



Value Neutral Instruction and the Curriculum

Recent Updates on Accrediting Bodies and DEI Requirements

Overview

In late 2024 and 2025, regional accrediting bodies have been reassessing their standards related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEI), with some accreditors removing explicit DEI requirements. Other accreditors maintain or refine their DEI language, emphasizing a focus on mission-centric student success for diverse populations.

Regional Accreditors

1. Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

- HLC's Criterion 3 states that accredited institutions should strive for a diverse faculty and staff that reflects human diversity, aligning with the institution's mission. HLC emphasizes flexibility and working with institutions to avoid conflicts with laws.

2. Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)

- MSCHE's 14th Edition Standards, revised in 2022, require institutions to reflect on and share results related to DEI within the context of their mission. DEI is integrated throughout the standards, which are mission- and student-centered. In the statement on executive order regarding accreditation the MSCHE stated it requires consideration of DEI outcomes but does not compel institutions to violate applicable laws, regulations, and other government mandates.

3. New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)

- NECHE has also proposed removing explicit DEI language from its standards in response to federal pressure. In the proposed 2026 standards draft it removes all references to DEI, replacing them with more generalized phrases about ensuring students "feel welcomed" and "supported".

4. Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)

- In May 2025, the NWCCU announced that institutions are no longer required to explicitly reference DEI in their accreditation documents. While the specific

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language around DEI has been adjusted, NWCCU's focus on evidence-based outcomes for all students, particularly those from underrepresented communities, remains a key part of its accreditation process. Institutions must still demonstrate how they are effectively promoting the success of all students by analyzing and addressing equity gaps using disaggregated data.

5. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

- SACSCOC has not included specific DEI criteria in its mandatory accreditation standards, offering institutions flexibility in interpretation. SACSCOC does not have any DEI requirements for universities to get accredited. The 2024 SACSCOC Resource Manual emphasizes that accreditation is intended to stimulate thinking and assess compliance with standards, rather than prescribing specific institutional practices for DEI.

6. WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)

- Following a standards review, the commission adopted updated standards that formally remove all DEI language, effective in October 2025.

Specialized/Professional Accreditors

7. Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)

- The American Association of Colleges of Nursing accreditation (AACN) arm CCNE revised accreditation standards, effective January 1, 2025. The CCNE Board of Commissioners approved revisions to the Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs in March 2024, with the updated 2024 standards taking effect at the beginning of 2025. The revisions were developed following public comment periods and are intended to align with the 2021 Essentials core competencies. An overview of the specific changes related to DEI verbiage is not explicitly detailed in recent summaries, though the broader accreditation updates reflect a response to the evolving environment. The AACN remains a strong advocate for DEI and has issued position statements in support of these principles. However, the AACN and individual nursing schools are also navigating the complex and evolving legal landscape surrounding DEI.

8. American Psychological Association (APA) - Commission on Accreditation

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- Temporarily suspended specific DEI-related standards. In March 2025, the APA's Commission on Accreditation suspended the evaluation of programs for compliance with specific standards related to diversity in recruitment, admission, and retention. This decision was made in response to federal executive orders that threaten federal funding for institutions with DEI policies.

9. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)

- Maintains DEI commitment while adapting to political shifts. The CSWE has released statements on federal executive orders and legislative changes, affirming its commitment to social justice and its response to ongoing policy shifts affecting social work education. The organization tracks state-level anti-DEI legislation and notes its impact on member institutions. While the CSWE is monitoring the situation, its 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) still incorporate DEI concepts.

10. Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND)

- The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) are focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through initiatives like embedding IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access) principles, creating a three-year action plan, and updating professional development and member resources. Recent updates include adding expanded demographic options for members, fostering a culture of belonging, and providing guidance to education programs on new pathways to RDN eligibility.

11. Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)

- The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards explicitly require preparation programs to integrate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). This was a strengthened focus in the 2022 revised standards. CAEP also requires accredited programs to meet federal and state regulations, though the interpretation and legality of some DEI initiatives are currently under legal debate. Because of the ongoing legal debate, educator



preparation programs must be careful to integrate CAEP's DEI standards in a way that remains compliant with evolving federal and state laws.

12. Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)

- In a May 2025 update, AACSB changed the title of its ninth Guiding Principle from "Diversity and Inclusion" to "Community and Connectedness". The change, which came in response to the "evolving global and political landscape," aimed to remove politically charged DEI terminology while preserving the spirit of fostering awareness and inclusivity. The core 2020 standards remain unchanged, and schools can continue to demonstrate impact through various mission-driven efforts.

13. ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology)

- Removed DEIA language from its criteria. In February 2025, ABET removed all references to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) from its accreditation criteria and supporting documents. This decision was made in response to federal directives and heightened scrutiny of higher education. Previously, ABET had incorporated DEI language into draft criteria and conducted pilot programs for these standards.

14. American Council for Construction Education (ACCE)

- DEI is not an explicit focus in ACCE's recent public communications, its commitment to supporting a robust and skilled workforce has indirect effects on diversity. ACCE's efforts to expand and improve construction education could broaden access to the field for various demographic groups. However, no specific or recent ACCE initiatives, statements, or DEI updates have been identified in publicly available information.

15. Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering

- ATMAE has not issued any specific updates regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. While the organization remains active with its annual conference, accreditation processes, and student competitions, there has been no public communication on formal DEI standards or programs

16. Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA)

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- Developed a DEIJA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility) action plan. NASPAA developed a strategic DEIJA plan to address racial and identity-based inequities in public service education. The organization is navigating legal and political challenges to DEI, with member institutions adapting their approaches. NASPAA aims to serve as a resource for its members during these transitions.

17. Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)

- Temporarily suspended specific DEI-related standards. In September 2025, CACREP temporarily suspended specific 2024 standards relating to the recruitment and retention of diverse students and faculty. The decision was made due to conflicts with recent federal guidance on DEI practices, which created uncertainty for programs.

18. Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC)

- ACEJMC has updated its standards to focus on DEI through a new "Advancing a Culturally Proficient Workforce" standard, which includes expectations for curriculum, faculty development, inclusive environment, and assessment and accountability. This standard requires programs to prepare students for multicultural workforces and to demonstrate commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in their curricula and operations. This update has generated discussion, with some universities finding the requirements challenging to meet, while others have proactively developed curriculum modules to meet the new objectives.

19. Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)

- Revised criteria to address DEI themes. CEPH adopted revised accreditation criteria for Schools of Public Health and Public Health Programs in March 2024 with significant updates focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), particularly for Schools and Programs of Public Health (SPH/PHP). These revisions require accredited units to demonstrate efforts to include diverse voices in decision-making, incorporate the preparation of students to work



with diverse populations into their guiding statements, and offer new pathways for meeting graduation rate benchmarks.

20. Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)

- Emphasizes Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) through its 2023 Accreditation Standards, requiring programs to educate students on providing culturally competent care and to foster a faculty that is equipped to teach diverse student populations. While ACEN does not mandate specific DEI statements, it requires that nursing programs prepare students to deliver individualized, respectful care to patients from diverse backgrounds. The ACEN also addresses DEI through its peer review process and vision for increasing diversity among its own evaluators.

21. Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE)

- Continues to advance DEI through resources and initiatives. As of 2025, the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), under which CAPTE operates, continues to provide resources and lectures focused on DEI and cultural competence. This approach emphasizes continuous learning and acknowledges the challenges facing DEI efforts.

22. Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA)

- Tracking and responding to federal executive orders. The CAA has acknowledged and tracked federal executive orders related to accreditation and DEI. The organization informed its programs of these developments and their potential impacts. Programs are also required to address DEI within their standards, and the CAA is currently responding to the evolving regulatory environment.

23. Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM)

- In May 2025, CAHIIM acknowledged updates regarding the April 2025 federal executive orders. The organization noted that the orders emphasize student outcomes, skills-based learning, and transparency, and that its accreditation body, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), highlighted

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these changes. CAHIIM has not publicly detailed how it will modify its specific standards in response to the federal order, but it is working with CHEA to address the changes.

24. Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC)

- CoARC is in the process of revising its accreditation standards for Entry into Respiratory Care Professional Practice, seeking public comments in 2025. While CoARC has announced a review of its standards for 2025, no specific details regarding DEI-related changes are found.

25. Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE)

- The CAATE approved new DEI and social justice standards for its professional, residency, and fellowship programs, with an effective date of 2022, prior to the federal executive order. These standards require the integration of cultural competency into the curriculum. As of October 2025, there is no public information indicating the CAATE has suspended or altered its DEI standards in light of recent state and federal legislation.

26. Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME)

- No specific updates from CAHME regarding its DEI standards in light of the 2025 federal order were found. However, there is an existing trend health care accreditor on shifting DEI language to “patient-specific needs” and patient-centered care” to align with recent legal shift.

27. Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA)

- In January 2024, CIDA announced Professional Standards 2024, which elevated DEI and accessibility as core professional responsibilities. In March 2025, CIDA published an FAQ providing guidance on navigating federal executive orders and directives related to DEI. CIDA has been proactive in

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addressing potential conflicts by referring programs to relevant federal guidance and legal analysis, while reaffirming its 2024 standards.

28. Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, American Bar Association (ABA)

- In February 2025, the ABA suspended enforcement of its DEI standards for law schools following pressure and a crackdown on DEI by the federal government. This suspension was a direct response to a federal executive order and reflects a recalibration of the ABA's approach to DEI in accreditation.

29. Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Related Professions (COAPRT)

- COAPRT maintains standard 7.02, which requires that students demonstrate the ability to design and evaluate services that "embrace personal and cultural dimensions of diversity". There is no indication that COAPRT has suspended or altered its standards due to recent federal actions.

30. Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT)

- The JRCERT held its 2024 conference to discuss innovations and best practices for advancing medical imaging and therapeutic science education, which included embracing diversity. JRCERT standards incorporate US Department of Education regulations for quality assurance. No public announcement was found from JRCERT regarding changes to its DEI standards in response to recent legislative changes, although the 2024 conference highlighted the importance of embracing diversity.

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31. National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS)

- NAACLS is seeking public comment on proposed changes to its 2024 Standards, which address curriculum, methodologies, and quality assurance. While NAACLS is undergoing a standards review process, no specific changes related to DEI verbiage resulting from federal or state legislation are found.

32. National Association of Schools of Music, Commission on Accreditation (NASM)

- There is no public information on changes to NASM's specific accreditation standards based on recent legislative changes.

33. National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)

- NASP is navigating a significant rise in anti-DEI legislation at both the state and federal levels. NASP is continuing its DEI initiatives amidst increasing challenges from legislation.

34. American Chemical Society (ACS)

- ACS is facing a lawsuit and scrutiny over its diversity, equity, and inclusion, and respect (DEIR) initiatives, particularly regarding its scholarship program. Despite this, the organization's accreditation standards, established by the Committee on Professional Training (CPT), still incorporate DEIR as a key component for approved degree programs.

35. American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB)

- Has actively continued its diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) initiatives in 2025, while also responding to a shifting political landscape. Key



updates include changes to membership structure, new grant awards, and public advocacy efforts. In early 2025, the ASBMB created a working group to assess how executive orders related to DEAI might affect the organization and its members. The group was charged with affirming society's commitment to inclusivity and supporting its scientific community. The ASBMB Public Affairs Advisory Committee has focused its advocacy on issues most relevant to the biochemistry and molecular biology community that could threaten scientific progress

Suggested Steps for Institutions and Academic Departments

1. **Identify Your Accreditors:** Determine which regional and specialized accreditors govern your institution and specific programs
2. **Review Specific Standards:** Obtain the most current accreditation standards and identify all diversity-related requirements
3. **Gap Analysis:** Compare your current language and practices against both accreditation requirements and state/federal regulations
4. **Develop Dual Documentation Strategy:** Create compliant internal documentation while adapting public-facing materials as legally permissible
5. **Engage Accreditors:** Consider requesting clarification from accrediting bodies about flexibility in language while meeting standards. Work with your regional accreditation institutional liaison

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6. Document Rationale: Maintain clear records of how alternative language still meets the substance of accreditation requirements
7. Legal Consultation: Work with legal counsel to navigate any conflicts between accreditation requirements and state laws