

Reaffirmation Process



The SACSCOC Board of Trustees conducts several types of institutional reviews: (1) Candidate Committee reviews of institutions seeking candidacy, (2) Accreditation Committee reviews of candidate institutions seeking initial membership, (3) Reaffirmation Committee reviews of member institutions seeking continued accreditation following a comprehensive review, (4) Special Committee reviews of member institutions seeking continued accreditation following evaluation of institutional circumstances that are accreditation related, and (5) Substantive Change Committee reviews of member institutions seeking approval and continued accreditation following the review of a change of a significant modification or expansion to the institution's nature and scope. These reviews are conducted in accordance with the Core Requirements and Standards in the *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* to provide consistent guidelines for peer reviews, representing the collective judgment of the membership on standards appropriate for the assurance of quality in higher education. Each of the above types of reviews has its own evaluation documents and peer review procedures and can be found on the SACSCOC web site at www.sacscoc.org.

The process described below is specific to a member institution seeking reaffirmation of accreditation.

Preparation by the Institution

As part of the reaffirmation process, the institution will provide two (2) separate documents:

1. Compliance Certification

The Compliance Certification, submitted fifteen (15) months in advance of an institution's scheduled reaffirmation, is a document completed by the institution that demonstrates its judgment of the extent of its compliance with each of the Core Requirements and Standards. The signatures of the institution's chief executive officer and accreditation liaison are required. By signing the document, these individuals certify that the process of institutional self-assessment has been thorough, honest, and forthright, and that the information contained in the document is truthful, accurate, and complete.

(View Compliance Certification document)

2. Quality Enhancement Plan

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), submitted six weeks in advance of the On-Site Reaffirmation Review Committee, is (1) a topic identified through ongoing, comprehensive and evaluation processes, (2) has a broad-based support of institutional constituencies, (3) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student successes, (4) commits resources to initiate, implement The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement 9 and complete the QEP, and (5) includes a plan to assess achievement. The plan should be focused and succinct (no more than 75 pages of narrative text and no more than 25 pages of support documentation or charts, graphs, and tables).

(View Quality Enhancement Plan document)

Review by the Commission on Colleges

1. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Review

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee, composed of a chair and normally eight to ten peer evaluators, serves as an evaluative committee in the reaffirmation process. The committee meets in Atlanta, Georgia, and reviews Compliance Certifications of a group of institutions to determine whether each institution is in compliance with all Core Requirements and Standards (except 7.2). The group of institutions, called "a cluster," normally will consist of no more than three institutions similar in governance and degrees offered. At the conclusion of the review, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee will prepare a separate report for each institution, recording and explaining its preliminary findings about compliance. The report is forwarded to the respective institution's On-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

2. The On-Site Reaffirmation Review

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee consists of peers and serves as an evaluative committee in the reaffirmation process. Following review by the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee, an On-Site Reaffirmation Committee will conduct a focused evaluation at the campus to finalize issues of compliance with the Core Requirements and Standards, evaluate the QEP, and provide consultation regarding the issues addressed in the QEP. At the conclusion of its visit, the On-Site Committee will finalize the Report of the Reaffirmation Committee, a written report of its findings noting areas of noncompliance. The Report of the Reaffirmation Committee, along with the institution's response to areas of noncompliance, is forwarded to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for review and action on reaffirmation of accreditation.

3. Review by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees

The Committees on Compliance and Reports (C&R), standing committees of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, review reports prepared by evaluation committees and the institutional responses to those reports. A C&R Committee's recommendation regarding an institution's reaffirmation of accreditation is forwarded to the Executive Council for review. The Executive Council recommends action to the full Board of Trustees, which makes the final decision on reaffirmation and any monitoring activities that it may require of an institution. The full Board of Trustees convenes twice a year.

These decisions are announced to the College Delegate Assembly during its annual business session in December.