



STRELIS

EXECUTIVE ANALYSIS

Recent CAPTE Accreditation Actions: Strategic Implications for University Leaders

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CAPTE's Accreditation Actions from the Spring 2026 Commission meeting marked the first time Doctor of Physical Therapy programs were evaluated under the 2024 CAPTE Standards and Required Elements. More recently, CAPTE staff expanded on those decisions during its self-study workshop, providing additional insight into how the Commission is interpreting and applying the revised standards in practice.

Together, the published Accreditation Actions and the recent guidance from the CAPTE staff offer valuable perspective on the evolving expectations shaping program review. For university leaders, these developments represent more than a summary of accreditation outcomes—they provide an opportunity to better understand where programs are succeeding, where challenges are emerging, and how evolving expectations may influence strategic planning, operational readiness, and long-term program quality.

Based on our review of the Accreditation Actions, observations from the recent CAPTE workshop, discussions with accreditation experts, and our experience supporting health professions programs throughout the accreditation lifecycle, we believe three observations deserve particular attention.

Assessment processes are receiving increased scrutiny

One of the clearest themes reinforced through both the Spring 2026 Accreditation Actions and CAPTE's recent accreditation workshop is the Commission's heightened expectation that programs demonstrate not only that assessment processes exist, but that they are actively used to drive continuous improvement.

Programs are expected to collect meaningful assessment data, analyze those findings systematically, and clearly demonstrate how results inform decisions related to program quality, curriculum, faculty workload, and achievement of the program's mission and goals.

Equally important, institutions should be prepared to provide evidence supporting significant program changes. Adjustments to faculty workload, curriculum design, or program operations should be accompanied by documented assessment findings that explain both the rationale for the change and its relationship to continuous quality improvement.

For university leaders, this represents an important shift. Assessment should no longer be viewed primarily as an accreditation requirement completed in preparation for a site visit. Increasingly, it is becoming an ongoing institutional management process that demonstrates whether a program is fulfilling its mission, achieving its educational outcomes, and making evidence-based decisions.

Program expansion requires strategic alignment and resource evidence

The recent Accreditation Actions also reinforce that substantive change requests require more than a description of the proposed expansion. Whether increasing enrollment, modifying delivery models, or adding additional locations, institutions are expected to demonstrate how the proposed change supports both the mission and goals of the program and the broader mission of the university.

Equally important, CAPTE expects programs to provide sufficient evidence that institutional resources can support the proposed growth. This includes faculty capacity, financial resources, facilities, technology infrastructure, and—particularly when enrollment increases are proposed—adequate clinical education opportunities to support additional students.

Expansion is therefore evaluated not simply as a growth initiative, but as an institutional commitment requiring thoughtful planning, documented rationale, and evidence that quality can be maintained throughout implementation.

For institutional leaders, growth strategy and accreditation strategy can no longer operate independently. The strongest programs integrate both from the earliest stages of planning.

Faculty capacity remains a critical accreditation consideration

Faculty resources continue to be one of the most important indicators of program readiness.

As programs grow and evolve, faculty are expected not only to meet workload expectations, but also to participate meaningfully in assessment activities, curriculum development, continuous quality improvement, student mentoring, and accreditation processes.

This represents an increasingly complex challenge for many institutions. Faculty are balancing teaching responsibilities alongside expanding administrative, assessment, and accreditation expectations while universities simultaneously pursue enrollment growth and program innovation.

The institutions that navigate accreditation most successfully recognize that protecting faculty capacity is not simply an operational issue—it is a strategic investment in long-term program quality.

Many universities are responding by supplementing internal expertise with specialized external support for accreditation planning, documentation, faculty coaching, and implementation activities. This approach enables faculty to remain focused on teaching, scholarship, and student success while strengthening institutional readiness throughout the accreditation process.

Bottom line

Although the 2024 CAPTE Standards have been in place for two years, the Spring 2026 Accreditation Actions provide the first meaningful indication of how the Commission is applying those standards during accreditation review.

Several themes are already emerging. Programs are expected to demonstrate stronger evidence of continuous assessment and improvement. Expansion requests require clearer strategic justification and documented resource capacity. Faculty workload, assessment processes, and institutional planning are increasingly viewed as interconnected components of accreditation readiness rather than separate operational activities.

For university leaders, the message is clear: Accreditation readiness is no longer defined solely by documentation. Increasingly, it is demonstrated through evidence that institutional planning, assessment systems, faculty resources, and continuous improvement processes are intentionally connected.

Institutions that build these capabilities proactively will be better positioned not only for accreditation success, but for sustainable program growth over the long term.

How Strelis supports universities

Successfully navigating today's accreditation environment requires more than technical knowledge of accreditation standards. It requires strategic planning, operational alignment, and access to specialized expertise across the full program lifecycle.

Strelis Consulting and Advisory Services helps universities strengthen institutional readiness through three integrated practice areas.

Accreditation and Compliance

Helping institutions prepare for accreditation with confidence through:

- SSR development support
- Accreditation strategy
- Faculty coaching and development
- Site visit preparation
- Compliance readiness

Program Development

Supporting the successful design and implementation of future-ready health professions programs through:

- Program feasibility
- Curriculum design
- Hybrid program development
- New program launch
- Faculty coaching and development
- Technology optimization

Growth and Modernization

Helping institutions align strategic growth with operational execution through:

- Program Modernization Roadmaps
- Enrollment and Expansion Strategy
- Financial Modeling
- Implementation Planning
- Technology Optimization

Schedule a complimentary accreditation readiness review

If your institution is preparing for accreditation, reaccreditation, program expansion, or strategic modernization, our consultants would welcome the opportunity to discuss your goals and share practical recommendations based on your current stage of development.

Schedule a complimentary accreditation readiness review to explore strategies for reducing risk, strengthening institutional readiness, and positioning your program for long-term success.

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