

# National Commission for Certifying Agencies

## Policy Manual



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This policy manual is current as of August 2021. Materials in this manual are subject to change. Please contact the NCCA to verify that you have a current copy.

National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA)  
2001 K. Street, NW 3rd Floor North Washington, D.C. 20006  
Phone 202/367-1165 Fax 202/367-2165 [info@credentialingexcellence.org](mailto:info@credentialingexcellence.org)  
[www.credentialingexcellence.org/NCCA](http://www.credentialingexcellence.org/NCCA)

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## **I. Organization and Purpose**

The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) is a standing committee of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (I.C.E.) responsible for the implementation and maintenance of an accreditation service for certification programs based on the requirements of the *NCCA Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs* (NCCA Standards). The NCCA shall have autonomy and independence related to all essential accreditation decisions, including: development and maintenance of operational policies and procedures; development of the proposed NCCA budget; and, development, maintenance and review of NCCA Standards in accordance with I.C.E. Standards Development Policies.

### **a. Mission and Vision**

#### NCCA Vision Statement

The NCCA will be an administratively independent resource recognized as the authority on accreditation standards for professional certification programs. Based on sound principles, NCCA standards will be optimal and comprehensive criteria for organizational process and performance. They will be broadly recognized, objective, and current benchmarks for certifying bodies to achieve and by which they operate.

#### NCCA Mission Statement

The NCCA helps to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the public through the accreditation of certification programs that assess professional competence. The NCCA uses a peer review process to:

- Establish accreditation standards;
- Evaluate compliance with these standards;
- Recognize programs that demonstrate compliance;
- Monitor and enforce continued compliance; and,
- Serve as a resource on quality certification.

Article XI of I.C.E.'s Bylaws establishes the NCCA, its purpose and composition.

### **b. Authority**

Article XI, Section A of I.C.E.'s Bylaws authorizes the Commission to have "autonomy and independence related to all essential accreditation decisions, including: development and maintenance of operational policies and procedures."

The Commission has sole and unreviewable power and discretion to make, alter, amend, interpret, or repeal such policies and procedures, without prior notice, as it deems necessary to the conduct of its affairs.

### **c. Commissioner Duties and Responsibilities**

#### General

In accordance with the provisions contained in the I.C.E. bylaws for election, appointment, service, meetings, voting, and indemnification, the authority of the NCCA shall be exercised exclusively by the Commissioners, acting individually and as a whole.

It is the responsibility and duty of a Commissioner to, (i) execute a written Commitment to render faithful service as a Commissioner including avoiding conflicts of interest or other impropriety and (ii) execute a written Agreement of Confidentiality. When performing his or her duties, a Commissioner shall be considered a volunteer to the fullest extent permitted by state and federal law.

At the discretion of the Commission, if a program with which a Commissioner is currently affiliated is denied accreditation, then a vote of the majority of the Commission may declare a Commissioner ineligible to serve. However, if all program(s) with which a Commissioner is affiliated is/are denied accreditation, then he or she is automatically ineligible to serve on the Commission. If such a program has been denied, and request for reconsideration is taken to overturn that decision, then he/she must recuse him/herself from all Commission business until a final decision is rendered.

#### Terms of Office

The composition of the NCCA is outlined in Article XI, section B of the I.C.E. Bylaws. Commissioners shall take office at the start of the new calendar year. The following term dates apply to the various roles on the NCCA:

Serving 2-year terms:

- 1 elected by the Board of Directors from representatives of voting I.C.E. organizational members
- At least 1 Public Commissioner elected by NCCA
- No less than 2 and up to 4 qualified psychometricians elected by NCCA

Serving 3-year terms, staggered:

- 5 appointed by the Board of Directors from representatives of certifying agencies with a certification program accredited by NCCA whose names appear on a slate of candidates recommended by the NCCA

No Commissioner, elected or appointed, shall serve more than six (6) consecutive years, unless circumstances require extension

Any vacancy shall be filled by NCCA, which shall appoint a commissioner to serve for the remainder of the term. This appointee is also eligible to serve full terms if subsequently elected or appointed.

