

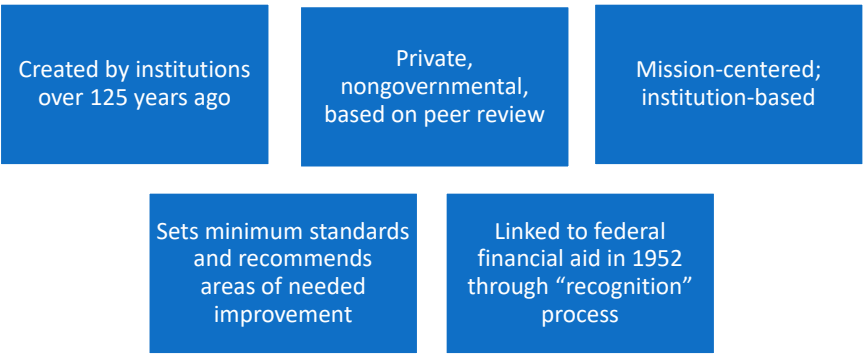


Accreditation 101: Fitting the pieces together

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Senior Vice President

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History of Accreditation



- Created by institutions over 125 years ago
- Private, nongovernmental, based on peer review
- Mission-centered; institution-based
- Sets minimum standards and recommends areas of needed improvement
- Linked to federal financial aid in 1952 through "recognition" process

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Higher Education Regulatory “Triad”

Accrediting Agencies

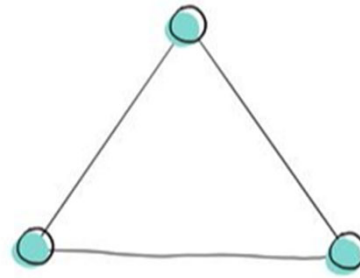
- Institutional quality and continuous improvement
- Accountability
- “Gate-keeper” function

State Governments

- Authorize institutions to operate within the state
- Consumer protection
- Varying range of regulatory requirements

Federal Government

- Focus on administrative and fiscal integrity of federal financial aid programs
- “Recognize” accreditation agencies



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Oversight of Accreditation Activities

Review by U.S. Department of Education (USDE) staff based upon recognition standards

Recommendation by USDE to National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI)

- Appointed group of educators and public members

Recommendation by NACIQI to U.S. Secretary of Education

Recognition decision by U.S. Secretary of Education



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Types of Accrediting Agencies

Institutional Accreditors

- Seven largest agencies accredit all aspects of an institution of higher education in specific regions; formerly called “regional” accreditors; all have now decided to accept applications from institutions in other regions
- Other national accrediting agencies accredit institutions of higher education anywhere in the country; usually they have a single focus

