

POLICY & PROCEDURES

ACC-08: DEFERRAL OF ACCREDITATION REVIEW

PREAMBLE

Preparation for an accreditation review requires long-term planning, both on the part of education programs participating in the process, and of Physiotherapy Education Accreditation Canada (PEAC), in order to ensure adequate financial and human resources to complete the process. Education programs are awarded accreditation status for a six-year cycle, and firm dates for the next onsite review and associated deadlines are set one year in advance, collaboratively with PEAC.

Deferral of an accreditation review has several implications.

Financial

- PEAC's budget and three-year expense projections are established based on the anticipated number of reviews scheduled in each fiscal year. Changes to the anticipated number of reviews can create resource management and fiscal challenges for PEAC.
- In addition, should a deferral be required or requested, financial penalties can be incurred by cancellation of airline tickets, hotel rooms, and other related costs.

Timelines/deadlines

- Onsite accreditation review visits must be completed in time for the final accreditation award decision to be received by the program prior to the date of expiry of its accreditation status. Following an onsite visit, the PEAC Accreditation Committee meets to review the program's accreditation dossier and make an accreditation award recommendation to the Board of Directors of PEAC, which then awards the program its accreditation status. The Accreditation Committee meets twice annually, in the spring and fall.

Human resources

- Onsite accreditation reviews are conducted by a group of four volunteers, who commit time several months in advance to preparing for the visit, and protecting the time to travel to the program to complete the visit. Deferral results in volunteers needing to adapt personal and professional commitments to continue as a member of the Peer Review Team.

- Rescheduling an onsite visit and recruiting replacement Peer Review Team members if necessary results in additional administrative and training time required by PEAC staff.

A deferral of an accreditation review may be requested by a program, requested by PEAC (*Administrative Extension*), or required by PEAC. Deferral will be granted only under exceptional circumstances. The circumstances under which may be granted are described below.

1.0 POLICY

1.1 Deferral requested by a program

- 1.1.1 Education programs with pre-accreditation status whose onsite accreditation review dates are confirmed will not be permitted a deferral of the accreditation review unless there is a significant mitigating circumstance outside of the program's control (see 1.1.8).
- 1.1.2 Education programs with accreditation status whose accreditation review dates are not yet confirmed may request a deferral of an anticipated accreditation review once and only once in each accreditation cycle.
- 1.1.3 Education programs with accreditation status whose onsite accreditation review dates are confirmed will not be permitted a deferral of the accreditation review unless there is a significant mitigating circumstance outside of the program's control (see 1.1.8).
- 1.1.4 Education programs may not request a deferral longer than six months.
- 1.1.5 The request for deferral to PEAC must be made at least six months in advance of the schedule onsite visit date.
- 1.1.6 A request made by an education program to defer its accreditation review must be reviewed and approved by PEAC.
- 1.1.7 Requests will be reviewed taking the following into consideration (in no particular order):
 - i. the program's rationale to support the request
 - ii. substantive changes made since the previous full accreditation review
 - iii. strength of the program's compliance with accreditation standards

- iv. the program's history of timely compliance with requirements to maintain accreditation status
- v. presence of circumstances which are beyond the program's control
- vi. PEAC fiscal and human resource capacity
- vii. risk to students and potential students with respect to educational quality

1.1.8 If a program's request to defer an accreditation review has been granted, PEAC may ask for the submission of additional interim progress reports in order for the program to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the accreditation standards.

1.1.9 Exceptions to the conditions described above may be considered in situations of serious extenuating or unforeseen circumstances, or emergencies out of the program's control. In these cases, should there not be the opportunity for review of the request by PEAC (given the urgency of the request), the Executive Director and the President of PEAC will render a decision regarding deferral.

1.1.10 Should a deferral of an onsite visit result in costs to PEAC (cancellation of flights, accommodation etc.), the program will be responsible for any financial penalties incurred by PEAC and its volunteers. In the case of a deferral being granted, the program will be invoiced a \$2500 administrative fee.

1.2 Deferral requested by PEAC (*Administrative Extension*)

1.2.1 PEAC can approach an education program to request an extension to a program's accreditation status for the purpose of addressing operational and resource issues related to the number of accreditation reviews in one year.

