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Official and Formal Considerations for Resolving Conditions

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Introduction:

Academic accreditation aims to ensure that institutions and academic programs can continuously develop and improve to the highest levels of performance. Since the Accreditation Standards are the governing framework for evaluation, it may appear when reviewing institutions or programs that some aspects need to be developed and improved to achieve the targeted compliance levels; thereby conditional accreditation is initially granted. By enhancing performance, the institutions or programs can meet the requirements of the conditions to change their conditional accreditation into Full Accreditation. Therefore, the main objective of reviewing the achievements in terms of observing the condition is to ensure that it has developed its performance commensurate with the level of performance targeted in the related Standard.

The NCAAA Accreditation Standards – like other Accreditation Standards issued by international agencies – are systematically designed to construct integrated approach between the criteria of the standards. Thus, performance in one standard influences and is influenced by the other Standards, (e.g. the quality of Teaching and Learning is influenced by Learning Resources, Facilities and Equipment, as well as by Faculty ... etc.). When conditions are observed, each one must be dealt with in light of its expected impact on other relevant aspects to enhance quality.

One of the reasons why some institutions or programs may fail to address the conditions is the lack of proofs and evidence that support the performance development. In this spirit, the NCAAA is keen to support institutions and programs in developing their performance and obtaining full accreditation and thus quality excellence. This outline is provided to deal with the conditions, which in turn, will be subject to further development per the results of reviewing the processes of observing conditions carried out by the NCAAA.





Organizational and Technical Aspects:

Upon receipt of the accreditation conditions, the institution or program shall actively deal with each one, including:

First: Official Considerations to Address the Conditions:

- ❖ **Applying Period:** The institution or program must apply for resolving the conditions at least **six months** before the end date of conditional accreditation. Failing to apply during the given period that allows the NCAAA to review the conditions may affect the accreditation status as indicated in the accreditation decision and its expiration date. It should be borne in mind that the application for resolving the conditions may require further proofs and evidence, or conducting an onsite visit.
- ❖ **Proofs and Evidence:** Accreditation is meant to be factual judgements and documented practices that are supported by clear proofs and evidence. Attaching appropriate, adequate and relevant proofs and evidence is therefore essential. The institution or program is not expected to attach documents, proofs and evidence that were already in place during the review visit that the Review Panel found to be inappropriate or did not meet review needs that the institution or program's performance according to these data met the acceptable level of compliance. The proofs and evidence are also expected to be relevant to the essence of the condition. The presentation of irrelevant evidence reflects a lack of understanding of the nature of the condition and how it should be approached. It is a fundamental consideration that proofs and evidence should be delivered as determined by the NCAAA and organized logically to clarify the documents' content. All evidence and files should have indicative names to their contents and only relevant evidences are used.
- ❖ **Official and Formal Framework:** While developing the requirements to resolve the conditions, the institution or program must in turn subject all its activities to the institution's rules of procedure, accepted methodologies in preparation and issuance of policies and regulations, formation of committees, and approval of plans and programs ... etc. A developed program is not expected to be offered without the institution's approval procedures, such as the approval of the Plans and Curricula Committee, and other statutory and specialized levels of the institution.





- ❖ **Adherence to the NCAAA's policies:** All operations and communications with the NCAAA must be conducted on an official basis, including addresses, application forms and others. Expected time frames must also be adhered to, and the failure to do so may affect the accreditation status.

Second: Technical considerations to resolve conditions:

- ❖ **Formation of an appropriate working group:** One of the most important actions to be initiated in addressing the condition is the formation of a competent and experienced working group to study and address the conditions. The requirement of accreditation does not depend on the preparation of a document or the issuance of a decision separately from the relevant aspects. Otherwise, the condition will not be imposed on the institution or program if all it requires is regular and simple remedies.
- ❖ **The action plan to address the condition:** The action plan should include several aspects, the most important of which are:
 - **Analysis of the condition to its components:** The conditions usually contain several elements or components, where dealing with some of them and neglecting others is considered a failure to fulfil the condition.
 - **Logical analysis of the condition components:** The condition contains several aspects, and cannot be addressed in parallel without taking into account the logical relationship between these aspects. Procedures cannot be taken before formulating the policy, actions cannot be implemented without a pre-plan, and no improvement plan can be prepared without an assessment of the performance gap. These interrelated aspects must therefore be identified and thus determine the proper methodology for dealing with them.
 - **Analysis of the condition in terms of its related factors:** The condition usually is linked to several aspects. When there is a condition related to the absence of skills for instance in the curriculum, it is not expected that satisfying the condition can be achieved by simply adding some skills without reviewing their consistency with the rest of the Learning Outcomes and clarifying how related they are. The impact on teaching and learning strategies used to achieve these skills, as well as their evaluation methods, should be also revisited.
 - **Perception of the essence of the condition:** Imposing conditions relating to the importance of implementing the comprehensive quality assurance system for example, or a mechanism to accurately measure the achievement of Learning Outcomes or other desired results are not expected to be resolved through the preparation of a report showing what has been achieved so far, rather an integrated mechanism or comprehensive system must be designed and applied and then its results are verified. By doing so, the applied system can be then described as effective.





- ❖ **Benchmarking before and after addressing the condition:** Imposing the condition aims to develop the performance of the institution or program. Therefore, the application for resolving the condition is expected to present performance results before and after implementing the changes. The benchmarking result should clearly describe the most significant changes made, their application, and implications for measuring the desired performance. A mechanism should be established to follow up on this regularly, and quantitative and qualitative evidence showing the impact of such development should be provided.
- ❖ **Substantial impact on performance:** The organization or program must clarify the nature of the new changes, or the update achieved when addressing the condition, and how that positive change is launched, applied, or verified for quality. Thus, it should not be a mere presentation of a set of actions undertaken without discussing its relationship with the subject matter of the condition, its content and its impact on performance.
- ❖ **Scientific methodology:** Many aspects as they are prepared in the early stages require additional procedures before they are approved, such as the need for programs and courses to be reviewed by specialists. Therefore, where there are processes involving the development of programs, courses or otherwise, they must obviously be subject to the same recognized scientific methodology for the implementation of such changes.
- ❖ **Annual follow-up:** The institution or program shall ensure the continuation and sustainability of actions that have contributed to address the condition. Annual and periodic follow-up reports shall include a special part on the performance levels related to the resolved conditions and the related recommendations. These reports are part of the yearly follow-up policies, which merit close attention by the NCAAA concerning the institutions and programs with conditional accreditation.





Conclusion:

Resolving accreditation conditions requires several official and technical aspects that the institution or program must take into account. These aspects are similar to the requirements of compliance with the Accreditation Standards in the first place for newly accredited institutions and programs.

The quality of the submitted application for resolving the conditions reflects the experience of the institution, the level of quality assurance and its maturity, and how periodic follow-up is conducted. Hence, remember that the application submitted bears the name of your organization and expresses the quality level thereof.

In case of any queries or need for support, please feel free to contact the NCAAA through the official channels.

The NCAAA wishes all the best to institutions and programs in terms of performance levels, continuous development and high competitiveness to reach the best of international levels





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