



**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES  
FOR UNDERGRADUATE  
REVIEW AND CERTIFICATION**



## Table of Contents

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INTRODUCTION .....	1
FREQUENCY OF CERTIFICATION REVIEWS .....	2
PROCEDURES FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM REVIEW .....	3
THE APPLICATION, ELIGIBILITY REPORT and SELF STUDY .....	4
WITHDRAWAL FROM A SCHEDULED REVIEW.....	5
THE REVIEW TEAM.....	6
REVIEW MEETING FORMAT .....	6
REVIEW AND VOTING SCHEDULE.....	8
REVIEW TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUBSEQUENT ACTION.....	8
PROGRESS REPORTS.....	9
CHANGE IN STATUS.....	9
LOSS OF CERTIFICATION.....	10
APPEALS PROCESS.....	10
WITHDRAWAL OF CERTIFICATION .....	11
FEES (subject to change annually) .....	11
ROLE OF THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM COMMITTEE (UPC) .....	11



## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR UNDERGRADUATE REVIEW AND CERTIFICATION**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Since 1989, the Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA) has recognized those baccalaureate health administration programs that meet the established criteria as eligible for AUPHA certification. At this time, AUPHA's Undergraduate Program Committee (UPC), led by a chair or co-chairs, oversees the undergraduate certification process. An undergraduate program review is required for certification. Once certified, programs must undergo a program review at least every four years and most commonly every seven years.

The review is informed by the eligibility report and self-study document. The self-study serves as a guide for faculty reviewers. It is expected that, as part of this review process, the program and its faculty will question, evaluate, and possibly amend the programmatic structure, goals, and teaching methods to reflect the criteria and their own educational goals and objectives. The program's self-study and any materials requested by the review team stand as evidence in the review. The submitted materials become the property of AUPHA.

AUPHA recognizes that flexibility and innovation are essential to the design and development of curricula. Each program must define its mission and objectives and must, therefore, be judged within the context of that mission and the defined objectives. However, it is incumbent on the program to demonstrate how its curriculum meets the intent of the AUPHA criteria. Failure to provide adequate evidence of this constitutes sufficient reason for the denial of certification. In some cases, a program in substantial compliance may not receive a score of "fully met" for every criterion but may still receive certification. In those instances, the program will submit an interim progress report the following year. Upon submission of interim progress reports, and when certification is reviewed, the program must indicate progress since the last review, noting in particular any actions taken with regard to recommendations from the previous review.

Programs are encouraged to strive for the highest quality. The established criteria reflect minimal programmatic structure, faculty, and curriculum expectations of AUPHA certified programs. The review process does not consist of a checklist of characteristics or essentials; rather it is based upon a collegial professional judgment of whether a program meets the AUPHA criteria for undergraduate health administration education. All programs seeking and holding AUPHA certification are subject to the criteria.



## **FREQUENCY OF CERTIFICATION REVIEWS**

Certified undergraduate programs are required to be reviewed at least every seven years. Any certified program due for review which fails to submit a self-study within the appropriate time frame will be subject to termination of certification.

In unusual circumstances, programs that have achieved a seven-year term of certification in their last review may apply for a one-year delay in their review. Delays must be recommended to the AUPHA Board of Directors by the UPC chair(s) and approved by a majority vote. Delays will be considered in the event of extenuating circumstances that may include, but are not limited to:

1. Extensive disruption of the operation of the program and/or college as a result of global or national health emergencies;
2. Extensive damage and/or disruption to the operation of the program as a result of natural disasters such as tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, or power/facility losses; unanticipated;
3. Unavoidable personnel change due to illness, substantial accident, and/or injury, personal circumstance, or professional career action;
4. University-wide or school-wide initiatives that substantially handicap the program in meeting certification criteria;
5. Extensive curricular changes which do not allow for evaluation of program elements that will apply to the foreseeable future; and
6. Other circumstances deemed extenuating in nature, as approved by the Board.

Requests for delay must be submitted electronically to AUPHA prior to May in the year that a program starts a new review cycle. For example, if a program is scheduled for review in the 2024-2025 cycle, it must submit a request for delay prior to May 2024. Requests submitted after this date will not be considered unless the rationale for the request is based on circumstances #1 or #2 of the preceding list. The request is reviewed by the UPC chair(s) and, if deemed appropriate, forwarded to the AUPHA Board of Directors for their consideration and vote.

