



THE COUNCIL OF PRIVATE COLLEGES OF AMERICA

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

CPCA 5-YEAR CERTIFIED REQUIREMENTS AND ACTIONS

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Institutions working on this level will be informed by their Certification Facilitator of any revisions to this document.

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Council of Private Colleges of America (CPCA)
21st CENTURY CERTIFICATION
CPCA 5-YEAR CERTIFIED
REQUIREMENTS AND ACTIONS

CPCA 5-Year Certified offers faith-based postsecondary education institutions the opportunity to continue an ongoing formal and professional relationship with the CPCA as a member institution. CPCA 5-Year Certified Institutions have achieved this level of recognition through continuous self-evaluation. They have provided evidence that they are accomplishing their mission and are providing quality educational programs.

CPCA 5-Year Certified indicates that the faith-based postsecondary education institution is:

- a. in substantive compliance with the CPCA Standards and Criteria,
- b. has been evaluated after completing a self-evaluation, and
- c. in the professional judgment of the Certification Evaluation Team and the CPCA, the institution provides quality instruction, student services, and is financially stable.

Steps to Achieve the CPCA 5-Year Certified

Application for CPCA 5-Year Certified

The chief administrative officer of the institution must submit a written letter on the letterhead of the institution to the CPCA affirming the governing board's decision to proceed with the Application for CPCA 5-Year Certified status along with the CPCA 5-Year Certified Application.

CPCA 5-YEAR CERTIFIED

1. Eligibility Requirements

The institution must:

- a. have CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION status and be a CPCA member in current standing.
- b. have been in operation for four (4) years prior to applying.
- c. be prepared to work with a CPCA Certification Facilitator.
- d. be prepared to pay travel expenses and honorarium for CPCA Certification Facilitators.
- e. be committed to honesty and integrity of excellence in education.
- f. participate in the onsite visit with two onsite CPCA Facilitators plus one offsite Facilitator
- g. Complete CPCA 5-Year Certified Application.

2. Benefits

- a. Provides a listing on the CPCA website under CPCA 5-YEAR CERTIFIED.
- b. Indicates the institutions upholding the standards of the CPCA.
- c. Indicates the institutions achieving CPCA 5-YEAR CERTIFIED with the CPCA
- d. Indicates the institutions intent to advance toward CPCA 10-YEAR CERTIFIED with the CPCA.

3. Issues to be examined and evaluated in the self-evaluation under the CPCA excellence in education criteria are the:

- a. Qualifications and Duties of Governing Board Members, Administrations, and Reputation of Institution
- b. Institution Mission, Goals, and Objectives
- c. Financial Responsibility
- d. Qualifications and Duties of Instructor/Faculty, and Staff
- e. Admission Practices and Tuition Policies, Collection Procedures, and Refunds
- f. Educational Program Objectives, Curricula, and Materials

4. Selected individual courses are examined and evaluated under the CPCA excellence in education criteria.

The institution must submit, at a minimum, one fourth (25%) of the curriculum (courses) for **each** degree program offered. In selecting the curriculum materials to be submitted to CPCA for evaluation, the representative courses should be:

- a. broadly and fairly representative of the curriculum for the entire degree program;
- b. selected from each level (i.e., 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, etc.) of the degree program; and
- c. in different subject areas that fairly represent the complete program (i.e., general education, electives, core courses, etc.).

Individual course materials also include examinations and examination solutions, and all tools, kits, and equipment provided with the course(s). Course materials submitted as part of an institution's certification process **are not** returned to the institution; they are consumed in the review process.

Subject matter experts, who are also called "subject specialists," are selected to review and report on the institution's course materials. All Subject Specialists go through a training program and sign the Conflict of Interest Policy and the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form before reviewing courses/programs. Typically, these reviews take place in the subject specialists' home or office. However, if an institution offers a combination distance study/resident program, offers a degree program, or has an extremely large number of courses, then one or more subject specialists are appointed to visit the institution for an onsite review during the full onsite visit. Each subject specialist submits to the CPCA a written report on the courses reviewed.

5. Up to 100 current students and graduates are surveyed and at least 4 are interviewed. The students are asked to complete a survey form (either electronically or paper-based) that contain questions about:

- a. enrollment practices
- b. lessons
- c. student services

Also questions regarding the student's satisfaction with the course(s) and the institution.

