

U.S. Department of Education

**Staff Report
to the
Senior Department Official
on
Recognition Compliance Issues**

RECOMMENDATION PAGE

1. **Agency:** American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
(1967/2003)
(The dates provided are the date of initial listing as a recognized agency and the date of the agency's last grant of recognition.)
2. **Action Item:** Compliance Report
3. **Current Scope of Recognition:** The accreditation and preaccreditation (Accreditation Candidate) throughout the United States of education programs in audiology and speech-language pathology leading to the first professional or clinical degree at the master's or doctoral level, and the accreditation of these programs offered via distance education.
4. **Requested Scope of Recognition:** Same as above
5. **Date of Advisory Committee Meeting:** June, 2012
6. **Staff Recommendation:** Renew the agency's recognition for a period of four years.
7. **Issues or Problems:** None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGENCY

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) is a national accrediting agency of graduate education programs in audiology or speech-language pathology. The CAA currently accredits or preaccredits 319 programs (247 in speech-language pathology and 72 in audiology) in 48 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Recognition History

The U.S. Commissioner of Education first recognized the American Speech Language and Hearing Association's (ASHA's) Educational Standards Board (Board) in 1967. Since that time, the Secretary of Education has periodically reviewed the Board's successor, the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA), and granted continued recognition. The last full review of the agency took place at the June 2008 meeting of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI). Both the Department and the NACIQI recommended that the agency's recognition be renewed for a period of five years. The Secretary had not made a final decision prior to passage of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, which contained a number of provisions related to accrediting agency recognition that were effective upon enactment. Subsequently, new regulations were developed, effective July 1, 2010. As a consequence, the agency was required to submit an updated petition for review by staff and NACIQI.

The updated petition was reviewed at the NACIQI's December 2010 meeting. The NACIQI and Department staff each recommended to continue the agency's recognition and require that the agency submit a compliance report within 12 months demonstrating the agency's compliance with the issues identified in the staff report and subsequently in the Assistant Secretary's February 2011 letter. The agency's compliance report is the subject of this analysis.

PART II: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

§602.17 Application of standards in reaching an accrediting decision.

The agency must have effective mechanisms for evaluating an institution's or program's compliance with the agency's standards before reaching a decision to accredit or preaccredit the institution or program. The agency meets this requirement if the agency demonstrates that it--

(f) Provides the institution or program with a detailed written report that assesses--

- (1) The institution's or program's compliance with the agency's standards, including areas needing improvement; and**
- (2) The institution's or program's performance with respect to student achievement;**

and

Previous Issue or Problem

During its 2010 review of the agency, Department staff noted that ASHA-CAA had not provided adequate documentation that it provides programs with a detailed written report assessing each program's performance with respect to student achievement that includes the program's use of all of the student outcome data and the results of its assessment of program effectiveness for continuous improvement.

Agency Response and Discussion

In response, the agency provided evidence of its implementation of its revised site visit report template documenting the agency's expanded assessment of the program's use of assessment data for program improvement and the agency's assessment of the program's completion, employment, and Praxis examination rates. The agency also included an accreditation decision letter with a finding of noncompliance related to Praxis examination rates and of partial compliance with the program's use of data for program improvement as well as narratives addressing both findings. Taken together, the agency's site visit report and accreditation decision letter constitute a detailed written report assessing a program's performance with respect to student achievement that includes the programs' use of the all of the student outcome data and the results of its assessment of program effectiveness for continuous improvement.

§602.19 Monitoring and reevaluation of accredited institutions and programs.

(c) Each agency must monitor overall growth of the institutions or programs it accredits and, at least annually, collect headcount enrollment data from those institutions or programs.

Previous Issue or Problem

During its 2010 review of the agency, Department staff found that the agency needed to demonstrate the specific triggers that will indicate whether a program's headcount growth does nor does not require the agency to determine whether the program maintains educational quality, and provide evidence of its analysis as part of its ongoing monitoring.

Agency Response and Discussion

The agency reports that it established a threshold of 50% increase in student enrollment since the prior reporting year as constituting significant enrollment growth. The agency also provided information about what it requires a program that meets or exceeds the threshold to include in a report to the agency as part of its monitoring process.

