Committee on Accreditation of the American Library Association

Accreditation Process, Policies, and Procedures (AP3)

Fourth Edition, June 2015

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Preface

The Accreditation Process, Policies and Procedures (APP) manual is used in conjunction with the Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies to guide the American Library Association (ALA) accreditation process. It is provided primarily for use and reference by program and institutional representatives, members of the ALA Committee on Accreditation (COA, the Committee), and External Review Panelists. It should be understood that policies drive process and that procedures are steps in the process. Previous editions of this manual were published in 2003, 2006, and 2012.

This fourth edition is effective immediately, with exceptions noted in individual sections.

This document is regularly reviewed for revision by Office for Accreditation staff. Substantive changes to process, policy or procedure are approved by COA and communicated by the Office through notifications on the Office for Accreditation web pages, in the Prism newsletter, and via email to program leadership. Updates that are editorial in nature are not reported.

Questions about the accreditation process as administered by the American Library Association's Committee on Accreditation should be directed to:

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American Library Association
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Chicago, IL 60611
accred@ala.org

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I. Overview of ALA accreditation

I.1 The role of accreditation

Accreditation is a voluntary, nongovernmental, and collegial process of self-review and external verification by peer reviewers. In higher education, accreditation has two goals: 1) to ensure that post-secondary educational institutions and their units, schools, or programs meet appropriate standards of quality and integrity; and 2) to improve the quality of education these institutions offer.

The two types of postsecondary education accreditation are institutional and specialized. Institutional accreditors evaluate and accredit an institution as a whole. There are a number of institutional accrediting agencies throughout the U.S. Each accrediting agency is responsible for

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Standards	Refers to Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies, the essential features of accredited library and information studies programs. The Standards are developed by the COA and approved by the ALA Council.
Visit or site visit	Refers to the part of a comprehensive review in which members of an ERP visit the school and institution to validate and augment the information contained in the Self-Study. Most visits are conducted as on-site visits in which members of the ERP travel to the program location. This document is written from that perspective. However, alternative approaches, such as virtual visits, may also be used, following consultation with the Program

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I.3.1 Scope of the COA

The COA accredits master's programs in library and information studies that are offered under the degree-granting authority of regionally accredited institutions located in the United States and also in its territories, possessions, and protectorates. By agreement with the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA), the COA also accredits LIS master's programs in institutions in Canada.

As a prerequisite to the accreditation of programs, the ALA requires that the institution be accredited by its appropriate regional accrediting agency. This requirement does not apply in Canada, however, which has no regional accrediting system. A Program Head must immediately inform the Office for Accreditation of any change in institutional accreditation status.

The COA is responsible for overseeing the development of standards for accreditation of master's degree programs in library and information studies. The development of standards is a broadly based, inclusive process involving members of the profession and the public. The COA continually reviews the standards at its regularly scheduled meetings and periodically appoints standards review subcommittees to determine when revisions are necessary.

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I.4.3(b) Accreditation actions

An accreditation action is a decision to grant or deny Initial accreditation status to a program; to grant Precandidacy, Candidacy, Continued, or Conditional status to a program; or to Withdraw accreditation from a program. Accreditation actions may be made only at a regularly scheduled meeting of the COA and require a quorum of at least eight COA members. Accreditation actions are based on the following:

- To grant Precandidacy status: Precandidacy application that meets all requirements as detailed in this document.
- To grant Candidacy status: Candidacy application that meets all requirements as detailed in this document and all the reports the program submitted since it was granted Precandidacy status.
- To grant Continued or Conditional status: Self-Study, External Review Panel Report, Program Response to External Review Panel Report (if submitted), all the reports the program submitted to the COA since the last comprehensive review, and the meeting with COA to close the comprehensive or progress review.
- To Withdraw accreditation:
    - If Withdrawal follows a comprehensive or progress review - Self-Study, External Review Panel Report, Program Response to External Review Report (if submitted), all the reports the program submitted to the COA since the last comprehensive review, and the meeting with COA to close the comprehensive or progress review.
    - If Withdrawal does not follow a comprehensive or progress review (see also AP3 I.14): All the reports the program submitted to the COA since the last comprehensive review.

