



The Institutional Review Process

GUIDE TO THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PROCESS

Introduction

In order to realize the goals of the new WASC accreditation process, the Commission has revised its approaches to institutional review. The staged, sequential model of review described in this section is built on more than 30 experimental visits and extensive study of institutional review processes from around the world. This new model is intended to provide institutions with a cycle of review more connected to each institution's context and stage of development, more aligned with institutional priorities and future directions, and more focused on educational effectiveness.

A substantial institutional investment is required to prepare for any external accreditation review. In their preparations, all institutions must commit significant time, money and energy to responding to the needs of the external agency. Historically, an institution starts fresh with each new self study, requiring considerable effort each time a review cycle occurs. Through this new model, the Commission is committed to a system of review that promotes the development of internal institutional indicators and then builds, to the extent possible, on existing institutional evidence. The review cycle relies on portfolios that can be retained and updated for subsequent reviews, and it promotes serious institutional inquiry and engagement with issues of consequence. By this process the Commission intends to align the cost of accreditation more with institutional improvement than external reporting, and to implement processes that will add value to institutional functioning and promote educational effectiveness. The Commission encourages institutions to assess their costs for the review process in relation to the benefits received and to communicate with the Commission ways of obtaining further efficiencies and improving the effectiveness of the review process.

The Commission is also committed to a review process that gives institutions as much notice as possible at each stage about the focus and scope of review. The Core Commitments define the broad outcomes of the accreditation process, with Accreditation Standards defining the scope of review. In the course of any institutional review and visit process, however, equal weight cannot be given to each possible area and topic identified within the Accreditation Standards. The flexibility afforded through this new model of review enables institutions to work with the Commission to refine the review process more appropriately to each institution's history and context. As well, in an effort to build the capacity of an institution to work more effectively within a culture of evidence and to give emphasis to educational effectiveness, the staged, sequential review process is intended to establish the scope of each review. The review process provides feedback to the institution at each stage that is consequential and useful for institutional accountability and improvement.

As this new model of review is implemented, the Commission is committed to sharing good practices and formats used by institutions so that the entire region can learn together and improve the review process continually. The intended outcomes of this process are to assist institutions and team members as they navigate the staged, sequential review process, to develop more effective evidence of institutional capacity and educational effectiveness, and to identify and promote useful ways of evaluating and improving student learning.

Overview of the Accreditation Review Cycle

The new WASC accreditation review process consists of three key elements, described in detail in this section. The Commission has attempted to develop a holistic *system* of review, rather than a single event, that reinforces the key values and principles of WASC, and that brings value to institutions and the public. The system of review has a clear *focus* (on effectiveness, both institutional and educational), an integrated *organization* (around the two Core Commitments, supported by the four Accreditation

Standards) and a staged, sequential *structure and cycle* that permits adaptation and responsiveness to institutional context and priorities.

The new accreditation review process involves an Institutional Presentation developed in three stages, integrated and sequenced to support and promote institutional development and effectiveness: Stage 1: The

Institutional Proposal; Stage 2: the Preparatory Review; and Stage 3: The Educational Effectiveness Review. The cycle of review is intended to be a maximum of ten years, providing institutions a three-year period to complete the process of self review and external evaluation, followed by an extended period of time for sustaining initiatives and recommendations resulting from this process.

This section of the *Handbook* is designed to give guidance to institutions and review teams about the purposes, structure, and format of the Institutional Presentation for each stage and the process of review to be conducted. Further information and support is provided through Commission workshops, the WASC website, and additional resource guides that are to be developed.

FOCUS:	INSTITUTIONAL & EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
ORGANIZATION:	TWO CORE COMMITMENTS SUPPORTED BY FOUR ACCREDITATION STANDARDS
STRUCTURE & CYCLE:	ADAPTIVE AND RESPONSIVE TO INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT & PRIORITIES

Institutional Self Review and External Evaluation

The heart of accreditation lies in the institutional self review. To be done effectively and with integrity, the review requires the conscious and public commitment of the institution’s leadership to openness, candor, and serious engagement, and an evident intention to use the results of the self review to improve institutional capacity and educational effectiveness. The WASC accreditation process represents a shift from attempting to review all aspects of institutional functions in a compliance mode to a review and validation of effective ongoing internal systems of quality review and improvement. External evaluation under this new approach can only be successful when built on an effective internal institutional process of evaluation, reflection, and plans for further action. In addition, the new sequential system of review developed by the Commission is designed to move away from long discursive reports to evidence-based *Institutional Presentations* comprised of focused portfolios of data and exhibits, supported by reflective and analytical essays. (Note: The Institutional Presentation is comprised of the materials prepared for the three stages of review: the Proposal, the Preparatory Review, and the Educational Effectiveness Review.)

It is the conscious goal of the Commission in establishing this new system of review to promote the development of more effective internal systems of data collection and analysis, described by WASC as a “culture of evidence.” Institutional Presentations under this new system are to be different from traditional self studies by taking the institution’s review of key indicators of its own capacity and educational effectiveness as the central focus of review, as well as including authentic source documents that relate the institution to the Standards. The scope, length and focus of Institutional Presentations are intended to be much different from traditional comprehensive self studies. Institutional Presentations are themselves demonstrations of the institution’s ability to generate and analyze indicators of performance aligned with the institution’s own priorities and educational objectives, and the institution’s ability to engage thoughtfully and extensively with issues of educational effectiveness and student learning.

The role of WASC evaluation teams at each stage of the review process is to work with the institution’s own evidence and exhibits, determine if they accurately and fairly describe the institution, and within the context of Commission Standards, determine if the institution demonstrates it has effectively addressed the two Core Commitments: that the institution has sufficient capacity and systems of quality assurance and improvement to demonstrate educational effectiveness at the time of review and are

likely to be sustained. Through the process of working with institutions to review and approve their Proposals for the accreditation process, the Commission also is adopting a stance weighted toward collaboration and institutional improvement except in those cases where the context of the institution's history or relationship with the Commission warrants a stricter compliance role.

Outcomes of the Accreditation Review Process

The Commission has identified outcomes it considers important for the accreditation review process that serve both institutions and the purposes of accreditation. The outcomes also provide a model for institutions since each institution is expected to identify in its Proposal specific outcomes for its accreditation self-review. It is expected that the staged sequential Institutional Presentation of the Institutional Proposal, Preparatory Review and Educational Effectiveness Review will lead to the following outcomes.

For the institution:

1. The development of and more effective use of indicators of institutional performance and educational effectiveness to support institutional planning and decision making;
2. Greater clarity about the institution's educational objectives and criteria for defining and evaluating those objectives;
3. Improvement of the institution's capacity for self review and of its systems of quality assurance;
4. A deeper understanding of student learning, the development of more varied and effective methods of assessing learning, and the use of the results of this process to improve programs and institutional practices; and
5. Systematic engagement of the faculty with issues of assessing and improving teaching and learning processes within the institution, and with aligning support systems for faculty more effectively toward this end.

