



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

SPECIAL COMMITTEE PROCEDURES AND TEAM REPORT

- Policy Statement -

Special Committees are authorized by the Commission on Colleges or its President to evaluate institutional circumstances that the Commission determines to be accreditation related. The principal role of the Special Committee is to judge whether the institution meets the requirements of the *Principles of Accreditation* in terms of the circumstances that prompted the authorization of the Special Committee visit and to determine continued compliance with the *Principles*, and/or to obtain information for the Commission. The Committee's report and recommendations are forwarded to the Commission on Colleges for review and action.

Listed below are the protocols for conducting Special Committee reviews:

1. Special Committees may be authorized by the President of the Commission, the Committees on Compliance and Reports (Commission on Colleges), or the Executive Council. Special Committees may not be combined with reaffirmation or substantive change reviews.

For an institution placed or continued on Probation, a Special Committee is automatically authorized to evaluate the institution prior to the next scheduled review of the institution if the institution has not been visited within six months.

2. The Special Committee is charged to conduct an on-site review in order to determine an institution's compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation* and to forward its findings to the Commission to enable a decision regarding the institution's accreditation status. To that end, it will review specific sections of the *Principles* cited in the notification letter from the President of the Commission. The Committee may extend its initial focus if any evidence of additional accreditation-related concerns comes to its attention.
3. A Special Committee should be of sufficient size to adequately review the issues and to make a determination regarding the institution's compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*.
4. A Commission staff member is required to accompany all Special Committees.

PROCEDURES FOR THE REVIEW

Materials for the Visit

It is the responsibility of the Commission staff member to decide what materials will be sent to the Special Committee prior to the visit (including committee member writing assignments) and what materials will be available to the Committee during the on-site evaluation. It is the responsibility of the institution to provide

materials as requested by Commission staff and the Commission and to provide any additional documentation appropriate to support the institution's compliance with the *Principles*.

Scheduling of the Visit

The Special Committee visit will occur no later than four weeks prior to the date of the final mailing to the Commission for action on the institution's case (meaning six weeks in advance of the Commission meeting). The date will be relative to the institution's next specified review at either the Commission's Summer Meeting in June or its Annual Meeting in December.

The Exit Conference

The Commission will offer the chief executive officer the opportunity to have an exit conference to discuss the Committee's findings.

The Committee Report and Response of the Institution to the Report

The Committee will complete the "Report of the Special Committee" which can be accessed on the Commission's Web page. Within one week of the conclusion of the visit, the Chair forwards the draft report to Committee members and to Commission staff. After the report is reviewed by members of the Special Committee and Commission staff, the Chair of the Committee forwards the draft report to the institution for the identification of factual errors only. Following any necessary revisions, the Chair forwards the final report to Commission staff who will then send it to the institution. If the institution elects to submit a written response, a copy of that response will be forwarded to the Commission if received by the date in the letter of transmittal from Commission staff—usually no later than 10 working days in advance of the Commission meeting. The Report of the Special Committee and the response of the institution to the report will be forwarded to the Commission for action.

The President of the Commission may grant an exception to the deadline for submitting documents only in unusual circumstances or only for previously unavailable significant documents. In such cases, the institution must petition the President of the Commission on Colleges in writing and include copies of the previously unavailable documents, if applicable.

Meetings on the Record with the Commission

Representatives of an institution may be invited for an interview only if the institution's status is such that a meeting on the record is warranted in accordance with Commission policy.

EXPENSES OF THE VISIT

As with all committee visits, it is the policy of the Commission that the institution being reviewed bear the travel, meals, and lodging expenses of the visiting committee and the accompanying Commission staff representative, \$200 for the miscellaneous expenses of the chair and \$100 for each committee member, and any clerical expenses. In addition, the institution will be assessed 25 percent of the total cost of the committee as part of the Commission's cost recovery program for special and substantive change committee reviews. The total cost is billed to the institution by the Association following the visit.

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