

Program Accreditation Determination Decision Guidelines

Adopted by IHEAC Board on: 5/3/23

Approach to Accreditation

As highlighted in the Guidance Manual the approach to accreditation embodies collaboration and focuses on quality improvement and assurance. The goal is to field test and refine a pilot accreditation process for programs who are striving to provide quality higher education for students with intellectual disability.

Overview of the Accreditation Decision Making Process

Upon review of the *Self-Study* and the *Peer Reviewer Evaluation Report* the IHEAC Board determines the level of accreditation a program receives. The IHEAC Board meets via video conference as often as is necessary to make decisions in a timely manner, generally within 1-2 months of a site visit. At the meeting, the Executive Director (or staff designee) presents an oral summary of the case, and a quorum of board members must be present at the determination meeting.

All IHEA Council accreditation decisions are rendered by the board members, with a majority of those present agreeing to the determination. The Executive Director (or staff designee) attends the meeting and witnesses the Council's discussion and decision in real time. In each accreditation case, Council members base their decision on the evidence contained in the program's *Self-Study Report* and in the *Peer Reviewer Evaluation Report*. The Council applies standards and evidence expectations to award, deny, or revoke accreditation.

The Council may take one of the following actions:

Accreditation Level	Definition –
Accredited	The Council finds that all 10 standard areas are met. The program is accredited for the full term of seven years .
Provisionally Accredited	The Council finds that all 10 standard areas are provisionally met, and the program is accredited for a term of three years .
Not Accredited	The Council finds that the program does not meet all 10 standard areas and does not qualify for accreditation for reasons specified in the decision letter.

Findings of *accredited*, and *provisionally accredited* are affirmative findings. No further action is needed for findings of *accredited*. A finding of *provisionally accredited* requires the program to complete a follow-up report by a specified date and a focused site visit at the Council's discretion. A finding of *not accredited* is an adverse finding.

Accreditation Terms and Notations

A full accreditation term is seven years. Provisionary accreditation is for three years. Accreditation terms take effect immediately at the time of the decision. Terms expire in the designated year at the close of the semester when the site visit took place (June 30 for site visits conducted between January 1 and June 30; December 31 for site visits conducted between July 1 and December 31).

Notification of Decision: An official communication (e.g., letter via email) will be sent to the program director and copied to the designated university leader(s) explaining the accreditation decision and the term of accreditation, and/or the date for any required reply by the program.

Appeal of Decision: If a program decides to appeal an IHEA Council accreditation decision, the program director must email the IHEAC Board President and the IHEA Council Executive Director to notify the Council of the program decision to appeal. A letter summarizing the reason(s) for appeal must be submitted within 10 working days of the notification of accreditation determination.

Required Annual Report: To maintain accreditation status, all accredited programs must complete and submit the IHEAC Annual Report between October 1 and December 31 of each year, beginning the calendar year following a program's initial IHEAC accreditation.