To fulfill the purposes of accreditation:

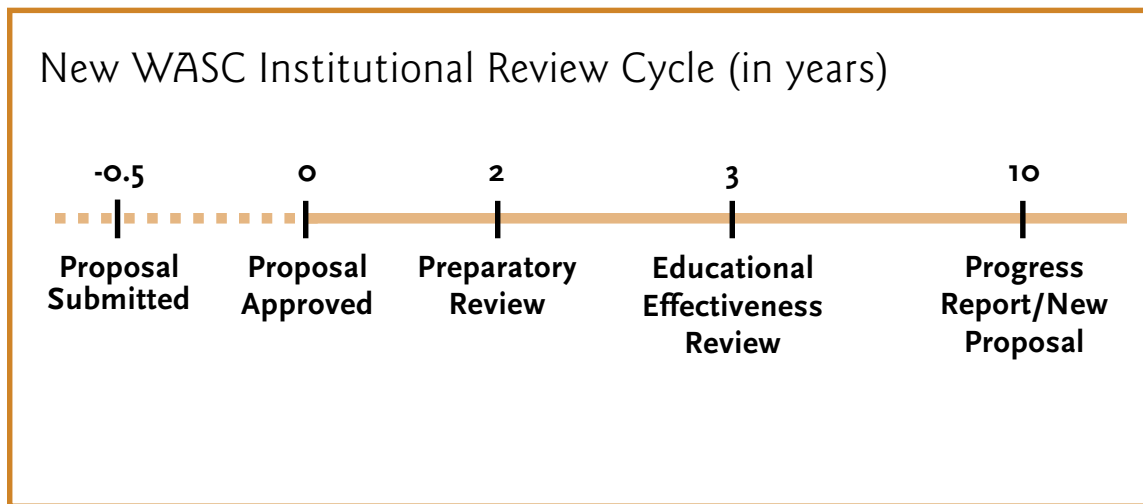
6. Validation of the institution's presentation of evidence, both to assess compliance with Accreditation Standards and to provide a basis for institutional improvement; and
7. Demonstration of the institution's fulfillment of the Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness.

THE WASC INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PROCESS

In order to obtain accreditation or remain accredited, each institution is required to demonstrate that it fulfills the two Core Commitments of the Accrediting Commission:

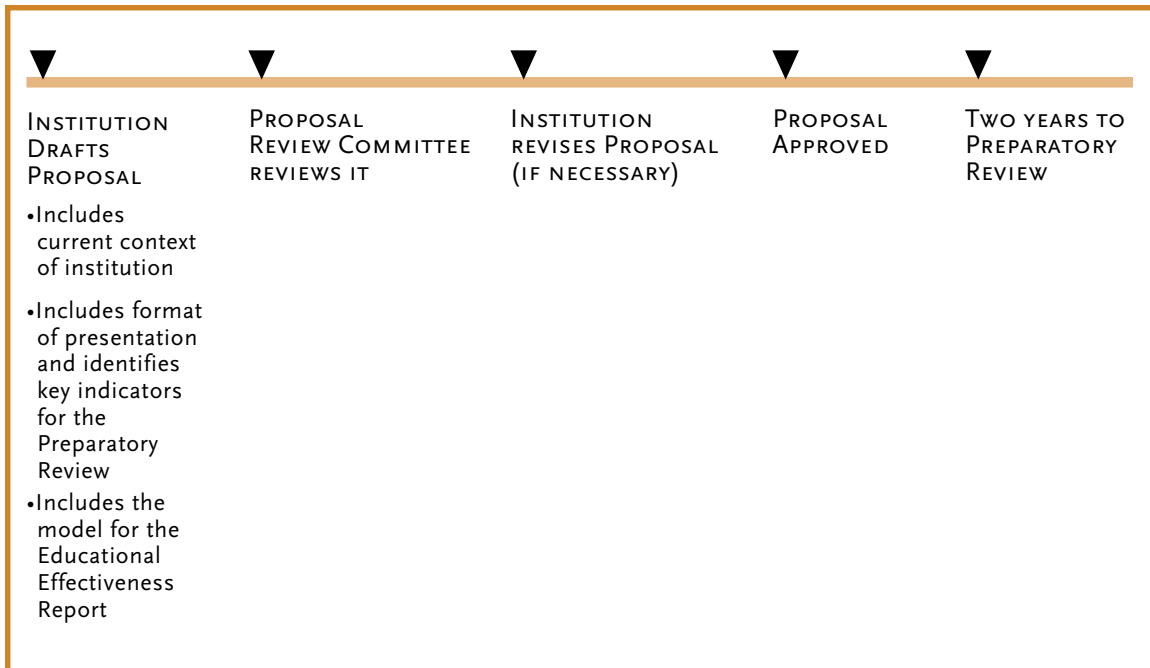
- I. Commitment to Institutional Capacity: The institution functions with clear purposes, high levels of institutional integrity, fiscal stability, and organizational structures to fulfill its purposes.
- II. Commitment to Educational Effectiveness: The institution evidences clear and appropriate educational objectives and design at the institutional and program level, and employs processes of review, including the collection and use of data, that assure delivery of programs and learner accomplishments at a level of performance appropriate for the degree or certificate awarded.

Demonstration of these Core Commitments occurs through a staged and sequential accreditation review process that results in an Institutional Presentation comprised of a Proposal, a Preparatory Review, and an Educational Effectiveness Review. This three-staged cycle applies to all institutions, regardless of where they are in the accreditation process. In the case of institutions considered for Initial Candidacy or Initial Accreditation, primary focus will be placed on institutional performance to meet the expectations of the Standards. For those institutions that have a history of Commission sanctions, greater emphasis will be placed on reviewing responses to previous Commission decisions and the identified Standards.



Stage I. The Institutional Proposal

Purposes: The Institutional Proposal is the first element of the Institutional Presentation and the first stage in the accreditation review cycle. Its purpose is to guide the entire accreditation review process. Once the Proposal is approved, it becomes part of the total body of institutional material that supports the review during its subsequent two stages. As such, the Proposal will be shared with each subsequent review team and with the Commission. The Proposal enables the review process to be anchored in each institution's distinctive context and its intended goals for the accreditation process. The staged review process is also intended to make meaningful contributions to each institution's own internal planning and review mechanisms, as well as to reduce the burden associated with having to do work unrelated to



institutional priorities. Commission interests are assured by the fact that each Proposal is reviewed by a peer committee charged with the responsibility of applying Commission criteria to each Proposal and its alignment with the Core Commitments and Accreditation Standards. Once approved, the Proposal may be further refined or modified during the accreditation process by mutual consent or by the Commission following the Preparatory Review. It provides both the institution and the Commission with a foundation for carrying out the accreditation process within a written and approved framework.

In sum, the Institutional Proposal enables the institution to:

1. Establish the context for its next accreditation review cycle by describing the institution's most important features, and the most important issues that it wishes to address;
2. Define specific goals and outcomes for the accreditation review in light of issues arising from the institution's own planning and development processes and emerging from the institution's examination of itself under the new accreditation Standards, as well as specific issues raised by the Commission as a result of the last institutional review;
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of its data gathering and analysis systems;
4. Identify how the institution will present basic data and Reflective Essays on Institutional Capacity for the Preparatory Review;
5. Explore educational effectiveness and support institutional improvement by identifying the institutional strategy to be used for the Educational Effectiveness Review; and
6. Propose the timing and relationship between the Preparatory and Educational Effectiveness Reviews (normally 12 to 18 months).

