

**TITLE 20 - EDUCATION****CHAPTER 28 - HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCES AND STUDENT ASSISTANCE****SUBCHAPTER IV - STUDENT ASSISTANCE****Part G - Program Integrity****subpart 2 - accrediting agency recognition****§ 1099b. Recognition of accrediting agency or association****(a) Criteria required**

No accrediting agency or association may be determined by the Secretary to be a reliable authority as to the quality of education or training offered for the purposes of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 or for other Federal purposes, unless the agency or association meets criteria established by the Secretary pursuant to this section. The Secretary shall, after notice and opportunity for a hearing, establish criteria for such determinations. Such criteria shall include an appropriate measure or measures of student achievement. Such criteria shall require that—

- (1) the accrediting agency or association shall be a State, regional, or national agency or association and shall demonstrate the ability and the experience to operate as an accrediting agency or association within the State, region, or nationally, as appropriate;
- (2) such agency or association—
  - (A) (i) for the purpose of participation in programs under this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, has a voluntary membership of institutions of higher education and has as a principal purpose the accrediting of institutions of higher education; or
  - (ii) for the purpose of participation in other programs administered by the Department of Education or other Federal agencies, has a voluntary membership and has as its principal purpose the accrediting of institutions of higher education or programs;
  - (B) is a State agency approved by the Secretary for the purpose described in subparagraph (A); or
  - (C) is an agency or association that, for the purpose of determining eligibility for student assistance under this subchapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, conducts accreditation through
    - (i) a voluntary membership organization of individuals participating in a profession, or
    - (ii) an agency or association which has as its principal purpose the accreditation of programs within institutions, which institutions are accredited by another agency or association recognized by the Secretary;
- (3) if such agency or association is an agency or association described in—
  - (A) subparagraph (A)(i) of paragraph (2), then such agency or association is separate and independent, both administratively and financially of any related, associated, or affiliated trade association or membership organization;
  - (B) subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2), then such agency or association has been recognized by the Secretary on or before October 1, 1991; or
  - (C) subparagraph (C) of paragraph (2) and such agency or association has been recognized by the Secretary on or before October 1, 1991, then the Secretary may waive the requirement that such agency or association is separate and independent, both administratively and financially of any related, associated, or affiliated trade association or membership organization upon a demonstration that the existing relationship has not served to compromise the independence of its accreditation process;
- (4) (A) such agency or association consistently applies and enforces standards that respect the stated mission of the institution of higher education, including religious missions, and that

ensure that the courses or programs of instruction, training, or study offered by the institution of higher education, including distance education or correspondence courses or programs, are of sufficient quality to achieve, for the duration of the accreditation period, the stated objective for which the courses or the programs are offered; and

**(B)** if such agency or association has or seeks to include within its scope of recognition the evaluation of the quality of institutions or programs offering distance education or correspondence education, such agency or association shall, in addition to meeting the other requirements of this subpart, demonstrate to the Secretary that—

**(i)** the agency or association’s standards effectively address the quality of an institution’s distance education or correspondence education in the areas identified in paragraph (5), except that—

**(I)** the agency or association shall not be required to have separate standards, procedures, or policies for the evaluation of distance education or correspondence education institutions or programs in order to meet the requirements of this subparagraph; and

**(II)** in the case that the agency or association is recognized by the Secretary, the agency or association shall not be required to obtain the approval of the Secretary to expand its scope of accreditation to include distance education or correspondence education, provided that the agency or association notifies the Secretary in writing of the change in scope; and

**(ii)** the agency or association requires an institution that offers distance education or correspondence education to have processes through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit;

**(5)** the standards for accreditation of the agency or association assess the institution’s—

**(A)** success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution’s mission, which may include different standards for different institutions or programs, as established by the institution, including, as appropriate, consideration of State licensing examinations, consideration of course completion, and job placement rates;

