Policy on Commission Actions on Institutions

Policy
Institutions applying for candidacy or initial accreditation and accredited institutions undergoing periodic evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation will be reviewed by the Accrediting Commission. The Commission will examine institutional evidence of student learning and achievement, the Self Evaluation Report of Educational Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, the External Evaluation Report of Educational Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, and documents from previous evaluations to determine whether the institution complies with the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The Commission will apply, as it deems appropriate, one of the actions listed in this policy.

In the case that a previously accredited institution cannot demonstrate that it meets the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, the Commission will impose a sanction as defined below. If the institution cannot document that it has come into compliance within a maximum of two years after receiving the initial sanction, the Commission will take adverse action. In keeping with the provisions of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, the Commission defines adverse actions for accredited institutions as termination of accreditation; denial, or termination for institutions seeking candidacy; and denial for institutions seeking initial accreditation.

Policy Elements
I. Actions on Institutions that are Applicants for Candidacy or extension of Candidacy

Grant candidacy. Candidacy is a pre-accreditation status granted to institutions that have successfully undergone eligibility review as well as a comprehensive evaluation process using the Accreditation Standards, including preparation of an Institutional Self Evaluation Report and a review by an evaluation team. Candidacy is granted when the institution demonstrates the ability to meet all the Accreditation Standards and Commission policies, or to fully meet them within the two-year candidate period. Candidacy indicates that an institution has achieved initial association with the Commission and is progressing toward accreditation. During candidacy, the institution undertakes the necessary steps to reach demonstrable and complete compliance with Accreditation Standards. This includes an Institutional Self Evaluation Report in preparation for initial accreditation. Candidate status may be extended for two years, for a total period not to exceed four years.

Defer a decision on candidacy. A Commission decision on candidacy is postponed pending receipt of specified information, as identified by the Commission, from the institution.
Extend candidacy. Candidacy is extended in response to a college request when the Commission determines that a candidate institution has made significant progress toward meeting the Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, and anticipates that the institution will meet all Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies if granted additional time to do so. Candidacy can be extended once for a two-year period. Four years in candidate status is the maximum allowable.

Deny candidacy. Candidacy is denied when the Commission determines that the institution has demonstrated that it does not meet all of the Eligibility Requirements, and does not meet a significant portion of the Accreditation Standards and Commission policies, and therefore cannot be expected to meet all Accreditation Standards and Commission policies within a two-year period. The institution may reapply for candidacy after two years by submitting an Institutional Self Evaluation Report. Denial of candidacy is subject to a request for review and appeal under the applicable policies and procedures of the Commission and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Termination of candidacy. Candidacy is terminated when the Commission determines that an institution has not maintained its eligibility for candidacy or has failed to explain or correct deficiencies of which it has been given notice. Termination is subject to a request for review and appeal under the applicable policies and procedures of the Commission and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

II. Actions on Institutions which are Applicants for Initial Accreditation

Grant initial accreditation. Initial accreditation may be granted after a comprehensive institutional evaluation. The institution substantially meets or exceeds the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The institution is required to submit a Midterm Report in the third year of the six-year accreditation cycle. The institution must be fully evaluated again within a maximum of six years from the date of the Commission action granting initial accreditation.

Grant initial accreditation and request a Follow-Up Report. The institution substantially meets or exceeds the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies, but has recommendations on a small number of issues of some urgency which, if not addressed immediately, may threaten the ability of the institution to continue to meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The Commission will specify the nature, purpose, scope, and due date of the report to be submitted. The institution is also required to submit a Midterm Report in the third year of the six-year accreditation cycle.

Grant initial accreditation and request a Follow-Up Report with a visit. The institution substantially meets or exceeds the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies, but has recommendations on a small number of issues of some urgency which, if not addressed immediately, may threaten the ability of the institution to continue to meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. The Commission will specify the nature, purpose, scope, and due date of the report to be submitted and of the visit to be made. The institution is also required to submit a Midterm Report in the third year of the six-year accreditation cycle.
Defer a decision on Initial Accreditation. A Commission decision on initial accreditation is postponed pending receipt of specified information from the institution, as identified by the Commission from the institution.

Extend candidacy. The Commission may extend candidacy in lieu of granting initial accreditation when the institution has not met the conditions for initial accreditation and has had candidacy. Candidacy can only be extended for a maximum of two years.

