

How Does Accreditation Address Substandard Institutions and Programs: An ABA Perspective

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The ABA Accreditation Project

- Scope: first professional degrees in law (J.D.)
- 203 law schools
- Institutional and programmatic accreditation
- Periodic reviews every seventh year
- Close ties to state-level bar admissions processes

Graduation And Completion Rates Matter...

... but that is not the ABA's primary issue:

- Aggregate graduate rate for 2015 graduates is 88%
- Rates vary across schools: highest academic attrition: ~150 schools have <2% academic attrition; fewer than 10 schools had a rate of 8% or higher; only 1 school had an "other" rate of over 7%; transfers in the aggregate are about 5%; a few schools lose 20% or more of their 1L class (largely rankings driven)

Regulating Borderline, and Declining Schools

- Seven years is too long to not pay attention
- Annual Questionnaire provides monitoring opportunity
- Focus on admissions, bar passage, and resources

Interim Monitoring Process

- More than a dozen data points
- Not necessarily Standards, but indicators of problems
- First round – all schools reviewed
- Second round – 2 or more “flag” schools get individual review
- Third round – some schools asked for further information
- Regular compliance process flows from there

How's It Working?

- Several schools moved into the compliance pipeline
- Timeline is still long
- Provides differentiated, segmented process
- Potential budget savings if we can extend regular cycle and rely more on this process
- Talking about: (a) making flags public, (b) some sort of monitoring or receivership concept, short of probation, that would take difficult schools out of the normal process and allow for closer monitoring and less overlapping process.