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- Maintaining the Directory of ALA-

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Withdrawn accreditation (See section I.14)	This category is assigned to a program that, effective on the date specified, is no longer accredited by the ALA. A program with this status is not listed in the directory of ALA-accredited programs. Reporting requirements: N/A Length of status: permanent

The Directory of ALA-Accredited Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies lists all programs with Initial; Continued; Conditional; or Withdrawn, Appeal Pending status. The status of each program is clearly noted. Programs with Withdrawn accreditation status are listed only in the Historical List of Accredited Programs. A current directory is available on the Office for Accreditation website.

I.7.1 Disclosure of accreditation status

As a public protection, including for prospective students, any reference to ALA accreditation status or display of the ALA Accredited logo must include the specific status as granted by COA: Candidacy; Conditional; Continued; Initial; Precandidacy; Withdrawn, Appeal Pending; or Withdrawn. See the specific status section for the required statement. Any program found to be

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I.9.2 Application requirements

An application for Candidacy status must be submitted to the Chair of the COA in care of the Office for Accreditation not less than 45 days before the COA meeting at which the application will be considered. The Candidacy application must include:

- A letter from the chief executive officer of the institution requesting Candidacy status for the program. The letter must also contain a statement that the institution understands that Candidacy status in no manner guarantees or implies that the program will be accredited or that accreditation is automatic at the end of the Candidacy period. A letter template is available on the Office for Accreditation website.
- A letter from the Program Head requesting Candidacy status for the program. The letter must also contain a statement that the program and/or school understands that Candidacy status in no manner guarantees or implies that the program will be accredited or that accreditation is automatic at the end of the Candidacy period. A letter template is available on the Office for Accreditation website.
- A report of the programO5 (o)-8 (r)g(m)-2-2 (ha) (p)-10 (r)3 (ogr)3 (a)-6 (m)]iO5 must also c pseo c timelines. A budget for the Candidacy , and date of submission of application;
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comprehensive review, the COA may vote to maintain a program's Candidacy status and schedule another comprehensive review.

During the Candidacy period, the institution, the school, and program are encouraged to seek advice from individuals within the profession who have experience with accreditation. The Director of the Office for Accreditation may suggest possible contacts. The OA Director is also

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I.9.6 Fees

Programs that are moving from Precandidacy to Candidacy are required to pay an application fee (see section I.23.1 for the current fee schedule). Candidate programs are also required to pay the same annual fee paid by accredited programs. If the OA Director or other Office staff member is invited to visit the institution, the institution will be billed for travel-related expenses.

I.10 Candidacy status and Initial accreditation of an additional progioo-eI -0.068t I.23.1 rhe pay 4

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I.10.4 Reporting to the COA

An annual statistical report is due by December 1, and a narrative progress report is due by February 15. The progress report should detail results of efforts underway in reaching programmatic objectives in relation to the Standards

The COA reviews these reports and sends a response to the dean and the chief academic officer (CAO) of the institution. This response is not an indication or checklist of steps that must be taken to achieve accreditation; rather, it is the COA's response to the efforts to obtain accreditation.

If, on review of the annual reports, the COA determines that the program is not yet ready to undergo a comprehensive review, it may grant a one-year extension of Candidacy status.

Instructions regarding the format and content of annual progress reports can be found on the Office for Accreditation website.

I.10.5 Fees

No application fee is required if the additional program is reviewed at the same time as the currently accredited program.

If the comprehensive review of the additional program occurs off-cycle, a nonrefundable application fee is required (see section I.23.1 for the current fee schedule). The program is responsible for all expenses related to the comprehensive review and the comprehensive review fee. If the OA Director or other Office staff member is invited to visit the institution, the institution will be billed for travel-related expenses.

