

Policy on Relations with Accrediting Agencies

(Adopted January 1998; Revised June 1998; Edited June 2002, Revised October 2013)

It is the policy of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges to maintain a working relationship with other accrediting agencies where a community of interest exists. Elements of the relationship shall include, but not be limited to:

- Active participation in meetings of executive staff and Commission leadership
- Routine open sharing of publications and policy documents
- Timely submission of information on accrediting decisions taken at Commission meetings
- Cooperating in the evaluation of institutions that operate in more than one accrediting association region
- Recommending persons for evaluation team and Commission service, and receiving such recommendations from other agencies
- Participation in common ventures of policy development and advocacy for institutional accreditation
- Systematically monitoring the status of ACCJC/WASC institutions with other accrediting agencies
- Consideration of actions taken by other recognized agencies when undertaking actions of initial candidacy or accreditation, or renewal of candidacy or accreditation of institutions that may be accredited by those other agencies
- Handling and forwarding of dues collected from member institutions on behalf of national affiliates such as the Council for Higher Education Accreditation

The Commission maintains regular communication with relevant accrediting agencies. On request from a relevant accrediting agency, information about the accreditation or preaccreditation status of an institution or about adverse actions on an institution will be provided.

Within 30 days of the Commission's meeting, the Commission notifies the appropriate accrediting bodies of all institutional actions. If the Commission's final decision is to deny, withdraw, suspend, or terminate the accreditation or preaccreditation of an institution or to put an institution on probation or show cause, the written notification will be provided at the same time as the institution is notified. Notification is also provided when a teach-out plan is approved by the Commission for a program that is accredited by another accreditor, whether resulting from withdrawal, adverse action, or loss state authorization or licensure.

The Commission notifies the relevant accrediting agencies if an accredited or preaccredited institution decides to withdraw voluntarily from accreditation or preaccreditation, or if the institution lets its accreditation or preaccreditation lapse. The Commission will notify the relevant accrediting agencies within 30 days of receiving notification from the institution of the date that it is withdrawing voluntarily or of the date on which accreditation or preaccreditation lapses.

Upon receipt of information regarding interim or final adverse actions against a member institution by another recognized accrediting agency (or state agency), Commission staff will seek further information from the agency involved, and the Commission shall determine whether a review of the accredited status of the institution will be required.

The Commission will not renew the accreditation or preaccreditation of any institution during a period that the institution is the subject of an action by a recognized institutional accreditation agency potentially leading to the suspension, revocation, or termination of the institution's accreditation or preaccreditation, or the institution has been notified of a threatened loss of accreditation and the due process procedures required by the action have not been completed. 34 C.F.R. § 602.28(b). If the Commission grants accreditation or preaccreditation notwithstanding these actions, the Commission will provide to the U.S. Secretary a thorough explanation consistent with its accreditation standards, why the previous action does not preclude the agency's grant of accreditation or preaccreditation. 34 C.F.R. § 602.28(c).

In the event that the Commission grants initial accreditation, reaffirmation, or candidacy to an institution that is subject to adverse action by another recognized institutional accrediting agency, the bases for the decision will be explained and communicated to that agency and to the Secretary of Education as appropriate to each case.

The Commission is affiliated with other regional agencies through the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). It should be noted that the Commission has been an active participant in the community of accrediting agencies since the establishment of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, first with the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions in Higher Education (FRACHE), then the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) and the Commission on Recognition in Higher Education Accreditation (CORPA) and the National Policy Board on Higher Education Accreditation.

The primary community of interest is clearly with the other regional institutional accrediting agencies. The Commission shares significant concerns with national agencies that accredit institutions, and to a lesser extent, with specialized accreditors. (Note policy, "Relationship Between General and Specialized Agencies.")