Deny Initial Accreditation. The Commission denies initial accreditation when an applicant institution no longer meets or fails to meet Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, or Eligibility Requirements within the maximum period allowed for a college to remain in candidacy. A denial is subject to a request for review and appeal under the applicable policies and procedures of the Commission and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. If initial accreditation is not granted, the institution may not reapply for candidacy for at least two years.

III. Actions on Institutions that are Applicants for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Actions that Reaffirm Accreditation

Reaffirm accreditation. The institution substantially meets or exceeds the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies. Recommendations are directed toward strengthening the institution, not correcting situations where the institution fails to meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies. The institution is required to submit a Midterm Report in the third year of the six-year accreditation cycle.

Reaffirm accreditation, and request a Follow-Up Report. The institution substantially meets or exceeds the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies, but has recommendations on a small number of issues of some urgency which, if not addressed immediately, may threaten the ability of the institution to continue to meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies. The institution is required to submit a Follow-Up Report. The Commission will specify the issues to be addressed and the due date of the report. Resolution of the issues is expected within a one- to two-year period. The institution is also required to submit a Midterm Report in the third year of the six-year accreditation cycle.

Reaffirm accreditation, and request a Follow-Up Report with a visit. The institution substantially meets or exceeds the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies, but has recommendations on a small number of issues of some urgency which, if not addressed immediately, may threaten the ability of the institution to continue to meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards and Commission policies. The Commission will identify the issues to be addressed in the report, the due date of the report to be submitted, and specifics of the visit to be made. Resolution of the issues is expected within a one- to two-year period. The institution is also required to submit a Midterm Report in the third year of the six-year accreditation cycle.

Defer a decision on reaffirmation of accreditation. A Commission decision on reaffirmation of accreditation is postponed pending receipt of specified additional information from the institution or to permit an institution to correct deficiencies and...
report to the Commission within six months or less. The response from the institution may be followed by a visit addressed primarily to the reasons for the decision. The Commission will specify the nature, purpose, and scope of the information to be submitted and of the visit to be made. The accredited status of the institution continues during the period of deferment.

IV. Sanctions

Institutions are advised that the U.S. Department of Education requires recognized accrediting bodies to terminate accreditation when an institution found is determined to be out of compliance with Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies and fails to come into compliance within a two-year period. Consequently, the Commission will take action to terminate accreditation if deficiencies are not resolved within this period. Under extraordinary circumstances, the institution may be granted additional time when the Commission determines good cause for extension exists.

A. Issue Warning. When the Commission finds that an institution has pursued a course deviating from the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or Commission policies to an extent that gives concern to the Commission, it may issue a warning to the institution to correct its deficiencies, refrain from certain activities, or initiate certain activities. The Commission will specify the time within which the institution must resolve these deficiencies. During the warning period, the institution will be subject to reports and visits at a frequency to be determined by the Commission. If warning is issued as a result of the institution’s educational quality and institutional effectiveness review, reaffirmation is delayed during the period of warning. The accredited status of the institution continues during the warning period.

B. Impose Probation. When an institution deviates significantly from the Commission’s Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or Commission policies, but not to such an extent as to warrant a Show Cause order or the termination of accreditation, or fails to respond to conditions imposed upon it by the Commission, including a warning, the institution may be placed on probation. The Commission will specify the time within which the institution must resolve deficiencies. During the probation period, the institution will be subject to reports and visits at a frequency to be determined by the Commission. If probation is imposed as a result of the institution’s educational quality and institutional effectiveness review, reaffirmation is delayed during the period of probation. The accredited status of the institution continues during the probation period.

C. Order Show Cause. When the Commission finds an institution to be in substantial non-compliance with its Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, or Commission policies, or when the institution has not responded to the conditions imposed by the Commission, the Commission will require the institution to Show Cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn at the end of a stated period by demonstrating that it has corrected the deficiencies noted by the Commission and is in compliance with the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. In such cases, the burden of proof will rest on the institution to demonstrate why its accreditation should be continued. The Commission will specify the time within which the institution must resolve deficiencies. If the loss of
accreditation will likely cause an institution to close, then during the Show Cause period, the institution must make preparations for closure according to the Commission's "Policy on Closing an Institution." While under a Show Cause order, the institution will be subject to reports and visits at a frequency to be determined by the Commission. If Show Cause is ordered as a result of the institution's educational quality and institutional effectiveness review, reaffirmation is delayed during the Show Cause order. The accredited status of the institution continues during the period of the Show Cause order.

