?**

To become CHEA-recognized, the accreditor must demonstrate that it meets the requirements of the 2021 [CHEA Standards and Procedures for Recognition](#) and successfully complete the recognition review process.

**What are the Steps in the CHEA Recognition Process?**

For specific information about the CHEA recognition process, please click [here](#).

**What are the Costs Associated with the CHEA Recognition Process?**

An accrediting organization, as part of applying for CHEA recognition (initial or subsequent), pays a non-reimbursable recognition fee of \$10,000.

There is no annual fee for accreditors recognized by CHEA.

### **How Long does the CHEA Recognition Process Take?**

The recognition process typically takes between 12 and 18 months.

### **What is the CHEA Term (Length) of Recognition?**

The 2021 [CHEA Standards and Procedures for Recognition](#) states that the maximum term of recognition is seven years. It is possible for an accrediting organization to receive a shorter term of recognition but not one that is longer.

### **What are CHEA's Reporting Requirements for a Recognized Accrediting Organization?**

The 2021 [CHEA Standards and Procedures for Recognition](#) require an Interim Report at the mid-point of the recognition term.

Interim Report guidelines can be found [here](#).

### **Where Can I Find Resources Specific to the CHEA Recognition Process?**

Numerous resources are available on the CHEA website at <https://www.chea.org/resources-accrediting-organizations>.

#### **Other Organizations Engaged in Recognition in the United States: U.S. Department of Education**

In the United States, recognition is carried out by two entities, CHEA and the United States Department of Education (USDE).

The primary purpose of USDE recognition is to assure that accrediting organizations are reliable authorities regarding the quality of education or training offered by the institutions or programs they accredit ([USDE Recognition Criteria, Subpart A-General, 602.1](#)). The major focus is to determine whether an institution or program is of sufficient quality to be eligible for federal funds, such as student grants and loans.

USDE recognition is a requirement for accrediting organizations that want to be part of establishing eligibility for federal funds for institutions and programs. Federal funds play a major role in the financing of institutions and programs. Some states require that an institution or program be accredited by a USDE-recognized accreditor in order to have state authority to operate.

Many accrediting organizations hold both CHEA and USDE recognition. Click [here](#) for a directory of organizations that are recognized by CHEA and/or USDE.