



Commission Review Process

Institutions that are placed on Warning, Probation or Show Cause, or for which applications for Candidacy or Accreditation are denied, or for which Candidacy or Accreditation is terminated by the Commission, may request a review of this decision by the following procedures. These review procedures are designed as a continuation of the accreditation peer review process and are therefore considered to be non-adversarial.

1. When the Commission takes any of the actions listed above, its Executive Director will notify the institution concerned of the decision by a method requiring a signature, within approximately 14 calendar days of the Commission's decision. Said notification shall contain a succinct statement of the reasons for the Commission's decision.
2. If the institution wishes a review of the Commission action, it shall file with the Executive Director a request for a review under the policies and procedures of the Commission. This request is to be submitted by the chief executive officer of the institution and co-signed by the chair of the governing board. Requests for review by an institution in a multi-college system shall also be signed by the chief executive officer of the system. The request for review must be received by a method requiring a signature, within 28 calendar days of the date of the mailing of the Commission's notification of its decision to the institution. The fee for the review process shall accompany the request.
3. Within 21 calendar days after the date of its request for review, the institution, through its chief executive officer, must submit a written statement of the specific reasons why, in the institution's opinion, a review of the Commission's decision is warranted. This written statement shall respond only to the Commission's statement of reasons for the Commission's decision and to the evidence that was before the Commission at the time of its decision. In so doing, the institution shall identify the basis for its request for review in one or more of the following areas: (1) there were errors or omissions in carrying out prescribed procedures on the part of the evaluation team and/or the Commission which materially affected the Commission's decision; (2) there was demonstrable bias or prejudice on the part of one or more members of the evaluation team or commission which materially affected the commission's decision; (3) the evidence before the Commission prior to and on the date when it made the decision which is being appealed was materially in error; or (4) the decision of the Commission was not supported by substantial evidence.

The institution may not introduce facts that were not available at the time the team visited the institution.

It is the responsibility of the institution to identify in the statement of reasons what specific information was not considered, or was improperly considered, by the visiting team or the Commission and to demonstrate that such acts or omissions were a material factor in the negative decision under review.

The statement of reasons will be reviewed by Commission staff for compliance with this provision. If, in the judgment of Commission staff, the statement of reasons is deficient, it will be forwarded to the Commission chair. No review committee will be appointed should the Commission chair concur.

If the statement of reasons is returned, the institution will be provided the opportunity to revise the statement within 21 days from the date the notice of return is sent to the institution. Should the institution resubmit its statement of reason within the prescribed time period, the revised statement will be reviewed by Commission staff. If the revised statement is still found deficient, it will be forwarded to the Commission chair. Should the Commission chair concur that the revised statement is deficient, no review committee will be appointed. This action is final and is not subject to the WASC appeals process.

4. On acceptance of the institution's written statement referred to in (3) above, a committee of three or more persons will be selected by Commission staff. A roster of the review committee will be sent to the institution normally within 30 calendar days of the date of the Commission's receipt of the institution's written statement. No person who has served as a member of the visiting team whose report is subject to review shall be eligible to serve on the review committee. The institution will be provided opportunity to object for cause to any of the proposed review committee members. After giving the institution this opportunity, Commission staff will finalize the membership of the review committee.
5. Within a reasonable period of time after the review committee has been selected, the Executive Director will schedule a meeting of the review committee at a location separate from the institution and Commission offices. No assurance can be made that the review committee process will take place so that action on the request for review will be able to be scheduled on the agenda of the next Commission meeting.
6. Prior to the meeting of the review committee, the review committee will go over available information. If additional information is needed, the chair of the review committee may request such information from the chief executive officer of the institution, Commission staff, or the prior team, before, during, or after the meeting of the review committee.
7. The review will be investigative and designed to determine if any of the grounds for review cited by the institution have been met.
8. Commission staff other than the WASC liaison for the contested Commission action will assist the review committee as needed. The Committee may interview, among others, Commission readers, the chair or members of the previous visiting team, and the Commission staff member supporting the team visit. Outside legal counsel is not permitted to attend or be present in meetings with the review committee without consent of the review committee chair. If allowed to be present, legal counsel will not be allowed to conduct any part of the proceedings but to advise institutional representatives as needed. The Commission legal counsel may advise the review committee, but may not attend those portions of the review committee's meetings when it is meeting with institutional representatives unless legal counsel for the institution is also permitted to be present.
9. The review committee should open and close its meeting with the chief executive officer or other institutional representatives, by attempting to ascertain whether or not the institution has any complaints about any aspect of the review process. All written evidence is to be provided to the review committee together with the institution's request for review. The Commission office shall provide the review committee with documents available to the Commission for its action. If additional information is requested from the institution, it is to be provided at least seven business days in advance of the review committee's meeting. The review committee is allowed to consider only evidence that was available to or known by the Commission at the time of its taking action. No new

evidence or information relating to actions or events subsequent to the date of the Commission action is to be presented or considered by the review committee.

10. The review committee shall prepare a report that states the reasons for the Commission action, identifies each reason advanced by the institution in its request for review, and, for each reason, evaluates the evidence which the institution has presented in support of its request for review. In addition, the review committee may evaluate additional evidence that, in its opinion, is relevant to its recommendation to the Commission. The report shall state only findings of fact, and not consider or cite any evidence relating to facts or events occurring after the date of Commission action.
11. The chair of the review committee will submit a copy of the review committee's report that is referred to in (10) above to the chief executive officer of the institution, the chair of the institution's governing board, and the Executive Director of the Commission, normally within 30 calendar days of the end of the review committee's visit.
12. In a confidential letter to the Commission, the review committee will recommend whether the decision of the Commission under review should be affirmed or modified. The recommendation of the review committee to the Commission will not be disclosed to the institution being reviewed. The recommendation is not binding on the Commission.
13. Within 14 calendar days of the institution's receipt of the review committee's report, the chief executive officer will submit a written response to the Executive Director of the Commission, with a copy to the Chair of the review committee, for transmittal to the Commission.
14. Prior to the Commission meeting where the review committee's report will be considered, a reader meeting will be conducted by conference call or meeting where the chief executive officer of the institution and a limited number of institutional staff will be invited to discuss the review committee report with those Commissioners designated as readers. The chair of the review committee will also be invited to participate in the call. Discussion at this reader meeting will be confined to the report of the review committee referred to in (10) above and the institution's response to this report.
15. The Commission readers will report the substance of this meeting to the Commission when it meets. Institutional representatives will be invited to appear before the Commission before it takes action.
16. The Commission will reach a final decision to: (1) reaffirm its original decision; (2) modify it; or (3) reverse it. As soon after the meeting as practicable, the Executive Director will notify the chief executive officer of the institution by a method requiring a signature of the Commission's decision.
17. When Accreditation or Candidacy has been denied or withdrawn, the institution may file an appeal with the President of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges through the Executive Director of the Commission in accordance with the provisions of Article VI of the Constitution of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Copies of the WASC Constitution are available on the Commission website (www.wascsenior.org) and are available from the Commission office. An Appeals Manual is also available from the Commission office. In making its appeal, the institution may only raise grounds and issues in support of those grounds that were raised during the review process.

18. When the Commission action is denial or withdrawal of accreditation or candidacy, the institution retains its prior status until the review process of the Commission is completed. If the institution files a subsequent appeal with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, its status remains unchanged until that appeal has been heard and decided.

19. Special charges for the review process have been established by the Commission. Current charges are available from the Commission office and on the Commission website. In addition, the Commission may develop any necessary procedures or instructions to review committees to implement this process. They are available from the Commission office.

Revised and approved by the Commission, June 23, 2006