



## FAQs regarding the Show Cause Directive from the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC)

**Has Aspen University lost its accreditation?** No. Aspen University is operating under a continuing Show Cause Directive from the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC), the university's institutional accreditor, and remains accredited while it is on Show Cause.

**What is a Show Cause Directive?** A Show Cause Directive is an enforcement action focused on specific areas of perceived non-compliance to which Aspen must respond through narrative, documentation, and other evidence within the specific remediation timeframe.

**Why has DEAC placed Aspen University under a Show Cause Directive?** Aspen University was originally placed under a Show Cause Directive on February 1, 2023, for concerns regarding the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Pre-licensure (BSN) program quality and integrity and issues relating to communication, notice, and timely disclosure of information. On September 7, 2023, DEAC expanded the Directive to include concerns over the institution's financial position and its compliance with DEAC Standard XI.

**How long will the show-cause period last?** When an institution is placed on show cause as Aspen has been, it begins a process that proceeds through the submission of an institution's response to the show cause directive to a site visit, through post-site visit processes to a final decision by the accreditor. Aspen submitted its response to the Directive on May 19, 2023, and hosted a DEAC team of reviewers in Phoenix on June 13, 2023. Aspen submitted its response to the expanded Show Cause Directive on October 4, 2023.

Aspen is currently participating in the remaining Show Cause Directive post-site visit processes that have now been integrated into its regular full reaccreditation process. Aspen submitted the Self-Evaluation Report for its reaccreditation on September 8, 2023, and hosted a DEAC team of reviewers on October 19, 2023. The Chair's Report was received on February 6, 2024, and Aspen submitted its response on March 6, 2024. On April 25, 2024, DEAC indicated that it would next review the Show Cause designation at its June 2024 Commission meeting and that action on its *Application for Renewal of Accreditation* would be deferred until January 2025. Aspen remains accredited as the dual processes proceed.

### **If the institution does lose its accreditation, what would happen to me, my degrees, or my credits?**

Institutional accreditation is very important to a school, applying a set of quality standards for the institution and its programs, providing access to federal funding, and maintaining public confidence in the institution. It is typical practice in higher education that in the event that accreditation is lost, all credits completed and degrees earned while an institution was accredited remain valid. Earned degrees would still be respected and earned credits would still be transferrable. This would be the case if Aspen were to lose its accreditation as an end result of the Show Cause Directive. For currently active students, Aspen has worked out a number of articulation agreements with various institutions to accept your credits according to their specific transfer policies. Loss of institutional accreditation may also impact licensing from other state and federal agencies, including the ability to offer financial aid, as well as programmatic accreditation where applicable. This could ultimately require a school to close.

**May I remain in my distance education program?** Yes. Aspen remains accredited for the Show Cause Directive's oversight period and while the reaccreditation process is underway.

**Will this affect my educational experience?** No, this will not impact your educational experience. Your faculty and program administrators are ready to help you complete your programs. Exceptional curriculum has been designed to provide a quality education for you at a reasonable price in alignment with our mission. Personnel in the Financial Aid and Student Finance departments will continue to work with you to finance your education appropriately. Your Academic Advisors and Librarians remain available to respond to your questions and encourage you in your career aspirations. Supporting you, our beloved students, has been and will continue to be our primary goal.

**As a nursing student, does this impact the CCNE accreditation?** No. The baccalaureate degree program in nursing, the master's degree program in nursing, and the Doctor of Nursing Practice program at Aspen University are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

**Is Aspen closing or actively teaching out all programs? How long do I have to complete my degree?** No, Aspen University is not currently in teach out. All of our programs are active, and we are operating normally.

**I heard that Aspen is in teach out and has 60 days to come up with a teach out plan. Why does there seem to be conflicting information?** It is standard accreditation practice for the existence of an institutional teach out plan. The existence of a teach out plan does not mean that Aspen is closing or actively teaching out its programs.

**If I withdraw now, can I get a refund?** Since Aspen remains accredited during the show-cause period, offering all of our programs, and operating normally, we are not considering issuing refunds at this time related to the show-cause.

**Will I still be able to qualify for Federal Financial Aid or VA funding during the show-cause period. If not, what will happen to my current student loans?** The show-cause period does not impact your eligibility for Federal Financial Aid or VA funding.

**While the school is under show-cause, will I still be held liable for tuition payments?** Yes, during the show-cause period, you will continue to make tuition payments as you always have.

**Will my courses or degrees look different on my transcript because of the show-cause?** Your courses and degrees will look the same on your transcript since Aspen remains accredited during this period. There is no indication on the transcript of the show-cause.

**If I want to transfer to another school now, can I?** Yes, students are able to withdraw from their programs at any time via their Student Portal. We recommend that you speak to your academic advisor before withdrawing to ensure that withdrawing is the right decision for you. If you choose to withdraw, you can request a copy of your official transcripts through the National Student Clearinghouse. If you need other assistance with transferring your credits, such as getting copies of your syllabi to send to other institutions, you can reach out to the Registrar's Office at [registrar@aspen.edu](mailto:registrar@aspen.edu) for help.

**When and how will we be updated as more information becomes available?** The university will continue to update all students via email and/or on the website as more information becomes available.

**Does the show-cause period impact international students? As an international student, can I continue taking courses?** There is no impact for international students at this time. You are able to continue in your program.

**Should I be concerned that Aspen's accreditation could be lost at any time without notice?** Aspen is working hard to ensure it does not lose its accreditation. That said, loss of accreditation can happen to any institution. Prior to that loss, an institution would engage in a process of teach out with its accreditors and regulators. Because a detailed

and complex process is involved, including a notification timeline, an institution closing from one day to the next is not common. As a result, students are encouraged to continue taking classes toward degree completion.

**I am in an online nursing program. Do the updates surrounding the BSN Pre-licensure program based in Arizona impact my degree?** No, the status of the BSN Pre-licensure program does not impact the online nursing programs. The online RN-BSN, RN-MSN, MSN, and DNP programs are operating normally.