

RANGE AND MEANING OF COMMISSION ACTIONS AFFECTING INSTITUTIONAL STATUS

According to regulations of the United States Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Education, the Commission is required, as part of its obligation, to honor the regulations listed below:

Whenever CTCI’s review of an institution under any standard indicates that the institution is not in compliance with that standard, CTCI must

1. Immediately initiate adverse action against the institution; or
2. Require the institution to take appropriate action to bring itself into compliance with the agency's standards within a time period that must not exceed
 - a. Twelve months, if the program, or the longest program offered by the institution, is less than one year in length;
 - b. Eighteen months, if the program, or the longest program offered by the institution, is at least one year, but less than two years, in length; or
 - c. Two years, if the program, or the longest program offered by the institution, is at least two years in length.

If the institution does not bring itself into compliance within the specified period, CTCI must take immediate adverse action unless, for good cause, it extends the period for achieving compliance.

“Adverse action” is defined as termination of accreditation or candidacy status.

Consistent with the Federal regulations, CTCI has established the following time limits for various actions the Commission may take if it determines an institution is not in compliance with one or more of the standards:

Monitoring action	6-24 months*
Deferment	1-12 months
Warning	1-24 months*
Probation	1-24 months*
Show Cause	1-24 months*

* The maximum time is 12 months if the longest program offered by the institution is less than one year in length or 18 months if the longest program offered by the institution is at least one year but less than two years in length.

When the Commission takes any of the above actions after it determines that an institution does not comply with one or more of the standards, the Commission usually requires the institution to

submit a follow-up report addressing the non-compliance issues, and it may also require the institution to undergo a site visit.

The Commission is not bound by the sequence of actions listed above nor is it precluded from taking an action at any level. For example, an institution does not have to be placed on warning before it is placed on probation, and the next action following warning may be show cause.

Also consistent with Federal regulations, the maximum time an institution found to be in non-compliance with one or more of the standards may be on monitoring, deferment, warning, probation, show cause, or any combination thereof, is 12 months if the longest program offered by the institution is less than one year in length, 18 months if the longest program offered by the institution is at least one year but less than two years in length, and 24 months if the longest program offered by the institution is more than two years in length. At its discretion, the Commission may require an institution to come into compliance within a time frame that is less than the maximum allowed.

If the institution fails to bring itself into compliance within the time specified by the Commission, the Commission will initiate action to terminate the institution's accreditation. However, the Commission may extend the time frame to come into compliance for good cause. Good cause exists, for example, if the Commission determines that the institution is making a good faith effort to correct existing deficiencies and come into compliance with the standard(s) and that it is likely to be able to correct those deficiencies and be in full compliance within the period of the extension. The maximum period for an extension due to good cause is 12 months.

Actions taken by the Commission on Technical and Career Institutions relative to the status of institutions affiliated or seeking affiliation are based on the application of the Commission's standards in its evaluative processes. These criteria include the **Eligibility Requirements** and the **Standards of Membership**, which must be satisfied by institutions seeking or wishing to maintain either candidate for accreditation or accredited status. In addition, affiliated institutions are expected to adhere to those Commission policies affecting institutional conduct.

Typically, the processes by which the standards are applied begin with the institution's preparation of a self-study. The institution is then evaluated by a visiting team, which reports its findings to the Commission. Action establishing an institution's status is taken by the Commission upon consideration of the institutional self-study and visiting team reports. In uncommon circumstances, the Commission may take an action affecting institutional status apart from its usual evaluative processes. In such situations, a strict adherence to due process is maintained.

The Commission has sole discretion in determining the range and timeliness of the actions it takes with regard to the preaccredited status, initial accredited status, continued accredited status, probation or termination of accreditation of the institutions in its membership. Affirmation of the Commission's decision on candidacy or initial accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges' Board of Trustees is required to ensure that due process with regard to these institutions has been followed.

INSTITUTIONS SEEKING CANDIDACY STATUS

CANDIDACY STATUS -- The Commission recommends to the Board of Trustees of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges that an institution be granted candidacy status when it is found that the institution meets the **Eligibility Requirements** and the **Standards of Membership**. While candidacy is a status of affiliation, it is not accreditation, and it does not assure eventual accreditation. Rather, it indicates that the institution has achieved initial recognition and that it is progressing toward accreditation. An institution, once granted candidacy, must achieve accreditation within five years. The continued compliance of a candidate institution with the Commission's **Standards of Membership** and its progress toward accreditation are determined by means of a biennial evaluation during the period of candidacy.

DEFERMENT OF ACTION -- Action on an institution's application for candidacy will be deferred when the Commission judges that it has insufficient data on which to base a final decision. In such cases, action is tabled until a specified time, but in no case longer than one year from the date of the Commission action. In the interim, the institution is required to submit a report and/or host a visit by Commission representatives.