**(B)** curricula;

**(C)** faculty;

**(D)** facilities, equipment, and supplies;

**(E)** fiscal and administrative capacity as appropriate to the specified scale of operations;

**(F)** student support services;

**(G)** recruiting and admissions practices, academic calendars, catalogs, publications, grading and advertising;

**(H)** measures of program length and the objectives of the degrees or credentials offered;

**(I)** record of student complaints received by, or available to, the agency or association; and

**(J)** record of compliance with its program responsibilities under this subchapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 based on the most recent student loan default rate data provided by the Secretary, the results of financial or compliance audits, program reviews, and such other information as the Secretary may provide to the agency or association;

except that subparagraphs (A), (H), and (J) shall not apply to agencies or associations described in paragraph (2)(A)(ii) of this subsection;

**(6)** such an agency or association shall establish and apply review procedures throughout the accrediting process, including evaluation and withdrawal proceedings, which comply with due process procedures that provide—

- (A) for adequate written specification of—
    - (i) requirements, including clear standards for an institution of higher education or program to be accredited; and
    - (ii) identified deficiencies at the institution or program examined;
  - (B) for sufficient opportunity for a written response, by an institution or program, regarding any deficiencies identified by the agency or association to be considered by the agency or association—
    - (i) within a timeframe determined by the agency or association; and
    - (ii) prior to final action in the evaluation and withdrawal proceedings;
  - (C) upon the written request of an institution or program, for an opportunity for the institution or program to appeal any adverse action under this section, including denial, withdrawal, suspension, or termination of accreditation, taken against the institution or program, prior to such action becoming final at a hearing before an appeals panel that—
    - (i) shall not include current members of the agency’s or association’s underlying decisionmaking body that made the adverse decision; and
    - (ii) is subject to a conflict of interest policy;
  - (D) for the right to representation and participation by counsel for an institution or program during an appeal of the adverse action;
  - (E) for a process, in accordance with written procedures developed by the agency or association, through which an institution or program, before a final adverse action based solely upon a failure to meet a standard or criterion pertaining to finances, may on one occasion seek review of significant financial information that was unavailable to the institution or program prior to the determination of the adverse action, and that bears materially on the financial deficiencies identified by the agency or association;
  - (F) in the case that the agency or association determines that the new financial information submitted by the institution or program under subparagraph (E) meets the criteria of significance and materiality described in such subparagraph, for consideration by the agency or association of the new financial information prior to the adverse action described in such subparagraph becoming final; and
  - (G) that any determination by the agency or association made with respect to the new financial information described in subparagraph (E) shall not be separately appealable by the institution or program;
- (7) such agency or association shall notify the Secretary and the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency within 30 days of the accreditation of an institution or any final denial, withdrawal, suspension, or termination of accreditation or placement on probation of an institution, together with any other adverse action taken with respect to an institution; and
- (8) such agency or association shall make available to the public, upon request, and to the Secretary, and the State licensing or authorizing agency a summary of any review resulting in a final accrediting decision involving denial, termination, or suspension of accreditation, together with the comments of the affected institution.
- (b) “Separate and independent” defined**
- For the purpose of subsection (a)(3) of this section, the term “separate and independent” means that—
- (1) the members of the postsecondary education governing body of the accrediting agency or association are not elected or selected by the board or chief executive officer of any related, associated, or affiliated trade association or membership organization;
  - (2) among the membership of the board of the accrediting agency or association there shall be one public member (who is not a member of any related trade or membership organization) for

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each six members of the board, with a minimum of one such public member, and guidelines are established for such members to avoid conflicts of interest;

(3) dues to the accrediting agency or association are paid separately from any dues paid to any related, associated, or affiliated trade association or membership organization; and

(4) the budget of the accrediting agency or association is developed and determined by the accrediting agency or association without review or resort to consultation with any other entity or organization.

