



NLSA Frequently Asked Questions Impact of COVID-19

Updated March 24, 2020

As the COVID-19 virus increasingly impacts Lutheran schools, the National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) national leadership team has developed the following policy and procedure for schools that are closed during their scheduled NLSA Validation Team Visit to request an extension in order to conduct the site visit during a period when the school is open:

Schools that are closed as a result of COVID-19 will be given an extension (1 year) without charge to provide time for the reopening of the school and to prepare for the rescheduled Validation Team Site Visit. Schools that are closed and are currently working with an extension will be granted the additional year without penalty (3/13/2020).

Any school whose Validation Team Visit members are impacted by the COVID-19 virus (quarantine, restricted movement, school closures, etc.) are also able to request an extension (1 year) without charge (3/13/2020).

Q: Why is it necessary to apply for an extension to postpone a Validation Team Visit?

A: NLSA is still required to keep accurate records when corresponding with partner agencies and states with reciprocal agreements. This process has been streamlined as much as possible while still respecting these requirements.

Q: How does a school apply for the extension?

A: Using this [link](#), the school administrator will submit the required information to postpone the school's scheduled Validation Team Visit and request an NLSA Pandemic Extension of one (1) year to the accreditation cycle. An NLSA representative will contact the individual school confirming the request within ten business days, and will at that time, share additional information with regard to the rescheduling of the Validation Team Visit.

Q: Are schools that have applied for and received a previous extension eligible for the second extension?

A: Schools that are closed and were previously extended through the 2019-2020 school year are eligible for the NLSA Pandemic Extension for one (1) year without penalty and without charge.

Q: Is a school that is preparing for accreditation with a Cognia/NLSA Site Visit, using Cognia as the lead protocol, eligible to apply for an NLSA Pandemic Extension or is Cognia providing the extension?

A: Dr. Eddie Krenson (Vice President, Nonpublic School Services, Cognia) verified on 3/13/2020 that schools applying for reciprocal accreditation (using NLSA or Cognia protocol) in the event of a school closure will be able to apply for a 1-year Pandemic Extension through NLSA.

Q: Will schools be penalized in NLSA if Standardized Testing is not administered in 2020?

A: Schools that are not able to administer Standardized Testing in 2020 will not be penalized in NLSA for absent data.

Q: If a school is postponing a Validation Team Visit until Fall 2020, is the school expected to turn in a Cumulative Action Report (CAR) in Spring 2020?

A: NLSA reciprocal relationships require that schools are monitored throughout the accreditation process. Schools are required to submit a Cumulative Action Report (CAR) annually. If a school is extended on a Pandemic Extension, it should submit what has been accomplished as a part of the extended accreditation cycle. Understandably, a school may have little or nothing to report, except for listing the dates the school was closed. **No school will be placed on provisional status for lack of progress.**

Q: With the NLSA Pandemic Extension, schools that are extending in 2020 and the schools that are renewing and are initial in 2021, a high volume of Validation Team Visits will occur in 2020-21. Is it possible to add an additional NLSA National Accreditation Commission Meeting (virtual) in December to keep schools on their current cycle?

A: At this time, an additional NLSA Accreditation Commission Meeting in December is not feasible with the anticipated number of 139 schools that will need to complete Validation Team Visits by November 1, 2020.

Q: A school in the district must prove that it is accredited by December 31, 2020 in order to maintain state voucher funding. How will NLSA fulfil this requirement?

A: NLSA is attentive to the needs of schools in voucher states and will ensure that no school is denied funding due to a lapse in accreditation. Schools that must be accredited before the July 2021 NLSA National Accreditation Commission meeting will be addressed by the NLSA Executive Committee with a review process and virtual vote by the Commission.

Q: Is it possible to give schools an extension for submitting annual reports to the district office?

A: NLSA reciprocal relationships are monitored closely. Each reciprocal relationship requires the three-step review process of Validation Team, District Commission and National Accreditation Commission. Understanding the hardship COVID-19 has placed on schools, NLSA will continue to work to meet the individual needs of each school. Districts must inform the national NLSA office of all rescheduled Validation Team Visit dates, recognizing that the goal remains for all schools “in process” to receive the official record and awarding of accreditation.

A deadline can be extended by a district for the Cumulative Action Report only. District Reports, Self-Study Reports and Validation Team Reports are to be submitted to the national office by June 15, 2020.

Clarification of Reports:

Cumulative Action Report: CARs are not collected at the national Office. An extended deadline from a district office is the individual district’s prerogative.

District Annual Report: The DAR is due June 15. Data are taken from the district report to prepare for the National Accreditation Commission (NAC) in July 2020.

Self-Study Report with School Action Plan and Validation Team Reports: Both the Self-Study and Validation Team Reports for schools that completed their Validation Team Visit during the 2019-2020 school year are due June 15. It is essential to have both reports to assign to NLSA NAC reviewers by July 1. Reviewers are responsible for reading the reports and consulting with Team Captains and districts regarding any questions about the Validation Team Reports prior to the NAC meeting to prevent a delay in the approval process.