



Accepting or appealing an accreditation decision

The program has 30 days in which to accept or appeal TEAC's action.

If the decision is to accredit and the program accepts the decision, TEAC announces the decision, informs stakeholders, posts the summary of the case on the TEAC website, and schedules the annual report.

Next steps for accreditation decisions with weaknesses or stipulations

If either a weakness or stipulation is cited, the program takes the following steps:

Weakness. The program must remedy the weakness before or in its next *Inquiry Brief*.

Stipulation. The program must address the stipulation within two years -- that is, in its second Annual Report -- to remain compliant with its accreditation status in TEAC.

Stipulations are removed by the Accreditation Committee upon recommendation of the Accreditation Panel. In the annual report, the program faculty makes its case that the program is no longer weak in the area stipulated by the Accreditation Committee. TEAC's director of audits verifies that the new evidence in the case is trustworthy. The verification may require a site visit and the payment of audit fees. Once the evidence is verified, the director of the Accreditation Panel places the case on the agenda of the next Accreditation Panel meeting for the panel's consideration. The panel, following its regular procedures, makes a recommendation to the Accreditation Committee that the stipulation be removed. The Accreditation Committee either accepts or rejects the recommendation.

If the panel does not make a recommendation for removal of the stipulation, or if the Accreditation Committee rejects the panel's recommendation for removal, TEAC will implement its adverse action policy to remove the program's accreditation status.

Appeals process

If the decision is not to accredit, the program may appeal the decision if it has evidence to support its claim. A program has grounds for appeal if it has any or all of the following evidence:

1. Evidence of errors or omissions in prescribed procedures on the part of the auditors, any reviewers, members of the Accreditation Panel, the TEAC staff, or the Accreditation Committee.
2. Evidence that demonstrable bias, conflict of interest, or prejudice on the part of a member, the TEAC staff or Board, an auditor, a reviewer, or member of the Accreditation Panel or Accreditation Committee influenced the Accreditation Committee's accreditation decision.
3. Evidence that TEAC's decision was not supported adequately or was contrary to the facts presented and known at the time of the decision.

If a program seeks to appeal an accreditation decision, it must do so within 30 days of being notified of the accreditation decision. The program must file in writing its intent for appeal and grounds for appeal. The program must submit relevant documentation along with the written appeal. A program may also elect to make an oral presentation at the appeal hearing and may be represented by legal counsel at the hearing. Until the appeal process is completed, the accreditation status of the program will remain in effect. The program must pay all expenses associated with the appeal.

The appeals panel

The chair of the TEAC Board of Directors will appoint a five-member appeals panel to adjudicate appeals. No member of the appeals panel may participate in an appeal by a program about which he or she has voted an accreditation determination. Members of the appeals panel will select a chair from among themselves.

The TEAC president will forward the program's intent to appeal and its written grounds for appeal to the chair of the appeals panel within 30 days of submission. In determining if the appeal has merit, the appeals panel will consider the record before the TEAC Accreditation Committee at the time of its decision. The record includes the *Brief*, the final audit report, any reviewer's evaluation, the case analysis, the accreditation report, the Accreditation Committee's decision and report, and any institutional responses made during the accreditation process. The record considered by the appeals panel also includes the written grounds for appeal with any attached documents, and the record of any complaints. The appeals panel will not consider evidence that was not reviewed or considered by the TEAC Accreditation Committee at the time of its decision and cannot take into account evidence of corrective action that occurred after the date of the decision by the TEAC Accreditation Committee.

The appeal hearing will be held within 60 days of the filing of the appeal. The program will be provided with an opportunity to provide a verbal statement, be represented by legal counsel, and to respond to questions of the appeals panel. The appeals panel meets in closed session to deliberate on the merits of the program's appeal.

In consultation with the members of the appeals panel, the chair prepares a written report of the panel's findings, which includes a proposed action by TEAC based on the appeals panel's review.

Within 15 days of the appeal hearing, the appeals panel's report is sent to the chair of the Accreditation Committee, who will consider the report and recommend to the executive committee of the board whether TEAC should sustain its original decision, grant a new category of accreditation (including denial), or take administrative action to redress the grievances in the appeal. The executive committee will consider the results of the appeal within 30 days of the appeal hearing.

Notification

Within 45 days of the appeal hearing, the TEAC president will provide written notification to the program of the executive committee's decision that details the basis for the committee's decision.