I.11 Initial accreditation

An institution without an existing ALA-accredited program that seeks ALA accreditation for a master's program in library and information studies must progress through Precandidacy and Candidacy status before being granted Initial accreditation by the COA. As a prerequisite to the Initial accreditation of a program, the ALA requires that the institution be accredited by its appropriate regional accrediting agency. This requirement does not apply to Canadian institutions.

At the end of the Candidacy period and following the comprehensive review of the program, the COA makes an accreditation decision. The COA takes one of the following actions: 1) to grant Initial accreditation, 2) to maintain the program's Candidacy status, or 3) to deny Initial accreditation. If Initial acher()Tj[(t)-2 ((t)-6 r()Tj2 (4 Tc 0.004 Tw ( )()Tj[.014 Tc -0.002 Tw.15 Td[(C)O04 Tc

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- The name of all ALA-accredited programs offered by the school;
- Accreditation status of the program(s) and the date(s) when this status was granted;
- The date of the next comprehensive review;
- Issues or concerns regarding compliance with the standards, a list of required reports, and a schedule for submission of those reports.

The COA schedules the next comprehensive review as part of its accreditation decision. For Continued accreditation, the next comprehensive review is normally scheduled seven years after the last comprehensive review.

Any standard on which a program has follow-up reporting (following a comprehensive review or interim reporting review) is made public by the Office for Accreditation in the Directory of ALA-Accredited Programs and as a part of the usual means (e.g., press release, Accreditation Decisions and Actions Taken reports, and Prism).*

* Effective for all programs beginning in May 2018

Revised April 13, 2018

I.16 Notice of Concern

The Notice of Concern is formal communication with and notification to an accredited program and its institution that the COA has serious concerns about the program's ability to comply with the Standards This process provides the program the opportunity for both written and in-person communication with the COA about the areas of concern. It also serves notice that the program may be placed on Conditional

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consideration of the program's accreditation status. See section I.19.1.

Progress Review The COA may schedule a progress review instead of a comprehensive review upon granting Conditional or Initial accreditation if it decides that a full comprehensive review is not necessary to gather enough evidence to make the next accreditation decision. A progress review is more focused than the comprehensive review and is intended to gather evidence about specific aspects of the program. See section I.19.2.

I.19.1 Comprehensive review

Major steps in the comprehensive review process include the following:

- Development of a Plan for the Self-Study;
- Development of the Self-Study;
- Review by an External Review Panel;
- Decision by the COA on the accreditation status of the program.

Throughout the comprehensive review process, the Director of the Office for Accreditation (OA) serves as the program's primary contact. The OA Director will respond to questions from the Program Head, make suggestions as appropriate, and consult with the ERP Chair. Additional details regarding specific steps involved in the comprehensive review process can be found in section II: Guidelines for the Self-Study and Comprehensive Review and section III: Guidelines for the External Review Panel.

I.19.2 Progress review

In some instances, the COA schedules a progress review instead of a comprehensive review upon conferring Conditional or Initial accreditation. A progress review is more focused than the

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may ask the program for a special report, schedule a comprehensive review, or take other action. Both the complainant and the school are notified in writing of the COA's decision.

At each regularly scheduled meeting of the COA, the OA

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Programs are notified of any fee change six (6) months before the billing date. See section I.23.1 for the current fee schedule.

The Office for Accreditation is responsible for assessing and collecting fees as follows:

Precandidacy fee	A program applying for Precandidacy status must submit an application fee with the application. Precandidate programs must pay an annual fee while in Precandidacy. The annual Precandidacy fee is normally billed no later than October 15.
Candidacy fee	A program applying for Candidacy status must submit an application fee with the application. An annual fee is assessed each year that the program is in Candidacy. The annual Candidacy fee is normally billed no later than October 15.
Annual accreditation fee	Accredited programs pay an annual accreditation fee. The annual accreditation fee is normally billed no later than October 15.
Comprehensive or progress review fee	[redacted]
	A program that chooses to file an appeal after receiving an accred.2 354.2[redacted]

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provides an overview of the entire process. The comprehensive review includes the development of a Plan for Self-Study, preparation of the Self-Study document, review by an External Review Panel (ERP), and an accreditation decision by the COA. Details regarding the work of the ERP can be found in section III.

