



Review of Standards Policy

Scope of This Policy

In view of the need for the COCA standards of accreditation to be kept both rigorous and relevant to a rapidly-changing healthcare environment, and in keeping with federal criterion 34 C.F.R. § 602.21 (a-b),(c-d), the COCA will follow a prescribed process and calendar for reviewing and updating its accreditation standards. The standards must be compliant with federal regulations and reflect best practices in higher education.

Timing for Review

The COCA will undertake a comprehensive and inclusive review of its accreditation standards every five years. In order to obtain and process input from various constituencies, the review will begin approximately 12 months prior to the approval and effective date on any revised standards. Should it become evident that any individual standards need to be modified in the interval between comprehensive reviews, such changes will be initiated promptly, but in no case later than 12 months from the identification of that need. (See 34 C.F.R. § 602.21(c-d)).

Process for Review

The COCA will notify its multiple constituencies that it is open to receive evaluative comments regarding the current standards in terms of the quality of osteopathic medical education they define and the relevance of the educational program as students are being prepared to enter the profession. The COCA will solicit comments from a broad and representative group of constituents, including but not limited to representatives from all accredited and pre-accredited COMs and proposed COMs in candidate status. Notices will also be sent to related organizations within the profession, such as the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) and the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) for distribution to their constituencies as they deem appropriate.

Parties interested in contributing comments related to the COCA standards will be directed to a link on the COCA website, which will be open to receive initial comments for a designated period of time. Any comments received will be taken into account by the Standards Review Committee (SRC), a standing COCA committee. The committee will prepare a preliminary draft of proposed changes to forward to the Commission. Drafts of changes that are approved by the Commission for public comment will be posted on the COCA website for a 30-day period of public comment. Announcements of these postings for public comment will be sent to the constituencies listed above.

Comments received will be considered by the SRC and a final draft submitted to the Commission for approval. The Commission may adopt the proposed standards by a majority vote. The Commission will also establish the effective date when institutions will be required to comply with the new standards, including whether compliance by new and developing COMs will be phased in as they progress in their development.

At its discretion, and by majority vote, the Commission may modify the accreditation standards to clarify their requirements, align requirements with related COCA policies and procedures, or correct grammatical errors, without soliciting public comment.

Publication of New Standards

Upon adoption by the Commission, the new standards will be published on the COCA website, including in the publications *Accreditation of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine: COM Continuing Accreditation Standards* and *Accreditation of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine: COM New & Developing Accreditation Standards*. The academic year when the standards are applicable will also be published.

Related Federal Requirements:

34 C.F.R. § 602.21(a-b),(c-d)