1.2.2 Programs are not obligated to agree to an extension should it not be convenient in the program's academic year or for needs related to human resource allocation.

1.3 Deferral required by PEAC

1.3.1 PEAC will require a deferral of an onsite accreditation review in exceptional circumstances, such as the submission of a poor quality or incomplete Self Study Report prior to a scheduled onsite visit.

1.3.2 In all cases of deferral required by PEAC, there will be no extension provided to the accreditation expiry date in order to accommodate

the deferral. Consequently, a program's accreditation award status may expire prior to re-scheduling of the onsite visit.

- 1.3.3 Should a deferral of an onsite visit be required by PEAC, the program will be responsible for any financial penalties incurred by PEAC and its volunteers, and will be invoiced a \$2500 administrative fee.

2.0 PROCEDURES

2.1 Deferral requested by a program

- 2.1.1 Programs with accreditation status must submit a request for deferral of an onsite accreditation date in writing to the Executive Director of PEAC, at least six months prior to the confirmed onsite accreditation dates. The request must include the program's rationale for requesting a deferral, and the length of deferral requested.
- 2.1.2 At its next meeting, PEAC will review the request and make a decision regarding deferral. Until the education program has been informed of PEAC's decision regarding the deferral, it should continue to plan for the onsite visit according to the original schedule.
- 2.1.3 The program will be notified in writing of PEAC's decision, and, in the case of denial of the request, the reason(s) for the decision. If a deferral is granted, the decision will identify any additional requirements, such as submission of an interim progress report(s). The program will also receive an invoice for any costs as outlined in 1.1.9 above.
- 2.1.4 The PEAC website will be revised to reflect the new accreditation award expiry date, and a new accreditation certificate, if necessary, will be issued to the program as soon as possible.
- 2.1.5 Should a revision to the required text for publication of the accreditation decision be required (*see ACC-02 Disclosure*), the program will be required to make the change within sixty days of official notification of confirmation of the approval.

2.2 Deferral requested by PEAC (*Administrative Extension*)

- 2.2.1 PEAC must submit a request in writing to the Program Chair with a rationale for the request for extension. The Program Chair will be notified of the deadline for acceptance or refusal of the extension.
- 2.2.2 PEAC will ensure the education program is aware that it is not required to provide a rationale for its decision to accept the extension or not.
- 2.2.3 Should the education program accept the extension, a formal written confirmation of the extension will be provided, and the PEAC website will be revised to reflect the new accreditation award expiry date.
- 2.2.4 Should a new accreditation certificate be required, PEAC will provide it as soon as possible to the program.
- 2.2.5 Should a revision to the required text for publication of the accreditation decision be required (*see ACC-02 Disclosure*), the program will be required to make the change within sixty days of official notification of confirmation of the extension.

2.3 Deferral required by PEAC

- 2.3.1 Poor quality or incomplete Self Study Report submitted prior to scheduled onsite visit
 - 2.3.1.1 When a program submits its Self Study Report (SSR) eight weeks prior to the scheduled onsite visit, PEAC staff review it briefly for completeness and then forward it to the Peer Review Team.
 - 2.3.1.2 Should PEAC staff and the Chair of the Peer Review Team have concerns about the quality of the report (either in navigability, in completeness, or in content) which would result in inefficiencies or extraordinary time being required on the part of the Peer Review Team to review the evidence provided, the SSR will be provided to the Chair of the PEAC Accreditation Committee and the President of PEAC for review.
 - 2.3.1.3 Should the SSR be deemed of low enough quality to defer the onsite visit, the Program Chair will be formally notified that a deferral of the accreditation visit will be required,

unless the program can submit a revision of the SSR within seven days of receipt of the notification.

2.3.1.4 The program's accreditation expiry date will not be adjusted to accommodate the deferral.

2.4 A \$2500 administrative fee and any costs incurred by PEAC as a result of a deferral requested by a program or a deferral required by PEAC will be the responsibility of the program and will be invoiced upon confirmation of deferral date.

| Policy Number: ACC-08 | |
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| Date of last revision | Associated documents |
| Sept 2016 | Program Accreditation Handbook |
| | ACC-01 Accreditation Decisions |
| | ACC-02 Disclosure |