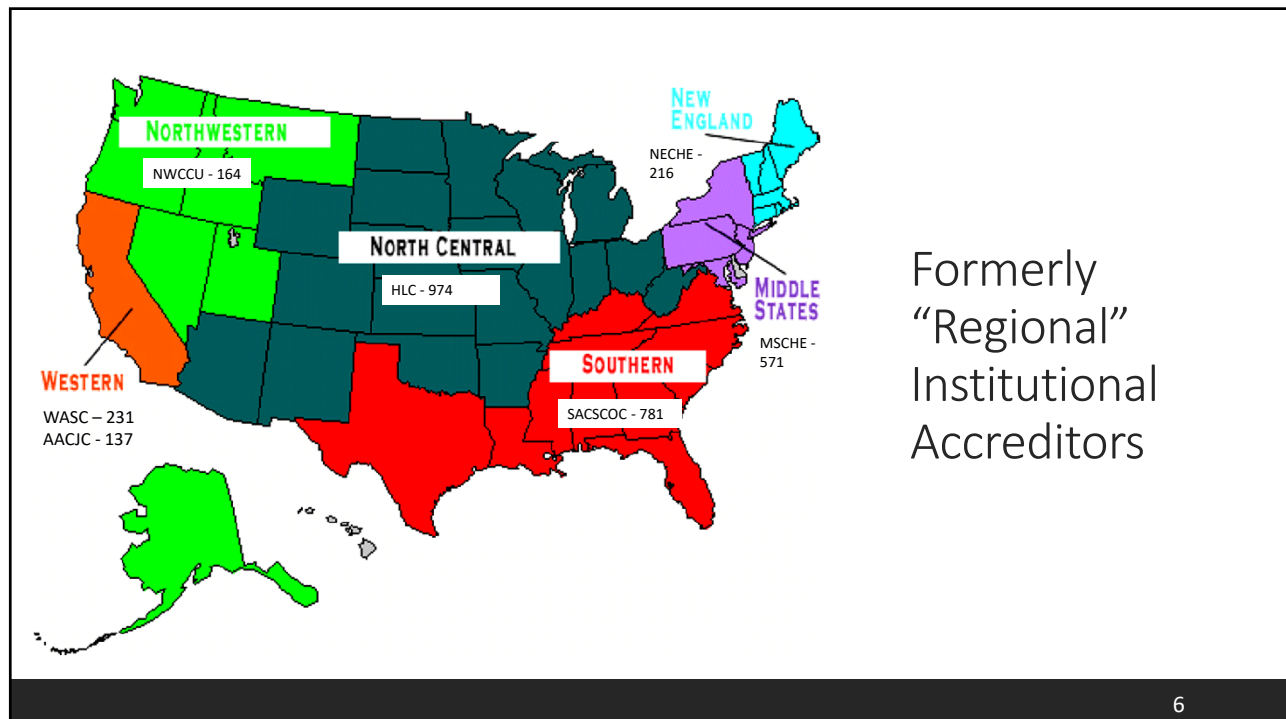
Specialized or Professional Accreditors

- Accredite programs within institutions; some can also function as “institutional” accreditors for institutions with programs in the same academic area (like law, medicine, and theology)



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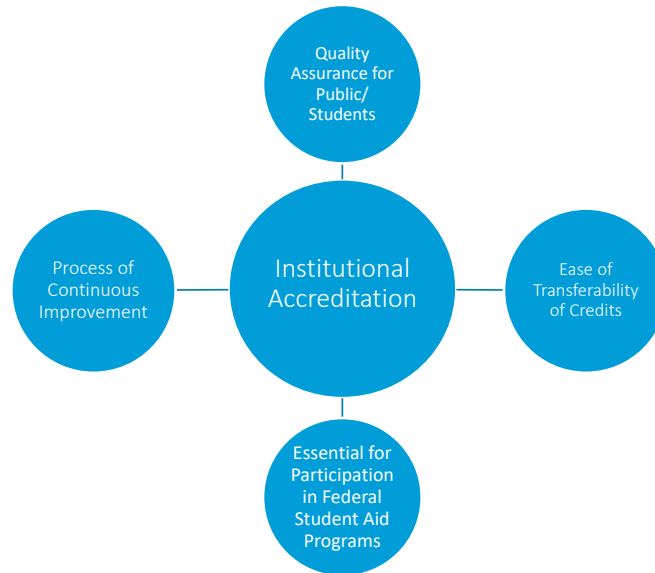
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Why Institutions Seek Institutional Accreditation



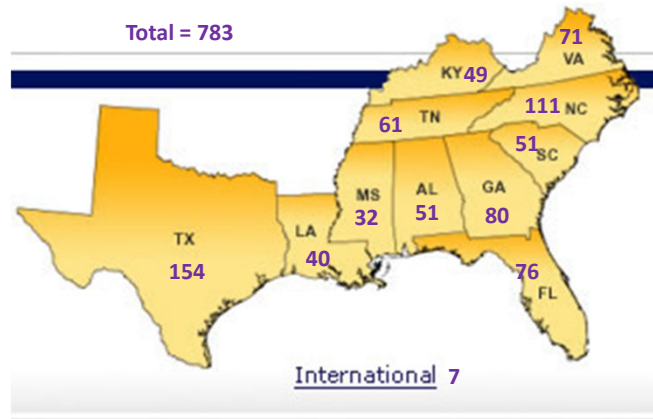
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SACSCOC Accredited and Candidate Institutions by State