**(c) Operating procedures required**

No accrediting agency or association may be recognized by the Secretary as a reliable authority as to the quality of education or training offered by an institution seeking to participate in the programs authorized under this subchapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, unless the agency or association—

(1) performs, at regularly established intervals, on-site inspections and reviews of institutions of higher education (which may include unannounced site visits) with particular focus on educational quality and program effectiveness, and ensures that accreditation team members are well-trained and knowledgeable with respect to their responsibilities, including those regarding distance education;

(2) monitors the growth of programs at institutions that are experiencing significant enrollment growth;

(3) requires an institution to submit for approval to the accrediting agency a teach-out plan upon the occurrence of any of the following events:

(A) the Department notifies the accrediting agency of an action against the institution pursuant to section 1094 (f) of this title;

(B) the accrediting agency acts to withdraw, terminate, or suspend the accreditation of the institution; or

(C) the institution notifies the accrediting agency that the institution intends to cease operations;

(4) requires that any institution of higher education subject to its jurisdiction which plans to establish a branch campus submit a business plan, including projected revenues and expenditures, prior to opening the branch campus;

(5) agrees to conduct, as soon as practicable, but within a period of not more than 6 months of the establishment of a new branch campus or a change of ownership of an institution of higher education, an on-site visit of that branch campus or of the institution after a change of ownership;

(6) requires that teach-out agreements among institutions are subject to approval by the accrediting agency or association consistent with standards promulgated by such agency or association;

(7) makes available to the public and the State licensing or authorizing agency, and submits to the Secretary, a summary of agency or association actions, including—

(A) the award of accreditation or reaccreditation of an institution;

(B) final denial, withdrawal, suspension, or termination of accreditation of an institution, and any findings made in connection with the action taken, together with the official comments of the affected institution; and

(C) any other adverse action taken with respect to an institution or placement on probation of an institution;

(8) discloses publicly whenever an institution of higher education subject to its jurisdiction is being considered for accreditation or reaccreditation; and

(9) confirms, as a part of the agency's or association's review for accreditation or reaccreditation, that the institution has transfer of credit policies—

(A) that are publicly disclosed; and

(B) that include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

**(d) Length of recognition**

No accrediting agency or association may be recognized by the Secretary for the purpose of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 for a period of more than 5 years.

**(e) Initial arbitration rule**

The Secretary may not recognize the accreditation of any institution of higher education unless the institution of higher education agrees to submit any dispute involving the final denial, withdrawal, or termination of accreditation to initial arbitration prior to any other legal action.

**(f) Jurisdiction**

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any civil action brought by an institution of higher education seeking accreditation from, or accredited by, an accrediting agency or association recognized by the Secretary for the purpose of this subchapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 and involving the denial, withdrawal, or termination of accreditation of the institution of higher education, shall be brought in the appropriate United States district court.

**(g) Limitation on scope of criteria**

Nothing in this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 shall be construed to permit the Secretary to establish criteria for accrediting agencies or associations that are not required by this section. Nothing in this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 shall be construed to prohibit or limit any accrediting agency or association from adopting additional standards not provided for in this section. Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit the Secretary to establish any criteria that specifies, defines, or prescribes the standards that accrediting agencies or associations shall use to assess any institution's success with respect to student achievement.

**(h) Change of accrediting agency**

The Secretary shall not recognize the accreditation of any otherwise eligible institution of higher education if the institution of higher education is in the process of changing its accrediting agency or association, unless the eligible institution submits to the Secretary all materials relating to the prior accreditation, including materials demonstrating reasonable cause for changing the accrediting agency or association.

**(i) Dual accreditation rule**

The Secretary shall not recognize the accreditation of any otherwise eligible institution of higher education if the institution of higher education is accredited, as an institution, by more than one accrediting agency or association, unless the institution submits to each such agency and association and to the Secretary the reasons for accreditation by more than one such agency or association and demonstrates to the Secretary reasonable cause for its accreditation by more than one agency or association. If the institution is accredited, as an institution, by more than one accrediting agency or association, the institution shall designate which agency's accreditation shall be utilized in determining the institution's eligibility for programs under this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42.

