



# Code of Federal Regulations

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## Title 34

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#### § 602.17 Application of standards in reaching accreditation decisions.

The agency must have effective mechanisms for evaluating an institution's or program's compliance with the agency's standards before reaching a decision to accredit or preaccredit the institution or program. The agency meets this requirement if the agency demonstrates that it—

- (a) Evaluates whether an institution or program—
  - (1) Maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate in light of the degrees or certificates awarded;
  - (2) Is successful in achieving its stated objectives at both the institutional and program levels; and
  - (3) Maintains requirements that at least conform to commonly accepted academic standards, or the equivalent, including pilot programs in § 602.18(b);
- (b) Requires the institution or program to engage in a self-study process that assesses the institution's or program's education quality and success in meeting its mission and objectives, highlights opportunities for improvement, and includes a plan for making those improvements;
- (c) Conducts at least one on-site review of the institution or program during which it obtains sufficient information to determine if the institution or program complies with the agency's standards;
- (d) Allows the institution or program the opportunity to respond in writing to the report of the on-site review;
- (e) Conducts its own analysis of the self-study and supporting documentation furnished by the institution or program, the report of the on-site review, the institution's or program's response to the report, and any other information substantiated by the agency from other sources to determine whether the institution or program complies with the agency's standards;
- (f) Provides the institution or program with a detailed written report that assesses the institution's or program's compliance with the agency's standards, including areas needing improvement, and the institution's or program's performance with respect to student achievement;
- (g) Requires institutions to have processes in place through which the institution establishes that a student who registers in any course offered via distance education or correspondence is the same student who academically engages in the course or program; and
- (h) Makes clear in writing that institutions must use processes that protect student privacy and notify students of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1099b)

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