## **Policy Changes Adopted on Second Reading**

Title: Commission Staff

The Board of Trustees adopted these policies on second reading at its meeting on November 1, 2012.

## **Background**

These policy changes provide for enhanced information about the role of the liaison, as recommended by the Board's Policy Task Force, but also include information about the role of the Commission liaison or other Commission staff in certain on-site evaluation visits. In addition, policies related to the visit have been cross-referenced to note the potential presence of Commission staff.

#### **Implementation**

These policies are effective immediately.

	Divide Role of Staff from Process for Making Minor Changes to Accreditation Relationship
Policy COMM.B.10.010	The staff of the Commission shall be responsible to the President of the Commission, or to any intermediate supervisor who reports to the President, who in turn shall be responsible to the Board of Trustees. The staff shall assist institutions in the accreditation processes, implement Commission policy, and carry out other responsibilities given it by the President and by Commission policy but shall not serve as an advocate for any institution. The Commission staff shall have the discretion to establish and modify Commission procedures in keeping with the intention and spirit of Commission policy.  Institutional Liaison A staff member of the Commission shall be assigned to each affiliated institution to serve as the primary liaison between the Commission and the institution, and to ensure that the institution receives effective service on behalf of the Commission.  Commission Staff on Evaluation Visits The Commission staff liaison or other Commission staff member may

accompany the evaluation team on certain visits. These visits include:

- Advisory Visits
- Visits for Removal of Sanction or Show-Cause
- Visits for Candidacy or initial accreditation

The President of the Commission shall determine whether the liaison or other Commission staff member will accompany a specific evaluation visit. The Commission President also has the discretion to determine that circumstances warrant having a Commission staff liaison or other Commission staff member accompany evaluation visits other than those visits expressly noted above.

The role of the Commission staff member accompanying an evaluation visit shall be (1) to support the team as needed with guidance on Commission policy and procedure; (2) to answer questions from the public or institutional representatives about Commission processes related to the visit; and (3) to observe the visit. When preparing to take action regarding the institution, the Board of Trustees or Institutional Actions Council may ask the Commission staff member to discuss the evaluation visit, but the staff member will not prepare a written report separate from the report prepared by the evaluation team.

In addition, Commission staff shall participate as a team member in any Fact-Finding Team related to Change of Control, Structure or Organization or in any on-site investigation of any serious complaint or legal, ethical or other related issue at an institution.

Policy Number Key

Section COMM: Higher Learning Commission

Chapter B: Commission Staff

Part 10: General

Last Revised: November 2012 First Adopted: January 1983 Revision History: November 2012

Notes: Former policy numbers 14.1, 15.1

Related Policies:

## Policy COMM.B.10.015

# Staff Authority for Minor Changes Related to an Institution's Relationship with the Commission

Commission staff may act to change an institution's Statement of Affiliation Status or recommend directly to the Institutional Actions Council that a change in the Statement of Affiliation Status be approved.

Staff may act to approve the following changes: editing of the Statement of Affiliation with non-substantive amendments; changing the date of upcoming evaluations or filing of reports by no more than one year and not to exceed the maximum timeframe for evaluation visits provided in Commission policy; approving progress and monitoring reports or requiring follow-up reports on the

same or related topics; and removing an institution from expedited desk review or notification for approval of additional locations.

Staff may recommend to the Institutional Actions Council for review and action the following: substantive amendments to the Statement of Affiliation Status including modifications to the Stipulations section; changing the date of upcoming evaluations or filing of reports by more than one year or beyond the maximum ten years required for a comprehensive evaluation; and new requirements for monitoring.

In addition, the President of the Commission may act to terminate, postpone or cancel a visit in extraordinary circumstances. The President may approve the presence of observers on an evaluation team or other Commission activity. The President may schedule Special Monitoring for an institution or make a recommendation to the Board for sanction or withdrawal of accreditation or to the Institutional Actions Council for monitoring following Commission policies for these actions.