**(j) Impact of loss of accreditation**

An institution may not be certified or recertified as an institution of higher education under section 1002 of this title and subpart 3 of this part or participate in any of the other programs authorized by this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 if such institution—

- (1) is not currently accredited by any agency or association recognized by the Secretary;
- (2) has had its accreditation withdrawn, revoked, or otherwise terminated for cause during the preceding 24 months, unless such withdrawal, revocation, or termination has been rescinded by the same accrediting agency; or

(3) has withdrawn from accreditation voluntarily under a show cause or suspension order during the preceding 24 months, unless such order has been rescinded by the same accrediting agency.

**(k) Religious institution rule**

Notwithstanding subsection (j) of this section, the Secretary shall allow an institution that has had its accreditation withdrawn, revoked, or otherwise terminated, or has voluntarily withdrawn from an accreditation agency, to remain certified as an institution of higher education under section 1002 of this title and subpart 3 of this part for a period sufficient to allow such institution to obtain alternative accreditation, if the Secretary determines that the reason for the withdrawal, revocation, or termination—

- (1) is related to the religious mission or affiliation of the institution; and
- (2) is not related to the accreditation criteria provided for in this section.

**(l) Limitation, suspension, or termination of recognition**

(1) If the Secretary determines that an accrediting agency or association has failed to apply effectively the criteria in this section, or is otherwise not in compliance with the requirements of this section, the Secretary shall—

- (A) after notice and opportunity for a hearing, limit, suspend, or terminate the recognition of the agency or association; or
- (B) require the agency or association to take appropriate action to bring the agency or association into compliance with such requirements within a timeframe specified by the Secretary, except that—

- (i) such timeframe shall not exceed 12 months unless the Secretary extends such period for good cause; and
- (ii) if the agency or association fails to bring the agency or association into compliance within such timeframe, the Secretary shall, after notice and opportunity for a hearing, limit, suspend, or terminate the recognition of the agency or association.

(2) The Secretary may determine that an accrediting agency or association has failed to apply effectively the standards provided in this section if an institution of higher education seeks and receives accreditation from the accrediting agency or association during any period in which the institution is the subject of any interim action by another accrediting agency or association, described in paragraph (2)(A)(i), (2)(B), or (2)(C) of subsection (a) of this section, leading to the suspension, revocation, or termination of accreditation or the institution has been notified of the threatened loss of accreditation, and the due process procedures required by such suspension, revocation, termination, or threatened loss have not been completed.

**(m) Limitation on Secretary's authority**

The Secretary may only recognize accrediting agencies or associations which accredit institutions of higher education for the purpose of enabling such institutions to establish eligibility to participate in the programs under this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 or which accredit institutions of higher education or higher education programs for the purpose of enabling them to establish eligibility to participate in other programs administered by the Department of Education or other Federal agencies.

**(n) Independent evaluation**

(1) The Secretary shall conduct a comprehensive review and evaluation of the performance of all accrediting agencies or associations which seek recognition by the Secretary in order to determine whether such accrediting agencies or associations meet the criteria established by this section. The Secretary shall conduct an independent evaluation of the information provided by such agency or association. Such evaluation shall include—

- (A) the solicitation of third-party information concerning the performance of the accrediting agency or association; and

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**(B)** site visits, including unannounced site visits as appropriate, at accrediting agencies and associations, and, at the Secretary's discretion, at representative member institutions.

**(2)** The Secretary shall place a priority for review of accrediting agencies or associations on those agencies or associations that accredit institutions of higher education that participate most extensively in the programs authorized by this subchapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 and on those agencies or associations which have been the subject of the most complaints or legal actions.

