



*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097*

THE ACCREDITATION LIAISON

Guidelines

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and its candidate and member institutions share responsibility for maintaining a relationship whereby both are fully informed of current accreditation issues and requirements and how those requirements are applied. In order to facilitate close and effective communication, SACSCOC has assigned a staff member to each candidate and member institution. This staff member establishes a working relationship with the leaders of the institution, consults with the institution during its reviews, answers questions or receives comments from the institution, maintains the SACSCOC file on the institution, and, in general, develops a familiarity with the operations of the institution, to the extent possible. Each candidate and member institution can help fulfill its responsibilities and complement this relationship with SACSCOC staff by appointing an Accreditation Liaison.

Selecting the Institutional Accreditation Liaison

SACSCOC strongly recommends that the chief executive officer appoint a senior faculty member or administrator who reports directly to the chief executive officer and has a suitable degree of visibility on campus as the institution's Accreditation Liaison. The liaison should not be a consultant employed to assist the institution during its decennial review. All official communications from SACSCOC will continue to go to the chief executive officer.

Responsibilities of the Institutional Accreditation Liaison

The Institutional Accreditation Liaison (IAL) is responsible for the following:

1. Ensuring that compliance with accreditation requirements is incorporated into the planning and evaluation process of the institution.
2. Notifying SACSCOC in advance of substantive changes and program developments in accord with the substantive change policies of the Commission.
3. Familiarizing faculty, staff, and students with SACSCOC's accrediting policies and procedures, and with particular sections of the *Principles of Accreditation* and SACSCOC policies that have application to certain aspects of the campus – especially when such documents are adopted or revised.

4. Serving as the primary contact person for SACSCOC staff. This includes encouraging institutional staff to route routine inquiries about the *Principles of Accreditation* and accreditation policies and processes through the IAL, who will call or email SACSCOC staff, if necessary. The IAL should also ensure that email from SACSCOC does not get quarantined by the institution's spam filter.
5. Coordinating the preparation of the annual profiles and any other reports requested by SACSCOC.
6. Serving as a resource person during the decennial review process and helping prepare for and coordinating reaffirmation and other accrediting visits.
7. Ensuring that electronic institutional data collected by SACSCOC is accurate and timely, including information regarding the institution's off-campus instructional sites, educational programs, and student achievement data. The IAL is also responsible for ensuring that institutional information in the SACSCOC database is current and periodically updated, including information about key administrative contacts and the peer evaluators affiliated with the institution.
8. Maintaining a file of all accreditation materials, such as reports related to the decennial review; reports related to other SACSCOC committee reviews; accreditation manuals, standards, and policies; schedules of all visits; copies of annual financial and enrollment profile information; and correspondence from SACSCOC offices.

Becoming an Effective Institutional Accreditation Liaison

Effective communication between member institutions and SACSCOC staff members is the key to ensuring that institutions are kept informed of current accreditation issues and requirements and that SACSCOC is made aware of institutional perspectives and concerns that touch accreditation issues. To develop an effective relationship between the institution and the SACSCOC staff member, the Institutional Accreditation Liaison may want to:

1. Learn about SACSCOC by reviewing the following information on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org):
 - general information about SACSCOC
 - the *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*
 - the *Resource Manual*
 - policies and publications of SACSCOC
 - institutional resources, including handbooks, manuals, and guides
 - upcoming meetings and events
2. Maintain contact with the SACSCOC staff member assigned to the institution.
3. Become involved in SACSCOC activities by attending the SACSCOC Annual Meeting and serving as a peer evaluator.
4. Become acquainted with the institution's accreditation history by reviewing past correspondence with SACSCOC and materials stemming from previous reaffirmation or substantive change reviews.
5. Ensure that reports to SACSCOC and significant correspondence from SACSCOC are archived for future reference.

Document History

Endorsed: Commission on Colleges, June 2000
Edited: January 2007, January 2012, September 2020