### Officer Positions and Terms

The Officers of NCCA shall consist of the Chair and Vice Chair and shall be elected via electronic ballot from members of the current Commission prior to its last in-person meeting of the calendar year. Officers shall take office at the start of the new calendar year.

The Chair and Vice Chair shall each serve a term of one year and may be eligible to be re-elected to additional terms within their respective elected or appointed Commission terms. If an Officer leaves office before the conclusion of his/her term, the NCCA may authorize an interim Officer to serve the remainder of the term.

## **II. Applications**

### **a. Eligibility**

Any program may apply for accreditation that has administered a certification examination program for one year or to at least 500 candidates, whichever comes first. A “certification program” uses a particular assessment instrument to issue a credential. Policies, processes, and practices reported in the application must be in place and have been implemented in development of the program.

An organization may begin an accreditation application online before its program(s) is eligible, but it may not be submitted for review until the eligibility criteria are met.

### **b. Fees**

Application Fees

Under Article X, Section B of I.C.E.’s Bylaws, the amount of applicable dues and fees is established annually by I.C.E.’s Board of Directors. Prior to seeking NCCA accreditation of a program, all organizations must pay a non-refundable application fee.

#### Accreditation Maintenance Fees

All organizations that have programs accredited by the Commission must pay annual accreditation maintenance fees to remain in good standing.

### **c. Application Process**

The NCCA application requires applicants to provide written explanations and supporting evidence that their program meets the NCCA [Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs](#).

A complete application includes the following:

- Online submission with explanations and supporting evidence for all Standards;
- Non-refundable application fee (see current fee schedule)

The NCCA [Online Application](#) Portal is used for all submissions. Failure to properly complete or submit the application may result in delay, return, or rejection of an application. The Commission reserves the right to delay the review of any application to the next review cycle.

Application Deadlines

There are three annual deadlines for submission of accreditation applications. At its option, the Commission may establish the schedule for re-accreditation of a currently accredited program. The following application deadlines will apply to initial accreditation and re-accreditation applications to be considered for accreditation decisions at the respective meetings.

Accreditation Term Date	Application Due Date	Commission Meeting
November 1 – March 31	August 31	October-November
April 1 - June 30	January 31	March-April
July 1 - October 31	April 30	June-July

The NCCA will not extend accreditation for programs that do not submit their re-accreditation applications according to the above schedule, and those submitted late will be reviewed in the next application cycle. The current accreditation will remain expired as of the term date until accreditation is granted for the new application.

While each organization with accredited programs will receive courtesy reminders when its program(s) is set to expire, it is ultimately the responsibility of each organization to know when its program(s) will expire and to submit a re-accreditation application accordingly.

Additional Information

Inquiries can be made to the I.C.E. headquarters office in writing or by telephone regarding any questions about the applications process. In no event, however, shall the Commission be bound by informal staff opinion or an individual Commissioner’s interpretation concerning NCCA Standards or its Policies and Procedures. NCCA also encourages applicants to seek guidance available from I.C.E. publications.

**III. Application Review Process**

**a. Commission Meetings**

The Commission meets as often as necessary to accomplish its work but typically three times annually face-to-face in addition to conference calls, as needed. All deliberations of the Commission are confidential and may be disclosed only as determined by the Chair, Vice Chair, or the Commission.

## Visitors

Commission meetings are open only to the Commissioners, I.C.E. staff and any persons invited by the Chair, Vice Chair, or the Commission.

### **b. Accreditation Review Process**

#### Initial Accreditation

Each initial application is first screened by staff for eligibility and completeness. Inquiries may be sent back to the applicant for clarification of responses, missing documentation, or initial concerns that may raise issues of compliance with any NCCA Standard, though the final compliance determination will be made by the Commission. New applicants will have the opportunity to resubmit their additional evidence at the next application deadline without additional payment if the inquiry cannot be responded to within 10 business days. If not resubmitted in the next deadline, the application may be submitted at a later date, along with all necessary updates and payment of fees.