**(3)** The Secretary shall consider all available relevant information concerning the compliance of the accrediting agency or association with the criteria provided for in this section, including any complaints or legal actions against such agency or association. In cases where deficiencies in the performance of an accreditation agency or association with respect to the requirements of this section are noted, the Secretary shall take these deficiencies into account in the recognition process. The Secretary shall not, under any circumstances, base decisions on the recognition or denial of recognition of accreditation agencies or associations on criteria other than those contained in this section. When the Secretary decides to recognize an accrediting agency or association, the Secretary shall determine the agency or association's scope of recognition. If the agency or association reviews institutions offering distance education courses or programs and the Secretary determines that the agency or association meets the requirements of this section, then the agency shall be recognized and the scope of recognition shall include accreditation of institutions offering distance education courses or programs.

**(4)** The Secretary shall maintain sufficient documentation to support the conclusions reached in the recognition process, and, if the Secretary does not recognize any accreditation agency or association, shall make publicly available the reason for denying recognition, including reference to the specific criteria under this section which have not been fulfilled.

**(o) Regulations**

The Secretary shall by regulation provide procedures for the recognition of accrediting agencies or associations and for the appeal of the Secretary's decisions. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall not promulgate any regulation with respect to the standards of an accreditation agency or association described in subsection (a)(5).

**(p) Rule of construction**

Nothing in subsection (a)(5) shall be construed to restrict the ability of—

- (1)** an accrediting agency or association to set, with the involvement of its members, and to apply, accreditation standards for or to institutions or programs that seek review by the agency or association; or
- (2)** an institution to develop and use institutional standards to show its success with respect to student achievement, which achievement may be considered as part of any accreditation review.

**(q) Review of scope changes**

The Secretary shall require a review, at the next available meeting of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity, of any change in scope undertaken by an agency or association under subsection (a)(4)(B)(i)(II) if the enrollment of an institution that offers distance education or correspondence education that is accredited by such agency or association increases by 50 percent or more within any one institutional fiscal year.

(Pub. L. 89–329, title IV, § 496, as added Pub. L. 102–325, title IV, § 499, July 23, 1992, 106 Stat. 641; amended Pub. L. 103–208, § 2(i)(3)–(8), Dec. 20, 1993, 107 Stat. 2478, 2479; Pub. L. 105–244, title I, § 102(b)(5), title IV, § 492(a)(2)–(d), Oct. 7, 1998, 112 Stat. 1622, 1759, 1760; Pub. L. 110–315, title IV, § 495, Aug. 14, 2008, 122 Stat. 3324; Pub. L. 111–39, title IV, § 408(1), July 1, 2009, 123 Stat. 1953.)

## Amendments

2009—Subsec. (a)(6)(G). Pub. L. 111–39 substituted semicolon for period at end.

2008—Subsec. (a)(4). Pub. L. 110–315, § 495(1)(A), added par. (4) and struck out former par. (4) which read as follows: “such agency or association consistently applies and enforces standards that ensure that the courses or programs of instruction, training, or study offered by the institution of higher education, including distance education courses or programs, are of sufficient quality to achieve, for the duration of the accreditation period, the stated objective for which the courses or the programs are offered;”.

Subsec. (a)(5)(A). Pub. L. 110–315, § 495(1)(B), amended subpar. (A) generally. Prior to amendment, subpar. (A) read as follows: “success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution’s mission, including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, State licensing examinations, and job placement rates;”.

Subsec. (a)(6). Pub. L. 110–315, § 495(1)(C), added par. (6) and struck out former par. (6) which read as follows: “such agency or association shall apply procedures throughout the accrediting process, including evaluation and withdrawal proceedings, that comply with due process, including—

“(A) adequate specification of requirements and deficiencies at the institution of higher education or program being examined;

“(B) notice of an opportunity for a hearing by any such institution;

“(C) the right to appeal any adverse action against any such institution; and

“(D) the right to representation by counsel for any such institution;”.

Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 110–315, § 495(2)(A), inserted “, including those regarding distance education” after “their responsibilities”.

Subsec. (c)(2) to (8). Pub. L. 110–315, § 495(2)(B)–(D), added pars. (2), (3), and (7), redesignated former pars. (2) to (6) as (4) to (8), respectively, and struck out former par. (7) which read as follows: “maintains and makes publicly available written materials regarding standards and procedures for accreditation, appeal procedures, and the accreditation status of each institution subject to its jurisdiction; and”.