Timing: Submitted two-and-a-half years prior to the Preparatory Review in order to be finalized two years prior to the Preparatory Review. Formal date of submission established by the Commission.

Format and Required Elements: Institutional Proposals are to include the following elements:

THE PROPOSAL INCLUDES:

- Statement of Institutional Context
- Description of expected outcomes
- Description of how constituencies were involved
- Description of how the Preparatory and Educational Effectiveness Reviews will be staged
- For the Preparatory Review, a brief description of how evidence will be presented, including the proposed format of presentation and identification of key indicators in the Institutional Portfolio
- For the Educational Effectiveness Review, a description of the proposed model, special emphases, and ways the institution will address student learning
- An Institutional Stipulation Statement

1. A Statement of Institutional Context that briefly describes the institution's background, its current context, a brief and basic presentation of its major strengths and challenges, and a synopsis of responses to issues raised by the Commission action letter and, where relevant, issues identified by the Substantive Change or Interim Report Committees. This Statement should also connect the context for the accreditation review to the institution's vision and strategic plan.
2. A description of the expected outcomes of the Accreditation Review Process. As the Commission has attempted to model this process on page 36, expected outcomes for the institution should be more than a statement of activities or identification of topics for review. The institution is expected to identify specific outcomes that it seeks to achieve through the accreditation review process and particular processes, policies, or procedures (e.g. planning, program review, establishing academic standards, faculty development, etc.) that it intends to improve through the process.
3. A description of how representatives of the institution's constituencies were involved in the development and internal approval of the Proposal and how they will be involved subsequently in the review process. It is expected that key institutional leadership, especially the faculty leadership, have been involved in the design of the proposal, the format of review, the selection of special themes, the method of inquiry, and the most significant indicators that will be developed as evidence.
4. A description of how the Preparatory and Educational Effectiveness Reviews will be staged and timed to address institutional goals and to demonstrate the institution's fulfillment of the two Core Commitments.
5. For the Preparatory Review, a brief description how the institution intends to present evidence to demonstrate compliance with Commission Standards including the proposed format of presentation and types of key indicators that will be included in the Institutional Portfolio. This statement should also include commentary on the effectiveness of the institution's data gathering and analysis systems, and the steps to be taken to develop institutional evidence to support both the Preparatory and Educational Effectiveness Reviews.

6. For the Educational Effectiveness Review, a brief description of the format to be used by the institution to engage issues of Educational Effectiveness (see p. 45), the special emphases being proposed in light of the format selected, the methods to be used to engage these issues, and the ways in which the institution will address issues of student learning. This statement should also identify the key evidentiary indicators the institution will develop and/or apply to support its Educational Effectiveness Review.
7. A prescribed set of Basic Descriptive Data presented in standard form that address a range of common institutional characteristics including enrollments, listings of the institution's academic programs, numbers of faculty and staff employed, and available fiscal, physical, and information resources. All data should be presented in the form of five-year historical trends. These Data Tables will be available on the WASC website (wascweb.org) for downloading.
8. A list of all degree programs where 50 percent or more of the program is offered off-site (more than 25 miles from the home campus) or by distance learning.
9. An Institutional Stipulation Statement signed by the Chief Executive Officer that establishes:
 - a. That the institution is using the review process to demonstrate its fulfillment of the two Core Commitments, that it will engage in the process with seriousness, that data presented are accurate and fairly present the institution.
 - b. That the institution has published and publicly available policies in force as identified by the Commission (See Appendix 1, p. 126). Such policies will be available for review on request throughout the period of accreditation.
 - c. That the institution will abide by procedures adopted by the Commission to meet United States Department of Education (USDE) procedural requirements (See Section VI).
 - d. That the institution will submit all regularly required data, and any data specifically requested by the Commission during the period of Accreditation (or Candidacy).
 - e. That the institution has reviewed its off-campus programs and degree programs offered by distance learning to ensure that they have been approved by the WASC substantive change process.

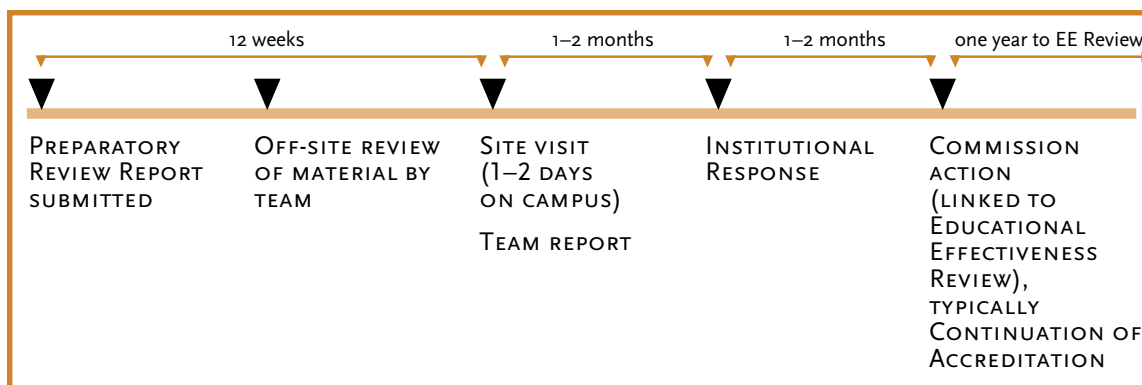
Exclusive of data displays and stipulations, the Institutional Proposal should not exceed ten pages in length.

Proposal Review Process: Following submission, the Institutional Proposal is first reviewed by Commission staff and may be commented on with requested revisions prior to submission to the Proposal Review Committee (PRC). The PRC is authorized to approve proposals which it believes assure that an institution will be able to effectively demonstrate that it fulfills the two Core Commitments required for accreditation. In cases where the PRC has doubts that the Proposal will result in a review process that is capable of doing so, the Committee may request further information from the institution and/or may require revision and re-submission of the Proposal itself. At the conclusion of the review process, Commission staff will inform the institution that its Proposal has been accepted and that it can proceed with the review. Working with Commission staff, the institution is responsible for preparing a final copy of the Proposal for use by evaluation teams and the Commission.

Stage 2. The Preparatory Review

Purposes: The Preparatory Review is designed to enable the Commission to determine whether an institution fulfills the Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity: *The institution functions with clear purposes, high levels of institutional integrity, fiscal stability, and organizational structures and processes to fulfill its purposes.* In keeping with the Commission’s goals of focusing institutional efforts in the accreditation process on issues of importance, building a culture of evidence, reducing the burden of the accreditation review and enhancing the strategic value of the process, the Preparatory Review is intended to be a focused review which includes a site visit with clearly defined purposes and procedures. These are to:

1. Audit and verify the information provided in the Institutional Presentation, and to assure that the data presented fairly and accurately portray the state of the institution at the time of review.
2. Evaluate key institutional resources, structures, and processes in the light of the Commission’s Standards to assure that the institution operates at or above threshold levels acceptable for accreditation (or candidacy) and, where appropriate, to identify any capacity-related issues that need to be carried forward in the Educational Effectiveness Review.
3. Assess the institution’s preparedness to undertake the Educational Effectiveness Review as proposed, and to assist the institution in refining its focus and plan for that review.