As of June 2022

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Know Your Institution

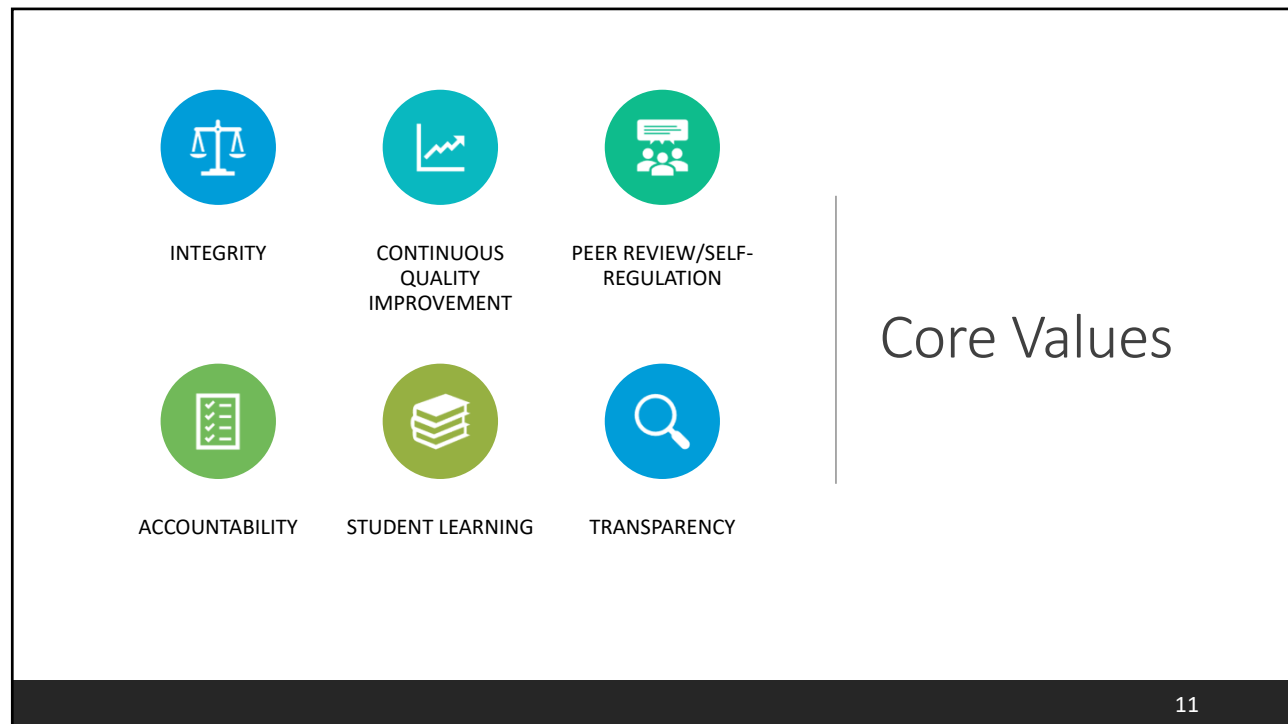
- Your Institution's Level

I: Associate Degree	IV: Educational Specialist
II: Baccalaureate Degree	V: ≤ 3 Doctoral Degrees
III: Master's Degree	VI: ≤ 4 Doctoral Degrees