The COA schedules the next comprehensive review as part of its accreditation decision. For Continued and Initial accreditation, the next comprehensive review is normally scheduled seven k o (t)-242

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One representative of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (or an alternative professional library and information organization) is permitted to observe reviews of Canadian programs. His or her role is to observe how the panel operates, not to influence its evaluation of the program.

A comprehensive review includes a visit and report by an ERP. Panel visits occur over two business days; typically, the panel arrives one or two days early to review on-site documentation and to tour facilities.

The ERP submits a draft ERP Report due three weeks after the visit. The final ERP Report is due five weeks after the visit. The ERP Chair is responsible for overseeing the development of the panel's report and editing it for consistency. The Program Head should submit factual corrections to the draft ERP Report and may submit an op3 (a)4 (nd]TJ148 i)-2 (t)1 (c)4 (t)-2 (i)-2 (one)4 ( )]TJ

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university websites. An annotated list of selected outcomes assessment and evaluation tools is available on the Office for Accreditation website.

Under the Standards, programs should use outcomes assessment as part of the ongoing planning and evaluation process. This process consists of setting a mission, defining goals, enumerating objectives, identifying appropriate measures and benchmarks, comparing what has been achieved to what was intended, and using what is learned to make improvements. Outcomes assessment provides the Program Head and faculty with information to make useful decisions about program improvement and to develop strategies for continuous improvement. These measures indicate how a program's achievements can be assessed, and they also provide evidence that program objectives are being achieved.

The process of outcomes assessment ultimately results in revision of the objectives and goals of a school and program. The outcomes can, and should, affect future decision-making and planning. Effective outcomes assessment means that the school and program have established and use broad-based, continuous program planning, development, assessment, and improvement.

As part of the accreditation process, the program, the ERP, and the COA should ask these questions about outcomes assessment:

- What mechanisms does the program already have in place to measure outcomes?
- What outcomes of the program provide evidence that the program is satisfactorily achieving its objectives?
- What resources does the program use to achieve the objectives of the program, and how are they organized to that end?
- Do the school and program provide reasonable assurance of continued resources and adequate organization so that it can continue to achieve its purposes and continue to conform to the Standards?

II.4.1 Sources of data for measuring outcomes

Goals, objectives, and assessment practices should not be so specific and inflexible that the school and program cannot respond to changes or unexpected events. Not all outcomes measures need to be objective or easily quantifiable; they must, however, be verifiable.

Look for outcomes measures first in existing documents about the program, its resources, and its external environment. Examples of sources of data for demonstrating attainment of objectives include student achievements (grades, projects, appointments, awards and recognition, job placements, etc.), alumni surveys, faculty accomplishments, employer feedback, and departmental or program evaluations. Assessment measures for the curriculum come from testing for success in attaining course and program objectives, school objectives, or institutional objectives for skills, thinking and practice in the discipline, and preparations for lifelong learning. The development of measures for teaching might begin with answering questions such as: What methods of presentation accommodate various learning styles? How are students

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II.5 The Plan for the Self-Study

The comprehensive review process begins with a notice from the Office for Accreditation advising the school of the scheduled comprehensive review of the program. This notification occurs approximately two (2) years before the ERP's planned visit. During the next few months, the Program Head works with the OA Director to select specific dates for the visit. The COA approves an ERP Chair from a list of highly qualified and experienced reviewers. After the program clears the proposed ERP Chair for any conflicts of interest, the Office invites the reviewer to chair. Appointment to ERP Chair can be made after the reviewer declares no conflicts of interest and confirms availability for the preparations and visit. Following appointment of the ERP Chair, the program begins developing a plan for its Self-Study.

