

Initial ALA Accreditation
Step One: Precandidacy Application

A report on the status of the program and a plan for achieving candidacy status are the two most critical elements of a precandidacy application. *Accreditation Process, Policies, and Procedures* (AP3), 4th ed., section I.8, details the requirements for achieving and maintaining Precandidacy status.

Precandidacy status represents a “commitment to achieving ALA accreditation.” A program is therefore not expected to be in compliance with the Standards at this point in the process.

PAST LESSONS

Past applications have shown how difficult it is for those working within the program to describe it adequately or clearly. They are too close to the subject. Someone outside the program needs to review the application against the requirements. This is also true of the eventual Self-Study. Many accredited programs struggle with this. Office for Accreditation staffers provide advice and can offer names of qualified individuals to consult on the process.

Be sure the application answers these questions:

What is the projected size of the faculty?

What is the anticipated size of student enrollment?

What is the relationship between the projected size of the faculty and the student body?

the program.” The application must detail plans to provide adequate courses a clear schedule of offerings.

Standard V Administration, Finances, and Resources

This standard requires the program to show that “the parent institution provides the resources and administrative support needed for the attainment of program objectives.” The application must provide evidence of plans to ensure that the program would have a reasonable expectation of financial viability. For example, if a report expresses uncertainty about when new funding for additional faculty lines and other resources will be available, acceptance of the application could be delayed until more is known.

This standard also requires that the “physical facilities provide a functional learning environment for students and faculty” and that “instructional and research facilities and services for meeting the needs of students and faculty include access to information resources and services, computer and other information technologies, accommodations for independent study, and media production facilities.” Further, that “the program’s systematic planning and evaluation process includes review of its administrative policies, its fiscal and support policies, and its resource requirements.” The Committee has rejected applications with insufficient evidence that the program has met the requirements of this standard “regardless of forms or locations of delivery of the school’s program” (Standards, Introduction).