

ACCREDITATION ACTION REPORT
Candidacy Application Review

The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology took the following accreditation action at its February 7-9, 2024 meeting, as indicated below.

Name of Program: Viterbo University

File #: 373

Professional Area:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Audiology |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Speech-Language Pathology |

Modality:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Residential |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Distance Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Satellite Campus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Contractual Arrangement |

Degree Designator(s): MS

Action Taken: Award Candidacy

Effective Date: February 9, 2024

Candidacy Accreditation Cycle: 02/01/2024 – 01/31/2029

Next Review: 1st Annual Progress Report due February 1, 2025

Notices: The program is advised to adhere to the following notices that are appended to this report.

- PROGRAM COMPLIANCE EXPECTATIONS
- PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF DECISION AND ACCREDITATION STATUS

The CAA conducted its comprehensive review in the context of the institutional and program mission statements and in consideration of the credentials for which the program is preparing students, and determined that the program demonstrated sufficient compliance with the Standards for Accreditation of Graduate Education Programs in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, unless noted below.

Standard 2.1 - The number and composition of the program faculty (academic doctoral, clinical doctoral, other) are sufficient to deliver a program of study that:

2.1.1 allows students to acquire the knowledge and skills required in Standard 3,

2.1.2 allows students to acquire the scientific and research fundamentals of the discipline,

2.1.3 allows students to meet the program's established goals and objectives,

2.1.4 meets the expectations set forth in the program's mission and goals,

2.1.5 is offered on a regular basis so that it will allow the students to complete the program within the published time frame.

Requirement(s) of the Standard to be met:

- The program must document
 - how the faculty composition is sufficient to allow students to acquire the knowledge and skills required in Standard 3;
 - how the faculty composition is sufficient to allow students to acquire the scientific and research fundamentals of the profession;
 - how the faculty composition is sufficient to allow students to meet the program's established learning goals and objectives;

Compliance Expectation Determined: Initiated

Compliance Expectation for Award of Candidacy Status: Initiated

CAA concern and steps to be taken:

The site visit team was not able to verify the requirements for review at the expected level of compliance based on interviews with key personnel and a review of relevant documents. At the time of the site visit, four faculty lines have been approved a search for faculty had been started; advertisements were also posted. The program had in place a plan to identify how to assign coursework. However, it wasn't clear if there was a plan should the faculty searches not be successful.

In response to the site visit report, the program reported that its faculty search is steadily ongoing and being well-received by candidates. The program also reported that formal job offers are planned for January 2024.

At the time of the first annual progress report, the program should provide an update on the hiring plan, as well as a plan if the current faculty search plan is unsuccessful. The program should identify a plan assigning faculty line areas to coursework, and a plan for covering this coursework if the search is unsuccessful.

Standard 2.2 - The number, composition, and workload of all full-time faculty who have responsibility in the graduate program are sufficient to allow them to meet expectations with regard to teaching, research, and service of the sponsoring institution.

Requirement(s) of the Standard to be met:

- The program must demonstrate that all faculty who have responsibility in the graduate program

and have obligations to provide teaching, research, and service as part of their workload:

- Are accessible to students
- Have sufficient time for scholarly and creative activities
- Have sufficient time to advise students
- Have sufficient time to participate in faculty governance
- Have sufficient time to participate in other activities that are consistent with the expectations of the sponsoring institution

- The program must demonstrate that all faculty who have responsibility in the graduate program and have obligations to provide clinical education and services as part of their workload:

- Are accessible to students
- Have sufficient time for scholarly and creative activities
- Have sufficient time to advise students
- Have sufficient time to participate in faculty governance
- Have sufficient time to participate in other activities that are consistent with the expectations of the sponsoring institution

- The program must demonstrate that faculty who are tenure eligible have the opportunity to meet the criteria for tenure of the sponsoring institution.

- The program must demonstrate that faculty who are eligible for promotion have the opportunity to meet the criteria for promotion of the sponsoring institution.