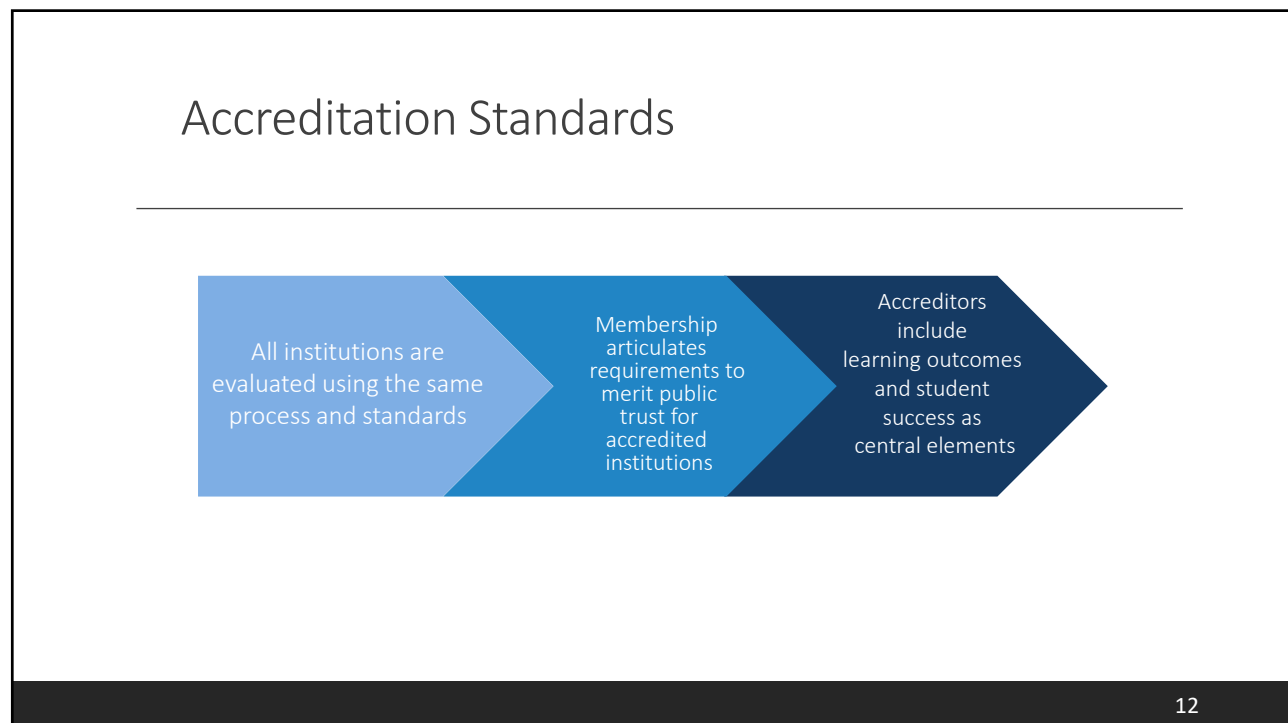
- Track A (Level I-II)
- Track B (Levels III-VI)
- Your reaffirmation year

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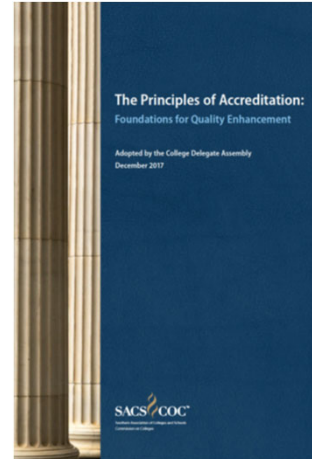


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Principles of Accreditation: Foundations of Quality Enhancement

The *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* outlines the accreditation standards adopted by the membership.

- Organizational Structure
- Content
- Core Requirements and Standards



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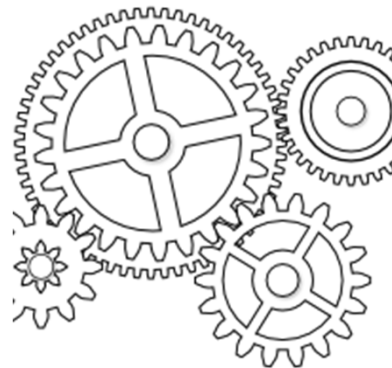
Characteristics of the Review Process

Institutional responsibility

- Ongoing compliance with standards
- Persuasive case for compliance with supporting documentation

