

## Policy on Commission Good Practice in Relations with Member Institutions

*(Adopted June 1980; Revised June 1996; Edited October 1997; Revised January 1999,  
January 2001, January 2006, January 2011; Edited June 2012, August 2012;  
Revised June 2013, October 2013, June 2015)*

### Policy

The Commission makes the commitment to follow good practices in its relations with the institutions it accredits.

### Policy Elements

The Commission will fulfill its commitment by adhering to the following practices:

- ~~1. Make an initial visit to, or evaluation of, an institution only on the written request of the chief executive officer of the institution.~~
1. ~~Revisit~~ Visit an institution *on the initiative of the Commission only on request by the chief executive officer, or if a visit is initiated by the Commission,* after due notice, *appropriate to the situation, is provided* to the institution.
- ~~3. Permit withdrawal of a request for initial candidacy or initial accreditation at any time (even after evaluation) prior to final action by the Commission.~~
2. ~~Appraise~~ Evaluate institutions in the ~~light~~ context of *their own stated purposes mission, respecting institutional integrity and diversity,* so long as ~~these are the mission is~~ within the general frame of reference of higher education and consistent with the standards of the Commission.
3. Use *the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, along with relevant authentic, factual* qualitative and quantitative information in institutional evaluations, *including information in the institution's Self Evaluation Report and any Special Reports, of Educational Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, and in the External Evaluation Report, Annual Reports, External Audits, and other information including written supplemental information provided by the institution in response to the final team report, and oral testimony before the Commission. of Educational Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, and relevant qualitative and quantitative information in institutional evaluation.*
- ~~6. Interpret standards for accreditation in ways that are relevant to the character of the particular institution, respecting institutional integrity and diversity.~~
4. Encourage ~~sound~~ educational innovation and continuous improvement in the educational effectiveness of the institution.

5. Publish ~~at least twice annually in the Commission newsletter~~ the names of institutions scheduled for comprehensive *external* evaluation.
6. Accept relevant third-party comment on ~~the member institutions as delineated in the Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions. scheduled for evaluation. Such comment must be submitted in writing, signed, accompanied by return address and telephone number, and received no later than five weeks before the scheduled Commission consideration. The Commission will notify the institution when a third-party report is received by sending a copy of the report to the institution.~~<sup>1</sup>

~~10. Establish reporting systems for annual, midterm, and self evaluation reports which inform the Commission regarding student loan default rates and the standing of the institution with respect to appropriate state agencies, institutional or specialized accrediting agencies, and the institution's compliance with Title IV.~~
7. Consider information regarding adverse actions against a member institution by another accrediting agency or state agency and provide an explanation consistent with *Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies as to why the action by another authority does not result in an adverse action by the Commission.*
- ~~12. Practice monitoring and oversight required by federal statute and regulations in the manner required by that mandate.~~
8. ~~Include on evaluation teams representation from other institutions of similar purpose and academic program to the extent feasible; include faculty and other academics, administrators and and other special appointees as appropriate on evaluation teams. Include faculty members among the academic representatives on comprehensive evaluation teams.~~
9. Provide institutions an opportunity to object, for cause, to individual members assigned to the team designated to visit the institution, with special concern for possible conflict of interest *or demonstrated bias.*
10. ~~Arrange for meetings~~ Require that ~~during~~ the comprehensive *external* evaluation ~~visit with administration, faculty, staff, students, and trustees, and~~ include a publicized opportunity for an open meeting *with students and interested others* during the visit.
11. ~~Address~~ Examine the *institution set standards set by the institution for student achievement, and institutional performance against those standards, with regard to student achievement* in reviews of institutional effectiveness.
12. ~~Advise team chairs~~ Require Expect that the *external evaluation team in its report should* make clear *the areas of deficiency and those Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies* with which the institution does not comply and *also those areas of institutional practice* needing improvement.

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<sup>1</sup> Also refer to the Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of the Commission and Member Institutions.