DENIAL OF CANDIDACY STATUS -- The Commission will recommend to the Board of Trustees of the Association the denial of candidacy status when it is found that an applying institution does not meet the **Eligibility Requirements** and/or the **Standards of Membership**. Prior to forwarding its recommendation to the Board of Trustees, the Commission will provide an opportunity for the institution to show cause, within a reasonable time period fixed by the Commission, but in no case to exceed one year from the date of the Commission action, why the recommendation should not be made. In such cases, the burden of proof shall rest with the institution.

The Board of Trustees will act on the Commission's recommendation at its next meeting. If the Board's decision is to deny candidacy, an institution may appeal this action under the relevant policies and procedures established by the Association.

CONTINUATION OF CANDIDACY STATUS -- An institution is continued in candidacy status when it is determined through the biennial evaluation that it continues to meet the **Eligibility Requirements** and the **Standards of Membership** and demonstrates that it is making satisfactory progress toward accreditation.

TERMINATION OF CANDIDACY STATUS -- When it determines that a candidate institution no longer meets the **Eligibility Requirements** and/or the **Standards of Membership**, the Commission will terminate candidacy status. Prior to terminating candidacy status, the Commission will provide an opportunity for the institution to show cause why the action should not be taken. The burden of proof shall rest with the institution. Institutions may appeal the termination of candidacy under the relevant policies and procedures established by the Association. Until final action is taken on the appeal, the institution's candidate status is unaffected. Institutions which lose candidacy status and subsequently seek affiliation must complete the entire process required of any applying institution as prescribed by the policies and procedures of the Commission.

INSTITUTIONS SEEKING INITIAL ACCREDITATION

INITIAL ACCREDITATION -- The Commission will recommend to the Board of Trustees of the Association that an institution seeking accreditation be granted that status when it is found that the institution meets the **Standards of Membership**. As a condition of its accreditation, the institution may be required to submit a Two-Year Progress Report on its efforts to address any recommendations for improvement the Commission and/or visiting team may have made to assist the institution as it strives to improve and also to provide the Commission with an update on any activities it has planned or is implementing to enhance institutional effectiveness.

DEFERMENT OF ACTION -- Action on an institution's application for accreditation will be deferred when the Commission judges that it has insufficient data on which to base a final decision.

Action may also be deferred when it is found that an institution seeking accreditation meets most, but not all, of the **Standards of Membership**, the identified deficiencies having the capability of being rapidly remedied.

In cases of deferral, action is tabled until a specified time, but in no case to exceed one year from the date of the Commission action or the end of the institution's five-year period of candidacy (if applicable), whichever comes first. During the deferral period, the institution is required to submit a report and/or host a visit by Commission representatives. Deferments are not included in the Commission's public announcements.

DENIAL OF INITIAL ACCREDITATION -- When the Commission finds that an institution seeking initial accreditation does not meet the **Standards of Membership** and that the deficiencies cannot be rapidly remedied, the Commission will deny initial accreditation. When the applying institution is otherwise in good standing as a candidate, it will be continued in that status.

However, if it is also determined that the institution no longer meets the **Eligibility Requirements** and/or the **Standards of Membership**, the Commission will terminate candidate status. Prior to taking an action to deny initial accreditation or to terminate candidacy, the Commission will provide an opportunity for the institution to show cause why the action should not be taken. The burden of proof shall rest with the institution. Institutions may appeal the denial of accreditation or the termination of candidacy under relevant policies and procedures established by the Association. Until final action is taken on the appeal, the institution's status is unaffected. Institutions denied accreditation and continued in candidacy must subsequently seek accreditation in keeping with the policies and procedures of the Commission. If the institution's candidacy is terminated and it subsequently seeks affiliation, it must complete the entire process required of applying institutions as prescribed by the policies and procedures of the Commission.

INSTITUTIONS SEEKING CONTINUED ACCREDITATION

CONTINUED ACCREDITATION -- An institution is continued in accreditation by the Commission when it is found that the institution continues to meet the **Standards of Membership**. Institutions whose accreditation has been reaffirmed, normally undergo comprehensive reevaluation for continued accreditation based on a decennial cycle, though the length of time between visits may be modified to reflect institutional circumstances. As a condition of its accreditation, an institution may be required to submit a Two-Year Progress Report on its efforts to address any recommendations for improvement the Commission and/or visiting team may have made to assist the institution as it strives to improve and also to provide the Commission with an update on any activities it has planned or is implementing to enhance institutional effectiveness.

If the Commission determines that an institution meets the **Standards of Membership** but the Commission has identified one or more standards where the institution's future compliance is questionable without ongoing institutional attention, the institution may be continued in accreditation. However, it will be monitored by the Commission for a period of time not to exceed 12 months if the longest program offered by the institution is less than one year in length, 18 months if the longest program offered by the institution is at least one year but less than two years in length, and 24 months if the longest program offered by the institution is more than two years in length. The institution will be required to submit a monitoring report at the end of the period documenting that it has addressed the areas of concern and remains in compliance with the standard(s). The Commission may also require the institution to undergo a site visit during the period.

