

# The Demand for Quality Assurance and a Specialized Accreditor's Response

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Quality assurance bodies come in various flavors; CEA is a model of specialized accreditation developed by a professional field, based on peer review, and shaped by federal regulatory requirements. Just as there are principles or standards of good practice for ESL/EFL/FL programs, there are principles of good practice, ranging from operations to development of standards, for accreditation agencies. This presentation will provide sources and summaries of these principles for specialized accrediting agencies, scaffold those points to how CEA was formed and now functions, describe the implications more broadly for development of an accreditation or quality assurance body, and note some implications for programs undertaking accreditation.

The demand for CEA accreditation has been strong over the last 20 years and continues to grow due to both “pull” and “push” factors, that is, pressures from sites and the field seeking external quality assurance review for their own purposes and from external constituencies requiring evidence that sites have met accreditation requirements for regulatory and other reasons. CEA grew very rapidly in the US to respond to these demands. CEA began to accredit internationally in 2004 and international demand has grown as well. This presentation will describe the sources of demand for CEA accreditation in the US and internationally, including stats, themes, and current trends and issues, and will provide an insider's view of managing rapid growth of an accreditation agency while adhering to the principles of good practice for specialized accreditors and while meeting regulatory requirements.