Each reaccreditation application is screened by staff for completeness. Inquiries may be sent back to the applicant for clarification of responses, missing documentation, or initial concerns that may raise issues of compliance with any NCCA Standard, though the final compliance determination will be made by the Commission. Applications for reaccreditation will have an opportunity to respond to inquiries within 10 business days before the application is advanced to the NCCA for review and decision.

#### Commission Review

Each application is then assigned to a primary administrative reviewer, a primary psychometric reviewer, and a primary public member reviewer. The assigned reviewers will prepare written feedback and make a recommendation to the full Commission regarding an accreditation decision. All eligible Commissioners provide review, input and make decisions on each submission. Eligibility is defined as not having a conflict of interest with regard to that submission. The Commission will render a decision after discussion of the findings and recommendations. The Commission reserves the right to use other means to make a determination on accreditation, including but not limited to conducting an audit of the program (e.g., virtual, document, onsite).

#### Matters Not Evaluated

The Commission does not evaluate the content of a program's assessment; the standards are concerned with structure, process, and results.

### **c. Commission Decisions**

Accreditation decisions are made by consensus of the Commission. It is the duty of the Commission to review an application's compliance with the NCCA Standards. The Commission does not provide consultative services or advice.

Applicants will be notified of Commission decisions no later than forty-five days following the last day of the meeting at which the application was reviewed.

### Term of Accreditation

Certification programs may be accredited for up to five (5) years; a shorter initial accreditation period may be granted upon request if an organization already has other accredited program(s) and wishes the term dates to be the same. NCCA does not grant conditional accreditation. If a program applies for reaccreditation, a decision to deny a program's reaccreditation may terminate the accreditation of the program prior to the original expiration date of the program's accreditation.

At the end of the accreditation cycle, a complete new application must be submitted. The NCCA Commission reviews each application for reaccreditation as it would an initial application. Previous accreditation decisions do not impact the reaccreditation review.

### Accredit for Five Years

Programs that have documented compliance with all of the NCCA Standards will be granted accreditation. A program must reapply for accreditation before the end of the five-year period to maintain continuous accreditation status per the timelines indicated in Section II C.

A compliance report may be requested to resolve minor issues related to compliance with the standards but that are easily addressed within a short period of time, as defined by the Commission.

### Accredit for One Year

New programs will NOT be granted accreditation until they demonstrate full compliance to the NCCA Standards. Accreditation may be granted for one year for reaccreditation applicants when minor noncompliance with a limited number of standards are cited. Upon Commission review of the compliance reports, one of the following decisions will be rendered:

1. Grant an additional four years' accreditation if full compliance is demonstrated within one year. The Commission may request additional follow-up or action.
2. Deny accreditation if full compliance is not demonstrated. A new application may then be submitted, with application fees, in a subsequent application deadline.

### Denial

A denial is issued when an application is deemed noncompliant, with substantive deficiencies in one or more Standards. A written notice shall identify the NCCA

Standard(s) for which compliance was deemed unsatisfactory. If a program was previously accredited, its accreditation will be withdrawn at the time the application for reaccreditation is denied.

The Commission will not take any further action on an application that has been denied.

If the organization wishes to apply for accreditation again, it must submit a new application and supporting documentation following the submission guidelines. Previously accredited programs that receive a denial must submit a new application fee. New programs that receive an initial denial are permitted to reapply during the next two application deadlines without additional payment of fees.

A request for reconsideration of the Commission's decision may be filed in accordance with the Reconsideration Policy referenced in Section VI.

#### **IV. Maintaining Accreditation**

Accreditation to the NCCA Standards requires ongoing compliance with the standards and annual reporting of certification activities.

##### **a. Annual Reports**

The certification program must demonstrate continued compliance to maintain accreditation.

- i. The certification program must annually complete and submit information requested of the certification agency and its programs for the previous reporting year.
- ii. The certification program must submit any information that the Commission may require to investigate allegations of lack of compliance with NCCA Standards. The Commission reserves the right to conduct an audit (e.g., virtual, document, onsite) to verify the integrity of the information submitted.
- iii. The certification program must report any substantive changes in the certification agency and its program.

