



TEAC Policy Update: Seven-Year Terms of Accreditation

The Board of Directors of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council at its 2011 Meeting revised TEAC's policies relating to length of accreditation terms. Beginning with accreditation decisions made in 2012, programs that satisfy all TEAC *Quality Principles* will be awarded accreditation for seven years. Programs achieving accreditation for the first time on the basis of an *Inquiry Brief*, as well as accredited programs that are successful in their bid for continuing accreditation, will be awarded seven-year terms. Five-year terms of 'initial accreditation' will continue to be awarded to programs that satisfy Quality Principles II and III in an *Inquiry Brief Proposal*. Two-year terms of accreditation will continue to be awarded to programs that have partially met the requirements of the system.

Background

TEAC's original framework allowed for two- or five-year terms of accreditation for previously-unaccredited programs, and terms of two, five, or ten years in cases of continuing accreditation. The rationale for the original framework was that the awarding of accreditation status reflected two judgments: the first, regarding whether or not there was sufficient evidence that the *Quality Principles* were met, and the second, regarding the degree of confidence that the *Principles* would continue to be met.

Though this logic was sound, two sets of environmental factors rendered it untenable in the long term. First, many states recognize accreditation status for only seven years: thus, even if a program were granted a ten-year term by TEAC, re-accreditation would be needed within seven years to meet state requirements. While this conflict affected only institutions in states that mandated accreditation, the second factor was national in scope. The pace of change in higher education has led many — members of the TEAC Board included — to conclude that ten-year terms are simply too long. (As a point of comparison, regional accreditors, which still award ten-year terms, now require substantial reports at the mid-point of the ten-year term.) These two factors commended the adoption of seven-year terms as the standard.

Policies Effected

Changes following from this decision will be reflected in Policy I and Policy II. The policy change is effective with accreditation decisions made after December 31, 2011.