



Information Systems and Technology Accreditation Council

Program Evolution Review

Definition: A program evolution review is a process that:

- a) provides information to the Information Systems and Technology Accreditation Council (ISTAC) to allow for the assessment of the depth and breadth of changes that have occurred in an accredited program since the last accreditation visit; and
- b) provides an opportunity to the accredited program to seek a two year extension to a three year accreditation period without the need for an accreditation visit.

Policies

- 1) A program evolution reviews will only be considered for accredited programs that have had a minimum of two successful consecutive accreditation visits prior to the present.
- 2) An accredited program will not be eligible for a program evolution review if there were any major deficiencies in the most recent accreditation report.
- 3) Eligibility for an extension of two years is assessed by means of a completed ISTAC questionnaire.
- 4) The program evolution process should be started no later than six (6) months prior to the expiration of the accreditation date. It is up to the discretion of the ISTAC to accept reports submitted after this date has expired.
- 5) All program evolution documents are reviewed by the ISTAC, which decides whether an extension will be granted.
- 6) The ISTAC decision on a program evolution review is final and not subject to appeal.
- 7) If an extension on the accreditation period is denied, the educational institution will be informed of this decision and the reason(s) for the decision and the standard ISTAC accreditation process is then started. Information collected through the evolution review process can be reused for the standard accreditation process.
- 8) If an extension is granted, it will be for 2 years from the end date of the three year accreditation period. ISTAC reserves the right to grant accreditation period extensions, beyond the normal 2 year period, under special circumstances.¹

¹ Special circumstance maybe elaborate as but is not limited to: 1. An institution with multiple CIPS ISTAC accredited programs wishing to have all programs share the same accreditation period start/end dates, 2. An institution where a program is scheduled for major restructuring, wanting to assure that the current student group will graduate from an accredited program.

- 9) Only one two-year extension is permitted within a five year period. After this period, a school must use the standard ISTAC review process, which will include a site visit.
- 10) For educational institutions that are on the annual [CIPS accreditation fee plan](#), there is no cost associated with the evolution review. If the institution is not on the plan, then the cost is \$1,000.

Evolution Review Process Example