Programs granted a delay will be invoiced for a review delay fee (see table of fees) when notified of the approval of their request for delay.

Programs that fail to submit a self-study by the due date will not be allowed to stand for review in the scheduled year. If the program is within seven years of its last review, the review will be delayed one year, the program will be required to pay a review delay fee, and the program will be put into a probationary status for the bridge year. Programs that fail to submit a self-study by the due date that were reviewed more than seven years previously will lose their certification effective July 1 of that year but may stand for certification again the following year if space allows.



## **PROCEDURES FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM REVIEW**

The undergraduate program review process enhances program self-assessment, interaction among faculty members, and the quality of programs. The eligibility report and self-study are the basis for review. The review meeting is held remotely. The program director must attend the review meeting. The program director may invite other faculty of the program or leadership of the college to attend; it is strongly recommended that at least one other faculty member and/or the dean (or designate) attend the review as well.

Certification cycles run across two calendar years, with the program review meeting taking place in June of the second calendar year. The self-study year is typically the academic year in progress at the start of the cycle. For example, a program undergoing review during the 2024-2025 cycle will write their self-study about the 2023-2024 academic year. The following are the steps in the review process with approximate timing:

<b>General Timetable</b>	<b>Example Review Year of 2024-2025</b>	<b>Actions/Events</b>
May of the first year in the cycle	May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ AUPHA notifies programs scheduled to undergo undergraduate program review in the following year, indicating whether the review is required.</li><li>○ Programs that are not required to undergo review confirm whether they will stand for review.</li><li>○ Programs required to undergo review confirm they are aware of this requirement and have the opportunity at this time to request a review delay under the circumstances identified above.</li><li>○ AUPHA sends the eligibility report criteria, eligibility report link, invoice, and application to programs who have tentatively committed to standing for review during the following calendar year.</li></ul>
June of first year in the cycle	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Programs submit the eligibility report, application, and review fee.</li><li>○ AUPHA reviews the eligibility report and notifies the programs of their eligibility.</li><li>○ AUPHA sends the self-study to eligible programs to complete.</li></ul>
July of the first year in the cycle	July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Programs attend a mandatory pre-certification webinar.</li></ul>



December of the first year in the cycle	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Programs are notified of their assigned review team.</li> <li>○ Programs submit the self-study to AUPHA.</li> </ul>
March through May of the second year in the cycle	March through May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review teams request additional information from their assigned program, if necessary.</li> <li>○ Programs respond to review team, if required</li> <li>○ Programs are notified of time and date of virtual review meeting.</li> </ul>
June of the second year in the cycle	June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Remote review meetings held.</li> </ul>
July of the second year in the cycle	July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Programs provide additional information requested during in-person reviews.</li> </ul>
September of the second year in the cycle	September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Programs receive draft of their review report.</li> <li>○ Programs respond to confirm receipt and provide any factual corrections to the draft review report.</li> </ul>
October/November of the second year in the cycle	October/November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ AUPHA Board of Directors acts on certification recommendations by review teams and UPC.</li> <li>○ Programs are notified of AUPHA Board action.</li> </ul>
October/November of the year following the cycle	October/November 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If required, programs are reminded to complete and submit an interim report on any criteria that were not fully met in the review report.</li> </ul>
January, just over a year after the cycle has ended	January 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If required, interim reports are due.</li> <li>○ Programs contacted with results of their interim report.</li> </ul>

### **THE APPLICATION, ELIGIBILITY REPORT and SELF STUDY**

Programs wishing to stand for certification must submit the application, payment, and eligibility report to AUPHA in June of the first year in their certification cycle. The application and eligibility report will be reviewed to ensure eligibility of the program to stand for certification. Once eligibility is confirmed, the program will receive the self-study.

Programs can use the AUPHA undergraduate review self-study guide available on the AUPHA website to guide their preparation of the self-study. Programs submit their self-study to AUPHA via an online survey tool.



The review team reads the self-study in the several months prior to the review meeting. The team may request additional information deemed lacking in the original self-study or may request clarification on issues not understood. The program is required to respond to these requests and provide the information in a timely fashion. A program's failure to provide information requested by the team will be taken into consideration in assessing the program's compliance with review criteria.