The annual report form will be available online in January of each year. A certification program must submit an Annual Report to the NCCA no later than June 1 of each year. Organizations that will be submitting programs for re-accreditation in the same year are still required to submit an annual report. The organization will be notified once its report has been accepted by the Commission. Please note that satisfying the annual reporting process is not a replacement for ongoing program maintenance activities required to comply with the Standards.

A late fee will be assessed for any organization that submits an annual report 5-9 calendar days after the due date. An additional late fee will be assessed for annual reports received 10-30 calendar days after the due date. If a program's annual report is

not received within 30 calendar days, its accreditation status will be marked as suspended until the annual report is received.

Once an annual report has been submitted and reviewed, any inquiries sent that are not responded within 30 calendar days, will result in suspension of the program accreditation until the inquiry is satisfied.

The Commission in its sole discretion shall fix an amount of time in which the certification program must demonstrate current compliance that is reasonable under the circumstances. If a program fails to resolve an inquiry within the designated timeframe, the program's accreditation will be revoked.

#### **V. Requests for Reconsideration and Effective Date of Final Decisions**

An applicant for accreditation or reaccreditation may request that the Commission reconsider a decision to deny accreditation or re-accreditation. A program that is sanctioned with a suspension, revocation of accreditation, or reaccreditation ineligibility decision under NCCA's Disciplinary policy may also request reconsideration. This Reconsideration Policy shall not apply to any action or decision by the Commission that does not concern the substance or merits of an accreditation or disciplinary decision.

##### Requests for Reconsideration

A request for reconsideration of an accreditation or reaccreditation decision must be made in writing and delivered either by hard copy, via certified mail or express delivery for which signature is required to the I.C.E. Director of Accreditation Services at 2001 K. Street, NW 3rd Floor North Washington, D.C. 20006, and/or electronically with written confirmation of receipt by I.C.E. to the email: [info@credentialingexcellence.org](mailto:info@credentialingexcellence.org), no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the date on which the Commission sent or gave notice of its action. If the Commission does not receive a timely request for reconsideration, then the underlying action shall be final.

The written request for reconsideration must identify the decision or other action for which reconsideration is sought; describe with specificity the reasons or grounds for reconsideration; and state what relief the applicant seeks. The Commission will reconsider a decision denying accreditation or reaccreditation or imposing a disciplinary sanction only if the reasons or grounds for reconsideration arise from: (1) material errors of fact in the decision-making process; and/or (2) a material failure to conform to published standards, policies, or procedures of the NCCA. A request for reconsideration may not be perfected by new facts. When reviewing an accreditation decision, the Commission shall not consider any facts or argument relating to changes in or improvements to the application or applicant's certification program that occurred later than the date of the last information considered by the Commission in rendering its initial decision.

In most cases, the Commission will review a request for reconsideration at its next regularly-scheduled meeting following receipt of the request. The Commission will notify

the applicant or program of its decision in writing within fifteen (15) days after it acts on the request for reconsideration. The notice shall contain a short and plain statement of the reasons for the decision. The Commission's determination of a request for reconsideration constitutes final action of the NCCA.

#### Confidentiality of Requests for Reconsideration of Accreditation and Reaccreditation Proceedings

Consistent with the Commission's general policy of maintaining the confidentiality of information and documents obtained by applicants for accreditation and re-accreditation, and as an extension of such policy, the Commission (including the Director of Accreditation Services and General Counsel) shall preserve and protect from public disclosure all documents and information submitted by the applicant in connection with requests for reconsideration, unless applicant consents to such disclosure or if any such matter already exists in the public domain or disclosure is required by law.

The Commission may make public any sanction imposed on a program.