Institutional review conducted in the context of institutional mission

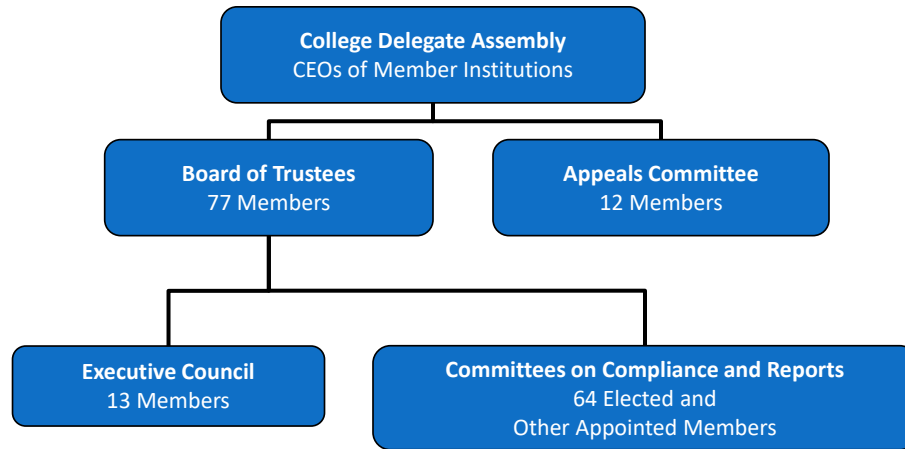
- Reviews and decisions by peer evaluators; not professional staff



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SACSCOC Structure



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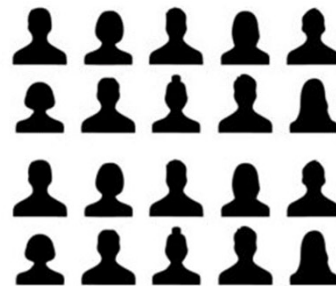
College Delegate Assembly

Member institutions each have one vote on:

- Electing Trustees
- Electing Appeals Committee & hearing officers
- Electing SACSCOC rep to SACS Board
- Changes to accrediting standards
- Changes to dues structure

CEO of a member institution has the vote

Meets once per year at the Annual Meeting in December



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SACSCOC Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees: 77 members

- Three representatives from each state (33)
- One public member from each state (11)
- 33 at-large representatives
 - Including one international representative

Meets two times a year



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Executive Council

Executive Council: 13 members

- One Trustee from each state
- One public member
- Chair, SACSCOC Board of Trustees

Meets three times a year



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Appeals Committee

Appeals Committee: 12 members

- Former members of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees

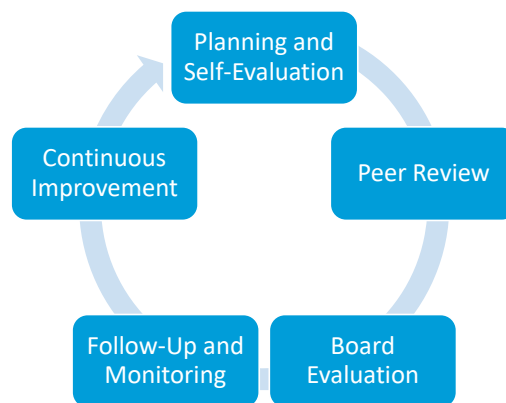
Hears appeals of adverse actions



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Process of Institutional Accreditation



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Self Evaluation



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Peer Review

Peer Review Committees:

Review	Visit	Recommend	Assess
Review institution's compliance document	Visit campus, conduct interviews and engage the campus community	Recommend action to SACSCOC Board of Trustees	Assess compliance (binary determination)

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SACSCOC Board Evaluation

SACSCOC Board of Trustees:

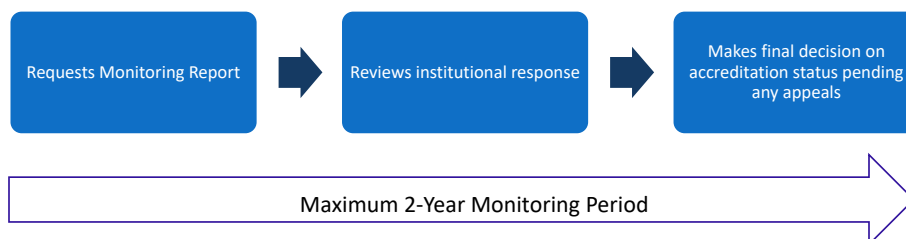


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Monitoring

SACSCOC Board of Trustees:



Note: The SACSCOC Board may place an institution on sanction if it does not meet core requirements or has come to the end of its monitoring period. At that time, an institution may only be continued in accreditation for Good Cause.