Those programs that fail to submit their self-study by the due date will be assessed a \$250 late fee. Programs that fail to submit their self-study by January 15<sup>th</sup> will not be permitted to stand for certification that year. If the program is within seven years of its last review, the program may submit the \$750 fee to delay the certification for one year. The program will be listed in a probationary status for the year. If the program has already received a delay from the previous year, the program will lose its certified status on July 1<sup>st</sup> and must restart the process as an initial certification the following year.

#### **WITHDRAWAL FROM A SCHEDULED REVIEW**

A program may elect to voluntarily withdraw from the review process at any time. However, once the review fee is submitted, the financial and certification status implications of such withdrawal will be treated as follows:

##### *Non-certified programs:*

If a non-certified program voluntarily withdraws from the certification process any time,

- Between submission of the fee and the review meeting: the review fee will not be refunded. However, it may be applied to a future review within the two years following the scheduled review, upon submission of a request to extend and the \$750 review delay fee. Should the program not pursue certification within the two years following their scheduled review, the program forfeits the review fee.
- Between the time of the review and the final action of the Board of Directors: the program will forfeit its review fee entirely.

##### *Certified programs:*

If a certified program that is within seven years of their last review withdraws from the certification process any time,

- Between submission of the fee and the review meeting: the review fee will not be refunded. However, it may be applied to a review the following year, upon submission of a request to delay and the \$750 delay fee. The program will be listed in a probationary status for the bridge year. Should the program not pursue certification in the following year, the program forfeits the review fee and will lose its certification effective July 1 of the year following its originally scheduled review.
- Between the time of the review and the final action of the Board of Directors: the review fee will not be refunded. The program may request to delay and pay the \$750 delay fee at that time. If



the program requests to delay, it will be listed on probationary status for the bridge year. Should the program not pursue certification the following year, it will lose its certification effective July 1 of the year following its review.

If a certified program that was reviewed more than seven years prior withdraws from the certification process, the program forfeits the review fee and will lose its certification effective July 1 of that same year.

### **THE REVIEW TEAM**

After consultation with the UPC chair(s), AUPHA appoints the undergraduate program review team. AUPHA recruits review team members from member programs and faculty who may be from undergraduate or graduate healthcare management programs. The team is comprised of at least three individuals, one serving as chair of the team. The chair is responsible for initiating and guiding the work of the team, communicating with the program as needed, and ensuring the timely delivery of all feedback and reports to the programs and AUPHA.

Review team members are eligible to serve as chair if they meet the following criteria:

- a) Have served as a team member on at least 3 review teams; and
- b) Are currently full-time faculty at an AUPHA Full Member Program or have been full-time faculty at a Full Member Program within the last 5 years.

Exceptions to these criteria may be made at the discretion of the UPC chair(s) if approved by the program being reviewed. Review team members are trained during the year via web-based training.

AUPHA, in consultation with the UPC chair(s), identifies and assigns team members to program reviews. Whenever possible, AUPHA will make every effort to assign team members that represent programs similar in size, setting, and focus to the program being reviewed.

AUPHA will inform the program of the review team in November of the first year in the cycle. The program will have 10 business days from notification of the appointed team to provide rationale for why any member might have a conflict of interest in reviewing the program. AUPHA reserves the right to make the final decision regarding selection of the review team. Programs will be notified in December of final team composition. The self-study will then be forwarded to the reviewers.

### **REVIEW MEETING FORMAT**

The undergraduate program review meeting is a virtual group discussion. Initial reviews for programs not yet certified are scheduled for three hours; re-certification reviews are scheduled for two hours. Prior to the review, the team meets to review any remaining areas of concern and to develop a strategy





for discussing these during the review.

The review team chair facilitates the review with the following agenda:

- Introductions
  - Review team chair facilitates introductions of the review team members and then allows all program representatives to introduce themselves.
- Overview
  - Review team chair discusses the process thus far and the goals for the review meeting. The chair will also share next steps after the review meeting.
- Discussion of Criteria and Findings
  - Review team chair facilitates a discussion of criteria with any notable strengths or areas of concern.
- Optional: Recess
  - During this optional recess, the program representatives will move to the virtual waiting room so the review team can discuss any points of interest or further clarification needed from the program.
- Summary of Review Findings
  - Review team chair summarizes the findings of the team and notes any areas where additional clarification or documentation may be needed from the program.
- Closing

Upon completion of the review session, the team meets to:

- (1) Review the program's responses to issues.
- (2) Specify additional information/documentation required (if any). [Note: A letter from the review chair, copied to AUPHA staff, must be sent within ten working days to the Program Director specifying what additional material is required.]
- (3) Summarize the program's strengths and weaknesses based upon each of the criteria.
- (4) Develop a schedule for determining the team's final recommendation.