Subsec. (c)(9). Pub. L. 110–315, § 495(2)(E), (F), added par. (9).

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 110–315, § 495(3), inserted at end “Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit the Secretary to establish any criteria that specifies, defines, or prescribes the standards that accrediting agencies or associations shall use to assess any institution’s success with respect to student achievement.”

Subsec. (o). Pub. L. 110–315, § 495(4), inserted at end “Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall not promulgate any regulation with respect to the standards of an accreditation agency or association described in subsection (a)(5).”

Subsecs. (p), (q). Pub. L. 110–315, § 495(5), added subsecs. (p) and (q).

1998—Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(a)(2), substituted “Recognition” for “Approval” in section catchline.

Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(b)(1), (2), substituted “Criteria” for “Standards” in heading and “criteria” for “standards” wherever appearing in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (a)(4). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(b)(3), substituted “offered by the institution” for “at the institution” and inserted “, including distance education courses or programs,” after “higher education”.

Subsec. (a)(5). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(b)(4)(A), (H), substituted “for accreditation” for “of accreditation” in introductory provisions and “(A), (H), and (J)” for “(G), (H), (I), (J), and (L)” in concluding provisions.

Subsec. (a)(5)(A) to (G). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(b)(4)(C), (E), added subpar. (A) and redesignated former subpars. (A) to (F) as (B) to (G), respectively. Former subpar. (G) redesignated (H).

Subsec. (a)(5)(H). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(b)(4)(F), substituted “measures of program length” for “program length and tuition and fees in relation to the subject matters taught”.

Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(b)(4)(C), redesignated subpar. (G) as (H).

Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(b)(4)(B), struck out subpar. (H) which read as follows: “measures of program length in clock hours or credit hours;”.

Subsec. (a)(5)(I). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(b)(4)(B), (D), redesignated subpar. (K) as (I) and struck out former subpar. (I) which read as follows: “success with respect to student achievement in relation to its mission, including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, State licensing examination, and job placement rates;”.

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Subsec. (a)(5)(J). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(b)(4)(G), inserted “record of” before “compliance”, substituted “based on the most recent student loan default rate data provided by the Secretary, the” for “, including any”, and inserted “any” after “reviews, and”.

Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(b)(4)(B), (D), redesignated subpar. (L) as (J) and struck out former subpar. (J) which read as follows: “default rates in the student loan programs under this subchapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, based on the most recent data provided by the Secretary;”.

Subsec. (a)(5)(K), (L). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(b)(4)(D), redesignated subpars. (K) and (L) as (I) and (J), respectively.

Subsec. (a)(7). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(b)(5), substituted “State licensing or authorizing agency” for “State postsecondary review entity”.

Subsec. (a)(8). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(b)(6), substituted “State licensing or authorizing agency” for “State postsecondary review entity of the State in which the institution of higher education is located”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(c)(1), substituted “recognized by the Secretary” for “approved by the Secretary” in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(c)(2), substituted “(which may include unannounced site visits)” for “(at least one of which inspections at each institution that provides vocational education and training shall be unannounced),”.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(d)(1), substituted “recognition” for “approval” in heading and “recognized” for “approved” in text.

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(d)(2), substituted “recognized” for “approved”.

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(d)(3), substituted “criteria” for “standards” in heading and “establish criteria” for “establish standards” in text.

Subsec. (j). Pub. L. 105–244, § 102(b)(5), substituted “section 1002” for “section 1088” in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (k). Pub. L. 105–244, §§ 102(b)(5), 492(d)(4)(A), amended subsec. (k) identically, substituting “section 1002” for “section 1088” in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (k)(2). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(d)(4)(B), substituted “criteria” for “standards”.

Subsec. (l). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(d)(5), substituted “recognition” for “approval” in heading, added par. (1), and struck out former par. (1) which read as follows: “The Secretary shall limit, suspend, or terminate the approval of an accrediting agency or association if the Secretary determines, after notice and opportunity for a hearing, that the accrediting agency or association has failed to apply effectively the standards or operate according to the procedures provided in this section.”

