



Continuing Accreditation of a Lactation Education Program

This document summarizes the steps in the Continuing Accreditation process for Lactation Consultant Programs accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). See *Accreditation Procedures* for further detail and the fees associated with accreditation. Every five years, accredited lactation education programs must conduct an internal review and submit a *Continuing Accreditation Self-Study Report (CSSR)*. This regular self-assessment ensures that the program continuously meets the current *Standards and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Lactation Education Programs*. Programs should carefully read the Standards as well as the guidance provided to fully understand and respond to the corresponding questions in the CSSR. The first Continuing Accreditation is due 5 years after Initial Accreditation and requires a Comprehensive Review. A Comprehensive Review includes both a Self-Study Report and a site visit. The second Continuing Accreditation cycle will require only a Self-Study Report unless LEAARC determines an interim site visit is necessary because of concerns with outcomes or compliance with the Standards. The Continuing Accreditation cycle will continue with a Comprehensive Review (CSSR and site visit) every 10 years and a CSSR only in the interim 5 years (unless concerns arise).

1. Submit Request for Accreditation Services (RAS): Programs begin the accreditation process by completing the [Request for Accreditation Services \(RAS\)](#) on the CAAHEP website. The form is “signed” by entering the name of the CEO at the end. LEAARC receives the RAS directly from the CAAHEP website after it is submitted.

2. Pay Registration Fee: After receiving the RAS, LEAARC will send the program an invoice and payment form for a non-refundable registration fee. Payment with credit card may be made online. Payment by check may be mailed to LEAARC with a copy of the *RAS Payment form*.

3. Self-Study Report: After receipt of the RAS fee, LEAARC will send the program an accreditation packet that includes a *Self-Study Report form (SSR)* and instructions for completion. The SSR is due within 12 months after receiving it. The time required to complete the self-study will depend on how much the program needs to do to bring the program into compliance with the CAAHEP *Standards and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Lactation Consultant Education Programs*. If the program is not ready to submit the SSR within 12 months, the program may request an extension and pay a new RAS fee. After LEAARC receives the SSR and *Site Visit Date Request form*, the program will receive an invoice for the SSR Fee and Site Visit Fee. When these fees are received, the accreditation review will begin.

4. LEAARC Review: LEAARC will review the SSR for completeness and evidence of substantial compliance with all accreditation Standards. LEAARC may request clarification of information or additional documentation. When LEAARC determines that the SSR is sufficiently complete, a date for the site visit is finalized. The time required for this review will depend on the amount of clarification and additional documentation needed.

5. Site Visit: LEAARC will send site visitors to observe, verify, and clarify evidence of the degree to which the program meets the CAAHEP Standards. The site visit for an existing program will be two days and includes a review of program materials and student records, as well as interviews with the program director, administrators, faculty, students, graduates, and advisory committee members. The site visit for a new program with no students will be one day and includes a review of program materials, as well as interviews with the program director, administrators, faculty, and advisory committee members. The site visitors will prepare a *Site Visit Report* which will be reviewed by LEAARC with verification of the factual accuracy by the program.

6. LEAARC Review: After the site visit, LEAARC will send a written *Findings Report* to the program. The Findings Report will indicate any potential citations and the program will be asked to submit a response to the findings within 60 days. After acceptance of the program’s response to the *Findings Report*, LEAARC will formulate a recommendation to CAAHEP to either grant Continuing Accreditation, Continuing Accreditation with a Progress Report, or Withhold Accreditation.

7. CAAHEP Accreditation Action: The CAAHEP Board considers accreditation actions at their scheduled board meetings. CAAHEP will notify the program of the accreditation decision

Questions? Email accreditation@leaarc.org