Policy Number Key

Section COMM: Higher Learning Commission

Chapter B: Commission Staff

Part 10: General

Last Revised: November 2012 First Adopted: June 2011 Revision History: November 2012 Notes: Former policy number 2.2(h)

Related Policies: INST.F.20.040 Processes for Approval of Substantive

Change, INST.D.00.000 Sanctions and Adverse Actions

Other Policy Changes Required by these Changes – These are not the full policy, only the portion that was revised.

## Policy INST.C.40.010

#### Statement of Affiliation

The Statement of Affiliation Status (SAS) provides official information regarding the conditions of the institution's accreditation with the Commission. Such information will include, but is not restricted to, the type of affiliation the institution has with the Commission; sanctions, if any, attendant to that status; the date of the institution's next comprehensive evaluation; and any monitoring the institution must undergo prior to that evaluation. Other information relevant to the facts of the institution's relationship with the Commission may be added.

The SAS is accompanied by the Organizational Profile (OP), a summary of data provided to the Commission by each affiliated institution. It is updated annually after the Commission receives the institution's annual data report and may be updated at the time of action by any Commission decision-making body or by Commission staff. The SAS and OP are public documents and are posted on the Commission's website.

## Changes to the SAS

Staff may act on its own initiative or at the request of an institution to approve the following changes to the SAS: editing with non-substantive amendments; and changing the date of upcoming evaluations or filing of reports by no more than one year and not to exceed the maximum timeframe for evaluation visits provided in Commission policy.

Staff may recommend to the Institutional Actions Council for review and action on the staff's own initiative or at the request of an institution the following changes to the SAS: substantive amendments including modifications to the Stipulations section; and changing the date of upcoming evaluations or filing of reports by more than one year or beyond the maximum ten years required for a comprehensive evaluation.

Policy Number Key

Section INST: Institutional Policies

Chapter C: Process for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Part 40: Official Records

Last Revised: November 2012 First Adopted: February 2007 Revision History: November 2012 Notes: Former policy numbers 2.4(b)

Related Policies: COMM.D.10.010 Management of Commission Information,

INST.F.10.010 Routine Monitoring

#### **Interim Reports**

## Policy INST.F.10.010

**Interim Reports.** An institution shall submit a required interim report according to the due date established in the action calling for the interim report. Staff will review and prepare a written analysis of all reports and may act on behalf of the Commission to accept the report or require additional reports on the same or related topic\_or may recommend to the Commission's decision-making bodies that further monitoring, including new interim reports or focused visits, as appropriate to the institution's Pathway assignment, be required on the same topics identified in the action or on other topics.

Policy Number Key

Section INST: Institutional Policies Chapter F: Maintenance and Monitoring

Part 10: Routine Monitoring

Last Revised: November 2012 First Adopted: November 1999

Revision History: February 2001, February 2007, February 2009, February

2010, November 2010, June 2012, November 2012

Notes: Former policy numbers 3.6(a)

Related Policies:

## Policy INST.F.20.040

#### **Expedited Approval of Additional Locations**

Institutions that have previously received approval from the Commission to initiate at least three additional locations may seek access to an expedited program for approval for future additional locations. Such access shall reflect the Commission's determination that the institution has a proven record of educational and administrative oversight of such locations and has the capacity to extend that oversight to new additional locations. Commission programs allowing for expedited approval of additional locations are Notification Program for Additional Locations and Desk Review Program for Additional Locations. An institution's request for initial access to an expedited program approval of future additional locations will be granted only after the institution has been reviewed by a Change Visit or other review resulting in a written report that documents the institution's compliance with appropriate requirements as outlined in this policy. Staff may act to remove an institution temporarily or permanently from expedited desk review or notification for approval of additional locations when an institution's capacity to provide appropriate oversight over its existing or future additional locations has been called into question.

## Policy Number Key

Section INST: Institutional Policies Chapter F: Maintenance and Monitoring Part 20: Intermittent Monitoring

Last Revised: November 2012 First Adopted: November 1999

Revision History: June 2009, June 2011, June 2012, November 2012

Notes: Former policy numbers 3.2(b)1.4

Related Policies:

## **Evaluation Visit Policies**

## Policy INST.A.20.020

#### Candidacy

#### **Comprehensive Evaluation.**

Add to the end of the first paragraph "The President of the Commission shall determine whether the institutional liaison or other Commission staff member will accompany the initial accreditation or candidacy visits."