Within sixty (60) days of the undergraduate program review meeting, the review team chair sends a draft report to AUPHA. AUPHA staff and the UPC chair(s) review the report, and, if necessary, consult with the review team chair regarding the report's contents. The group may amend the report based on that consultation or may ask the team chair to amend the report at that time.

AUPHA staff then send the program a version of the draft report with the recommended action removed, confirming receipt with the program's certification contact. The program reviews the report



for accuracy and completeness and must respond within ten (10) working days. After consideration of the program's response, the review team finalizes the draft report. The review team chair submits the final report to AUPHA according to the due date on the timetable for that certification cycle, typically in late September. AUPHA staff and the UPC chair(s) then review the program's response and the report, making any final revisions required. Once finalized, AUPHA forwards the recommendations to the Board of Directors. AUPHA's President and CEO and the UPC chair(s), have final editorial control of the report, though they typically consult with the chair of the review panel when making revisions.

### **REVIEW AND VOTING SCHEDULE**

After the review meeting and subsequent follow-up with the program, the review team will recommend an action to the UPC. Conditions may be attached to certification or the continuation of certification, with a specific deadline for the program to meet those conditions. The UPC chair(s) will review the recommendations of the review team and determine whether to forward such recommendations to the Board of Directors or return the report to the review team for amendment. The Board will review the recommendations of the UPC at their next scheduled Board meeting. An affirmative vote of a majority of the Board of Directors is required for certification. The program is notified of the outcome of the Board vote within thirty (30) days.

While the Board relies heavily on the recommendations of the UPC, it holds the final authority in deciding upon certification action and may amend review team or UPC recommendations in the final report and action.

### **REVIEW TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUBSEQUENT ACTION**

The review team recommends an action to the UPC chair(s). After their review, the UPC chair(s) will recommend action to the Board of Directors for their consideration. The recommendation consists of three parts:

1. The recommendation to award or deny certification.
2. The term of certification.
  - a. If the first recommendation is to award certification, the subsequent recommendation will be for the duration and terms of certification. Guidelines are as follows, though individual circumstances may warrant a deviation from these guidelines:
    - i. Programs in substantial compliance with the criteria will receive a 7-year certification.
    - ii. Programs in minimal compliance with the criteria will receive a 4-year certification.
    - iii. Programs undergoing review for the first time will receive a 4-year certification.
  - b. The determination of level of compliance will be made by the review team and



confirmed by the UPC chair(s) and AUPHA Staff.

3. Finally, the team will recommend any required interim progress reports and timeframes for the submission of those reports. Progress reports are typically due just over a year from the date programs are notified of the result of their review.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS**

AUPHA uses progress reports to determine that all programs that have participated in the certification process come into full compliance with AUPHA certification criteria. Consequently, a progress report will be required of those programs that partially meet or do not meet one or more criteria at the time of the review. The final review report specifies progress report requirements, which will be due the first week in January of the year(s) specified in the report unless another timeframe is recommended and approved by the board.

The program must submit the progress report(s) to AUPHA electronically by the date(s) specified in the review report. If progress reports are not submitted on time, the program will be charged a late fee of \$250 for each month or portion thereof that the report is late. Programs failing to submit progress reports within 120 days of the due date will be subject to adverse action by the UPC or Board up to and including withdrawal of Certification.

The report must address the program's progress towards meeting any criteria not judged to be fully met during the review.

Upon receipt, AUPHA will forward the progress report to the UPC chair(s). The chair(s) will review the progress report and inform the UPC as to its recommendation on the report within thirty (30) days of receipt. If the program has evidenced sufficient progress toward meeting all of the recommendations in the report, the chair(s) will recommend that no further action is needed from the program and the program will receive notification of such within sixty (60) days of report submission.

If there has not been sufficient evidence of progress towards meeting the recommendations in the report, the UPC chair(s) may recommend an additional progress report, or an interim review should the situation warrant. In the event that an interim review is recommended by the UPC chair(s), the UPC will assess such recommendation and make a determination as to whether or not to forward this recommendation to the Board or take alternative action. Interim reviews will be required upon recommendation of the UPC and two thirds vote of the Board.