At least one year before the site visit, the Program Head submits the Plan for the Self-Study to the OA Director and the ERP Chair for review. The main purpose of the plan is to ensure that the preparation for program review is done in a timely, thorough, and effective manner. In writing the plan, the school decides whether to give special focus in the Self-Study to specific areas, such as an initiative or a comprehensive curriculum review. The Plan is most effective when the school takes a future-oriented approach, often building on strategic planning documents, vision statements, biennial narrative reports to the COA, and other such items that the school already has or is planning for the near future.

The plan is discussed by the Program Head, the OA Director, and the ERP Chair in a conference call. During the conference call, the ERP Chair and the Program Head begin to work on preliminary scheduling of the visit activities.

The Plan for the Self-Study should be detailed enough to:

- Outline the process the school and program will follow as it prepares for the accreditation review (e.g., committee structure, faculty and staff assignments, responsibility for developing the documents required);
- Describe any special areas of emphasis for the comprehensive review;
- Describe the layout of the document;
- Include a timeline that allows the school to submit a complete draft Self-Study four (4) months before the site visit date and a final Self-Study at least six (6) weeks before the site visit date;
- List by standard the evidence that will be used in the Self-Study to indicate compliance with the Standards and how the evide

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- Examples of how program constituents are involved in program evaluation.

  * Effective beginning with program reviews with visits in fall 2018.

II. Curriculum

- Syllabi for all active courses
- Table of course numbers and descriptions, including locations and/or forms of delivery
- Table of course rotation schedule, spanning the years since the last review through what is planned for the future
- Table of areas of concentration/career pathways with required and elective courses
- Brief descriptions of experiential opportunities
- Descriptions of the curr

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- Evidence of the decision making process by providing the supporting data relating to the evaluation of the faculty and how the results are systematically used for program improvement and planning

IV. Students

- The program's policies for recruiting, admission, placement, and retention of students
- The program's policies on recruiting and retaining a diverse student body
- Data reflecting implementation and evaluation of above policies
- Examples of materials used in student recruitment
- Policies and procedures for waiving any admission standard or prerequisite
- Financial aid policy and data reflecting assistance made available
- Description of student advising procedures
- Progression and graduation data
- Descriptions of student organizations and activities
- Sample student plans of study
- Table of direct and indirect measures used to evaluate student learning outcomes
- Table of direct and indirect measures used to evaluate individual student learning
- Examples of how the evaluation of student learning is used to improve the program

V. Administration, Finances, and Resources

- Organizational charts for the program, the school/college of which the program is a part, and the institution as a whole
- Description of relationships of program and school/college to the institution with regard to autonomy, support and resources
- Minutes of meet

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- A table of contents for the appendices, listing document name, file name, and brief description, e.g., Appendix A, appendix_a.doc/xls/pdf, etc., SLIS Committee Structure.
- Appendices may be combined in one file or provided as separate files in a folder labeled "Appendices." If appendices are combined in one file, the table of contents listings must hyperlink to the corresponding appendices.
- Electronic file names should be concise and indicative of the content of the document, e.g., appendix_a. doc/xls/pdf, etc., self study.doc/pdf, etc.

Instructions regarding electronic submission of the draft Self-Study and the final Self-Study are sent to the program approximately three months before the due dates.

Revised June 3, 2019

II.8 Responding to the ERP Report

The ERP Report is detailed in section III.7. Programs have two opportunities to respond to the ERP Report, which is submitted after the site visit has been completed. In both cases, responses are optional.

II.8.1 Optional response to correct errors of fact in the draft ERP Report

The draft ERP Report, due three weeks after the site visit, is sent from the ERP Chair to the Program Head and the OA Director. The program then has one week (seven calendar days) to provide correction to errors of fact in the draft report. This optional response goes only to the ERP Chair (and panel) and the OA Director and is not seen by the COA. Examples of facts

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- To provide the opportunity to the Program Head to update the COA on program developments since the site visit or clarify information in the Self-Study or the program's response to the ERP Report;
- To provide the opportunity to the ERP Chair to clarity information in the ERP Report;
- To provide the opportunity for the Program Head to respond to questions from COA members that result from their examination of the comprehensive review documentation and reports leading up to the review. The purpose of the questioning is to confirm compliance with the Standards.

