

## **I.9 Candidacy status**

Candidacy status indicates that the program is ready to begin the two-year process that culminates in the Self-Study, a comprehensive review of the program, and an accreditation decision by the COA. When a program is granted Candidacy status, it then follows the comprehensive review process.

An institution that has a master's program in library and information studies that is not accredited by the ALA's Committee on Accreditation must go through Precandidacy and Candidacy status before receiving Initial accreditation from the COA. As a prerequisite to the granting of Precandidacy or Candidacy status to a program, the ALA requires that the institution be accredited by its appropriate institutional accrediting agency. This requirement does not apply in Canada, which has no institutional accrediting system.

Resources for programs seeking Initial accreditation can be found on the Office for Accreditation website.

### **I.9.1 Eligibility requirements**

In order to seek Initial accreditation from the ALA, precandidate programs are required to apply for Candidacy status. A precandidate program that is ready to proceed with the comprehensive review process must submit the application for Candidacy status at least two years before the anticipated site visit. A permanent full-time Program Head must be in place before a program can be granted Candidacy status. All candidate programs must have an on-site comprehensive review.

### **I.9.2 Application requirements**

An application for Candidacy status must be submitted to the Chair of the COA in care of the Office for Accreditation not less than 45 days before the COA meeting at which the application will be considered. The Candidacy application must include:

- A letter from the chief executive officer of the institution requesting Candidacy status for the program. The letter must also contain a statement that the institution understands that Candidacy status in no manner guarantees or implies that the program will be accredited or that accreditation is automatic at the end of the Candidacy period. A letter template is available on the Office for Accreditation website.
- A letter from the Program Head requesting Candidacy status for the program. The letter must also contain a statement that the program and/or school understands that Candidacy status in no manner guarantees or implies that the program will be accredited or that accreditation is automatic at the end of the Candidacy period. A letter template is available on the Office for Accreditation website.
- A report of the program's status. This report must address each element of the standards, illustrating the extent of current compliance and providing projections with timelines. A budget for the Candidacy period is required.
- Detailed plans for developing the Self-Study and preparing for the comprehensive review. These plans must include a calendar for developing the Self-Study and

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preparing for the review, and plans for evaluating the performance outcomes of the program.

- Format of the application:
  - Cover page with name of program, name of degree to appear on diploma, name of unit (college, school, department, etc.) in which program resides, name of institution, institutional accreditor (for U.S. institutions), and date of submission of application;
  - Table of contents;
  - Glossary of terminology and abbreviations;
  - List of appendices;
  - Numbered pages, organized by standard.

### **I.9.3 Review by the COA**

The COA reviews the application for Candidacy status at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The COA takes one of the following actions: 1) to grant Candidacy status, 2) to keep the program in Precandidacy status, or 3) to deny Candidacy status. A decision to keep a program in Precandidacy status or to deny Candidacy status to a program is not appealable.

### **I.9.4 Length of Candidacy status**

A program may remain in Candidacy status for two years. A one-year extension before the comprehensive review is possible pending the approval of the COA. Following the comprehensive review, the COA may vote to maintain a program's Candidacy status and schedule another comprehensive review.

During the Candidacy period, the institution, the school, and program are encouraged to seek advice from individuals within the profession who have experience with accreditation. The Director of the Office for Accreditation may suggest possible contacts. The OA Director is also available to advise on the ALA accreditation process and on the development of reports that are to be submitted to the COA.

Candidate programs will receive all literature and mailings sent to accredited programs. Representatives of candidate programs are welcome to attend all open meetings, training sessions, and workshops offered by the COA or the Office.

Candidate programs are not listed in the directory of ALA-accredited programs. Use of the ALA Accreditation logo is not permitted.

As a public protection, including for prospective students, program and school communications must indicate that the program has Candidacy status and must include this statement:

*The [degree name] program at [Name of school and institution] has been granted Candidacy status by the Committee on Accreditation of the American Library Association. Candidacy status is an indication that [name of school and program] has voluntarily committed to participate in the ALA accreditation process and is actively seeking accreditation. Candidacy does not indicate that the program is accredited nor does it guarantee eventual accreditation of the program by ALA.*

### **I.9.5 Reporting to the COA**

Each year the candidate program is required to submit a detailed progress report to the COA. This report should indicate what progress the program has made in reaching programmatic objectives, obstacles that have been encountered, and its plans to address those obstacles. This report is due in the Office for Accreditation by February 15 each year. The program is also required to submit the annual statistical information collected from all ALA-accredited programs. This report is due in the Office for Accreditation by December 1 each year.

The COA will review these reports and will send a response to the Program Head and chief academic officer (CAO) of the institution. This response is not an indication or checklist of steps that must be taken to achieve accreditation; rather, it is the COA's response to the program's efforts to obtain accreditation.

If, on review of the annual reports, the COA determines that the program is not yet ready to undergo a comprehensive review, it may grant a one-year extension of Candidacy status to the program for a total of three years of Candidacy.

Instructions regarding the format and content of annual progress reports can be found on the Office for Accreditation website.

### **I.9.6 Fees**

Programs that are moving from Precandidacy to Candidacy are required to pay an application fee (see section I.23.1 for the current fee schedule). Candidate programs are also required to pay the same annual fee paid by accredited programs. If the OA Director or other Office staff member is invited to visit the institution, the institution will be billed for travel-related expenses.