### **CHANGE IN STATUS**

A program may withdraw from certified status if changes in program status result in it not continuing to meet the criteria for certification. The program must write a letter to the AUPHA Board Chair stating the reasons for its desire to withdraw and indicating when the program expects to be able to undergo



undergraduate review to return to certified status.

### **LOSS OF CERTIFICATION**

In the case of a Board decision to deny or terminate certification, the program will receive formal notice of the Board decision within thirty (30) days of the vote, advising the program of the reason for the action. In the event of a denial or termination of certification, the program may exercise its right to appeal the decision.

### **APPEALS PROCESS**

Appeals are only available to programs that have been denied certification or whose certification has been terminated. Actions regarding the number of years of certification or the number of progress reports to be submitted are not eligible for appeal.

If the program chooses to appeal the Board decision, the following steps apply:

1. The program must inform the Board of this intent by certified letter within thirty (30) days of receipt of the notice, along with the appeals fee of \$1,500. If the program intends to appeal within the 30-day window, AUPHA will provide an invoice for the appeal fee.
2. The Board, in consultation with the UPC, will appoint an appeals committee consisting of two (2) members of the Board and one (1) faculty member from an AUPHA certified undergraduate program. No member of the original review team may serve on the appeals committee. The program will be notified of the composition of the appeals committee within two (2) weeks of the Board's receipt of the certified letter and appeals fee.
3. The program must submit four (4) copies of its appeal to AUPHA within thirty (30) days of the appointment of the appeals committee. The appeal should include the Program's response to the final review report and additional comprehensive documentation presenting the grounds for the appeal. AUPHA will immediately forward the appeal to the appeals committee.
4. The appeals committee reviews the documentation, and within sixty (60) days writes a report to the Board and to the program with its recommendation. In conducting the review, the appeals committee will have access to the program's self-study application, the review report, and the appeals documents.
5. The Board, after consultation with the UPC, votes on the recommendation of the appeals committee and communicates its decision to the program within two (2) weeks. The decision of the Board is final.



A program that has lost its certification through denial or termination may not re-apply for certification until one (1) year from the time of the Board decision has passed.

Should the program choose not to appeal, or should an appeal be denied, the program should immediately remove any reference to being certified on all materials, including those used to recruit new students. The program's undergraduate certification officially concludes at the end of the calendar year in which the Board decision was made.

### **WITHDRAWAL OF CERTIFICATION**

AUPHA retains the right to withdraw certified status from any program for just cause and after due process. The Board, in consultation with the UPC, may withdraw the certification of a program through a two-thirds vote at which a quorum is present.

Sufficient cause includes, but is not limited to, failure to submit required progress reports and review self-studies when due notice has been given, failure to come into compliance with all AUPHA certification criteria within the timeframe specified in the review report, failure to submit the AUPHA annual survey when due notice has been given, and failure to pay fees.

### **FEES (subject to change annually)**

Annual AUPHA Membership Fee	TBD annually
Initial Certification Review	\$4,500
Re-Certification Review	\$3,600
Appeals Fee	\$1,500
Review Delay Fee	\$750
Late Report Fee	\$250 per month, prorated based on date report is received.

### **ROLE OF THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM COMMITTEE (UPC)**

The UPC oversees the undergraduate certification review process as part of its responsibilities. The following activities are conducted by the UPC and its membership:

- Assessing the review upon completion of the final report and making a recommendation to the Board on certification actions.
- Assessing the progress report evaluation and making a recommendation to the Board on actions related to progress reports.
- Bi-annually evaluating the review criteria to ensure they are current and relevant, and revising as needed, not less than every 8 years.
- Providing substitute review team members from its ranks or recruiting such from the membership if appointed team members can no longer serve.



- Overseeing review team selection process.
- Intervening when there are issues or concerns with the process or outcome of reviews (e.g. when the team does not fulfill its responsibilities).
- Providing advice and consultation to the Board regarding appeals issues.

#### **PARTICIPATION IN ANNUAL AUPHA BENCHMARKING SURVEY**

All AUPHA Full certified undergraduate programs must complete and submit the annual AUPHA benchmarking survey. Failure to complete the survey will result in either probation or suspension of AUPHA undergraduate certification. Failure to pay program dues will also result in probation or suspension of AUPHA undergraduate certification.