

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)?

A national advocate and institutional voice for academic quality through accreditation, CHEA is a U.S. association of degree-granting colleges and universities and recognizes institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations. CHEA is the only national organization focused exclusively on higher education accreditation.

CHEA:

- Is a major national voice and advocate for higher education accreditation and quality assurance.
- Scrutinizes accrediting organizations for their effectiveness in advancing academic quality and serving higher education, students and the public.
- Serves as a national and international authority on accreditation and quality assurance and an unsurpassed information resource.
- Supports and works to advance the role of accreditation in maintaining the core academic values of higher education – commitments to institutional autonomy, academic freedom and institutional mission.
- Provides a major national and international forum for communication and exchange among accrediting organizations, institutions and programs.

What is a U.S. Recognized Accrediting Organization?

In the United States, accrediting organizations are non-governmental organizations that review and evaluate institutions or programs and render judgments about their accreditation status.

An accrediting organization that has been reviewed and determined to meet the standards of an external body such as CHEA or the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) is considered “recognized.”

What is the Value of Accreditation?

Accreditation:

- Helps assure that a neutral, external party has reviewed, using appropriate peer expertise, the quality of education provided by an institution or program and offered suggestions for improvement.
- Provides for eligible students to have access to federal financial aid if they attend institutions accredited by accreditors that are recognized by USDE.
- Signals to prospective employers that an educational program has met widely accepted educational standards. A particular field may require graduation from an accredited program or institution.

Where is Information About Accredited Institutions and Programs Available?

All accrediting organizations provide information to the public about the institutions and programs they accredit and when those institutions and programs have been reviewed. This is available on the accrediting organization's Website.

For a complete list of recognized accrediting organizations and their accredited institutions or programs, go to:

- The *CHEA Database of Institutions and Programs Accredited by Recognized U.S. Accrediting Organizations*: <https://www.chea.org/chea-recognized-organizations>
- The *USDE Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs*: <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>

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The Council for Higher Education Accreditation serves its members, students, and society through advocacy for the value and independence of accreditation, recognition of accrediting organizations, and commitment to quality in higher education.

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