Attendees of the meeting:

- The Committee on Accreditation. Any COA member having a conflict of interest with the program is not present for the meeting, deliberations, or voting;
- The Program Head; other representatives of the program or institution may also attend at the discretion of the Program Head;
- The ERP Chair or other designated member of the ERP;
- Office for Accreditation staff.

Order of the meeting:

- Introductions of meeting attendees, facilitated by the chair of the COA;
- Opening remarks by the Program Head (optional, 10 minutes maximum). The Program Head may speak from electronic or printed notes, but may not make a presentation (no Powerpoint presentations, etc.) or distribute handouts;
- Questions from COA members to the Program Head or ERP Chair relating to specific documentation and its relationship to the Standards;
- Closing remarks by the Program Head (optional, 2 minutes maximum);*
- Closing remarks by the chair of the COA.

After the Program Head and ERP Chair leave the room at the conclusion of the meeting, the COA deliberates before making an accreditation decision. The COA communicates its accreditation decision in a letter to the Program Head, with copies to the dean of the school or college and to the CEO of the institution.

*Effective beginning with reviews with visits in spring 2017 for meeting with COA at the 2017 Annual Conference.

Revised April 21, 2017

III. Guidelines for the External Review Panel

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- Arranging access to appropriate electronic documents, campus networks, and online courses;
- Coordinating communication among ERP members before, during, and after the site visit;
- Scheduling and conducting conference calls with the entire panel during the site visit, if there are any off-site panelists, to discuss issues related to the visit;
- Avoiding purely social activities with the Program Head, students, faculty, and other interested parties during the site visit;
- Planning and conducting the exit briefing with representatives of the program and the institution;
- Consulting with the OA Director should any serious problem arise;
- Ensuring that process is followed and professional decorum is maintained throughout the visit;
- Coordinating the development of the ERP Report;
- Submitting the draft and final ERP Reports to the school and the Office for Accreditation by the stated deadlines;
- Attending the COA meeting wherein the Committee makes the accreditation decision in order to represent the panel and respond to COA questions.

III.5.2 Responsibilities of ERP members

Panel members are appointed approximately one year before the visit. The work of the ERP members begins when they receive assignments from the Chair, review their assigned chapter(s) of the draft Self-Study, and provide feedback to the Chair, approximately four months before the visit. Intense work starts when panelists receive and begin analysis of the Self-Study that is sent to them six weeks before the site visit. Work continues through the visit and the development and submission of the ERP Report to the COA.

Responsibilities of ERP members include the following:

- Participating in one or more training sessions before the site visit;
- Reviewing the *Standards* carefully before reading the Self-Study;
- Maintaining confidentiality throughout the process in accordance with section III.5.4 and the signed confidentiality agreement;
- Preparing for and participating in panel conference calls or electronic discussions to plan the work of the panel;
- Reviewing assigned chapter(s) of the draft of the Self-Study and providing feedback to the Chair;
- Reading and analyzing the entire Self-Study carefully and thoroughly;
- Completing draft of assigned report sections before the site visit;
- Completing assignments scheduled before and after the site visit in a timely manner;
- Preparing questions and areas for further observation and evidence gathering during the site visit;
- Notifying the ERP Chair of additional evidence or documents that should be reviewed on site;

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- Working cooperatively with the ERP Chair and other members of the panel throughout the process;
- Keeping a log of the people interviewed to ensure that all parties are interviewed and to use as a reference when writing the report;
- Interacting diplomatically with all program and institutional personnel, students, and other constituents;
- Avoiding making comparisons of the program being reviewed to other programs;
- Avoiding making pronouncements regarding the program's compliance with the standards or possible accreditation decision;
- Avoiding other commitments during the site visit;
- Completing assigned sections of the ERP Report as scheduled by the ERP Chair.

