



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

## **DIFFERENTIATED REVIEW PROCESS**

### **Policy Statement**

All institutions accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) are required to undergo a review for reaffirmation of accreditation every ten (10) years. After being granted initial accreditation, new member institutions will be reviewed for reaffirmation of accreditation after five (5) years, then every ten (10) years thereafter. While maintaining the rigor associated with the reaffirmation of accreditation process, member institutions may participate in a Differentiated Review Process if they meet eligibility requirements. The reaffirmation review occurs in accordance with procedures outlined in pertinent SACSCOC documents including handbooks and other policies (see the *Principles of Accreditation* and the “Handbook for Institutions Seeking Reaffirmation of Accreditation”). The Differentiated Review Process will include compiling and submitting a **modified** Compliance Certification, documenting compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*, and submitting a Quality Enhancement Plan for review by evaluation committees. The Differentiated Review Process includes off-site and on-site reviews and institutions document fewer *Principles of Accreditation* standards during the initial process (institutions may need to address additional standards based on reports or supplemental information discovered). Institutions may **not** participate in the Differentiated Review Process for two consecutive decennial reaffirmation of accreditation processes.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Eligibility Process**

In accordance with the “Time Line for Reaffirmation Tracks”, institutions within the reaffirmation class (Tracks A & B) approaching the reaffirmation of accreditation process may apply to participate in the Differentiated Review Process. SACSCOC staff will identify member institutions that meet the initial eligibility criteria.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

Institutions must demonstrate the following eligibility criteria to participate in the Differentiated Review Process:

- Has been accredited by SACSCOC for at least ten (10) years.
- Has not been placed on sanction (Warning or Probation) by SACSCOC within the last five (5) years.
- Has not submitted a SACSCOC Monitoring Report within the last five (5) years.
- Has not had a significant number of substantive changes within the last five (5) years.

- An example of “significant number of substantive changes” occurs if the number of new instructional sites exceeds the mean number of such new sites for the reaffirmation class and represents more than a 50% increase for the institution in the last five (5) years.

The peer review committee may consider additional conditions that may prevent an institution from participating in a differentiated review to include, the institution:

- Has not experienced any of the following in the last five (5) years:
  - Constant change in institutional CEO position.
  - Significant (20% or more) increase/decrease in enrollment over the five (5) years.
  - Has not demonstrated issues with board/administrative distinction.
- Has not been placed on sanction from a programmatic, professional or national athletic association or accreditor.
- Has not experienced monitoring for its institutional finances in the last five (5) years.

A peer review committee will consider the eligible institutions’ responses to the aforementioned eligibility criteria and recommend their participation to the Executive Council. The Executive Council will confirm an institution’s eligibility to participate in the Differentiated Review Process. Institutions will receive written notification of eligibility and must affirm their participation to the SACSCOC President, in writing. Institutions may not appeal the Executive Council decision.

### **Modified Compliance Certification Document**

All SACSCOC member institutions that meet the aforementioned eligibility criteria are approved to engage in the Differentiated Review Process. Participants must complete a *modified* compliance certification document consisting of 40 Core Requirements and Standards, as listed below:

1.1\* (Integrity), 2.1 (Institutional mission), 4.1 (Governing board characteristics), 4.2.d (Conflict of interest), 4.2.f (External influence), 4.2.g (Board self-evaluation), 4.3 (Multi-level governance - if applicable), 5.1 (Chief executive officer), 5.2a (CEO control), 5.2b (Control of intercollegiate athletics), 5.2c (Control of fund-raising activities), 5.4\* (Qualified administrative/academic officers), 6.1\* (Full-time faculty), 6.2.a (Faculty qualifications - new faculty hired since last reaffirmation), 6.2.b\* (Program faculty), 6.2.c\* (Program coordination), 7.1 (Institutional planning), 7.2 (Quality Enhancement Plan), 8.1\* (Student achievement), 8.2.a\* (Student outcome: educational programs), 9.1\* (Program outcomes), 9.2\* (Program length), 9.3a-c\* (General education requirements), 10.2\* (Public information), 10.5\* (Admissions policies and practices), 10.6\* (Distance and correspondence education), 10.7\* (Policies for awarding credit), 11.1 (Library and learning/information resources), 12.1\* (Student support services), 12.4\* (Student complaints), 12.6 (Student debt), 13.1 (Financial resources), 13.2 a-c (Financial documents), 13.3 (Financial responsibility), 13.6\* (Federal and state responsibilities), 13.7\* (Physical resources), 14.1\* (Publication of accreditation status), 14.3\* (Comprehensive institutional review), 14.4\* (Representation to other agencies), and 14.5 (Policy compliance)

*\*Denote federal requirements that must be addressed.*

**NOTE: Institutions are expected to maintain compliance with all standards in *the Principles of Accreditation*. If an institution’s response reveals noncompliance with other standards than those noted above, the SACSCOC Board of Trustees will request submission of monitoring reports until compliance is demonstrated. The maximum period for submitting monitoring reports is two years.**

**Future Reviews**

Institutions that meet the eligibility requirements and participate in the Differentiated Review Process may **not** participate in the Differentiated Review process for the institution's next decennial reaffirmation of accreditation.

**Document History**

*Approved: Commission on Colleges December 2019*