

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

**(Revised March 23, 2017)**

**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 mandate 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 “Reporting Reference User Manual for Preparing State and Institutional Reports on the Quality of Teacher Preparation,” February, 2017:

*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 July 1, 2013, the De Facto Consolidation of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) created the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). CAEP is now the unified national accrediting organization for educator preparation. Based on Virginia’s 2016 signed partnership agreement with CAEP and changes made to accreditation program review decision designations by CAEP, the definitions for “at-risk of becoming low-performing” and “low-performing” institutions of higher education in Virginia were realigned.

On January 23, 2017, 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 March 23, 2017, meeting.

## **Options for Accreditation**

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.

Currently, the two options for accreditation are as follows:

### **Accreditation Options**

Option I: Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)

Option II\*: Board of Education (BOE) Approved Accreditation Process

Each accreditation review results in one of the following decisions:

#### **Option I: Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP):**

- Initial Accreditation for seven years
- Full Accreditation for seven years<sup>1</sup>
- Probationary Accreditation for two years<sup>2</sup>
- Denial of Initial Accreditation<sup>3</sup>
- Revocation of Accreditation<sup>4</sup>
- Exemplary or “Gold” Accreditation<sup>5</sup>

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

- Accredited
- Accredited with Stipulations
- Accreditation Denied

Under the Title II regulations, all states are required to implement a system to assess the quality of each teacher preparation program. Currently, Virginia’s definitions are aligned with the accreditation options for BOE and CAEP. Institutions meeting these definitions at the end of the reporting year will be designated “at-risk of becoming a low-performing” or “low-performing” institution of higher education.

**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:

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<sup>1</sup> All five standards are met (previously accredited by CAEP, NCATE or TEAC; no serious problems exist across standards, and retain a seven-year accreditation cycle).

<sup>2</sup> All but one standard met (reaccredited for a period of two (2) years).

<sup>3</sup> Accreditation is denied to providers seeking initial accreditation that fall below CAEP standards.

<sup>4</sup> Accreditation is revoked. EPP failed to meet two (2) or more of the CAEP Standards. Used with EPPs that has been previously accredited by CAEP, NCATE or TEAC.

<sup>5</sup> Meet all CAEP standards and surpass those guidelines for a combination of standards (only awarded to a small number of providers).

CAEP: Probationary Accreditation for 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:

CAEP: Full Accreditation (five years)<sup>6</sup>  
BOE: Accredited

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."

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<sup>6</sup> Full Accreditation is granted for the remainder of the accreditation term. The Virginia CAEP Partnership currently allows for seven-year accreditation cycle. The partnership with CAEP expires December 31, 2021.