III.5.3 General recommendations

Maintaining collegial relationships and a professional demeanor throughout the review process is important. Accreditation is a voluntary process. It is founded on the premise of continuous self-evaluation and improvement as well as on respect for the individuality and uniqueness of each program and institution.

Panelists are cautioned against providing friendly advice or making comparisons to their own or other institutions. Even though such information may be well intended, the role of the ERP member is as an observer and evaluator; the time taken to describe other institutions diminishes the time available to evaluate the program being reviewed. The possibility of such advice and recommendations being interpreted as requirements for accreditation is of significant concern.

III.5.4 Confidentiality

All information related to the accreditation of programs is strictly confidential. This includes, but is not limited to, all reports; Self-Studies; files; correspondence, including the Decision Document; and discussions. Each ERP member must sign a confidentiality agreement at the beginning of each review to which he or she is assigned.

The following guidelines apply to people serving on an External Review Panel:

- Confidential information must be used solely in conjunction with duties performed as a member of the External Review Panel;
- Any material or other information related to the accreditation process must be disposed of in a manner that protects confidentiality;
- Any request received by a panelist for information regarding the accreditation process or the program must be forwarded to the Office for Accreditation or to the respective program.

III.6 Site visit exit briefing

Site visits conclude with an exit briefing that is an explanation of the panel's findings and preliminary conclusions, combined with the formalities of a courteous departure. The briefing is

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6. Review of program strengths and areas for improvement. Emphasize that these are observations to provide a sense of the visiting panel's impressions, but are neither final nor comprehensive.
7. Summary of what will happen after the panel leaves:
    a. The ERP Chair will send a draft of the ERP Report to the program and the Office for Accreditation;
    b. The program may then respond with corrections to factual errors in the draft ERP Report;
    c. The ERP Chair will submit the final ERP Report to the program and to the COA via the Office for Accreditation;
    d. The program has the option of submitting a written response to the ERP Chair and the COA;
    e. The Program Head and ERP Chair will meet with COA at the next ALA conference to answer the Committee's questions;
    f. The COA will make the accreditation decision.

III.7 The ERP Report

The COA uses the ERP Report in conjunction with the Self-Study. Thus, the ERP Report should address key points from the Standards based on evidence as outlined in II.7.4, but it should not recapitulate the information contained in the Self-Study or quote large passages from the Standards. References to pages in the Self-Study should be made instead.

Panelists' observations and evaluations must be founded on the Standards and must provide an objective assessment of the program supported by evidence presented within the Self-Study and/or gained as part of the site visit. Evidence can take the form of student ac 1 TfTj-34.35 outline th4 (r)3 4.02

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III.7.1(b) Analysis

This section of approximately 20 pages analyzes the program within the context of the Standards

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	x The ERP Chair initiates planning of assignments and scheduling for the site visit. x The ERP Chair and the Program Head begin drafting an agenda for the visit and discussing the documents and other evidence needed for the on-site review.
6 weeks before scheduled visit	x The Program Head submits the final Self-Study to be reviewed by the OA Director and each ERP member. x ERP members begin their review and analysis of the Self-Study; x The ERP Chair notifies the Program Head of any additional documents or evidence needed for the review. x The ERP Chair and the Program Head consult on the agenda for the site visit. x The ERP Chair assigns responsibilities to all panel members.
	Site visit
3 weeks after site visit	x The ERP Chair sends a draft of the ERP Report to the Program Head, the panel members, and the OA Director. Each recipient is invited to offer corrections to any factual errors in the draft report.
4 weeks after site visit	x The Program Head sends any corrections of factual errors in 0 Tw 6.11 0 Td( )T

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IV. Appeal process

IV.1 Introduction to the appeal process

The American Library Association (ALA) is an accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), whose standards require "appropriate and fair policies and procedures that include effective checks and balances" (CHEA Recognition Standard 12D). ALA is also a member of the Association for Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) and follows its Code of Good Practice. The Code states that a member of ASPA mus

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IV.7.2 Correspondence and document copies

All correspondence and documents are to be addressed to the chair of the ARC in care of the ALA Executive Office. The Executive Office is responsible for distributing appeal documents. All documents must be sent in electronic format. If sent via email, the sender should request evidence of receipt. Documents that are more than 20 pages, such as the Self-Study, should also be sent in hard copy via an overnight delivery service, signature required, and are deemed received on the signature date.