13. Provide to the institution *written notice of the Commission action and a detailed written evaluation report ~~about the institution's performance with respect to student achievement and student learning and about its review~~ assessing the institution's ~~or program's~~ compliance with the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies *and its reported performance with respect to student achievement and student learning. The External Evaluation Report will note findings, conclusions and recommendations in areas for which the institution has deficiencies and must take steps to meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The External Evaluation Report also may includes, when appropriate, recommendations for improvement of institutional effectiveness and educational quality. The Commission action letter will specify the period, not to exceed two years, within which the institution must resolve deficiencies in meeting standards.**

~~19. Emphasize the value and importance of institutional self evaluation and respect the confidentiality of the institutional Self Evaluation Report and the External Evaluation Report until after the Commission has acted on them.~~

~~20. Encourage discussion and use on campus of major team recommendations.~~

The Commission has the responsibility to require that team members keep confidential all institutional information examined or heard before, during, and after the team visit and after the Commission acts.<sup>2</sup>

The Commission provides institutions due process<sup>3</sup> concerning accrediting decisions made by the Commission.

- A. *External evaluation team reports are held as confidential until the Commission has conducted its review and acted on the accredited status of the institution.*
- B. *An institution, through its CEO, is provided with the draft External Evaluation Report before it becomes final. The institutions ~~are~~ through its CEO is provided an opportunity to respond to the Chair of the external evaluation team concerning the ~~in writing to~~ draft External Evaluation Reports, in order to correct errors of fact.*
- C. *An institution, through its CEO, is provided with the external evaluation team's final External Evaluation Report in advance of the Commission meeting. The institution is provided an opportunity to submit a written response ~~respond in writing~~ (no less than 15 days in advance of the Commission meeting) to the final External Evaluation Reports on issues of substance *concerning any perceived remaining errors of fact in the External Report, and to any deficiencies noted in the report which could result in a finding of noncompliance with an Eligibility Requirement, and to any Accreditation Standard, deficiencies or Commission policy noted in the report.* The written supplemental information may also pertain to the evaluation process, conditions at the institution at the time of the visit, verification of final policy adoption or similar actions noted in the team report as pending or imminent, or to the institution's ability to achieve and maintain compliance with standards.*

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<sup>2</sup> Also refer to the Statement on the Process for Preserving Confidentiality of Documents Related to Institutional Evaluations.

<sup>3</sup> Complies with 34 C.F.R. § 602.18, § 602.23, § 602.25.

- D. *An institution, through its CEO, is provided with the opportunity ~~and~~ to appear before the Commission to present oral comments ~~when reports are considered~~ in closed session before the Commission acts on the accredited status of the institution. The oral comments must pertain to the matters identified in section C., above, for inclusion in supplemental written responses by the college.*

The Commission will notify the institution in writing, through an action letter, as soon as reasonably possible after Commission decisions are made and will include in its action letter the reasons for actions taken, *or will refer the institution to the External Evaluation Report for detailed reasons.*

If the Commission's action on an institution will be ~~lists~~ based upon any deficiency which ~~was~~ has not been noted as part of an accreditation review in the External Evaluation Report, Institutional Self Evaluation Report or other institutional report, or in the submitted annual reports and audit reports, then before making any decision on the institution's compliance with the pertinent Accreditation Standard that will become part of the basis for ~~includes a~~ sanction or denial ~~ing or terminating~~ withdrawal of accreditation or candidacy, the Commission, through its President, will afford the institution additional time to respond in writing to the perceived deficiency before *including the related finding of noncompliance in a sanction or accreditation denial or withdrawal finalizing its action.* ~~at the next Commission meeting.~~ In its response, the institution also may address any asserted procedural errors as well.

*An institution subject to an adverse decision, ~~The institution~~ may ~~a~~ request a review by the Commission of its adverse actions, as described in the Policy on Review of Commission Actions, and thereafter ~~may request an further~~ appeal hearing, as described in the Bylaws of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC), and Appeals Procedure Manual, if the nature of the action warrants an appeal.*

*The Commission will provide an opportunity for institutional representatives and the general public to attend those portions of Commission meetings devoted to policy matters and other ~~s~~ items of a non-confidential nature.*

~~26. Will not condition ~~candidacy or an institution's~~ accreditation upon ~~the~~ payment of fees which are not approved by the Commission ~~for payment to the ACCJC~~ for annual dues, evaluation costs, or other assessments.~~