#### Effective Date of Decisions

The Commission's decision on any matter affecting the accreditation of an accredited program – whether resulting from consideration of an application for reaccreditation or the imposition of a disciplinary sanction – becomes final and effective thirty (30) calendar days after the date on which the Commission first sent or gave notice of its action, if no timely request for reconsideration is received, or as of the date the Commission sends or gives notice of its decision about a reconsideration request; provided, however, that a disciplinary sanction imposed with immediate effect will become effective as of the date the Commission sends notice, even if the decision is subject to a request for reconsideration. A decision to deny a program's reaccreditation may terminate the accreditation of a program prior to the original expiration date of the program's accreditation.

## **VI. Confidentiality**

### **a. Policy:**

All information submitted in connection with an application for accreditation is deemed to be confidential, except for that which is already in the public domain. NCCA may disclose de-identified, aggregated data submitted by applicants. This policy is important to encouraging certifying programs to seek voluntary accreditation and to promote candor in the application process. NCCA shall not disclose such information to any third person without the written consent of the applicant.

NCCA shall not disclose confidential information related to or verbally discussed during NCCA Commission meetings or other verbal or written information identified as confidential Commission business.

NCCA shall not divulge the specific contents of NCCA accreditation applications and related documents or any information about an applicant received verbally or in writing.

NCCA shall not disclose confidential information related to accreditation application requests for reconsideration or other actions affecting accreditation status that are being considered by the NCCA and/or I.C.E. Board of Directors unless required by a court with competent jurisdiction.

Neither NCCA staff nor any individual Commissioners are authorized to disclose accreditation decisions via phone or e-mail.

## **VII. Correcting Errors in Accreditation Decisions**

### **Preamble:**

The Commission's accreditation procedures are designed to ensure that evidence of an applicant's compliance with NCCA Accreditation Standards receives careful, detailed, and multiple reviews. If information comes to the attention of the Commission that would lead to questioning full compliance to the Standards after accreditation has been granted, the program will be given opportunity to address areas of non-compliance. This policy does not apply during the reaccreditation process, as applications are reviewed *de novo*.

### **Policy:**

Due regard for the public mission and integrity of the NCCA requires that the Commission act on discovery of issues that raise concerns of non-compliance once accreditation is granted. Except in extraordinary cases, however, corrective action will be taken only after the affected certification program is given notice and an opportunity to cure the defective activity, *i.e.*, the program must demonstrate current compliance with the applicable standard or face adverse consequences such as loss of accreditation. A program that successfully demonstrates full current compliance may be granted continued accreditation through the end of the five-year reaccreditation period.

When deciding whether a proposed adverse consequence is appropriate, the Commission may take into account whether and how members of the public who rely upon the certification program's certification are or likely would be affected, if at all, by the program's noncompliance with the NCCA standard at issue.

If and when a Commission or staff member has reason to believe that an error was made, the matter will be brought promptly to the attention of the Chair or Vice Chair of the Commission for handling in accordance with the following steps:

**Procedure:**

1. Preliminary Assessment: The Chair, in consultation with NCCA staff and legal counsel, shall make a threshold determination whether the newly-discovered evidence, if presumed true for this purpose, would have materially affected the outcome of the prior accreditation decision. Non-material or harmless errors in finding or applying facts do not require further action by the Chair or full Commission.
2. Referral to Full Commission: The Chair shall report the newly-discovered evidence to the full Commission together with recommended procedures for corrective action. These procedures shall cover such matters as the contents of the written notice to the affected certification program; what additional information and/or documentation should be requested from the program; how much time the program will be given to demonstrate current compliance with the particular standard(s) at issue; and the consequences to the certification program of failing to demonstrate current compliance (e.g., suspension, loss of accreditation).
3. Notice to Affected Certification Program: The Commission shall promptly notify the affected program in writing that: (i) it has reason to believe that a material error in a prior decision was made; (ii) the nature and basis, including identity of relevant documents, of the alleged error; and (iii) the requirement that the certification program demonstrate current compliance with the applicable NCCA standard by a date certain to avoid adverse consequences.
4. Time for Demonstrating Compliance: The Commission in its sole discretion shall fix an amount of time in which the certification program must demonstrate current compliance that is reasonable under the circumstances, and may extend such time on its own motion or for good cause shown. The certification program's failure to demonstrate compliance within such time shall be, in and of itself, sufficient ground for revoking accreditation or denying renewal.
5. Request for Reconsideration: The certification program may request a reconsideration of a Commission decision to impose adverse consequences for failure to demonstrate current compliance or other reason. The procedures described in the Commission's Request for Reconsideration policy shall govern such requests.

