



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

THE ACCREDITATION LIAISON

The Commission on Colleges and its candidate and member institutions share responsibility for maintaining a relationship whereby both are fully informed of current accreditation issues and requirements and how those requirements are applied. In order to facilitate close and effective communication, the Commission has assigned a staff member to each candidate and member institution. This staff member establishes a working relationship with the leaders of the institution, consults with the institution during its reviews, answers questions or receives comments from the institution, maintains the Commission file on the institution, and, in general, develops a familiarity with the operations of the institution, to the extent possible.

Each candidate and member institution can help fulfill its responsibilities and complement this relationship with Commission staff by appointing an Accreditation Liaison.

Selecting the Accreditation Liaison

The Commission strongly recommends that the chief executive officer appoint as the institution's Accreditation Liaison a senior faculty member or administrator who reports directly to the chief executive officer and has a suitable degree of visibility on campus. The liaison should not be a consultant employed to assist the institution during its decennial review. All official communications from the Commission will continue to go to the chief executive officer.

Responsibilities of the Accreditation Liaison

The Accreditation Liaison is responsible for the following:

1. Ensuring that compliance with accreditation requirements is incorporated into the planning and evaluation process of the institution.
2. Notifying the Commission in advance of substantive changes and program developments in accord with the substantive change policies of the Commission.
3. Familiarizing faculty, staff, and students with the Commission's accrediting policies and procedures, and with particular sections of the accrediting standards and Commission policies that have application to certain aspects of the campus (e.g., library, continuing education) especially when such documents are adopted or revised.
4. Serving as a contact person for Commission staff. This includes encouraging institutional staff to route routine inquiries about the *Principles of Accreditation* and accreditation policies and processes through the Accreditation Liaison, who will contact Commission staff, if necessary, and ensuring that email from the Commission office does not get trapped in the institution's spam filter.

5. Coordinating the preparation of the annual profiles and any other reports requested by the Commission.
6. Serving as a resource person during the decennial review process and helping prepare for and coordinating reaffirmation and other accrediting visits.
7. Ensuring that electronic institutional data collected by the Commission is accurate and timely.
8. Maintaining a file of all accreditation materials, such as, reports related to the decennial review; accreditation committee reports; accreditation manuals, standards, and policies; schedules of all visits; and correspondence from accrediting offices.

How to Become an Effective Accreditation Liaison

Effective communication between member institutions and Commission staff is the key to ensuring that institutions are kept informed of current accreditation issues and requirements and that the Commission is made aware of institutional perspectives and concerns that touch accreditation issues. To develop an effective relationship between the institution and the Commission staff member, the Accreditation Liaison may want to

1. Learn about the Commission on Colleges and the way it works by reviewing the following sections of the its Website (www.sacscoc.org):
 - general information about the Commission
 - the *Principles of Accreditation*
 - policies and publications of the Commission
 - institutional resources, including handbooks, manuals, and guides
 - upcoming meetings and events
2. Maintain contact with the Commission staff member assigned to your institution.
3. Get involved in Commission activities by attending the annual meeting and serving as a peer evaluator.
4. Become acquainted with the institution's accreditation history by reviewing past correspondence with the Commission and materials stemming from previous reaffirmation or substantive change reviews.
5. Ensure that reports to the Commission and significant correspondence from the Commission are archived for future reference.

Endorsed: Commission on Colleges, June 2000
Edited: January 2007