

CACREP Implements New Monitoring Decision Options

CACREP will begin implementation of new monitoring decision options at the July 2023 Board of Directors (BOD) meeting. The implementation of the monitoring decisions options, along with the accreditation decision options implemented in January 2023, are the culmination of a multi-year strategic planning process that began in 2019. The decision options represent just one of a series of strategic initiatives in development aimed to support accredited programs and programs seeking accreditation, and to enhance transparency and accountability in the CACREP accreditation review and monitoring processes for public protection. Further modifications to the monitoring process will be announced and implemented on a rolling basis over the next two years.

Monitoring

Once a program receives a grant of accreditation, it enters a monitoring phase. The monitoring process is predicated on the central concept that programs holding accredited status will remain in compliance with the accreditation standards. Programs in the monitoring phase may be asked, for instance, to respond to cited standards via required progress reports (including reports that address notices of concern or sanctions). Programs will also be asked to demonstrate ongoing compliance with accreditation standards via required monitoring reports (e.g., midcycle reports). Monitoring also includes programs reporting on substantive changes. The monitoring period begins at the most recent accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation decision. The program will remain in an accredited state barring the interruption of accredited status based on a voluntary withdrawal from the status by the institution or by BOD action following the review of reports submitted during the monitoring period. A program successfully completing a monitoring period will enter a full review process for a reaffirmation of accreditation approximately 18 months prior to the expiration of the accreditation cycle.

Monitoring Decisions

During monitoring, the BOD may continue a program's accreditation, request further reporting on progress, or indicate heightened concern about compliance issues through notices of concern, sanctions, or show cause. The BOD may revoke a program's accredited status if the program is unable to demonstrate achieving and maintaining full compliance with the standards and policies. Similar to the accreditation decision options, the monitoring decision options provide the Board with a wider variety of tools to reflect the findings of monitoring reviews. This in turn provides better clarity to programs, students, and the public on what decisions mean and what may need to occur for a program to demonstrate continued compliance with the accreditation standards.

Monitoring decisions may be made at any time during a term of accreditation. They do not have to be made in a sequential progression. The BOD will determine which monitoring decision to apply as it considers the facts of the case and the accreditation record for a program.

Monitoring Decisions		
Decisions	Definition	Notification
Continuation of Accreditation	The program has demonstrated full compliance with the standards and policies.	
Continuation of Accreditation with Progress Report Required	<p>The program has demonstrated significant progress toward coming into compliance with all cited standards and policies and is actively implementing a clearly articulated approach for resolution, but a small amount of additional time is needed for the program to fully implement its approach and be in full compliance with the requirements.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>There are indicators that a program is or may be out of compliance with one or more standards or policies.</p>	CACREP: Public announcement of monitoring decisions and entry in Directory of Accredited Programs
Continuation of Accreditation with a Notice of Concern	<p>The program has not demonstrated significant progress toward coming into compliance with all cited standards and policies.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>There are indicators that a program is or may be out of compliance with one or more standards or policies.</p>	CACREP: Public announcement of monitoring decisions and entry in Directory of Accredited Programs
Revocation of Accreditation *	The program has failed to resolve identified standards- and/or policy-related compliance concerns.	CACREP: Public announcement of revocation decisions and entry in Directory of Accredited Programs
Sanctions		
Continuation of Accreditation with a Warning	The program is out of compliance with one or more standards or policies, but the BOD does not believe there is imminent concern regarding risk to students and the public based on the scope and/or type of noncompliance.	<p>CACREP: Public announcement of monitoring decisions and entry in Directory of Accredited Programs</p> <p>Program: Notification to students and provision of a copy of the notice to students to CACREP for the accreditation record.</p>

Continuation of Accreditation on Probation	<p>The program is out of compliance with one or more standards or policies, and the BOD believes there are imminent concerns regarding the risk to students and the public based on the scope, type, and/or duration of the non-compliance.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The BOD has prescribed a timeframe in which in which a compliance concern must be resolved.</p>	<p>CACREP: Public announcement of monitoring decisions and entry in Directory of Accredited Programs</p> <p>Program: Notification to students and provision of a copy of the notice to students to CACREP for the accreditation record.</p>
Show Cause		
Show Cause	<p>The BOD has significant concerns regarding the program’s compliance with one or more standards and/or policies, and there are questions about the program’s ability to come into compliance.</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>There are extreme and/or abrupt changes impacting the university and/or program and the BOD has concerns regarding whether the resulting compliance issues can be resolved in a timely manner.</p>	<p>CACREP: Public announcement of monitoring decisions and entry in Directory of Accredited Programs</p> <p>Program: Notification to students and provision of a copy of the notice to students to CACREP for the accreditation record.</p>

** A revocation of accreditation is the only adverse action. Sanctions are not adverse actions as programs remain in an accredited status during the term of the sanction.*

Notice of Concern and Sanctions

Notices of concern and sanctions represent different levels of concern and clarity regarding the degree and implications of a program’s noncompliance with the standards and/or policies. Programs must submit follow-up reporting in response to any of these actions by the BOD. The BOD will determine the timeline for when the follow-up report is due. The BOD may also require focused site visits.

Show Cause

The BOD may issue a show cause notice at any point during an accreditation term when there are significant concerns about a program’s compliance with the standards and/or a program’s ability to resolve the compliance concerns in an acceptable timeframe. The concerns may focus solely on or in combination on the extent of the compliance concerns, the impact of the compliance concerns on students, the length of time for which the compliance concerns have existed, and/or the suddenness and extent of the compliance concerns. When the BOD issues a show cause notice, it will conduct a

hearing that will provide the program with the opportunity to present a rationale for why the program should retain its accredited status.

Public Notice

All accreditation and monitoring decisions are public information and as such will be published in the CACREP Directory of Accredited Programs and in the reporting of accreditation and monitoring decisions following each meeting of the CACREP BOD. The resolution of noncompliance requirements will be noted by subsequent changes in accreditation status and/or secondary status in the CACREP Directory of Accredited Programs and in the reporting of accreditation decisions following each BOD meeting.

Programs are required to post accurate accreditation status information in program materials. It is strongly recommended that counseling programs regularly and actively inform students and stakeholder groups about the accreditation status and any secondary statuses of all counseling specialty areas and doctoral programs and, if applicable, pending accreditation reporting requirements and potential outcomes. Programs must notify students when a sanction (i.e., warning or probation) or show cause has been issued and provide a copy of the student notification to CACREP for the accreditation record.

Conclusion

These monitoring decision options will facilitate the CACREP BOD's decision-making, which in turn will benefit accredited counseling programs, counseling programs seeking accreditation, and the public, including prospective students. The monitoring decision options provide tools that can be tailored more precisely to different circumstances that present in a program's compliance with accreditation standards and policies. This change aims to support counseling programs and the public, and to achieve greater transparency and accountability in the accreditation process.