V. Actions that Terminate Accreditation

Terminate Accreditation. If, in the judgment of the Commission, an institution has not satisfactorily explained or corrected matters of which it has been given notice, or has taken an action that has placed it significantly out of compliance with the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies, its accreditation may be terminated. The Commission will give the institution written reasons for its decision. Termination of accreditation is subject to a request for review and appeal under the applicable policies and procedures of the Commission and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The accredited status of the institution continues pending completion of any review and appeal process the institution may request. Otherwise, the institution's accreditation ends on the date when the time period permitting such a request expires. In such a case, the institution must complete again the entire accreditation process.
ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Policy on Review of Commission Actions
(Adopted January 1977; Revised January 1979, June 1998; Edited June 2002,
August 2006, January 2008; Second Reading June 2013)

Institutions that are denied candidacy or initial accreditation, or whose candidacy or
accredited status is terminated by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior
Colleges may request a review of the Commission’s decisions. Other Commission actions are
not subject to review. For purposes of compliance with 34 C.F.R. § 602.25(c), these actions
are identified as the considered to be adverse actions which may be taken by the
Commission. Other Commission actions on accredited status are not subject to review. Such
A review must be requested prior to the filing of an appeal by the institution to the Western
Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The following procedures will govern the conduct
of the Commission’s review:

1. If the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges decides to take any
of the actions, an adverse action listed above, it’s the President will notify the
institution concerned of the decision by certified mail. Return receipt requested,
within approximately seven 30 calendar days of the Commission’s decision. Said
notification shall contain a succinct statement of the reasons for the Commission’s
decision.

2. If the institution wishes a review by the Commission, it shall file with the Commission
President a request for such a review under the policies and procedures of the
Commission. This request should be submitted by the chief executive officer of the
institution and co-signed by the Chairperson of the governing board. Requests for
review by an institution in a multi-college system shall be co-signed by the chief
executive officer of the system. This request must be received by certified mail,
return receipt requested, within twenty-eight 28 calendar days of the date of the
mailing of the Commission’s notification of its decision to the institution. The fee for
review shall accompany the request.

3. Within twenty-one 21 calendar days after the date of its request for a review, the
institution, through its chief administrative executive officer, must submit a written
statement of the reasons why, in the institution’s opinion, a review of the
Commission’s decision is warranted. As a general rule, this written statement should
respond only to the reasons cited by the Commission in its decision and to the
evidence that was before the Commission at the time of its decision. In so doing, the
institution shall identify the basis for its request for review in one or more of the
following areas: (1) there were errors or omissions in carrying out prescribed
procedures on the part of the evaluation team and/or the Commission which
materially affected the Commission’s decision; (2) there was demonstrable bias or

1 Adverse actions are defined, by 34 C.F.R. §602.3 as “the denial, withdrawal, suspension, revocation,
or termination of accreditation or preaccreditation, or any comparable accrediting action an agency
may take against an institution or program.” The due process described in this Policy addresses the
regulatory requirements of 34 C.F.R. §602.25 as to adverse actions.
prejudice on the part of one or more members of the evaluation team or Commission which materially affected the Commission's decision; (3) the evidence before the Commission prior to and on the date when it made the decision which is being appealed was materially in error; or (4) the decision of the Commission was not supported by substantial evidence.

It is the responsibility of the institution to identify in its statement of reasons any specific information that was not considered, or was improperly considered, by the visiting team.

The institution must accompany its statement of reasons with all written documents that the institution desires requests that the review committee Commission consider.

The statement of reasons will be reviewed by Commission staff for compliance with this provision. The staff review will normally be completed within 30 days from receipt of the statement of reasons.

4. If, in the judgment of Commission staff, the statement of reasons is deficient, it will be forwarded to the Commission Chairperson. No review committee will be appointed should the Commission Chairperson concur.—If the Commission Chair concurs with the judgment of Commission staff that the statement of reasons is deficient, a notice of return and statement of reasons will be returned to the institution and no review committee will be appointed.

If the institution's statement of reasons is returned, the institution will be provided the opportunity to revise the statement within 21 days from the date the notice of return and statement of reasons is sent to the institution. Should the institution resubmit its statement of reasons within the prescribed time period, the revised statement will be reviewed by Commission staff. If the revised statement is still found deficient, it will be forwarded to the Commission Chairperson. Should the Commission Chairperson concur that the revised statement is deficient, the matter will be considered closed and no review committee will be appointed. This action is final and is not subject to the WASC appeals process.

