

Public Notice: Maintenance of Program Accreditation Records

The *Accreditation Operation Procedures* (AOP) outline procedures that guide the accreditation process for programs to be accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA). The AOP corresponds to the Implementing Regulations (IRs), which are official policy documents that “elucidate, interpret and operationally define” the APA Commission on Accreditation’s (CoA) policies and procedures. IRs are divided into several different sections (A through E), which are subject to regular review and revision by the CoA. Through this iterative process, opportunities for clarification have arisen regarding an IR in Section E, which addresses Self-Governance and Regulation.

Procedure for OPCA Maintenance of Program Accreditation Records

To align the CoA’s policies with its current actions, the Commission has clarified its policy on its maintenance of program accreditation records to comply with Department of Education and other legal requirements.

In accordance with the APA “Policies for Accreditation Governance” and the US Department of Education regulations for notice and comment, the CoA is providing additional information and is making the changes available for a thirty (30) day period of public notice starting March 24, 2025. On behalf of the CoA, thank you in advance for your review.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation

Phone: (202) 336-5979

Email: apaaccred@apa.org

Website: <http://www.accreditation.apa.org/>

E.1-1. Procedure for Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation Maintenance of Program Accreditation Records

(Commission on Accreditation, October 1997; revised July 2011, April 2023, revised for public comment, February 2025)

Section 602.15(b) of the criteria for recognition of the CoA's accrediting activities by the U.S. Secretary of Education states the following:

"The agency maintains complete and accurate records of (1) its last full accreditation or preaccreditation review of each institution or program, including on-site evaluation team reports, the institution's or program's responses to on-site reports, periodic review reports, any reports of special reviews conducted by the agency between regular reviews, and a copy of the institution's or program's most recent self-study; and (2) all decision letters issued by the agency regarding the accreditation and preaccreditation of any institution or program and any substantive changes; ~~including all correspondence that is significantly related to those decisions.~~"

This implementation procedure outlines the steps that will be taken by the CoA, consistent with the Secretary's requirements.

1. An accreditation history will be maintained for each program. This information will include dates of review for accreditation and the final decision resulting from the review.

2. The Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation will maintain the following records for each program:

a) The program's most recent self-study report.

b) The site visit reports and responses from the program's ~~two~~ most recent periodic review.

c) All narrative annual reports submitted by the program following its ~~two~~ most recent periodic review.

d) ~~All correspondence between the program and CoA regarding decisions made on a program's accredited status, including any correspondence significantly related to those decisions. Copies of all official decision letters issued by the CoA to a program regarding decisions made on a program's accredited status, including any substantive changes.~~

e) ~~All other routine and non-routine correspondence between the program and the CoA/Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation regarding substantive changes to the program as required by Implementing Regulations C-27 M, C-27 D, C-24 I, and C-20 P.~~

f) ~~All correspondence between the program and the CoA/Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation pertaining to the program's appeal of an accreditation decision (if any) or complaints filed against the program (if any) that occurred following the program's two most recent periodic reviews.~~

As part of routine records maintenance, the CoA discards records that it is not required to retain under current U.S. Department of Education recognition standards, CoA policies, or other applicable legal requirements.