Timing: The Preparatory Review occurs on dates established by the Commission approximately two years after finalization of the Institutional Proposal. Institutions that have previously been given dates for the next reaffirmation review should expect the Preparatory Review to occur at that time.

Who Is Involved in Preparation: It is expected that key institutional constituencies, including faculty leadership, are involved in the design of the Institutional Presentation, the selection of indicators, and especially in the drafting and review of the analytical essays. Much of the evidentiary portion of the Institutional Presentation is designed to be prepared from existing evidence by administrative staff under the guidance of the institution’s design. The entire presentation is to be reviewed by the constituencies of the institution—including faculty and staff leadership and governing bodies as appropriate.

The Preparatory Review Report: To support the Preparatory Review, each institution is responsible to develop a Preparatory Review Report. The Report is intended to be primarily evidentiary, consisting of a carefully-chosen set of exhibits (the Institutional Portfolio) that support the institution’s claim that it meets the Core Commitment to Capacity, supported by limited text essays that explain or reflect on the Portfolio’s contents. To the extent possible, the exhibits included in the Institutional Portfolio should be drawn from existing documents and data rather than being prepared especially for the review team.

The Portfolio is also intended to be “standing,” i.e., it should be able to be used in succeeding reviews to avoid duplication of effort and additional institutional costs.

The following structure is suggested for the Preparatory Review Report:

1. An Introduction that describes the contents of the Institutional Presentation as a whole, together with any changes in context that may have arisen since approval of the Proposal.
2. The Institutional Portfolio, which includes:
 - a. An updated set of Basic Descriptive Data originally submitted with the Proposal;
 - b. A set of prescribed exhibits and data displays including lists of institutional policies required by the Commission (stipulated by the CEO and subject to audit on site—See Appendix 1), together with more detailed breakdowns of student body characteristics; enrollments and degrees granted for the institution’s academic programs; more detailed data on faculty and staff, and on fiscal, physical, and information resources; a table listing current assessment activities; and a set of standard statistics on educational operations. Institutions whose default rate for Title IV programs requires a default reduction plan should provide a copy of their plan for review; and
 - c. A set of exhibits and data displays chosen by the institution as evidence of its Commitment to Capacity. These may include examples of policies and procedures, additional data, or examples of how particular activities are undertaken, as suggested by particular Commission Standards, Criteria for Review, or Questions for Institutional Engagement.
3. Reflective Essays in regard to each specific Standard that indicate what the exhibits contained in the Portfolio mean to the institution, what issues they raise, and why those included were chosen in addition to the prescribed exhibits.
4. A Concluding Essay that summarizes the institution’s case that it meets the Commitment to Capacity, provides a reflective view of its strengths and weaknesses in relation to the Commission’s Standards, and proposes appropriate recommendations and follow up steps. The Concluding Essay should include commentary on the institution’s preparedness for undertaking the Educational Effectiveness Review.
5. An Appendix that documents the institution’s response to previous concerns identified by the Commission in its action letter and major recommendations of the last visiting team.

In preparing the Institutional Presentation as a whole, institutions should be mindful of several important priorities relevant to all four Accreditation Standards. These include:

- ☞ Establishment of clear objectives;
- ☞ Indicators and metrics of achievement, and/or specific bodies of evidence that can help the institution to determine the degree to which objectives are being achieved; and
- ☞ Actions taken on the basis of evidence in order to improve performance.

These three priorities should guide an institution as it conducts its self review, selects exhibits for the Institutional Portfolio and determines the contents of Reflective Essays for the Preparatory Review.

Report Length: The entire Preparatory Review Report is limited to 35 pages of text (single spaced), exclusive of exhibits and Appendices.

Possible Models for the Preparatory Review Report: The normal model expected for organizing the Preparatory Review Report will be to arrange the exhibits by the four Commission Standards. In this case, it is recommended that Reflective Essays be prepared that cover the exhibits associated with each Standard. Consistent with the approved Institutional Proposal, possible alternative models might include; 1) Exhibits organized in terms of the institution’s strategic planning priorities, with a cross reference to Commission Standards; and 2) Exhibits organized around special themes, with a cross reference to Commission Standards. Since the intent is for the Institutional Portfolio to be of on-going use to the institution, the model chosen should reflect institutional needs as well as the ability to present the necessary evidence for review.

Process of the Preparatory Review: Because the Preparatory Review is intended to be organized for the purposes stated above, the institution is not expected to prepare a comprehensive self review. Nor is the institution expected to provide data in response to each and every Criterion for Review included under the four Commission Standards. Rather, using a combination of prescribed and specially selected exhibits, the institution is expected to demonstrate it possesses the basic resources, structures, and processes to meet the Core Commitment to Capacity and the broad statement of each Standard.

To verify the evidence included in the Preparatory Review Report, there will be a brief site visit using the methodology of academic audit. Characteristics of the site visit include the following:

1. **TEAM SIZE.** Preparatory Review Teams will normally range from two to four people, depending on the size and complexity of the institution and the scope of the issues involved;
2. **VISIT LENGTH.** Preparatory reviews normally will involve no more than one to two days on campus;
3. **PROCESS OF REVIEW.** The Preparatory Review Team is responsible to assure “due diligence” on the part of the institution. Accordingly, a sample of key processes and issues will be selected by the Review Team in advance of the visit for review and auditing. Teams will use a combination of approaches to gather evidence while on campus—for example, sampling specific administrative processes and procedures to verify that they are followed or in place, reviews of documentary evidence, and structured interviews;

THE PREPARATORY REVIEW REPORT—FOCUSES ON CORE COMMITMENT 1 TO INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

(Limited to 35 pages of text, exclusive of exhibits and appendices)

INCLUDES:

- Introduction, including changes in context since the Proposal
- Institutional Portfolio
 - Basic Descriptive Data
 - Set of Stipulated Policies (Appendix 1)
 - Set of exhibits and data displays
- Reflective Essays indicating what the Portfolio exhibits mean to the institution
- Concluding Essay
- Appendix with institution’s response to previous team and Commission concerns

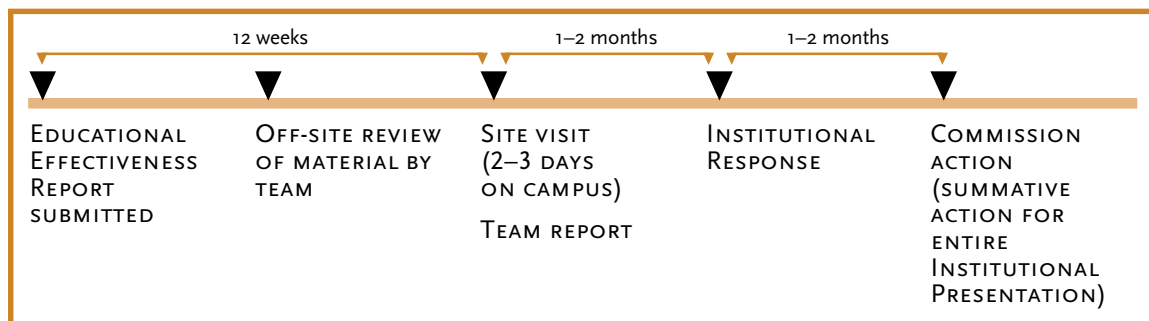
4. **PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES.** The Preparatory Review Team is expected to review the Preparatory Review Report prior to the site visit and communicate with the institution to clarify any ambiguities contained therein, to request additional evidence, and/or to submit specific questions or issues that it wishes to explore more fully in the course of the review; and
5. **TEAM REPORT.** The Preparatory Review Team will prepare a report of its Preparatory Review, commenting on institutional compliance with accreditation standards, especially those in relation to the Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity as embodied in the Standards. The team also is expected to comment on the institution's preparedness to engage in serious analysis of Educational Effectiveness and to assist the institution by recommending ways to improve the focus and presentation of issues in the framework being used for the Educational Effectiveness Review. The team report will be submitted to the institution for comment on errors of fact before the report is finalized and sent to the Commission. The institution will also be provided opportunity to prepare a formal written statement in response to the final report which will be provided to the Commission.

