The Commission initiates a systematic and comprehensive review of its Accreditation Standards and practices every ten six years. The review is designed to assess the utility, effectiveness and relevance of the Accreditation Standards and practices, and to ensure that they are updated to align with changing institutional characteristics, societal needs, and federal regulations, and best practices in higher education. Information from multiple sources, including input from internal and external constituencies, are used in the review. If the Commission determines that changes to the Accreditation Standards are needed, then it announces its intent to change the Standards. The review may result in formative and clarifying revisions, or in significant changes to Accreditation Standards as deemed appropriate.

The review may result in formative and clarifying improvements, or in significant changes, to Accreditation Standards and practices as deemed appropriate by the Commission. At the time of each review, the Commission will also seek to align Accreditation Standards and practices with federal regulatory requirements and with excellent practices in higher education accreditation.

The Review Process

The Commission makes available to its member institutions and the public and its member institutions information announcing the Review, the Commission’s means of soliciting input on Accreditation Standards and practices, and a tentative proposed timeline for completing the review and issuing implementation of any new or revised and/or updated Accreditation Standards. During the review process, the Commission also will provide periodic updates to the public and its member institutions and the public on its progress in reviewing and developing the and/or updating its new Accreditation Standards and practices through electronic communications to member institutions and other constituencies, notices on its website, and its newsletter.

The process for review of Accreditation Standards and practices:

1. Examines whether the Standards and practices are adequate to evaluate institutional and educational quality;
2. Examines whether the Standards are relevant to the educational needs of students and adequately evaluate student learning and achievement;
3. Examines each standard and the Standards as a whole;
4. Examines the accreditation practices that implement Accreditation Standards and Commission policies;

1 If, during a review process, the Commission determines changes to the Accreditation Standards are needed, then the Commission is required to initiate action within 12 months to make the changes, and must complete the action within a reasonable period of time. 34 C.F.R. 602.21(c).
5.4. Solicits suggestions from internal constituencies such as Commissioners and
Commission staff, member institutions and their staffs, and governing board members,
and persons who serve as evaluation team members and team chairs;

6.5. Solicits suggestions from communities of interest or others with special
expertise in accreditation related matters; and

7.6. Solicits suggestions from external constituencies such as students, business
leaders and other members of the public served by member institutions.

Development and Approval of New and/or Revised Updated Accreditation
Standards

If the review process results in the need for new and/or revisions updates to the
Accreditation Standards, the Commission may use the assistance of special topic task forces,
accreditation experts, an editorial board or drafting committee, and persons from member
colleges when drafting proposed language for the revised new and/or updated Accreditation
Standards.

Once any revised new and/or updated Accreditation Standards have been drafted, the
Commission will provide opportunities to its member institutions, and their staffs and
governing board members, college systems to which they may belong, students, business
leaders and other members of the public, and other higher education associations to
comment on proposed changes to Accreditation Standards. These individuals and groups are
invited to send written comments to the Commission and/or to testify at public hearings and
meetings scheduled by the Commission. The comments thus gathered are taken into account
as the Commission finalizes any revisions to Accreditation standards.

When the Commission has developed a final draft of any new and/or updates to the
Accreditation Standards, it will announce the date and location for a Commission meeting at
which the Accreditation Standards will be considered for first reading, and will invite
comment on the draft during through a public hearing. In order to facilitate constituency
and public input, the Commission may conduct additional public hearings throughout the
Western region on the final draft of the Accreditation Standards. The Commission will
announce the date and location for a Commission meeting at which the Accreditation
Standards will be considered for second reading and adoption, and will invite comment before
taking action to adopt the new and/or updated revised Accreditation Standards. The process
for drafting and approving new standards normally will be completed within two years.

Revisions Changes to Accreditation Standards between Reviews

At any time between the regular ten-year review of Accreditation Standards, the above
notwithstanding, if the Commission identifies a need to revise and update the Standards
between reviews, at any time between the regular ten-year review, the process for ensuring
constituent participation will be consistent with the process used during the ten-six-year
standard reviews. When the Commission identifies a need to change the Accreditation

2 The USDE can require accrediting bodies to make changes to Accreditation Standards and policies
within one year of adoption of new regulations or discovery by the USDE that an accreditor’s
Standards are not compliant with federal regulations. In such cases, the ACCJC will need to respond
within the one year time frame.
34 C.F.R. §602.36.
Standards, it will initiate action within 12 twelve months. The process for drafting and approving new standards normally will be completed within two years.

At any time between the regular ten-year review of Accreditation Standards, if the Commission identifies any ambiguities in the Accreditation Standards language, the Commission may revise update the wording of a Standard further reserves the right to make small editorial changes to the language of individual Accreditation Standards designed to clarify meaning on an as-needed basis through the normal Commission meeting process with a first and second reading. Notice and will be provided to member institutions and the public and notice to its member institutions of the opportunity for institutional and public comment on such proposed editorial changes before adoption.