(Questions such as:

Did you achieve, or will you have achieved upon completing your studies, the goals you had when you started the course or program?

Would you recommend these studies to a friend? And,

All things considered, were you satisfied with your studies with us?)

There are two questions that **MUST** be included in the surveying process:

- a. What have you learned in your studies that have caused you to make changes in your life or the life of your family? Give some examples.
- b. What have you learned in your studies that you have been able to teach others, helping them to make changes in the life of those to whom they minister? Give some examples.

6. The institution shall have an **Onsite Visit** by a team of two CPCA Certification Evaluators and one offsite CPCA Certification Evaluator ensuring that the institution is ready for CPCA 5-year Certified status.

Following submission of the CPCA 5-year Certified Application to the CPCA an onsite visit is scheduled. The mission of the onsite visit is to verify the information, and documentation contained in the Quality Compliance Review (QCR) and Report previously submitted to the CPCA. A written report of findings is filed with CPCA that tracks the institutional compliance with all CPCA Standards and Criteria.

This level requires the institution to have the financial ability to pay the two person onsite evaluators their related travel expenses, plus the two onsite evaluators and a third offsite evaluator their honorariums.

The date of the Onsite Visit is to be a mutually convenient date for the institution and for the examiners. The CPCA coordinates with the institution. Since a majority of the review process is completed before the onsite visit, most onsite visits are accomplished in one to two days, depending upon the size of the institution.

In cases where resident education is provided as a required or as an optional part of a distance education course, the educational facilities are examined to make sure that outcomes of resident education contribute to the total course objectives. The opposite is also true, when distance elements are an integral part of a resident course.

Certification Facilitator Action

The Certification Facilitator who is working with the institution submits the Self-Evaluation, the Report relating to the Onsite Visit, written correspondence, and a recommendation to the CPCA Office for approval to enter into CPCA 5-year Certified or delay (with reasons). It should be noted that the maximum period of time in working toward CPCA 5-year Certified is **three (3) years**. Any institution that doesn't achieve CPCA 5-year Certified within this period will be deleted from the

Council's list of approved candidates and must wait a minimum of one year before re-applying.

Final Action

The CPCA 5-year Certified Application, the Report on the Onsite Visit (including a recommendation), and all correspondence is presented in a package to the President of the CPCA for appropriate action. In turn, the CPCA officially receives the package, and may take one of the following actions:

1. Receive the package and grant CPCA 5-year Certified status to the institution for a period of time not exceeding five years.
2. Receive the package and grant CPCA 5-year Certified status to the institution with conditions and interim requirements for a period of time not exceeding three years.
3. Receive the package and based on specific cited items elect to defer granting CPCA 5-year Certified status in order for the institution to have a specified amount of time to correct the cited area.
4. Receive the package and based on the recommendation take action to not grant CPCA 5-year Certified status.

Institution Action

An institution may voluntarily withdraw its CPCA 5-year Certified Application at any time. All fees paid to the CPCA are deemed to be nonrefundable.

During the period of CPCA 5-year Certified status the institution will pay all fees required by the CPCA, and provide at least two reports annually pursuant to the timeline previously approved by the CPCA.

CPCA 5-YEAR CERTIFIED INSTITUTIONS ANNUAL REPORT

Certification is viewed by the CPCA as a continuing level recognition that, once conferred, is removed only for cause and then with careful observance of due process. A responsible certification program necessarily includes periodic review of certified institutions both for their benefit and for the fulfillment of the CPCA's accountability to the academic community and to the public.

CPCA certified institutions must submit an Annual Report to the CPCA. The CPCA continuously monitors the institutions as a key component of the overall culture of "trust but verify" that characterizes effective voluntary certification today.

REAFFIRMATION OF CERTIFICATION

After the initial CPCA 5-year Certified status is granted, certification will then be granted for a five year period with a required Quality Compliance Review (QCR) and Report to be filed with the CPCA. The QCR and Report is to be submitted along with the supporting documentation. The institution will meet with the CPCA in its review. The Report should focus on data evidence from the outcomes assessment program that demonstrates that the institution is accomplishing its stated mission. Every fifth year, the self-evaluation process will be repeated. A comprehensive onsite visit will be scheduled and the institution will meet with the CPCA in review of reaffirmation of certification.