Commission Action: Following submission of the team report, the Commission will take action. The range and definition of Commission decisions are found in Section IV of the Handbook. Typically, the Commission may act as follows:

1. Receive the report of the Preparatory Review Team, find that the institution fulfills its expectations under the Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity, and proceed with the schedule for the Educational Effectiveness Review. Accreditation (or Candidacy) will continue.
2. Identify any additional issues to be addressed in the Educational Effectiveness Review, adjusting the date of the Educational Effectiveness Review if needed.
3. Impose a monitoring condition or a sanction if warranted.

Stage 3: The Educational Effectiveness Review

Purposes: The Educational Effectiveness Review is intended to be significantly different from the Preparatory Review. Its primary purpose is to invite sustained engagement by the institution on the extent to which the institution fulfills its educational objectives. Through a process of inquiry and engagement, the Educational Effectiveness Review also is designed to enable the Commission to make a judgment about the extent that the institution fulfills its Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness: *The institution evidences clear and appropriate educational objectives and design at the institutional and program levels, and employs processes of review, including the collection and use of data, that assure the delivery of programs and learner accomplishments at a level of performance appropriate for the degree or certificate awarded.* Specific purposes of the Educational Effectiveness Review include:



1. To review the design and results of institutional efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs;
2. To examine institutional practices for evaluating student learning and to develop and share good practices in using educational results to improve the process of teaching and learning;
3. To examine the alignment of institutional resources with activities designed to achieve the institution's educational objectives; and
4. To promote sustained engagement with selected issues of Educational Effectiveness consistent with Commission Standards. These will have already been identified by the institution and approved through the Proposal Review Process. The institution is encouraged to select issues of importance to itself in this process, so the Review will be of maximum local utility.

Timing: As developed and approved through the Proposal Review Process, normally 12 months following the Preparatory Review.

Who Is Involved in Preparation: In light of the primary emphasis placed on inquiry and engagement related to questions of teaching and learning in this Review, it is expected that faculty will be deeply involved in the design and implementation of the Educational Effectiveness Report and review process, as well as others at the institution connected to issues of Educational Effectiveness.

Possible Models for the Educational Effectiveness Report: The Educational Effectiveness Review is intended to enable institutions to explore topics or themes that are related to the institution's own priorities and needs, with special emphasis on the assessment and improvement of student learning. The Commission Standards, especially Standards 2 and 4, serve as a frame for selecting topics to be examined in the course of the Educational Effectiveness Review. The format for the Educational Effectiveness Report will therefore vary significantly based upon the institutional context and model for review agreed upon through the Proposal Review Process. Examples of the most prominent models that have emerged from past WASC experimental visits are found on the WASC website (wascweb.org), along with their support contacts and material. Models for the Educational Effectiveness Review include:

1. **SPECIAL THEMES.** Under this model, in addition to the required elements specified below, the institution will carefully select a limited number of topics for review in depth; identify expected areas of inquiry or researchable questions for each topic; select a methodology for engaging each topic; and carry out each investigation as a rigorous research-based study. Typically, three or more topics should be selected involving aspects of Educational Effectiveness. At least one of these must give explicit attention to student learning and be supported by concrete data on educational results;
2. **STRATEGIC PLANNING-BASED.** Under this model, in addition to the required elements specified below, the institution would identify a limited number of areas of emphasis in its current strategic plan for in-depth review. The intent is to align the Commission's concern with Educational Effectiveness with the priorities set under the institution's own internal planning processes. The agreed upon topics should be addressed in depth, and should involve significant engagement with evidence of student learning based on educational results. The topics should also emphasize the use of such evidence for improvement of the institution's educational effectiveness;
3. **COMPREHENSIVE.** Under this model, the institution will produce a single comprehensive document describing how it goes about the process of investigating and assuring educational quality. This could be a comprehensive review of assessment at the institution; a comprehensive examination of how the institution might become more learning-centered; or an extensive

review of the entire institution under specific points of inquiry. In any of these approaches, the institution would be expected to include evidence-based discussions of student learning based on educational results; and

4. **AUDIT-BASED.** Under this model, the institution would follow an “audit-like” approach to examining key processes for assuring quality in teaching and learning, including such activities as curriculum design and approval; the establishment and maintenance of academic standards (e.g. grading and the levels of achievement signified by its degrees and other academic awards); instructional evaluation and improvement; and/or the program review process for academic and non-academic programs. A major intent of this audit process is to determine the degree to which the institution’s own design for such processes is actually being carried out in practice at the institutional, school, departmental, or classroom level. As a result, the heart of the “audit” would involve selecting particular examples—for example, a few academic programs, courses, or instructional staff—and examining these in depth to determine alignment. Institution’s electing this approach have sometimes used external “audit” models to guide them—for example the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award framework or the Academic Audit approaches adopted by both Great Britain and Hong Kong.

Common Elements of the Educational Effectiveness Report: Although the particular model approved in the Institutional Proposal will largely govern the format and content of the Educational Effectiveness Report, all Educational Effectiveness Reports should include the following elements:

1. **A DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS APPROACH:** All institutions are to provide background descriptions and analyses of how they approach Educational Effectiveness through their own intentional system of quality assurance and improvement. This part of the Report

THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT

—FOCUSES ON CORE COMMITMENT 2 TO EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

(limited to 50 pages of text, exclusive of exhibits & appendices)

INCLUDES:

- A description of the Educational Effectiveness approach
- Deep engagement and analysis of Educational Effectiveness such as:
 - Several analytical essays (for a Special Themes Model)
 - A single, extended essay (for a Comprehensive or Audit Model)
- Supporting evidence for the analysis of Educational Effectiveness, building on the Institutional Portfolio prepared for the Preparatory Review
- An Integrative Component

is intended to provide the team and Commission with the basic context for examining Educational Effectiveness at the institution. This section should also serve the institution by providing an opportunity to inventory the scope and effectiveness of the institution's quality assurance processes for maintaining and improving educational quality. The institution should broadly describe a) the design and approaches the institution takes to assure quality in teaching and learning; b) the kinds of evidence of learning it collects; and c) the way in which such evidence is used to support further inquiry and improvement;

2. **DEEP ENGAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS:** As part of the Educational Effectiveness Review, each institution is expected to engage the issue of Educational Effectiveness in depth. Several possible approaches are identified on page 46; each has been found in experimental visits to serve institutions well. If the institution has been approved for a Special Themes Model, it might develop several analytical essays that treat aspects of Educational Effectiveness in depth; or, one or a series of analytical essays might be prepared to examine the implications of specific groups of exhibits related to Educational Effectiveness included in the enhanced version of the Institutional Portfolio developed for this stage of the review process. Under a Comprehensive or Audit Model, the Analysis of Educational Effectiveness might be a single extended essay.