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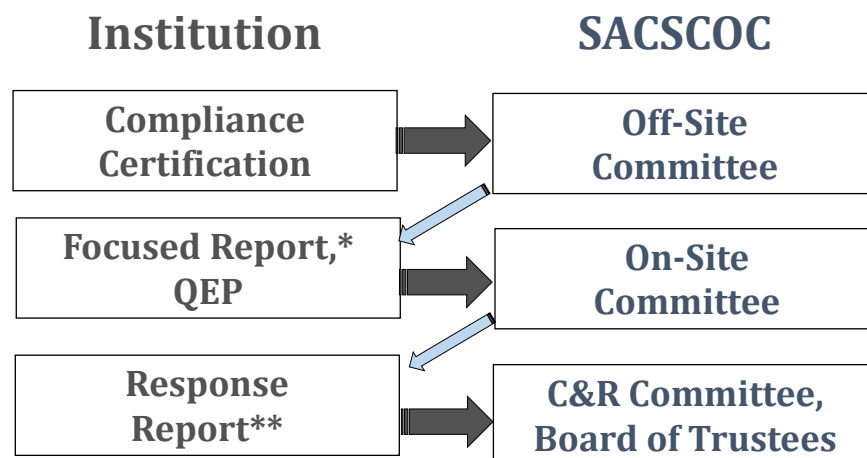


SACSCOC Peer Review Processes

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Reaffirmation Process (Decennial Review)



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Differentiated Decennial Review

Eligible Institutions identified by SACSCOC staff

- Has been accredited by SACSCOC for at least ten (10) years.
- Within the last five (5) years, has NOT:
 - Been placed on sanction (Warning or Probation)
 - Submitted a Monitoring Report
 - Had a significant number of substantive changes

Institutional applications reviewed by peers

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

Compliance Certification includes a reduced number of standards

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Off-Site Reaffirmation Process

- Committee Structure
- “Cluster” of Institutions
- Timeline
 - Materials submitted
 - March for review in April (Track A)
 - September for review in November (Track B)
 - 3 or more “Zoom” meetings
 - SharePoint collaborative writing
 - Virtual meeting over 1.5 days to finalize reports
 - Preliminary report sent to institution

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On-Site Reaffirmation Process

- Committee Structure
- Focused Report and QEP
- Timeline
 - Materials submitted 6 weeks prior to visit
 - Fall: Track A
 - Spring: Track B
 - 1 or more “Zoom” meetings
 - On-Site visit
 - Committee completes draft
 - Draft report sent to institution to identify errors of fact
 - Final report transmitted formally to institution