**VIII. Disciplinary Policy & Procedures**

**Policy:**

The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) will investigate and impose sanctions for violation of its NCCA Standards for Accreditation or its Policies in accordance with this Policy. Violations may include furnishing false information or misrepresenting facts in an

application for accreditation or reaccreditation or in connection with the maintenance of accreditation. When NCCA determines that a violation has occurred, it may impose sanctions, including but not limited to:

- written reprimand
- mandatory correction
- suspension of accreditation
- revocation of accreditation
- reaccreditation ineligibility

Relevant documentation considered in the course of the disciplinary process and a record of any action taken will be placed in the certification program's permanent NCCA file and will be available for review by NCCA should subsequent complaints be received or for other appropriate review. The fact of a suspension and of any imposed final sanction may be made public by the NCCA.

**Procedure:**

1. Complaints alleging violations of the NCCA Standards or a written NCCA Policy may be submitted by any interested party, or may be self-initiated by NCCA or I.C.E. The complainant's identity shall remain confidential, unless the circumstances reasonably require disclosure or the complainant waives confidentiality protection. The complainant also agrees to keep confidential the complaint filing and all other correspondence or communications with NCCA related to NCCA's investigation and review of the complaint and to the outcome of the review. The NCCA reserves the right to terminate its investigation if confidentiality is breached.
2. Complaints must be in writing and provide details, with appropriate supporting documentation of how a particular Standard or Policy is being or has been violated by an accredited certification program.
3. Preliminary Review: The NCCA Chair or Vice Chair will determine, within twenty-one (21) calendar days of receipt of a complaint, if there are sufficient grounds to warrant an investigation.
  - a. No Further Investigation Indicated: The NCCA Chair or Vice Chair may determine, in their sole discretion, that the complaint warrants no further action.
  - b. Further Investigation Indicated/Certification Program Notified: If there appear to be sufficient grounds to warrant investigation, a subcommittee of the NCCA consisting of the NCCA Chair or Vice Chair, a Public Member, and one additional Commission member, appointed by the Chair, will investigate the complaint and determine whether any violations may have occurred. Written notice of the investigation will be provided to the certification program identifying any potential violations and may be accompanied by appropriate documents or

other evidence of the potential violation and a copy of the NCCA Disciplinary Policy & Procedures. The subcommittee also may request additional information.

4. Certification Program Response: The certification program will have thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of the notice of the potential violations to respond by submitting in writing and delivered either by hard copy, via certified mail or express delivery for which signature is required to the I.C.E. Director of Accreditation Services at 2001 K. Street, NW 3rd Floor North Washington, D.C. 20006, and/or electronically with written confirmation of receipt by I.C.E. to the email: [info@credentialingexcellence.org](mailto:info@credentialingexcellence.org), any requested information, refuting or admitting to the facts or the substance of the allegations, or proposing remedies.
5. Subcommittee Review of Response: If the information provided and the proposed remedies resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the subcommittee, then (i) a report of the resolution will be made to the NCCA at its next regularly scheduled meeting, (ii) the complainant will be informed of the resolution, and (iii) the certification program will be notified of the resolution within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of the information by the NCCA.
6. Full NCCA Commission Review: If the certification program's response is unsatisfactory to the subcommittee, the subcommittee will prepare a written analysis and recommendation for NCCA. The subcommittee will notify the certification program of its recommendation and provide a copy of its written analysis to the certification program. The certification program may, within thirty (30) calendar days of the date the subcommittee sends the notice, submit an additional written response that addresses the subcommittee's analysis and recommendations.