§602.26 Notification of accrediting decisions

The agency must demonstrate that it has established and follows written procedures requiring it to provide written notice of its accrediting decisions to the Secretary, the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, the appropriate accrediting agencies, and the public. The agency meets this requirement if the agency, following its written procedures--

(a) Provides written notice of the following types of decisions to the Secretary, the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, the appropriate accrediting agencies, and the public no later than 30 days after it makes the decision:

(1) A decision to award initial accreditation or preaccreditation to an institution or program.

(2) A decision to renew an institution's or program's accreditation or preaccreditation;

Previous Issue or Problem

The agency needed to demonstrate that it complies with its written policies and procedures to submit notifications to the entities specified in this criterion in a timely manner. Agency Response and

Discussion

ASLHA provided specific documentation demonstrating that it adheres to its written policies to notify all listed entities of its positive accreditation decisions within 30 days. This includes notifications to the Secretary, appropriate State

licensing or authorizing agency and the appropriate accrediting agencies. As a result, the agency meets the requirements of this section of the criteria

(b) Provides written notice of the following types of decisions to the Secretary, the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, and the appropriate accrediting agencies at the same time it notifies the institution or program of the decision, but no later than 30 days after it reaches the decision:

- (1) A final decision to place an institution or program on probation or an equivalent status.
 - (2) A final decision to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke, or terminate the accreditation or preaccreditation of an institution or program;
 - (3) A final decision to take any other adverse action, as defined by the agency, not listed in paragraph (b)(2) of this section;**
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Previous Issue or Problem

The agency needed to demonstrate that it consistently implements its written policies of sending notifications of negative accreditation decisions to the entities named in this criterion within the specified timeframes.

Agency Response and Discussion

The documentation provided by the agency demonstrates that it notified the Secretary, appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, and the appropriate accrediting agencies within 30 days following its decision to place a program on probation. It also reported that it has not had the opportunity to apply the requirements of (b)(2) and (3) of this section during the 2011 accreditation cycle.

(c) Provides written notice to the public of the decisions listed in paragraphs (b)(1), (b)(2) and (b)(3) of this section within 24 hours of its notice to the institution or program;

Previous Issue or Problem

The agency needed to demonstrate that it consistently adheres to its written policies to notify the public of negative decisions within 24 hours of notifying the program.

Agency Response and Discussion

The agency provided its compliant policies and documentation demonstrating that it followed its written policies by notifying the public within 24 hours of its notice to the program of a negative decision.

(e) Notifies the Secretary, the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, the appropriate accrediting agencies, and, upon request, the public if an accredited or preaccredited institution or program--

(1) Decides to withdraw voluntarily from accreditation or preaccreditation, within 30 days of receiving notification from the institution or program that it is withdrawing voluntarily from accreditation or preaccreditation; or

(2) Lets its accreditation or preaccreditation lapse, within 30 days of the date on which accreditation or preaccreditation lapses.

Previous Issue or Problem

The agency needed to demonstrate that it applies its policy of notifying the entities in this criterion when a program voluntarily withdraws or allows its accreditation to lapse.

Agency Response and Discussion

The agency provided copies of its revised policies and procedures, which require the agency to notify the entities in this criterion within the prescribed timelines when a program voluntarily withdraws or allows its accreditation to lapse. The agency also reports that has not had the opportunity to apply the procedures in this requirement.

§602.28 Regard for decisions of States and other accrediting agencies.

(c) The agency may grant accreditation or preaccreditation to an institution or program described in paragraph (b) of this section only if it provides to the Secretary, within 30 days of its action, a thorough and reasonable explanation, consistent with its standards, why the action of the other body does not preclude the agency's grant of accreditation or preaccreditation.

Previous Issue or Problem

The agency needed to revise its policy to include a statement as to why the actions of the state agency or other accrediting agency do not preclude the agency from granting accreditation or preaccreditation to a program.

Agency Response and Discussion

The agency provided a copy of its revised policies and procedures required by this section of the criteria. The agency's policies clearly state that it can only apply the requirements of 602.28(b) if the agency provides to the Secretary within 30 days the rationale of why "the action of the other body does not preclude the agency's grant of accreditation or preaccreditation". The agency also reports that it has not had the opportunity to apply the requirements of this section.

PART III: THIRD PARTY COMMENTS

The Department did not receive any written third-party comments regarding this agency.