Regardless of the model for the Report that is approved at the Proposal stage, the institution is expected to move well beyond description of activities to analysis of evidence, reflections on how well the institution's quality assurance processes are working, and ways that those processes have led to further improvement that can be used by the institution. In addition, the Educational Effectiveness Review should provide an occasion for engagement of the institution's constituencies, especially its faculty, organized around the approved model to further its understanding of Educational Effectiveness and to lead to specific recommendations for improvement. In all cases, the institution is expected to work with evidence of educational results and student learning as a major part of the Educational Effectiveness Report;

3. **SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:** Building on the Institutional Portfolio developed for the Preparatory Review, the institution should present additional evidence and exhibits that support its analysis of Educational Effectiveness and student learning. The institution should provide an updated table listing current assessment activities such as the one originally submitted as part of the Preparatory Review. In addition, the institution might include selected results of assessment studies, results of any summative learning measures deemed important by the institution (e.g., pass rates for licensure examinations, capstone courses, etc.), surveys of graduates and current students, and employer feedback on former student performance. Depending upon the particular model chosen for the Educational Effectiveness Report, the exhibits selected might be organized in terms of particular Commissions Standards related to teaching and learning or around particular themes or issues related to Educational Effectiveness as selected by the institution and described in its original Proposal; and
4. **AN INTEGRATIVE COMPONENT:** All Educational Effectiveness Reports are expected to include an Integrative Component in which the institution synthesizes and integrates the discrete elements of its Educational Effectiveness Self Review and the impact of the entire sequential accreditation review process. For most institutions, this will take the form of an integrative chapter. Some institutions may choose to provide integrative comments and reflections throughout their presentation. Whichever model is used, the institution should move beyond the separate topics for review, and ask: Were there common themes or issues that emerged? What was learned from the internal review process, and what major recommendations emerged? Were the goals and outcomes established in the Proposal achieved? What will be the next steps taken to address the major recommendations of the internal review process, and how will momentum be sustained?

Report Length: Regardless of the model chosen, the entire Educational Effectiveness Report will be limited to 50 pages of text (single spaced), exclusive of exhibits.

Process of Review: The Educational Effectiveness Review involves an on-site visit organized in alignment with the model chosen by the institution and focused on the Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness through the topics raised in the Educational Effectiveness Presentation and Commission Standards.

1. **TEAM SIZE:** The Educational Effectiveness Review Team will normally range from five to seven people depending on the nature of the institution and scope of issues. Its members will be specially trained in the purposes and methodologies for this review.
2. **VISIT LENGTH:** The Educational Effectiveness Review will normally involve from two-three days on campus.
3. **PROCESS OF REVIEW:** The Educational Effectiveness Review Team will be selected to ensure expertise in the special issues or themes of the review and in topics related to educational effectiveness. Teams will use a combination of methods to gather evidence while on campus—for example, sampling core quality assurance processes and student learning assessment methods, structured interviews, and review of documentary evidence. They may also conduct selected on-site audits designed to validate the procedures used by the institution in conducting its own process of self-investigation and/or verify the accuracy of data included in the Report. Finally, depending on the model chosen by the institution, they may provide additional feedback in a collaborative mode on topics selected by the institution.
4. **PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY.** As in the Preparatory Review, the Educational Effectiveness Review Team may also communicate with the institution in advance of the visit to clarify any ambiguities contained in the Educational Effectiveness Presentation, to request additional evidence, and/or to submit specific questions or issues that it wishes to explore more fully in the course of the review.
5. **TEAM REPORT.** The Educational Effectiveness Review team will prepare a report of its review, commenting on the institution's posture with respect to the Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness. In doing so, the team will be expected to use the institution's presentation and supporting evidence along with the on-site review to demonstrate the institution's ability to sustain an evidence-based inquiry into the topic of educational effectiveness that leads to institutional improvement. Where applicable, the team will also be expected to comment on issues or themes selected by the institution, with recommendations for improvement and on those issues identified by the Commission after the Preparatory Review for consideration at the Educational Effectiveness Review. The team report will be submitted to the institution for comment on errors of fact before the report is finalized and sent to the Commission. The institution will also be provided opportunity to prepare a formal written statement in response to the final report which will be provided to the Commission.

Commission Action: Following submission of the Educational Effectiveness Review team report, the Commission will take action. The range and definition of Commission decisions are described in Section VI of the *Handbook*. Typically, the Commission will act as follows:

1. Receive the report of the Educational Effectiveness Review Team and determine if the institution has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments as embodied in the Commission Standards. The Commission reviews the reports of the Preparatory and Educational Effectiveness Reviews to determine that the institution has satisfactorily addressed both Core Commitments as embodied in the Commission Standards. With positive results from both reviews, the Commission will reaffirm accreditation.

2. Reaffirm accreditation with monitoring conditions.
3. Impose a sanction.
4. Schedule follow up activities as needed.

Fees and Charges

A fee schedule for the Commission and Association of Senior Colleges and Universities is prepared each year and is available on the WASC website and from the Commission office. Annual fees are based on institutional enrollment. In addition, fees and expenses are charged for the following activities:

Eligibility Applications: Fees are charged for the initial application, reapplications, and for appeal of eligibility determinations. Information for institutions seeking Eligibility can be found in the Commission publication, *How To Become Accredited*, available through the WASC office or downloadable from the WASC website.

Candidacy/Accreditation Applications: After an institution has been determined to be eligible, it is required to file a one-time fee. This fee covers some on-site consultation, staff conferences as needed, and advice on preparation for an Institutional Review and team visit.

Evaluation Visits: The institution is billed for the expenses of the visiting team, including the cost of the chair's preliminary visit and appearance before the Commission, staff travel, and a visit fee established for the type of visit. The expenses of special visits made by the Commission because of special inquiries are also paid by the institution.

Special Charges: Additional charges will be assessed for unusually complex evaluations which require staff time beyond that normally expended. These include visits to out-of-region programs and to institutions requiring unusually large teams in relation to the size of the institution. In such cases, the Commission will charge an additional fee. After one substantive change or out-of-region visit has been made for an institution in a year, the same principle of excess costs will apply to additional visits.

Commission Review of a Negative Action: When an institution requests a Commission Review, there will be a special processing fee and a deposit against costs. If the actual costs are less than paid, the excess will be refunded. If actual costs are greater, the institution will be billed for the difference.

All fees are due and payable upon submission (for applications) or upon receipt of a bill from the Commission office. Late payments may jeopardize the institution's accreditation.

A current schedule of fees and charges is available from the Commission office and the WASC website, www.wascweb.org.



