

Core Requirements

Core Requirements are basic, broad-based, foundational requirements that an institution must meet to be accredited with the Commission on Colleges. They establish a threshold of development required of an institution seeking initial or continued accreditation by the Commission and reflect the Commission's basic expectations of candidate and member institutions. Compliance with the Core Requirements is not sufficient to warrant accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation. Accredited institutions must also demonstrate compliance with the Comprehensive Standards and the Federal Requirements of the *Principles*, and with the policies of the Commission.

An applicant institution seeking candidacy is required to document compliance with Core Requirements 2.1 – 2.11; Comprehensive Standards 3.3.1, 3.5.1, and 3.7.1; and Federal Requirements 4.1 – 4.7 to be authorized a Candidacy Committee or to be awarded candidacy or candidacy renewal. An applicant/candidate institution is not required to document compliance with Core Requirement 2.12 until it undergoes its first review for reaffirmation following initial accreditation. (*See Commission policy "Accreditation Procedures for Applicant Institutions."*)

An accredited institution is required to document compliance with all Core Requirements, including Core Requirement 2.12, before it can be reaffirmed. If an institution fails to document compliance, the Commission will place the institution on sanction or take adverse action. (*See Commission policy "Sanctions, Denial of Reaffirmation, and Removal from Membership."*)

Core Requirement 2.12 requires an institution to develop an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Engaging the wider academic community, the QEP is based upon a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the effectiveness of the learning environment for supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution.

Implicit in every Core Requirement mandating a policy or procedure is the expectation that the policy or procedure is in writing and has been approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and implemented and enforced by the institution.

EXERPT FROM 2010 EDITION OF SACS COC'S *THE PRINCIPLES OF ACCREDITATION: FOUNDATIONS FOR QUALITY ENHANCEMENT*, P. 15

Comprehensive Standards

The Comprehensive Standards set forth requirements in the following four areas: (1) institutional mission, governance, and effectiveness; (2) programs; (3) resources; and (4) institutional responsibility for Commission policies. The Comprehensive Standards are more specific to the operations of the institution, represent good practice in higher education, and establish a level of accomplishment expected of all member institutions. If an institution is judged to be significantly out of compliance with one or more of the Comprehensive Standards, its reaffirmation of accreditation may be denied. *(See Commission policy "Sanctions, Denial of Reaffirmation, and Removal from Membership.")*

A candidate institution is required to document compliance with Core Requirements 2.1-2.11, all the Comprehensive Standards (except 3.3.2), and Federal Requirements in order to be awarded initial membership.

Implicit in every Comprehensive Standard mandating a policy or procedure is the expectation that the policy or procedure is in writing and has been approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and implemented and enforced by the institution.

EXERPT FROM 2010 EDITION OF SACS COC'S *THE PRINCIPLES OF ACCREDITATION: FOUNDATIONS FOR QUALITY ENHANCEMENT*, P. 23

Federal Requirements

The U.S. Secretary of Education recognizes accreditation by SACS Commission on Colleges in establishing the eligibility of higher education institutions to participate in programs authorized under Title IV of the *1998 Higher Education Amendments* and other federal programs. Through its periodic review of institutions of higher education, the Commission assures the public that it is a reliable authority on the quality of education provided by its member institutions.

The federal statute includes mandates that the Commission review an institution in accordance with criteria outlined in the regulations of the *Amendments* developed by the U.S. Department of Education. As part of the review process, institutions are required to document compliance with those criteria and the Commission is obligated to consider such compliance when the institution is reviewed for initial membership or continued accreditation.

Implicit in every Federal Requirement mandating a policy or procedure is the expectation that the policy or procedure is in writing and has been approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and implemented and enforced by the institution.

EXCERPT FROM 2010 EDITION OF THE SACS COC'S *THE PRINCIPLES OF ACCREDITATION: FOUNDATIONS FOR QUALITY ENHANCEMENT*, P. 37