

## Transcript

Loretta Waldron:

Welcome! The Council for Higher Education Accreditation is pleased to support your CHEA recognition process by offering three tutorials to assist you in preparing your application. The tutorials are not exhaustive, but will provide key points to facilitate a clear understanding about CHEA and the recognition process. I am Loretta Waldron, Vice President for Recognition Services. In this role, I'm always available for consultation by email, virtual meetings, or phone calls. My contact information is noted at the end of each tutorial.

Let's get started on your recognition journey. In this session, I'll address CHEA recognition, how it differs from the US Department of Education, and provide an overview of the recognition process for accrediting organizations seeking both initial and continuing recognition.

What is CHEA recognition? CHEA recognition of an accrediting organization is a rigorous process designed to assess and affirm the quality of US institutional, regional, national faith related and programmatic accrediting organizations.

CHEA is the only non-governmental higher education organization in the United States that engages in and awards recognition to institutional, regional, national faith related and programmatic accrediting organizations. Although the US Department of Education conducts governmental recognition reviews for accrediting organizations, CHEA acts independently of the federal government's recognition activities. CHEA recognition focuses solely on academic quality assurance of institutions and programs. CHEA recognition signifies to the higher education community and the public that the accrediting organization serves institutions and programs with the highest regard for integrity of practice and ethical behavior, and demonstrates a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. It promotes academic quality and continuous improvement. It serves higher education, students and the public by communicating its accreditation decisions. It makes determinations about academic quality in higher education. It implements and enforces its standards and policies, and it acknowledges and affirms the institution and the program mission and purposes.

You may ask how CHEA recognition is different from the US Department of Education, (USDE recognition), and why should you, as an accrediting organization pursue CHEA recognition if you are already recognized by USDE. There are some significant differences. The USDE has a focus on Title Four funding. CHEA does not. The USDE's regulations are prescriptive and reach through the accreditor to demand certain practices by institutions. CHEA's standards encourage innovation and focus on academic quality, insisting that the accreditor hold institutions to an academic standard and promote student achievement. The USDE looks at current and past compliance while CHEA is forward looking towards improvement. Lastly, CHEA is non-governmental and is not subject to political influence. CHEA offers the accrediting organization consistency and a lack of political interference.

The 2021 CHEA Standards and Procedures for Recognition will be your guide during the recognition journey.

Let me provide an overview of the process for recognition. The initial applicant contacts CHEA regarding recognition, whereas CHEA contacts the chief executive officer, the CEO, of the accrediting organization

seeking continuing recognition. This contact is made approximately 18 months prior to the first of the calendar year in which the current term of recognition expires. That is, if the term of recognition ends December 31st, 2025, contact would be made in June 2023 based on the calendar year starting January 2025. June 2023 is approximately 18 months prior.

For both initial and continuing recognition. I will discuss with a designated representative of the accrediting organization the eligibility requirements found in section A of our document.

Is the accrediting organization non-governmental and US based? Does it have legal authority to operate? Does it have a governing board? Does it accredit a majority of institutions or programs that have legal authority to operate as higher education institutions or programs and confer degrees at the associate level or higher? Does it have a written mission statement, bylaws, policies, procedures, and standards that are appropriate for accrediting higher education institutions and/or programs? Have these been approved by the governing board? Are they readily accessible to the public? and Has it accredited at least two institutions or programs?

If the representative of the accrediting organization answers yes to each question, an overview of the recognition process, policy, timeline, and CHEA expectations are discussed. When the executive officer of an accrediting organization that is an initial applicant notifies CHEA it is ready to start the process, an application form is emailed to the individual..

Upon receipt of the completed application form, the timeline for review by the Committee on Recognition and the CHEA Board of Directors is determined. The application narrative form and an invoice for the recognition fee are emailed to the accrediting organization's executive officer. Upon confirmation that an applicant for continuing recognition still meets the requirements, an application form and the invoice for the recognition fee are emailed to the CEO. The CEO notifies CHEA of the first and second choices for the agendas of the Committee on Recognition and the CHEA Board of Directors in which it would like to be scheduled for review.

After the application and supporting documents are submitted, I review the materials for completeness. Was the application narrative form completed and submitted? What were the core documents (The standards for accreditation, policies and procedures, et cetera) provided? Are links to these documents operational? Have all standards been addressed? Has evidence to support the narrative been provided?

Was suggested evidence in the 2021 Standards provided? Is any clarification of the narrative responses required?

If incomplete or links are broken, the CEO is contacted and a call to discuss the application is scheduled. The CEO is reminded the Committee on Recognition upon review of the application makes a recommendation to the CHEA Board of Directors regarding recognition. New and/or revised materials may be submitted after the call.

Upon determination the application is complete, it is forwarded to the Committee on Recognition for review. Prior to the Committee meeting, CHEA issues a public notice for third party comment regarding the accrediting organization's application for recognition. Any comments submitted are forwarded to the accrediting organization for review and comment. The accrediting organization makes a public

presentation to the Committee. Ordinarily, the executive officer of the accrediting organization and the chair of the decision-making body represent the organization. The Committee submits its findings and recommendations on the recognition action to the CHEA Board of Directors with notification to the accrediting organization. The Board of Directors considers the recommendation and makes its decision on the recognition action. The accrediting organization is notified of the Board's decision.

This wraps up our session on the CHEA recognition process. Further sessions will address the standards, key terms and how to use suggested evidence when writing the narrative for recognition. You may contact me via email at [waldron@CHEA.org](mailto:waldron@CHEA.org) or at 202.372.9254.