DEFERMENT OF ACTION -- Action on continuing an institution's accreditation may be deferred when the Commission judges that it has insufficient data on which to base a decision. In such cases, action is tabled until a specified time from the date of the Commission action, but in no case to exceed twelve months if the program offered by the institution is less than 12 months, eighteen months if the program is

at least one year but less than two years in length, or two years if the program is at least two years in length. In the interim, the institution is required to submit a report and/or host a visit by Commission representatives. Deferments are not included in the Commission's public announcements.

WARNING – Warning is a Commission action that signifies a school is deficient in meeting one or more of the **Standards of Membership**. A warning does not affect the accredited status of the institution. The school shall respond to the Commission's concerns within a reasonable time as established by the Commission, but in no case to exceed twelve months if the program offered by the institution is less than 12 months, eighteen months if the program is at least one year but less than two years in length, or two years if the program is at least two years in length.

PROBATION STATUS - Probation is an action that signifies the Commission's very serious concern about the institution's failure to meet one or more of the **Standards of Membership**. It also signifies that the Commission believes the institution is in direct and immediate danger of losing its accreditation because of conditions that threaten its ability to comply with the **Standards of Membership** and/or other policies.

Prior to placing an institution on probation, the Commission will provide an opportunity for the institution to show cause why the action should not be taken. The burden of proof shall rest with the institution. Institutions may appeal the probation action under relevant policies and procedures established by the Association. Until the appeals process is completed, the institution's status is unaffected.

An institution on probation must bring itself into compliance with the Commission's Standards within a time period specified by the Commission; failure to do so will result in termination of accreditation. Institutions for which the longest program is at least two years will have a maximum period of two years to come into compliance with Commission Standards; institutions for which the longest program is at least one year but less than two years will have a maximum of eighteen months. In placing an institution on probation, the Commission may specify a shorter period of time during which the institution must demonstrate it has come into compliance with the Standards or face the loss of its accreditation.

Institutions on probation are subject to special scrutiny by the Commission which may include the submission of specified reports and hosting visiting teams. If conditions at the institution worsen significantly during the period of probation, the Commission may take an action terminating accreditation. If the institution on probation does not come into compliance with the Standards during the specified time period, the Commission will terminate accreditation unless the Commission, for good cause, extends the period for achieving compliance.

Probation is a public status indicated in any Association publication or communication about the affected institution. Upon inquiry, the Commission will provide the reasons for probationary status as well as plans to monitor the institution. An institution on probation is obliged to disclose its status as well as the availability of additional information on its probationary status to prospective students, those currently enrolled, and the public, in its catalog and recruitment materials, and on its website.

TERMINATION OF ACCREDITATION -The Commission will terminate the accreditation of an institution on probation if at the end of the specified time period the institution has not come into compliance with the Commission's Standards unless extended for good cause. The Commission may also terminate the accreditation of an institution not on probation if it finds that the institution is not meeting one or more **Standards of Membership** and that this non-compliance is fundamental to the institution's integrity or its ability to come into compliance within the time frame specified by the Commission.

For institutions not on probation, prior to taking the action to terminate accreditation, the Commission will provide an opportunity for the institution to show cause why the decision to terminate should not be made. The burden of proof shall rest with the institution. Institutions may appeal this action under relevant policies and procedures established by the Association. Until final action is taken on the appeal, the institution's status is unaffected. Institutions that lose accreditation and subsequently seek affiliation must satisfactorily complete the entire process for applying institutions as required by the policies and procedures of the Commission.

REVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL STATUS

All accredited institutions must undergo comprehensive evaluations by a Commission appointed visiting team, preceded by institutional self-study, at least once every ten years. The Commission on Technical and Career Institutions also requires as a matter of policy that all of its accredited institutions undergo a focused visit no later than five years following a decennial or initial accreditation visit. The institution bears the responsibility for preparing a focused visit report to be distributed to the Commission office and to members of the focused visit team no later than four weeks prior to the date of the on-site visit by the team. The purpose of the focused visit report and the ensuing visit is to inform the Commission of significant developments and progress made by the institution since its most recent decennial on-site visit. The focused visit report should include a response to any progress report or other actions required of the institution by Commission action or policy.

Between comprehensive evaluations, the Commission may require reports and/or evaluations focused on specified items.

Institutions may also be asked to submit other reports on specified topics. Such reports are often an expression of the Commission's concern regarding specified conditions, which affect an institution's compliance with the **Standards of Membership** and/or other policies. The report provides an opportunity for the institution to inform the Commission of action taken to address the area of concern. There are other circumstances which may result in a Commission decision which requires a special report to provide additional information, as in the case of a deferral of action, and the need to monitor anticipated significant institutional developments and substantive changes. When external validation of the report's content is believed necessary, the report is followed by an evaluation visit to the campus by a small number of Commission representatives.