The full NCCA Commission will then review the complaint, the certification program's response(s), and the subcommittee analysis and recommendation at the next available opportunity. The NCCA will determine by majority vote whether the certification program committed any violations and will specify the sanctions imposed. Written notice of the NCCA's determination will be sent to the certification program by electronically by email.

7. Effective Date: At the NCCA's discretion, any sanction imposed may be made effective immediately notwithstanding that the program may request or has requested a reconsideration of the decision as provided below. If the sanction entails loss of active accreditation status (e.g., suspension or revocation of accreditation), NCCA will make that status change public. A certification program that has lost active accreditation status through suspension or revocation of accreditation must not hold itself out as accredited by NCCA unless and until the sanction expires or is withdrawn or lifted.
8. Request for Reconsideration: A program that is sanctioned with a suspension, revocation of accreditation, or reaccreditation ineligibility decision under this Policy may request that the Commission reconsider its decision, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the NCCA's Reconsideration Policy, which shall govern the review process in all respects. A request for reconsideration, including a statement of the basis for the

request, must be submitted in writing and delivered either by hard copy, via certified mail or express delivery for which signature is required to the I.C.E. Director of Accreditation Services at 2001 K. Street, NW 3rd Floor North Washington, D.C. 20006, and/or electronically with written confirmation of receipt by I.C.E. to the email: info@credentialingexcellence.org within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the NCCA's notice of sanction.

9. **Final Sanctions:** The communications issued by the NCCA to the complainant and to the certification program are confidential; provided, however, that NCCA may make public any sanction that is imposed with immediate effect. If no request for reconsideration is filed, sanctions that have not been imposed with immediate effect are considered final after the deadline to file a request for reconsideration; if a request for reconsideration is timely filed, such sanctions are considered final upon the date NCCA sends notice of its decision on reconsideration. If the final sanction affects a program's accredited status, that determination will be made public by the NCCA. As noted above, suspensions and other sanctions made be made immediately effective upon the initial decision of the Commission, regardless of whether a request for reconsideration may be or has been filed.

## **IX. Use of NCCA organizational logo, NCCA Accredited Program Mark and Name**

### General

Except as otherwise permitted herein: (i) any use or display of NCCA organizational logo or NCCA Accredited Program mark without the prior written consent of the Director of Accreditation Services or (ii) any use of NCCA's name to state or imply accreditation or approval by or affiliation with NCCA, is prohibited.

### Permitted Use of Mark

When NCCA accredits a certification program it supplies a certificate that the program may display. NCCA also provides its accredited program mark in various electronic formats so that the accredited program may document its accreditation on certificates issued to certificants, Web sites, stationery, brochures, candidate guides, and other publications, as well as a press release to distribute to publications within the profession. The accredited program mark shall not be used in a manner that could be misleading or infer that the NCCA accreditation applies to certification programs not accredited by the NCCA.

The accredited program may state that NCCA reviewed the program and found at the time of the review that the program met the NCCA accreditation standards. The accredited program may also point out that it submits annual reports to NCCA and must undergo a reaccreditation every five years. All statements made by a program concerning NCCA accreditation must be accurate and truthful.

The accredited program may only use the NCCA accredited program mark and is not permitted under any circumstances to use the NCCA organizational logo.

### Other Conditions

The NCCA accredited program mark is the only accepted mark for use by programs to indicate NCCA accreditation. Use of the I.C.E. membership logo or NCCA organizational logo is not permitted for this purpose. Prior to receiving notice from NCCA regarding accreditation, certification programs are prohibited from using the NCCA organizational logo or accredited program mark to promote their program(s). When the NCCA accredited program mark is modified or replaced by a new mark, programs are allowed one year from the formal date the new mark is officially introduced to utilize existing supplies of printed materials with the obsolete mark. Use of an obsolete NCCA accredited program mark is prohibited after the new mark has been in use for one year.

### Misleading Use of Name Prohibited

Any organization whose program(s) are not accredited by the NCCA shall not make statements in promotional materials or elsewhere regarding compliance with NCCA Standards or make any references to having followed NCCA Standards when establishing the certification program. I.C.E. and NCCA view such representations as misleading to the public.