IV



Commission Decisions on Institutions

Commission Decisions on Institutions

Once the Commission has made a decision regarding Candidacy or Accreditation of an institution, it will notify the institution in writing as promptly as possible. The forms of possible Commission action with regard to institutions are:

1. Grant Initial Candidacy and Initial Accreditation
2. Defer Initial Candidacy or Initial Accreditation
3. Continue Accreditation between the Preparatory Review and the Educational Effectiveness Review
4. Reaffirm Accreditation
5. Reaffirm Accreditation with a formal Notice of Concern
6. Issue a Warning
7. Impose Probation
8. Issue an Order to Show Cause
9. Terminate Accreditation
10. Deny Initial Candidacy or Initial Accreditation

All of the above Commission actions except the formal Notice of Concern, are made public and are published in an *Annual Directory*, in a report following each Commission meeting, and in a public Statement of Affiliation Status (see Appendix 3). In addition, in taking the above actions, the Commission may impose conditions or request additional reporting or site visits.

DECISION	PUBLIC/PRIVATE	TIME UNTIL COMMISSION REVIEW
Reaffirm Accreditation	Public	Up to 10 years
Reaffirm Accreditation with Formal Notice of Concern	Reaffirm (public) Notice of Concern (private)	Up to 4 years
Issue a Warning	Public	2-year limit under federal law
Impose Probation	Public	2-year limit under federal law
Issue Show Cause Order	Public	1-year limit
Terminate Accreditation	Public	date specified

1. Grant Initial Candidacy and Initial Accreditation

Initial Candidacy: The institution must demonstrate that it meets all or nearly all of the Standards for Accreditation at a minimum level, with a clear plan in place to meet the Standards at a substantial level of compliance for accreditation. Candidacy is limited to four years, and is granted only when an institution can demonstrate that it is likely to become accredited in this time period.

Initial Accreditation: The institution has met Commission Standards at a substantial level, and is ready to move into the accreditation cycle of review. Initial Accreditation is limited to five years before the next comprehensive review.

2. Defer Initial Candidacy or Initial Accreditation

A Deferral is not a final decision. It is interlocutory in nature and designed to provide further guidance and time for the institution to correct certain deficiencies. This action allows the Commission to indicate to an institution the need for additional information or progress in one or more specified areas before a positive decision can be made.

3. Continue Accreditation between the Preparatory Review and the Educational Effectiveness Review

This action is taken after the Commission has received the report from the Preparatory Review, identified issues to be considered as part of the next review, and is ready to proceed to the Educational Effectiveness Review. If necessary, the Commission will issue a Notice of Concern or impose a sanction following the Preparatory Review.

4. Reaffirm Accreditation

Reaffirmation of Accreditation indicates that the Commission has found an institution has met or exceeded the expectations of the Standards. It is granted for up to ten years and may be accompanied by the request for interim reports and visits. When accreditation is reaffirmed, institutions are most often placed on a seven- or a ten-year cycle.

5. Reaffirm Accreditation with a formal Notice of Concern

This action provides notice to an institution that, while it currently meets WASC Standards, it is in danger of being found in noncompliance with one or more Standards if current trends or findings continue. Institutions issued a formal Notice of Concern will have a special visit within four years to assess progress. If the issues are not addressed, a sanction will be imposed, triggering the two-year rule, described below.

A formal Notice of Concern is not made public by the Commission. This means it is neither published in the *Directory* nor identified when members of the public call for information on the accreditation status of the institution.

Commission Sanctions

Under USDE regulations, when the Commission finds that an institution fails to meet one or more Standard, it is required to notify the institution and give the institution up to two years from the date of its action to correct the situation. If the institution fails to take corrective action, the Commission is required under USDE regulations to terminate accreditation. The law permits an extension of this two-year time frame when good cause is found. The Commission has determined it will grant an extension for good cause only under exceptional circumstances.

All sanctions are made public and published in the *Annual Directory*. Since all sanctions trigger the new federal two-years-and-terminate rule, public notice is warranted regardless of the label of the sanction.

The Commission has adopted several different sanctions—Warning, Probation and Show Cause—to enable the Commission to inform the institution and the public its view of the severity of concerns regarding noncompliance with one or more Commission Standards. These sanctions are not intended to be applied sequentially. Whichever sanction is imposed, the Commission is required by federal law to terminate accreditation, rather than to continue the institution under the same or a new sanction for another two-year period, unless clear progress has been made within two years. Only when there is clear evidence of good cause will the sanction period be extended.

Because all sanctions reflect that an institution has failed to meet one or more Standards for Accreditation, thus triggering the two-year-to-termination rule, the institution will need to demonstrate that it has come into compliance with the cited Standard(s) within the two-year period.

6. Issue a Warning

A Warning reflects that an institution fails to meet one or more of the Standards for Accreditation. While on Warning, any new site or degree program initiated by the institution will be regarded as a substantive change (see the Substantive Change Manual for details). The candidate or accredited status of the institution continues during the Warning period.

When an institution is placed on Warning, the Commission will request that a meeting be set up between WASC staff and representatives of the institutional board of trustees within 90 days following the placement of the sanction. The purposes of the meeting are to further communicate the reasons for the Commission action, to learn of the institution's plan to achieve wider notice within the institution of the action taken by the Commission and the reasons for it, and to discuss the institution's plan for responding to the action.

7. Impose Probation

Probation is a determination that an institution has been found to have serious issues of noncompliance with one or more Commission Standards. While on Probation, the institution will be subject to special scrutiny by the Commission, which may include a requirement to submit periodic prescribed reports and to receive special visits by representatives of the Commission. In addition, while on Probation, any new site or degree program initiated by the institution will be regarded as a substantive change (see the Substantive Change Manual for details). The candidate or accredited status of the institution continues during the Probation period.

When an institution is placed on Probation, the Commission will request that a meeting be set up between WASC staff and representatives of the institutional board of trustees within 90 days following the placement of the sanction. The purposes of the meeting are to further communicate the reasons for the Commission action, to learn of the institution's plan to achieve wider notice within the institu-

tion of the action taken by the Commission and the reasons for it, and to discuss the institution's plan for responding to the action.

8. Issue an Order to Show Cause

An Order to Show Cause is a decision by the Commission to terminate the accreditation of the institution within a maximum period of one year of the date of the Order, unless the institution can show cause why such action should not take effect. Such an Order is typically issued when an institution, having been placed on Warning or Probation for one year, has been found not to have made sufficient progress to come into compliance with Commission Standards. The institution has the burden of proof to demonstrate why its candidacy or accreditation should not be terminated. The institution must demonstrate that it has responded satisfactorily to Commission concerns, that it has come into compliance with all Commission Standards, and will likely be able to sustain such compliance. An Order to Show Cause may also be issued as a summary sanction for unethical institutional behavior (see Policy on p. 56).

The candidate or accredited status of the institution continues during the Show Cause period, but, during this period, any new site or degree program initiated by the institution will be regarded as a substantive change requiring prior approval. In addition, the institution may be subject to special scrutiny by the Commission, which may include special conditions, the requirement to submit prescribed reports or to receive special visits by representatives of the Commission.

Two copies of the Order to Show Cause will be sent to the chief executive officer, who is to forward one copy to the chair of the governing board. In addition, when an Order to Show Cause has been issued, the Commission will request that a meeting be set up between WASC staff and representatives of the institutional board of trustees within 90 days following the issuance of the order. The purposes of the meeting are to underscore the meaning of an Order to Show Cause, to further communicate the reasons for the Commission action, and to discuss the process to be used for the show cause review.

