*THE VOICE*

AER Accreditation Council Annual Impact Report for 2024

The 2024 AERAC Annual Impact Report is now on the website. It includes links to a Survey Monkey sent in the second half of 2024 to 94 qualified accreditation reviewers. Twelve respondents served on OSAC (organizations and schools) reviews and 22 respondents worked on HEAC (higher education personnel preparation) reviews within the past 3 years. They answered both multiple-choice and open comment questions. An additional 6 respondents who served between four and five years ago were directed to write comments on the 9 open questions. Please take a look at the Annual Impact Report 2024 to see all the responses to the multiple-choice questions here: <https://www.aerbvi.org/accreditation>.

This article provides some highlights of the open comments we received:

* 15 comments regarding the training, orientation and support during the review. Two were very specific: “the required reading seemed to overlap on many topics so it made the whole process feel very time consuming. It was hard to tell what the priorities were” and “It would be helpful to provide a short video of the way in which a reviewer helps on these boards, what to expect as far as time to put into reviewing, and promote more ACVREP credits to recruit more professionals to be a part of it.”
* 6 Comments about standards included highlighting the need to reduce the redundancy of questions.
* 16 comments on the review process added to the redundancy comments, plus offered strong critiques of the interview process, the need to provide more than syllabi to show activities designed for the student to demonstrate knowledge, the difficulty for panel members to find the information, and the consequence of a prolonged review process.

The open questions also requested feedback on the new policies required by CHEA, which recently awarded recognition to AERAC. These policies address a complaint process, due dates for responses to panel requests for more information, a 30-day public comment period, posting of Decision Summaries on the AER website, and accreditations of programs in other countries. In general, these items received very positive support.

The responses were less positive to the revised Annual Program Update Report required from HEAC accredited entities. The HEAC programs themselves also shared deep concerns about the required information on the 2023 Update Report, which had been revised to meet CHEA standards. The difficulty in providing meaningful, accurate data and fair comparisons among programs was mentioned several times. The Annual Program Update for 2024 was changed in response to these concerns and the responses which were due in March 2025 reflected a big sigh of relief from the program managers and still provided meaningful information.

Two webinars, one for OSAC and one for HEAC, were delivered at the beginning of this year to provide better information for training of both panel members and the people preparing accreditation materials for their organizations/programs. These webinars also address more precisely what is expected in terms of evidence to show compliance, and what is required in terms of directing the panel to the exact evidence being offered so the panel doesn’t spend a lot of time looking for the information.

The survey preserved the anonymity of all respondents. It was successful in encouraging constructive criticism. All comments are appreciated very much and will be on the agenda for further analysis the rest of this year for OSAC-HEAC and the AER Accreditation Council. If you wish to share your thoughts on any aspect of the accreditation process, feel free to reach out to elly@aerbvi.org.

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