## Policy Number Key

Section INST: Institutional Policies

Chapter A: Requirements for Achieving and Maintaining Membership or Affiliation with the Higher Learning Commission

Tightation with the Higher Learning Commiss

Part 20: Defining the Affiliated Entity

Last Revised: November 2012

First Adopted: August 1992 and August 1987

Revision History: revised August 1996, effective September 1996, revised February 1998. Revised Criteria for Candidacy adopted February 2003,

	effective May 1, 2003, revised February 2007, revised February 2010, revised June 2011, revised February 2012, effective January 2013  Notes: Policies combined November 2012 - 1.1(b), 1.1(b)1, 1.1(b)2, 1.4, 2013  - 1.1(b)1.3, 1.1(c), 1.1(c)1 Everything except Withdrawal of Application for Accredited or Candidate Status to be sunset December 31, 2012.  Related Policies: INST.C.40.010 Official Record, COMM.B.10.010 Staff Role and Responsibility
Policy INST.F.20.010	Special Monitoring
	The Commission reserves the right to call for special monitoring when the integrity of the institution and its educational programs might be in jeopardy. The President may conduct such monitoring by calling for a special report or an Advisory Team Visit. The President of the Commission shall determine whether the institutional liaison or other Commission staff member will accompany the Advisory Team Visit.
	Policy Number Key Section INST: Institutional Policies Chapter F: Maintenance and Monitoring Part 20: Intermittent Monitoring
	Last Revised: November 2012 First Adopted: November 1999 Revision History: February 2001, February 2007, November 2012 Notes: Former policy numbers 3.6(b) Related Policies: COMM.B.10.010 Staff Role and Responsibility
Policy	Probation
INST.D.20.010	Comprehensive Evaluation.  Add at the end of the first paragraph "The President of the Commission shall determine whether the institutional liaison or other Commission staff member will accompany evaluation visits related to probation."
	Policy Number Key Section INST: Institutional Policies Chapter D: Sanctions and Adverse Actions Part 20: Probation
	Last Revised: November 2012 First Adopted: August 1988 Revision History: February 1998, May 2002, February 2011, June 2012, November 2012 Notes: Former policy numbers 2.5(b)3
	Related Policies: COMM.B.10.010 Staff Role and Responsibility
Policy INST.D.30.010	Show Cause Order (Procedural Order)  The Board of Trustees may require an institution to show-cause, within a

limited period of time not to exceed one year, as to why its accreditation should not be removed. The Board of Trustees will explain the reasons for its decision in a show-cause order. The show-cause order will require that an institution (1) present its case for continued accreditation by means of a report, known as a show-cause report, that provides substantive evidence that the institution continues to meet each of the Criteria for Accreditation and (2) host an on-site evaluation team to validate the report. The President of the Commission shall determine whether the institutional liaison or other Commission staff member will accompany the Show-Cause Evaluation Visit.

Policy Number Key

Section INST: Institutional Policies Chapter D: Sanctions and Adverse Actions

Part 20: Show Cause

Last Revised: November 2012 First Adopted: June 2000

Revision History: June 2006, November 2012

Notes: Former policy numbers 2.5(c)

Related Policies: COMM.B.10.010 Staff Role and Responsibility

## Policy INST.C.10.020

## **Process Elements Common to Open and Standard Pathway**

## Comprehensive Evaluation.

Add at the end of the first paragraph "The President of the Commission shall determine whether the liaison or other Commission staff member will accompany any visit related to an Assurance Review."

Policy Number Key

Section INST: Institutional Policies

Chapter C: Process for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Part 10: Substantive Requirements for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Last Revised: November 2012 First Adopted: June 2012

Revision History: November 2012

*Notes:* 

Related Policies: COMM.B.10.010 Staff Role and Responsibility