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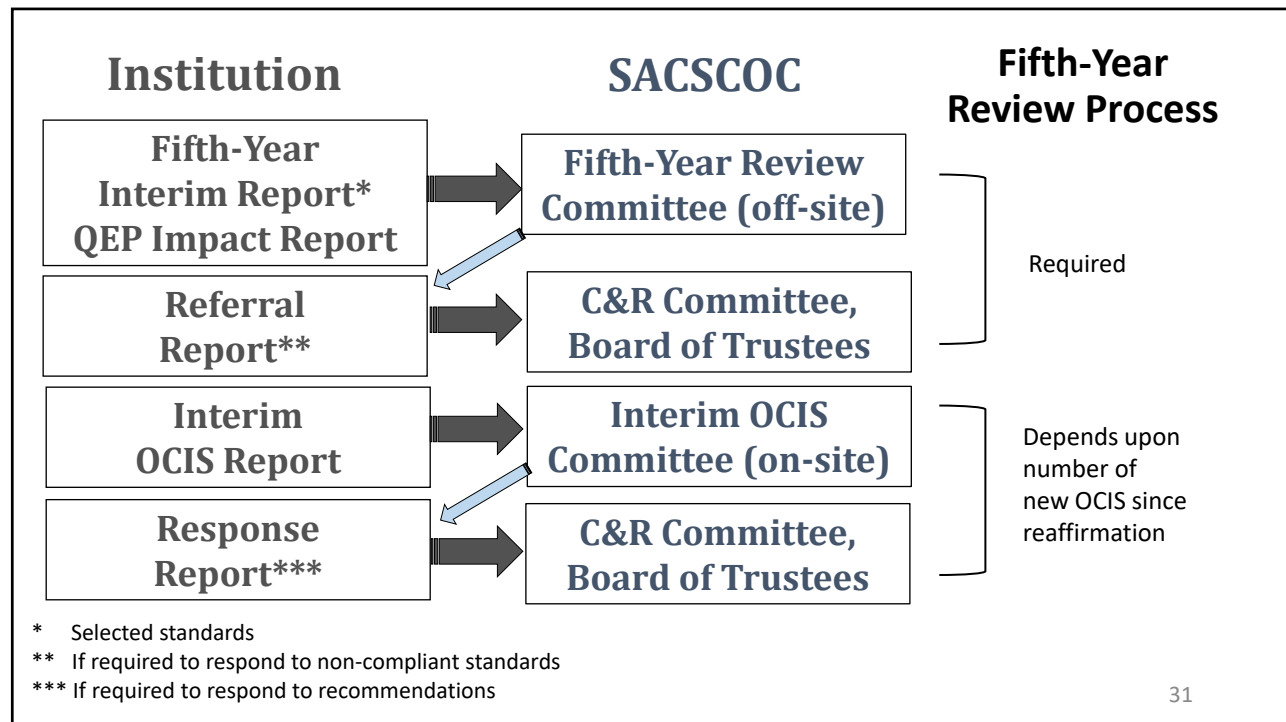
Tips from Evaluators

- Ensure that all compliance components in the standard are addressed.
- Provide relevant, curated evidence to illustrate and support statements made in the narrative.
- Prepare your report so that it is easily navigated, with a clear, focused organizational structure to guide reviewers to essential information required to confirm compliance.
- Use narratives to provide context and align linked evidence to standard requirements.

