

IV.3 Appeal process overview

An Appeal Review Committee (ARC), appointed by the ALA President with the approval of the ALA Executive Board, reviews appeals.

To begin the appeal process, an institution must file a notice of intent to file an appeal **within seven (7) calendar days** of receipt of the COA decision document letter. The institution must file the document on which the appeal will be based along with the filing fee **within 30 calendar days** of receipt of the COA decision document. The institution sends these documents to the ALA Executive Director (ED) with a request for signature upon receipt. Failure to do so within these time frames results in the institution's forfeiture of its right to use the ALA appeal process.

The institution's document must set forth in detail all of the grounds on which the appeal is based. Either the chief executive officer (CEO) of the institution or the executive officer of the master's program may file the appeal. Any appeal must be filed in the name of the institution and with its consent.

The COA has **30 calendar days** to respond to the institution's appeal document or notify the ARC that it will not submit a response. If COA chooses to respond to the institution, it will provide copies to the ARC via the ALA Executive Director and to the Office for Accreditation.

The ARC will meet to discuss the basis of the appeal **within 30 calendar days** of receipt of the COA's response. At that meeting, the ARC will seek clarification of arguments presented in the documentation. The institution and the COA should prepare to have representatives available for this meeting.

The ARC makes one of two recommendations: 1) uphold the COA's decision or 2) remand the decision back to the COA with comment. The ARC sends a report of its recommendation to the ALA Executive Board **within 14 calendar days** of the meeting.

The ALA Executive Board reviews the ARC's report and recommendation and makes one of two determinations: 1) uphold the COA's decision or 2) remand the decision back to the COA with comment. The ALA Executive Board members are to determine not whether they would have reached the same conclusions as the COA and/or the ARC, but whether the COA committed clear error by failing to follow established published procedures, resulting in an unfair decision, or by reaching an arbitrary or capricious conclusion.

The ALA Executive Board sends a report of its determination and the ARC's recommendation and report to the institution, the COA, ARC members, and the ALA President **within 14 calendar days** of receipt of the ARC report. If the Executive Board upholds the COA's decision, then the COA's decision is considered final.

The deadlines set forth in this document may be extended only upon a showing of extraordinary circumstances such as natural disaster or serious illness. Extensions of time must be requested in writing in advance of the pertinent deadline.

If the ALA Executive Board upholds the decision of the COA to withdraw or deny accreditation, then the date of accreditation withdrawal is the date of the institution's receipt of the Board's determination.

If the decision is remanded back to the COA, the Committee will review and act on the reports at its next regularly scheduled meeting. If COA upholds its decision following its review, then the

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date of accreditation withdrawal or denial is the date of the institution's receipt of the COA's final decision.

- If the COA votes to reinstate Conditional accreditation, then the date of accreditation is retroactive to the date of the decision to withdraw.
- If the COA votes to grant Initial accreditation, the decision applies retroactively for students who complete degree requirements 24 months prior to the date of the meeting where the original decision was made (section I.11.1). The decision of the COA is final and may not be appealed.