



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 initial 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 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. For a Committee where the focus is on financial issues, there must be additional committee members accompanying the financial reviewers in order to assess the impact of financial instability on the institution.
3. A Special Committee should be of sufficient size to adequately review the issues.
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.

The Committee Report

The Committee will complete the "Report of the Special Committee" which can be accessed on the Commission's Web page. Within two weeks of the visit, the Chair forwards the draft report to Committee members and to the Commission office. After the report is reviewed by members of the Special Committee and Commission staff, the Commission office distributes the final report to the institution and to the Commission for action.

The Exit Conference

At the conclusion of the Special Committee visit, the Chair has the discretion of conducting an Exit Conference.

Response by the Institution

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. Consequently, the site review normally occurs within a few weeks of the Commission meeting at which the report is reviewed.

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 accord with Commission policy. If the institution elects to submit a written response, a copy of that response will be forwarded to one of the Commission's Committee on Compliance and Reports if received no later than two weeks in advance of the Commission meeting.

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.

*Approved: Commission on Colleges, December 1998
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