

## **I.16 Notice of Concern**

The Notice of Concern is formal communication with and notification to an accredited program and its institution that the COA has serious concerns about the program's ability to comply with the *Standards*. This process provides the program the opportunity for both written and in-person communication with the COA about the areas of concern. It also serves notice that the program may be placed on Conditional accreditation. A Notice of Concern is not issued to programs with Conditional accreditation, Precandidacy, or Candidacy status.

The COA may issue a Notice of Concern to a program and its institution if changes occur between comprehensive reviews that could affect the program's continued compliance with the *Standards* and/or if special or biennial narrative reports do not address COA's stated concerns about the program. Before issuing a Notice of Concern, the COA provides the program the opportunity to address these concerns through special reports. If the COA determines that the reports do not provide evidence of sufficient progress, it will issue a Notice of Concern as described below in section I.16.1.

The Notice of Concern does not change the accreditation status of the program and is considered confidential correspondence between the program, institution, and the COA.

A program is required to submit special reports to COA if a Notice of Concern is issued. Upon review of these reports, the COA may take one of three actions: 1) withdraw the Notice, 2) reaffirm the Notice, or 3) place the program on Conditional accreditation and reschedule the comprehensive review or schedule a progress review.

### **I.16.1 Procedures**

To issue a Notice of Concern, the COA sends a letter to the program and the institution that specifies areas of concern, cites previous correspondence on these issues, and lists required reports and due dates. The Notice of Concern includes a statement that the program may have Conditional accreditation status conferred which could lead to a decision to withdraw its accredited status. The COA may request a meeting with the Program Head and other appropriate representatives of the institution in order to be apprised of progress the program has made in addressing issues identified. A copy of this letter is also sent to the person to whom the Program Head reports and CAO of the institution.

If, upon review of subsequent reports and the meeting, the COA determines the reports do not provide evidence that issues are being addressed or that sufficient progress is being made, the COA will place the program on Conditional accreditation status (see section I.13).

### **I.16.2 Actions following a Notice of Concern**

After receiving a Notice, the program must submit special reports by the dates established by the COA. If requested in the Notice, representatives from the institution meet with the COA to apprise of progress on addressing the issues identified. The Committee will review each report at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Following its review of a report, the COA may take one of three actions: 1) remove the Notice of Concern, 2) reaffirm the Notice, or 3) place the program on Conditional accreditation and reschedule the comprehensive review or schedule a progress

review. COA will send a letter to the Program Head and institutional representatives explaining its actions.