9. Terminate accreditation

An action to terminate accreditation is made with a specific date of implementation specified. It is subject to both the Commission Review Procedures and the WASC appeals process. If an institution closes after a termination action, there are federal requirements imposed on both the institution and WASC for making teach-out arrangements.

10. Deny Initial Candidacy or Initial Accreditation

In its decision to deny Initial Candidacy or Initial Accreditation, Commission policy provides that an institution may reapply once it has demonstrated that it has addressed the issues leading to the denial, and, in all cases, it must wait at least one year before reapplying. Denial is an appealable action. (See the following section on the Commission Review Process).

Publication of Actions

The Commission will make its actions public, when appropriate, through its Executive Director, and will publish in the WASC *Annual Directory*, the WASC website, the *Western Exchange* newsletter, in a Statement of Affiliation Status, (See Appendix 3) and the appropriate national directories, the status of each institution. Those institutions under Warning, Probation, or Show Cause will be so noted in these publications and on the WASC web site. If the filing period for review or appeal is still pending, a footnote will be printed to the effect that, "The institution may request a review of this action by___."

In all cases of public negative action, the Commission will give the institution written reasons for its decision. A public statement about the action will be prepared in consultation with the institution for response to inquiries. The Commission reserves the right to make the final determination of the nature and content of the public statement.

If an institution so conducts its affairs that they become a matter of public concern, or uses the public forum to take issue with a negative action of the Commission relating to that institution, the Commission may disseminate, through the Executive Director, the action taken, and the bases for that action, making public any pertinent information available to it. (See Policy on Disclosure of Accrediting Documents and Commission Actions, p. 104).

Summary Sanctions For Unethical Institutional Behavior

If it appears to the Commission or its staff that an institution is in serious noncompliance with Standard One (Institutional Purposes and Integrity) in a manner that requires immediate attention, an investigation will be made and the institution will be offered an opportunity to express itself on the matter. If the Commission concludes that the institution has so acted it may:

1. Sever relations if the institution is an applicant, but not yet a candidate or accredited; or
2. If the institution is a candidate or accredited, either:
 - a. issue an Order to Show Cause why its Candidacy or Accreditation should not be terminated at the end of a stated period; or
 - b. in an extreme case, sever its relationship with the institution by denying or terminating candidacy or accreditation; or
3. Apply less severe sanctions as deemed appropriate.

Commission Review Process

Institutions that are placed on 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 certified mail, return receipt requested, 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 certified mail, return receipt requested, within 28 calendar days of the date of the mailing of the Commission's notification of its decision to the institution.

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 specific errors of fact or omissions of fact which were material to the decision and provide evidence in support of each. The institution may also point out areas where, in the institution's judgement, the Commission gave undue importance to certain facts to the detriment of other facts that should have been given more weight in the decision. 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 visit.
6. Prior to the visit to the institution, 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 visit.
7. The review visit will be investigative and designed to determine if the Commission's decision was substantially supported by the evidence before the Commission at the time of its decision.
8. Commission staff will assist the review committee as needed. The Committee may interview, among others, the chair or members of the previous visiting team. Outside legal counsel is not permitted to attend or be present in meetings with the review committee without consent of the review committee chair.

9. The review committee should open and close its visit with a meeting with the chief executive officer of the institution. At the closing meeting, the chair should, among other matters, attempt to ascertain whether or not the institution has any complaints about any aspect of the visit.
10. The review committee should prepare a report that cites and 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.
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. Within 14 calendar days of the institutions'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.
13. 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.

14. No assurance can be made that action on the request for review will be scheduled on the agenda of the next Commission meeting.
15. The chief executive officer of the institution and a limited number of its staff will be invited to meet with two Commissioners designated as readers and the chair of the review committee shortly before the meeting of the Commission at which the report will be acted upon. Discussion at this preliminary meeting will be confined to the report of the review committee referred to in (10) above and the institution's response to this report.
16. The two readers will report the substance of this meeting to the Commission when it meets. Institutional representatives may, upon the institution's request, appear before the Commission.
17. 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 certified mail of the Commission's decision.
18. 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 Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Copies of the WASC Constitution are printed in the WASC *Annual Directory* or are available from the Commission office. An Appeals Manual is also available from the Commission office.
19. 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.

20. Special charges for the review process have been established by the Commission. Current charges are available from the Commission office. In addition, the Commission has adopted implementation procedures for the review process, which are available upon request from the Commission office.

Notification of Decisions

Commission Decisions Regarding Accreditation Status

The Commission will provide written notice to the Secretary of the US Department of Education, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, the appropriate accrediting agencies, and the public no later than 30 days after it makes a decision regarding:

- ☞ initial accreditation, candidacy, or reaffirmation;
- ☞ a final decision to place an institution on probation or show cause; or
- ☞ a final decision to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke or terminate the accreditation or pre-accreditation status of an institution.

In addition, the Commission will provide written notice to the public regarding the decisions to place an institution on Probation or Show Cause, or to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke, or terminate accreditation status within 24 hours of its notice to the institution or program.

No later than 60 days after these decisions, the Commission will make available to the Secretary of the US Department of Education, the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, and the public upon request, a brief statement summarizing the reasons for the agency's decision, and the comments, if any, that the affected institution may wish to make with regard to that decision.

Institutional Decisions Regarding Accreditation Status

The Commission will notify the Secretary of the US Department of Education, the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, and, upon request, the public if an accredited or pre-accredited institution:

- ☞ Decides to withdraw voluntarily from accreditation or pre-accreditation, within 30 days of receiving notification from the institution that is withdrawing voluntarily from accreditation or pre-accreditation;
- ☞ Lets its pre-accreditation status lapse within 30 days of the date on which pre-accreditation status lapses.

Regard for decisions of other agencies

If the Commission is notified by another recognized accrediting agency that an applicant or candidate institution has had a status of recognition with that agency denied, revoked, or terminated, the Commission will take such action into account in its own review if it is determined that the other agency's action resulted from a deficiency that reflects a lack of compliance with the *WASC Handbook of Accreditation*.

If the Commission is notified by another recognized accrediting agency that an accredited institution has had a status of recognition with that agency revoked, suspended, or terminated, or has been placed on a publicly announced probationary status by such an accrediting agency, the Commission will review its own status of recognition of that institution to determine if the other agency's action resulted from a deficiency that reflects a lack of compliance with WASC's *Handbook of Accreditation*. If so, the Commission will determine if the institution's status with the Commission needs to be called into question or if any follow-up action is needed.

If the Commission is notified by a state agency that an applicant, candidate or accredited institution has been informed of suspension, revocation, or termination of the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education, the Commission will review its own status of recognition for that institution to determine compliance with the *Handbook of Accreditation*. If the Commission finds the institution is no longer in compliance with the *Handbook*, the Commission will determine the appropriate action to be taken.

In implementing this policy, the Commission relies on other accrediting bodies and state agencies to inform the Commission of adverse action so the Commission can undertake the review specified in this policy. Applicants for Eligibility with the Commission shall provide information on any actions by a recognized accrediting association within the past five years. In addition, the Commission requires candidate and accredited institutions holding accredited or candidate status from more than one USDE recognized institutional accrediting body to keep each institutional accrediting body apprised of any change in its status with one or another accrediting body.