Subsec. (n)(1). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(d)(6)(A), substituted “criteria” for “standards” in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (n)(3). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(d)(6)(A), (B), substituted “criteria” for “standards” in two places, “recognition process” for “approval process”, and “recognition or denial of recognition” for “approval or disapproval”, and inserted at end “When the Secretary decides to recognize an accrediting agency or association, the Secretary shall determine the agency or association’s scope of recognition. If the agency or association reviews institutions offering distance education courses or programs and the Secretary determines that the agency or association meets the requirements of this section, then the agency shall be recognized and the scope of recognition shall include accreditation of institutions offering distance education courses or programs.”

Subsec. (n)(4). Pub. L. 105–244, § 492(d)(6)(C), added par. (4) and struck out former par. (4) which read as follows: “The Secretary shall maintain sufficient documentation to support the conclusions reached in the approval process, and, upon disapproval of any accreditation agency or association, shall make publicly available the reason for such disapproval, including reference to the specific standards under this section which have not been fulfilled.”

1993—Subsec. (a)(2)(A)(i). Pub. L. 103–208, § 2(i)(3), inserted “of institutions of higher education” after “membership”.

Subsec. (a)(3)(A). Pub. L. 103–208, § 2(i)(4), substituted “subparagraph (A)(i)” for “subparagraph (A)”.

Subsec. (a)(5). Pub. L. 103–208, § 2(i)(5), substituted a semicolon for the period at end of subpar. (L) and inserted after subpar. (L) the following: “except that subparagraphs (G), (H), (I), (J), and (L) shall not apply to agencies or associations described in paragraph (2)(A)(ii) of this subsection;”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 103–208, § 2(i)(6), substituted “as a reliable authority as to the quality of education or training offered by an institution seeking to participate in the programs authorized under this subchapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42” for “for the purpose of this subchapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42”.

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Subsec. (1)(2). Pub. L. 103–208, § 2(i)(7), substituted “institution” for “institution” and “association, described in paragraph (2)(A)(i), (2)(B), or (2)(C) of subsection (a) of this section, leading to the suspension” for “association leading to the suspension”.

Subsec. (n)(1)(B). Pub. L. 103–208, § 2(i)(8), amended subpar. (B) generally. Prior to amendment, subpar. (B) read as follows: “site visits at both the accrediting agency or association and member institutions, including unannounced visits where appropriate.”

### **Effective Date of 2009 Amendment**

Amendment by Pub. L. 111–39 effective as if enacted on the date of enactment of Pub. L. 110–315 (Aug. 14, 2008), see section 3 of Pub. L. 111–39, set out as a note under section 1001 of this title.

### **Effective Date of 1998 Amendment**

Amendment by Pub. L. 105–244 effective Oct. 1, 1998, except as otherwise provided in Pub. L. 105–244, see section 3 of Pub. L. 105–244, set out as a note under section 1001 of this title.

### **Effective Date of 1993 Amendment**

Amendment by Pub. L. 103–208 effective as if included in the Higher Education Amendments of 1992, Pub. L. 102–325, except as otherwise provided, see section 5(a) of Pub. L. 103–208, set out as a note under section 1051 of this title.

### **Effective Date**

Section effective Oct. 1, 1992, see section 2 of Pub. L. 102–325, set out as an Effective Date of 1992 Amendment note under section 1001 of this title.

### **Study of Transfer of Credits**

Pub. L. 105–244, title VIII, § 804, Oct. 7, 1998, 112 Stat. 1806, which directed the Secretary of Education to conduct a study regarding the treatment of the transfer of credits from one institution of higher education to another and to report to Congress, not later than one year after Oct. 7, 1998, was repealed by Pub. L. 110–315, title IX, § 931(1), Aug. 14, 2008, 122 Stat. 3456.