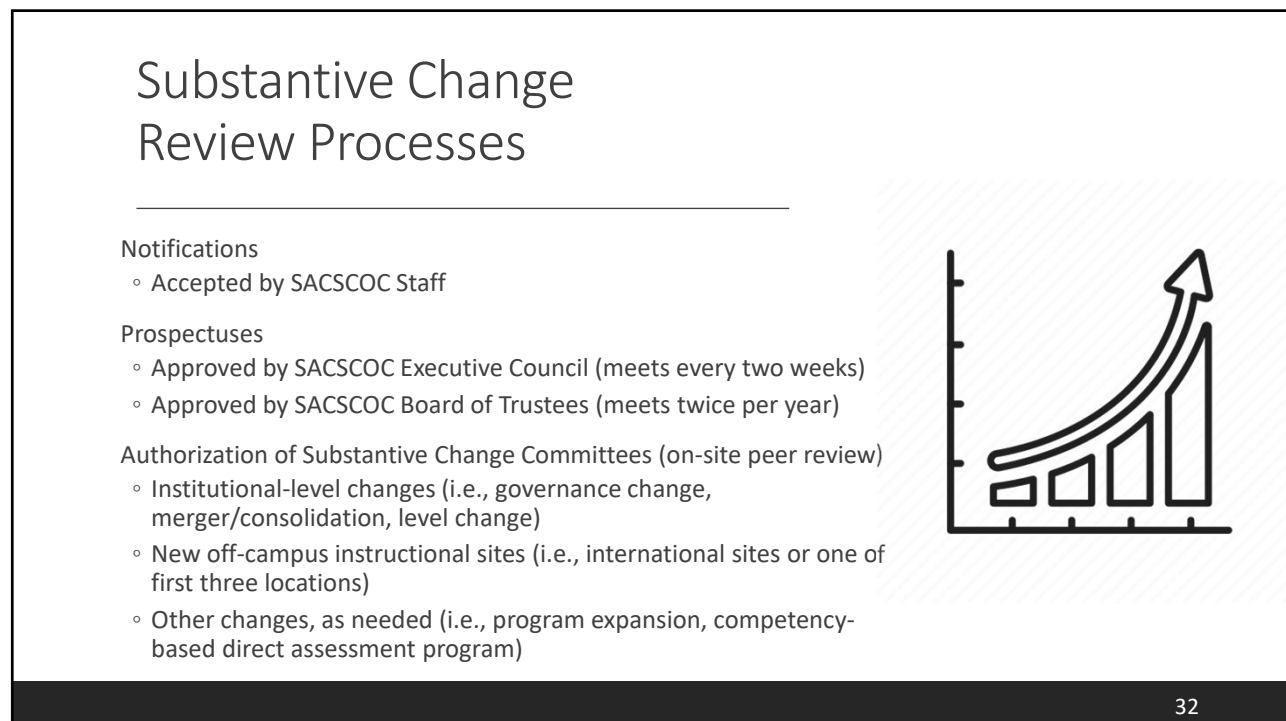


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Substantive Change Policy and Procedures

The policy includes procedures and specific requirements for each type of substantive change.

The Appendix provides a summary chart followed by instructions regarding what to submit for those changes requiring submission of a prospectus.

New Program – Approval

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

FOUNDS
Approval
Exec Council of the Board
Consent
Yes
No
Yes

A new program with 50-100% new content is a significant departure from the institution's existing programs and requires SACS/COC approval prior to implementation.

For an institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION, a new program with 25-100% new content is a significant departure from the institution's existing programs and requires SACS/COC approval prior to implementation.

- Content is new if it is not currently offered by the institution at the new program's instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral).
- A determination of the percentage of new content is made by the institution, not SACS/COC.

Substantive Change Type	Requires	Visit	Other
This is a summary only. Always consult policy for complete information on substantive change types.			
	Notification	Approval – Exec Council	Approval – Full Board
		Contingent	Required
			Review Fee
			Sub Change Restriction
INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES			
Acquisition	•	•	•
Change Measure Progress to Completion	•	•	•
CBE Course-Credit Approach-Institutional Approval	•	•	•
Distance Ed-Institutional-level Approval	•	•	•

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Accreditation: Institutional Resources

Reaffirmation: Documents, Policies, and Timelines

- Compliance Certification Document
- Handbook for Institutions Seeking Reaffirmation
- Institutional Summary Form
- Faculty Roster Form (Plus Faculty from Prior Review Form and directions for completion)
- Timelines for Reaffirmation Tracks

Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports (Policy)

Observers on Reaffirmation On-Site Review Committees (Policy)

Quality Enhancement Plan (Policy and framework)



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Quality Enhancement Plan

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It's about
student
learning
and success

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Topic Identification and Focus: What is your goal?

How will you know the project has been successful?

Provide a clear, concise statement of intent



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Topic Identification and Focus: Why this goal?

Strategic Plan

Institutional initiatives

Institutional metrics and key performance indicators

Assessment data

Trends and peer comparisons

Feedback from constituent groups



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What intervention
will be implemented?

What is your operational plan?

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Planning and Assessment: How will you monitor success?

Outcomes are specific, measurable, and clearly related
to student learning or student success

Baseline data and targets for improvement

Authentic, appropriate assessments

- aligned with plan goals and outcomes
- consider both formative and summative assessments
- are not limited to indirect measures



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Broad-Based Support and Resources

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Tips from Evaluators

Connect the topic to institutional plans and provide the evidentiary support.

Focus the topic to support feasibility and provide a clear implementation plan

Ensure that the intervention and operational plan is thorough and clearly aligned with the plan goals and outcomes.

Define outcomes that are specific and measurable, and include mechanisms for establishing a baseline, monitoring progress, and achieving targets

Ensure that assessment is an integral part of the plan and aligned with the plan goals and outcomes.

Avoid an assessment plan that focuses primarily on measuring implementation of intervention strategies rather than student achievement or learning outcomes



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