



# CHEA at a Glance

## Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)/ CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG)

CHEA serves its members, students and society through advocacy for the value and independence of accreditation, recognition of accrediting organizations and commitment to quality in higher education.

The CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG) – CHEA’s international arm – assists institutions and quality assurance organizations worldwide in further enhancing capacity for academic quality and advancing understanding of quality assurance internationally.

### CHEA

- The only national organization in the United States focused exclusively on higher education accreditation and quality assurance.
- Recognizes U.S. accrediting organizations, including regional, career-related, faith-related and programmatic accrediting organizations.
- Governed by a board of college and university presidents, institutional representatives and public members.

### Serving Higher Education and the Public

CHEA serves higher education members, accreditation communities and the public by its execution of the following functions:

- Validates through recognition processes sound and effective higher education accrediting bodies;
- Conducts and coordinates research that informs and advances accreditation and quality assurance;
- Serves as a national advocate to government, media and the public for higher education quality through accreditation and peer review;
- Collects and disseminates data and information about accreditation through a biennial public almanac;
- Offers non-binding arbitration between institutions and accreditors regarding final adverse accrediting decisions; and
- Works to preserve the quality and diversity of colleges and universities.

### Recognition

CHEA recognition of an accrediting organization is a rigorous process designed to assess and affirm the quality of U.S. institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations. CHEA is the only nongovernmental higher education organization in the United States that engages in

and awards recognition to institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations. Although the U.S. Department of Education conducts governmental recognition reviews for accrediting organizations, CHEA acts independently of the federal government's recognition activities. CHEA recognition focuses solely on academic quality assurance of institutions and programs.

### CHEA Recognition Standards\*

- **Promotes academic quality and advance student achievement.** Advancement of academic quality is at the core of accreditation. Accrediting organizations provide evidence that they implement and enforce standards, policies, or procedures that reflect the accrediting organization's expectations for academic quality.
- **Demonstrates public accountability for performance and transparency.** Public accountability for performance and transparency includes expectations related to the decision-making and accountability of accrediting organizations, and the performance of accredited institutions or programs in meeting the accrediting organizations expectations (quantitative and qualitative).
- **Sustains an effective accreditation structure and organization.** A recognized accrediting organization provides evidence that it implements standards and policies that manifest a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, ensure ethical practices in its operations and are consistent with the CHEA standards.
- **Demonstrates capacity and compliance for international accreditation.** A recognized accrediting organization that accredits outside of the United States demonstrates that it has the competence to engage in international accreditation activities and applies standards that are substantially comparable to U.S. institutions and programs.

*\*This language demonstrates the recognition standards and is not the full or official policy statement. Please consult the 2021 CHEA Recognition Policy and Procedures at [www.chea.org](http://www.chea.org) for the formal policy language that is used in CHEA recognition reviews, in the Accreditation and Recognition section on the CHEA website.*

### Accreditation in the United States

Accreditation in higher education is a collegial, peer-review process that emphasizes continuous improvement, assesses academic quality, and advances public accountability of institutions and programs. The accreditation process typically includes:

- A comprehensive review, inclusive of a self-study that provides written documentation of how an institution or program meets the standards or criteria.
- An on-site evaluation with a team composed of peer reviewers who engage with the institutional and/or programmatic stakeholders to confirm the standards are being met.
- Review by the decision-making body of the accrediting organization that then renders a decision about accreditation.
- Ongoing monitoring in between comprehensive reviews.

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