

I.11 Initial accreditation

An institution without an existing ALA-accredited program that seeks ALA accreditation for a master's program in library and information studies must progress through Precandidacy and Candidacy status before being granted Initial accreditation by the COA. As a prerequisite to the Initial accreditation of a program, the ALA requires that the institution be accredited by its appropriate institutional accrediting agency. This requirement does not apply to Canadian institutions.

At the end of the Candidacy period and following the comprehensive review of the program, the COA makes an accreditation decision. The COA takes one of the following actions: 1) to grant Initial accreditation, 2) to maintain the program's Candidacy status, or 3) to deny Initial accreditation. If Initial accreditation is granted, the COA will schedule a comprehensive review with a visit in seven years or a progress review with a visit in three years. Programs with Initial accreditation status may be required to submit detailed annual narrative reports to the COA to enable the committee to monitor the development of the new program.

A decision to maintain a program's Candidacy status cannot be appealed. If a program is maintained in Candidacy, the COA will schedule a comprehensive review visit to occur within three years and will provide a detailed letter (Decision Document) that states its concerns.

If a program is denied Initial accreditation, the standards at issue as stated in the decision letter of response to the review are made public. If an appeal is filed, the standards at issue are not publicly disclosed until a final decision is made. Reapplication for Precandidacy status can be made two years following the date of the Decision Document denying Initial accreditation.

I.11.1 Retroactive period of Initial accreditation

Initial accreditation, when granted, applies retroactively for students who complete degree requirements in the 24 months prior to the date that initial accreditation is granted. For example, if initial accreditation is granted in January of 2017, students who complete degree requirements in January 2015 or later are considered to have graduated from an ALA-accredited program.

I.11.2 Disclosure of accreditation status

As a public protection, including for prospective students, any reference to the program's ALA accreditation or display of the ALA Accreditation logo must include the following statement:

The [name of master's degree] program at [institution name] is accredited by the American Library Association Committee on Accreditation, with the status of Initial accreditation. The next comprehensive review visit scheduled for [Spring or Fall yyyy].

Any program found to be misrepresenting its accreditation status through public statements or in documents will be notified by the ALA Office for Accreditation to take immediate corrective action. Failure to correct misrepresentation of the accreditation status can lead to adverse action.