

Policy on Relations with Government Agencies

*(Adopted June 1996; Revised January 1998; Edited June 2002, August 2007;
Revised January 2012, January 2013, October 2013)*

The Commission has sought recognition and periodically seeks renewal of recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Education, in order that member institutions achieve and maintain eligibility to participate in programs such as Title IV student financial aid of the Higher Education Act (HEA). The Commission and its member institutions take direction from the Commission Policy on Institutional Compliance with Title IV. The Commission provides, upon request from the U.S. Secretary of Education, any information sought regarding institutional compliance with Title IV regulations of the HEA.

Within 30 days of the Commission's decision, the Commission notifies the U.S. Department of Education and appropriate state licensing or authorizing agencies and 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 to the U.S. Secretary of Education, appropriate state licensing or authorizing agencies and accrediting bodies will be provided at the same time as the institution is notified, and the written notification to the public will be provided within 24 hours of notice to the institution.

No later than 60 days after a decision to place an institution on probation or show cause or to terminate or deny the accreditation or candidacy of an institution, the Commission will make available to the U.S. Secretary of Education, the appropriate licensing or authorizing agency, and the public, a brief statement summarizing the reasons for the Commission's decision, and the comments, if any, that the affected institution may wish to make with regard to that decision.

The Commission notifies the U.S. Secretary of Education 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 U.S. Secretary of Education 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.

Copies of publications, such as the Commission newsletter are routinely sent to the state and federal agencies with which the Commission communicates. The ACCJC Directory of Accredited Institutions, which is continuously updated, is available on the Commission website (www.accjc.org).

The Commission maintains regular communication with the U.S. Department of Education and relevant state agencies. On request from the U.S. Department of Education or relevant state agency, information about the accreditation or preaccreditation status of an institution or about adverse actions on an institution will be provided.

The Commission responds to inquiries from government agencies and forwards responses to complaints against institutions that have been routed to the Commission by those agencies. If a conflict occurs between Accreditation Standards and state or local laws governing an

institution seeking accreditation, the Commission will undertake appropriate consultation toward resolution of the conflict.

In the event clear evidence of Title IV fraud and abuse is obtained by the Commission, that information is forwarded to the U.S. Department of Education. Institutions are notified and asked to respond if complaints or allegations of fraud and abuse are communicated to the Commission by the Department of Education.

The Commission submits to the U.S. Secretary of Education any proposed changes in policy and procedures, Eligibility Requirements, or Accreditation Standards that might alter its scope of recognition or its compliance with appropriate federal regulation. 34 C.F.R. § 602.27(d).

When a state authorizing or licensing agency has notified the Commission of its revocation of an institution's license or authorization, then the Commission will require a teach-out plan of that institution in accordance with the Policy on Closing an Institution. If an institution has closed without a teach-out plan, the Commission will work with the U.S. Department of Education and other agencies to assist students who have been affected by the closure.

The Commission will not, except where exceptional circumstances exist, renew the accreditation or preaccreditation of any institution that is subject to adverse action by any other recognized institutional accrediting agency or state agency. If accreditation or preaccreditation is granted in such a case, the Commission will provide documentation of the reasons for the action to the U.S. Department of Education and to the other accrediting agency or state agency within 30 days of such action.