4.5. If, on review, the statement of reasons is found to comply with the requirements set forth in item 3, above, the matter will be accepted for review and the institution so notified. On acceptance of the institution's written statement of reasons referred to in paragraph 3, the Commission staff will select a review committee of three or more persons. A roster of the review committee will be sent to the institution normally within twenty-one 21 calendar days of the date of the Commission's receipt and acceptance of the institution's statement of reasons. No person who has served as a member of the visiting team whose report is subject to review shall be eligible to serve on the review committee. The institution will be provided the opportunity to object for cause to any of the proposed review committee members. After giving the institution notice of this opportunity, the Commission staff will finalize the membership of the review committee and the committee chair appointment.

5.6. Within a reasonable period of time after the review committee has been selected, the Commission President will schedule a meeting of the review committee at a location separate from the institution and Commission offices. No assurance can be made that
the review committee process will take place so that action on the request for review will be able to be scheduled on the agenda of the next Commission meeting.

6.a. Prior to the meeting of the review committee, a Chairperson will be appointed and the review committee will review available information. If additional information is needed at any time during the review by the review committee, the Chairperson of the review committee may request such information from the chief executive officer of the institution, Commission staff, or the prior team.

b. The chief executive officer or other institutional representatives will be invited to answer questions and address issues raised in the statement of reasons.

7.c. The review will be investigative and designed to determine if the grounds for review, cited by the institution, have been met.

8.d. The committee will open and close its meeting with the chief executive officer or other institutional representatives, by attempting to ascertain whether the institution has any complaints about any aspect of the review process. The review committee is allowed to consider only evidence that was available to or known by the Commission at the time of its taking action. New evidence or information relating to actions or events subsequent to the date of the Commission action shall not be presented or considered by the review committee.

9.7. The committee will prepare a report that states the reasons for the Commission action, identifies each reason advanced by the institution in its request for review, and, for each reason, evaluates the evidence which the institution has presented in support of its request for review. In addition, the review committee The report may include an evaluation of may evaluate additional evidence that, in its opinion of the review committee, is relevant to its recommendation to the Commission and was before the Commission at the time of its decision. The report shall state only findings of fact, and not consider or cite any evidence relating to facts or events occurring after the date of the Commission’s decision.

10.a. The Chairperson of the review committee will submit a copy of the review committee’s report which is referred to in paragraph 9 to the chief executive officer of the institution, the Chairperson of the institution’s governing board, and the President of the Commission, normally within twenty-one 21 calendar days of the end of the review committee’s deliberations, via certified mail or other means that provide a receipt of delivery.

11.b. Within fourteen 14 calendar days of the institution’s receipt of the review committee’s report, via certified mail or other means that provide a receipt of delivery, the chief executive officer may submit a written response to the President of the Commission, with a copy to the Chairperson of the review committee. Failure of the institution to submit a response shall constitute an acceptance by the institution of the review committee’s report.

c. After considering the written response, the review committee may make revisions to the review committee report to correct errors of fact or omissions. The revised review committee report will be sent to the chief executive officer of the
institution, the Chairperson of the institution's governing board, and the President of the Commission.

42.8. In a confidential letter to the Commission, the review committee shall recommend whether the decision of the Commission under review should be affirmed, reversed, or modified. The recommendation of the review committee to the Commission will not be disclosed to the institution being reviewed. The recommendation is not binding on the Commission.

43.9. The matter will be scheduled for Commission consideration at its next regular Commission meeting.

a. In making its decision on the institution's status, the Commission will consider the evidence available to it and then reach a final decision to (a) reaffirm its original decision; (b) modify it; or (c) reverse it.

b. As soon after the meeting as practicable, but not later than 30 days after the Commission decision, the Commission President will notify the chief executive officer of the institution by certified mail or other means that provide a receipt of delivery, of the Commission's decision.

44.c. The decision of the Commission, referred to in paragraph 15, shall be the final decision as far as of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges is concerned, on the action concerning the institution which was under review.

d. However, if the decision has affirmed the denial or termination of candidacy or termination of accreditation, the institution may file an appeal with the President of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, through the President of the Commission in accordance with the provisions of Article VI of the Constitution of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Bylaws of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and the Appeal and Hearing Procedures.

4510. An institution retains its accredited or candidate status until the review process of the Commission is completed. If the institution files a subsequent appeal with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, its status remains unchanged until that appeal has been resolved—the appeal process is completed.

4611. The cost of the review will be borne by the institution. The request for a review must be accompanied by a deposit set by the Commission. If the actual cost is less than this amount, the excess will be refunded. If it is greater, the institution will be billed for the difference.