

**Definitions of At-Risk of Becoming Low-Performing and Low-Performing  
Institutions of Higher Education in Virginia  
As Required by the Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA)**

**(Revised May 19, 2011)**

**Background Information:**

In October 1998, the U.S. Congress enacted Title II provisions to the Higher Education Act (HEA) authorizing federal grant programs to improve the recruitment, retention, preparation, and support of new teachers. Title II also included accountability measures in the form of reporting requirements for institutions and states on teacher preparation and licensing.

Section 207 of Title II reporting requirements mandates that the U.S. Secretary of Education collect data on standards for teacher certification and licensure, as well as data on the performance of teacher preparation programs. The law requires the Secretary to use these data in submitting its annual report on the quality of teacher preparation to Congress. In addition, states were required to develop criteria, procedures, and processes from which institutions at-risk of becoming low-performing and low-performing institutions could be identified. The following statement is an excerpt from the Title II “Reference and Reporting Guide for Preparing State and Institutional Reports on the Quality of Teacher Preparation,” April 19, 2000:

*To receive funds under this act, a state, not later than two years after the date of Enactment of the Higher Education Amendments of 1998, shall have in place a procedure to identify, and assist, through the provision of technical assistance, low-performing programs of teacher preparation within institutions of higher education. Such state shall provide the U.S. Secretary an annual list of such low-performing institutions that includes an identification of those institutions at-risk of being placed on such list. Such levels of performance shall be determined solely by the state and may include criteria based upon information collected pursuant to this title. Such assessment shall be described in the report under section 207(b).*

On September 26, 2001, the Board of Education approved Virginia’s definitions for low-performing and at-risk of becoming low-performing institutions of higher education with teacher preparation programs, beginning with approved program reviews on July 1, 2003. The designations of “approval, approval with stipulations, and denial of accreditation” were used in these definitions. The *Regulations Governing the Review and Approval of Education Programs in Virginia*, effective September 21, 2007, and amended January 19, 2011, separated the accreditation and program approval processes; therefore, revisions were needed in Virginia’s definitions for “low-performing” and “at-risk of becoming low-performing institutions.” On November 20, 2008, the Board of Education approved revisions to the definitions to align with the accrediting bodies’ designations.

Title II HEA, was reauthorized on August 14, 2008. Section 205 of Title II of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) mandates that the Department of Education collect data on state assessments, other requirements, and standards for teacher certification and licensure, as well as data on the performance of teacher preparation programs. The law requires the Secretary to use these data in submitting an annual report on the quality of teacher preparation to the Congress.

The *Regulations Governing the Review and Approval of Education Programs in Virginia*, effective September 21, 2007, and amended January 19, 2011, define the standards that must be met and the review options available for the accreditation of professional education programs required. Based on recent changes made to accrediting body designations by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council, there is a need to align the definitions for at-risk of becoming low-performing and low-performing institutions of higher education in Virginia. Federal reporting is required by states in October of each year. Institutions meeting these definitions at the end of the reporting year will be designated at-risk of becoming low-performing institutions of higher education or low-performing institutions of higher education.

On March 21, 2011, the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure unanimously recommended that the Board of Education approve the revised definitions of at-risk of becoming low-performing and low-performing institutions of higher education in Virginia. The revised definitions of at-risk of becoming a low-performing institution of higher education and low-performing institution of higher education were approved by the Virginia Board of Education at its May 19, 2011, meeting.

### **Options for Accreditation**

The three options for accreditation are as follows:

Option I: National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

Option II: Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)

Option III: Board of Education (BOE) Approved Accreditation Process

Each accreditation review results in one of the following decisions:

#### **Option I: National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education:**

- Accreditation for five years<sup>1</sup>
- Accreditation for seven years<sup>2</sup>
- Accreditation for two years with a focused visit
- Accreditation for two years with a full visit
- Defer decision [Accreditation decision is deferred for six months.]
- Deny accreditation
- Revoke accreditation

<sup>1</sup>*All standards are met, no serious problems exist across standards, and the state retains a five-year cycle.*

<sup>2</sup>*All standards are met and no serious problems exist across standards. (Note: Virginia maintains a seven-year cycle.)*

#### **Option II: Teacher Education Accreditation Council:**

- Accreditation (ten years)
- Accreditation (five years)
- Accreditation (two years)
- Initial accreditation (five years)
- Initial accreditation (two years)
- Deny

### **Option III: Board of Education (BOE) Approved Accreditation Process:**

- Accredited
- Accredited with Stipulations
- Accreditation Denied

### **Definitions of At-Risk of Becoming a Low-Performing Institution and Low-Performing Institution of Higher Education in Virginia**

The following definitions of becoming at-risk of becoming a low-performing and low-performing institution of higher education in Virginia as required by the August 14, 2008 Title II HEA provisions were approved by the Virginia Board of Education on May 19, 2011.

**At-Risk of Becoming a Low-Performing Institution of Higher Education:** An at-risk of becoming a low-performing institution of higher education means an institution with teacher preparation programs that receives one of the following designations from the accreditation review:

NCATE: Accreditation for two years with a focused visit; or  
Accreditation for two years with a full visit

TEAC: Accreditation (two years)  
Initial Accreditation (two years)

BOE: Accredited with Stipulations

**Low-Performing Institution of Higher Education:** A low-performing institution of higher education means an institution with teacher preparation programs that has not made improvements by the end of the period designated by the accrediting body or not later than two years after receiving the designation of at-risk of receiving the designation of at-risk of becoming a low-performing institution of higher education.

When an institution receives one of the following designations, the low-performing designation will be removed:

NCATE: Accreditation for seven years

TEAC: Accreditation (ten or five years)<sup>3</sup>

BOE: Accredited

<sup>3</sup>The Virginia/TEAC Partnership currently allows for seven-year accreditation. The partnership with TEAC expires June 30, 2013.

If an institution's accreditation is revoked or denied, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) will be notified for appropriate action. The *Regulations Governing the Review and Approval of Education Programs in Virginia*, (8VAC20-542-20), effective September 21, 2007 and amended January 19, 2011, stipulate that "If a professional education program fails to maintain accreditation, enrolled candidates shall be permitted to complete their programs of study. Professional education programs shall not admit new candidates. Candidates shall be notified of program approval status."