Compliance Expectation Determined: **Initiated**

Compliance Expectation for Award of Candidacy Status: **Planned/Initiated**

CAA concern and steps to be taken:

The site visit team was not able to verify through interviews and a review of documents if the program director was eligible for tenure, or had the opportunity to meet the criteria for tenure, promotion, or continued employment. In response to the site visit report, the program provided additional information on faculty member tenure eligibility and procedures, and the candidacy committee determined that the program is at the expected level of compliance for this standard.

The CAA review determined that teaching loads are very heavy based on the program's current plan. It remains unclear if there will be additional on-site clinic responsibilities of these faculty once a full-time clinic is established. There is also a concern as to whether faculty will have sufficient time for scholarly activities, service, and be accessible to students.

At the time of the first annual progress report, the program should provide an update on faculty workload and the ability to be accessible to students, and have sufficient time for the activities required by the standard once the clinic is established.

Standard 4.1 - The program criteria for accepting students for graduate study in audiology or speech-language pathology meet or exceed the institutional policy for admission to graduate study.

Requirement(s) of the Standard to be met:

- Policies regarding any exceptions to the criteria (such as "conditional" status) must be clearly explained and consistently followed.

Compliance Expectation Determined: **Initiated**

Compliance Expectation for Award of Candidacy Status: **Initiated**

CAA concern and steps to be taken:

The site visit team was not able to verify the requirements for review at the expected level of compliance based on interviews with the program director, dean, and other key personnel. Upon a review of documents, including the candidacy application and a program manual, it was not clear how Viterbo undergraduate students would be accepted into the graduate program. On the program webpage, it was stated that preference was given to students who obtained undergraduate degrees at Viterbo. When clarification was sought by the site visit team, especially related to students from outside Viterbo, the program was not able to consistently describe the admission criteria. The admissions criteria surrounding fluency in a second language were unclear as well, and a plan for exceptions was not clear, or if there would be any.

In its response to the site visit report, the program provided documentation in the Student Handbook of admission requirements and exceptions. The CAA found that the admission exceptions policy was unclear, and is in need of more clarification, specifically around individuals who are granted conditional status.

At the time of the first annual progress report, the program should provide clarification on any policies regarding any exceptions to the admissions criteria (such as “conditional” status) and demonstrate how these exception policies will be consistently followed.

PERFORMANCE WITH RESPECT TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The CAA evaluated this program regarding its performance with respect to student achievement and provides the following report, required as an accrediting agency recognized by the US Secretary of Education [[34 CFR 602.17\(f\)](#)]. Upon award of Candidacy status, no students are enrolled in the program; thus student achievement data has not been collected. However, the CAA assessed the program's process for collecting and reporting student achievement data and found the program to meet or exceed the established CAA expectations as described in the Candidacy Compliance Continuum for accreditation standard 5.0 – Assessment.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF THIS DECISION AND ACCREDITATION STATUS

The CAA publishes a notice of final accreditation actions on its website after comprehensive reviews are completed in accordance with its published policies. In the event an adverse action is taken and becomes final (i.e., withdrawal or withholding of an accreditation status), the CAA is required to publish a brief statement summarizing the reasons for withholding or withdrawing the accreditation status of a program, together with the comments, if any, that the affected program may wish to make.

The Criteria for Recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Education requires all recognized accrediting agencies to provide for the public correction of incorrect or misleading information an accredited or preaccredited program releases about accreditation or preaccreditation status, contents of site visit reports, and accrediting or preaccrediting actions with respect to the program. [[34 CFR 602.23\(d\) and 602.23\(e\)](#)] The program must make accurate public disclosure of the accreditation or preaccreditation status awarded to the program, using the language provided in the [Accreditation Handbook](#) (see Chapter XII Informing the Public) on the academic accreditation website. If the program chooses to disclose any additional information within the scope of the ED rule, such disclosure also must be accurate. Any public disclosure of information within the scope of the rule must include the CAA's name, address, and telephone number as described in the [Accreditation Handbook](#). If an institution or program misrepresents or distorts any action by the CAA with respect to any aspect of the accreditation process, its accreditation status, the contents of the site visit report, or final CAA accreditation actions or decisions, the CAA will inform the chief executive officer of the institution and the program director that corrective action must be taken. If corrective action is not taken, the CAA will release a public statement that provides correct information and may invoke other sanctions as may be appropriate.