ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS – DOCTORAL: REGIONAL ACCREDITATION

Charles Caramello
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
University of Maryland
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OVERVIEW

1. Institutional Accreditation
2. Accreditation Review Process
3. Accreditation and Outcomes Assessment
4. Excellence through Accreditation and Assessment
1. INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION
REGIONAL ACCREDITING AGENCIES

- **New England** Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education *(NEASC-CIHE)*
- **North Central** Association of Colleges and Schools - The Higher Learning Commission *(NCA-HLC)*
- **Northwest** Commission on Colleges and Universities *(NWCCU)*
- **Southern** Association of Colleges and Schools *(SACS)* Commission on Colleges
- **Western** Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities *(WASC-ACSCU)*
- **Middle States** Commission on Higher Education *(MSCHE)*
  Delaware, DC, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands

- Bureaucrats policing regulations?
- Colleagues conducting peer review.
ACCREDITATION REVIEWS

- Decennial Review
- Periodic Reviews or Interim Reports
- Institutional Self-Evaluations or Annual Reports
- Substantive Change Reports (when applicable)
BASIC PRINCIPLES

Mission
- Ensure institutions meet acceptable levels of quality
- Improve effectiveness of institutions

Process
- Accreditation via peer evaluation
- Use of standards of excellence as review method

Values
- Promote self-evaluation and institutional improvement
- Advance learning and teaching
- Achieve diverse, dynamic, global higher education community
STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Resources

- Institutional Mission
- Governance and Administration
- Financial Resources
- Physical Resources
- Faculty and Personnel Resources
- Institutional Effectiveness Assessment

Learning

- Student Affairs and Services
- Learning and Teaching Resources
- Undergraduate Programs
- Graduate and Professional Programs
- Extended Studies and Other Programs
- Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
ACCREDITATION PARTNERS

THE INSTITUTION

GOAL: Advancing the Institution

THE REVIEW TEAM

THE ACCREDITING AGENCY
2. ACCREDITATION REVIEW PROCESS
BASIC ELEMENTS

An accreditation review covers all aspects of institutional operation, including graduate education.

A Decennial Review comprises several steps:

1. Self-Study
2. Self-Study Report
3. Review Team Campus Visit
4. Review Team Report
5. Institutional Response
6. Commission Action
SAMPLE TIMELINE

LATE SUMMER
Commission appoints review Chair and Team.
Institution drafts report and compiles review documents.

FALL
Chair and Institution collaboratively review self-study process, draft report, and campus visit.

WINTER
Institution completes final Self-Study Report.
Commission, Institution, Chair and Team prepare for campus visit.

EARLY SPRING
Chair assigns review tasks to Team.
Team Members conduct preliminary reviews.

SPRING
The Team Visit Occurs
Chair and Team Members prepare Review Report.
Institution responds to Review Report.

SUMMER
Chair presents Report to Commission.
Commission takes appropriate action.
Establishing professional and collegial relationships is critical to success.

**Graduate Dean**
- Collects and analyzes outcomes and other data
- Reports on graduate programs
- Participates in self-study process and report preparation

**Institution**
- Conducts self-study and prepares report
- Hosts Team visit
- Submits follow-up reports
- Implements agency recommendations

**Review Team**
- Reviews self-study and report
- Conducts Team visit
- Prepares report and recommendations
- Reports to agency

**Agency**
- Establishes guidelines and standards for accreditation
- Monitors accreditation cycle
- Represents regional higher education
FLOW OF COMMUNICATION

- Institution
- Graduate Programs
- Chair
- Agency
- Team Members
3. ACCREDITATION AND OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT
OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Sustained and Organized Processes to Assess:

• Institutional Effectiveness
• Student Learning

Results Used To:

• Inform Planning and Resource Allocation
• Improve Programs and Services
LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Developing clearly articulated learning outcomes: knowledge, skills, competencies.

Using the results of those assessments to improve teaching and learning.

Offering courses, programs, and experiences providing students opportunities for achieving learning outcomes.

Assessing student achievement of those learning outcomes.
DOCTORAL ASSESSMENT

- Undergraduate, masters, and doctoral degrees and programs differ significantly.

- Doctoral programs also differ significantly by discipline.

- Doctoral training focuses more on research/scholarly benchmarks than on courses.

- Programs in best position to develop objectives, benchmarks, rubrics, and measures.

- Use of both “direct” and “indirect” measures critical in doctoral education.

- Assessment at doctoral level based on creating new methods and knowledge, not just learning existing methods and knowledge.
ASSESSMENT MEASURES

DIRECT

Occasions and Objectives

- Courses and seminars
- Qualifying exams
- Research proposals
- Dissertations and defenses
- Mastery of knowledge
- Ability to think critically and creatively
- Ability to express ideas clearly
- Advancing knowledge
- Advancing disciplinary thinking
- Advancing expressive possibilities

INDIRECT

Achievements

- Time to degree
- Number of presentations
- Number of publications
- Number of fellowships/awards
- Placements and positions
- Early professional successes
CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

• Buy-in from **doctoral programs** and, especially, **senior faculty**.

• Assessments from **all programs**, factoring in newness, size, etc.

• Clear understanding and employment of **feedback loop**.

• Revaluation of “**direct**” and “**indirect**” measures.

• Focal shift from **learning** to **creating knowledge**.
REASONS FOR DOCTORAL ASSESSMENT

- GOA Mandated By Accrediting Agencies
- GOA Can Be Made Useful
- GOA Can Be Kept Simple
4. EXCELLENCE THROUGH ACCREDITATION AND ASSESSMENT
ACCREDITATION

The most important function of regional accreditation is to assist member institutions in establishing the integrity of the degrees they offer.

An institution that takes its instructional mission seriously and that values student learning:

- is clear and public about desired learning outcomes;
- uses learning goals and outcomes to improve instruction;
- provides an environment supportive of learning;
- promotes critical reflection on teaching and learning.
BENEFITS

**Program Impact:**
Opportunity to analyze and improve individual programs.

**Campus Impact:**
Opportunity to conduct periodic self study and ongoing program assessment.

**Regional Impact:**
Opportunity to share in peer review profiting institution and regional higher education.