The institution and the COA will provide the Executive Office with 16 copies of their documents to be used in the appeal. The documents will be distributed by the Executive Office as follows:

- Seven (7) for the ARC;
- One (1) for the ALA Executive Office;
- One (1) for the Office for Accreditation;
- One (1) for the representative of the institution;
- One (1) for the representative of the COA; and
- Five (5) copies for distribution to legal counsel and/or other representatives involved in the appeal.

The institution is responsible for providing copies of:

- The Self-Study;
- The optional school response to the ERP Report; and
- The appeal document.

The COA is responsible for providing copies of:

- The ERP Report;
- The COA Decision Document withdrawing or denying accreditation;
- The COA response to appeal; and
- In the case of withdrawal of accreditation, the Decision Document granting the program Conditional accreditation and subsequent COA correspondence with the institution pertaining to interim reports.
- In the case of denial of Initial accreditation, the Decision Document granting Candidacy and subsequent COA correspondence to the institution pertaining to interim reports.

IV.7.3 Expenses

The institution must submit a non-refundable appeal filing fee (see section I.23.1 for current fee), due with submission of the document on which the appeal is based.

Each party is responsible for all expenses that it incurs in connection with this appeal process, including expenses for its representatives and any legal fees.

ALA and the institution share any costs of transcription if the ARC meeting is transcribed.

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- Whether the COA failed to follow its established, published procedures in reaching its decision, and that this failure to follow procedures caused the decision to be unfair; and/or
- Whether the COA's decision was arbitrary, capricious, or not supported by significant, relevant information or evidence that the institution submitted in writing to the ERP and/or to the COA at the time of the review or before the decision, and that this oversight resulted in an unfair decision.

IV.8.1

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The ALA Executive Board reviews the ARC report and makes one of two determinations: 1) to uphold the COA's decision, or 2) to remand the decision back to the COA with comment. The Executive Board members are not to determine whether they would have reached the same conclusions as the COA and/or the ARC, but rather to determine whether the COA committed clear error by failing to follow established published procedures, resulting in an unfair decision or by reaching an arbitrary or capricious conclusion.

The Executive Board sends a report of its determination and a copy of the ARC report to the institution, the COA via the Office for Accreditation, the ARC members, and the ALA President within 14 calendar days of the Board's receipt of the ARC report.

If the Executive Board upholds the COA decision to withdraw or deny Initial accreditation, then the COA's decision is considered final and the date of accreditation withdrawal is the date the institution receives the ALA Executive Board determination and report along with the ARC report.

If the decision is remanded back to the COA, then that committee will review and act on the reports at its next regularly scheduled meeting. There will not be another on-site review of the program. The COA's re-review and decision will be based on the Self-Study, the ERP Report, the school response to the ERP Report, the Decision Document, the appeal document, the COA response to appeal, the ARC recommendation and report, and the Executive Board determination and report. The decision of the COA at this meeting is final and may not be appealed.

IV.10 The role of the ALA Executive Board

The ALA Executive Board provides advice to the ALA President in the selection of ARC members and approves the ARC members.

The conflict of interest requirements of s

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IV.11 Appeal process timeline and deadlines

Deadlines are determined from the date of the receipt of a document. Days in the deadlines column of the timeline refer to number of calendar days. Roman numerals in the Action column refer to the section in this manual with details on that action.

Appeal Process Timeline

Action	Deadline	Example dates

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