

## **I.4 The Committee on Accreditation's structure and organization**

The COA consists of 12 members appointed by the ALA president-elect in the role of chair of the Committee on Appointments (*ALA Bylaws*, Article VIII, Section 2). Ten members are personal members of ALA who are appointed to represent educators and practitioners. One of these members is Canadian appointed in consultation with the Canadian Federation of Library Associations. Another is a Dean/Director (Program Head) appointed in consultation with the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE). Two members of the COA must be appointed from the public at large to represent the public interest.

A Memorandum of Understanding guides appointments in order to protect the integrity of the process.

The COA uses *Robert's Rules of Order*, in the latest edition, to govern its work (*ALA Bylaws*, Article XII).

### **I.4.1 Terms of appointment**

Members of the COA, with the exception of the public members, are appointed for four-year staggered terms and may not be re-appointed to the committee. Only personal members of ALA are eligible for appointment.

Public members are appointed from the public at large and represent the public interest. They are appointed for two-year terms and may be re-appointed once. Public members cannot be librarians or information professionals. A public member cannot have studied library and information studies; cannot be currently or formerly professionally employed in a library, information center, or related industry (for example, as a material or systems vendor); and cannot be a current or former member of the ALA or any other library association. Public members cannot be employed in an institution at which there is a program accredited by the ALA or in an institution that has a program with Precandidacy or Candidacy status.

The chair of the COA is appointed by the ALA president-elect for a one-year term and may be reappointed once. When a vacancy occurs on the COA before the end of the member's term, the vacancy "shall be filled by appointment by the Executive Board until the expiration of the conference year in which the vacancy occurs, at which time appointment to fill out the unexpired term shall be made" (*ALA Bylaws*, Article VIII, Section 7b).

### **I.4.2 Conflict of interest policy**

It is the responsibility of each COA member to disclose any personal, financial, or professional interest that might create a conflict with that member's ability to carry out fairly and objectively the responsibilities of a COA member. Typical situations requiring member disclosure and COA review include:

- Current or recent employment by or consulting arrangements with an institution of higher education that offers or proposes to offer master's degrees in library and information studies;
- Close personal relationships with individuals at an institution with an LIS program;
- Current or recent student status at an institution with an LIS program.

Each member's disclosure is reviewed by the COA at least once a year and also as disclosures are presented. Generally, any conflicts of interest are resolved through the member's recusal from discussions or votes on the issue or program related to the conflict. COA may request that a member recuse himself or herself due to a disclosed conflict of interest. On a case-by-case basis, the COA may also consider and adopt additional measures to ensure that its work is not compromised by a potential or actual conflict of interest.

### I.4.3 Voting by the COA

#### I.4.3(a) Quorum

Seven (7) of the twelve (12) members of the COA in attendance constitutes a quorum for business other than accreditation actions. Non-accreditation decisions require a simple majority of votes cast.

Accreditation actions require a quorum of at least eight (8) members of the COA. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of votes cast is needed to pass a motion.

The COA chair has the same rights and privileges as all other members have, including the right to make motions, to speak in debate, and to vote on all matters.

#### I.4.3(b) Accreditation actions

An accreditation action is a decision to grant or deny Initial accreditation status to a program; to grant Precandidacy, Candidacy, Continued, or Conditional status to a program; or to Withdraw accreditation from a program. Accreditation actions may be made only at a regularly scheduled meeting of the COA and require a quorum of at least eight COA members. Accreditation actions are based on the following:

- To grant Precandidacy status: Precandidacy application that meets all requirements as detailed in this document.
- To grant Candidacy status: Candidacy application that meets all requirements as detailed in this document and all the reports the program submitted since it was granted Precandidacy status.
- To grant Continued or Conditional status: Self-Study, External Review Panel Report, Program Response to External Review Panel Report (if submitted), all the reports the program submitted to the COA since the last comprehensive review, and the meeting with COA to close the comprehensive or progress review.
- To Withdraw accreditation:
  - If Withdrawal follows a comprehensive or progress review - Self-Study, External Review Panel Report, Program Response to External Review Report (if submitted), all the reports the program submitted to the COA since the last comprehensive review, and the meeting with COA to close the comprehensive or progress review.
  - If Withdrawal does not follow a comprehensive or progress review (see also AP3 I.14): All the reports the program submitted to the COA since the last comprehensive review.

Accreditation actions require an affirmative vote of two-thirds of votes cast. Less than a two-thirds affirmative vote for Continued status results in Conditional status. Less than a two-thirds affirmative vote for Initial or release from Conditional accreditation results in

denial or withdrawal, respectively. A motion to reconsider an accreditation action also requires a two-thirds affirmative vote.

Number of votes cast ( <i>recusals and abstentions are not counted</i> )	Number of affirmative votes required to carry motion by two-thirds
12	8
11	8
10	7
9	6
8	6
7	5
6	4
5	4
4	3
3	2

#### I.4.3(c) Voting between meetings

The *ALA Bylaws*, Article VIII, Section 8, authorizes voting by email, conference call, and mail as long as all committee members are polled simultaneously. No accreditation actions may be made between regularly scheduled meetings, nor may accreditation votes be taken by mail, fax, or telecommunications.

#### I.4.3(d) Communicating with the COA

Correspondence with the chair or any member of the COA should be sent to the Office for Accreditation. The Office fulfills the secretarial function for the COA and maintains all its records.

Any request for action by the COA must be directed to the chair of the COA, sent care of the Office for Accreditation at least six weeks before the next regular COA meeting. This time frame will enable the COA to consider the request for the agenda of the next meeting.

*Revised November 16, 2017*