



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

UNSOLICITED INFORMATION

Policy Statement

Unsolicited information is information about an accredited or candidate institution that comes to the attention of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) typically outside the normal cyclical review of an institution and that appears to call into question significant issues of compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*. Five circumstances warrant SACSCOC review of unsolicited information about an accredited or candidate institution: (1) information revealed about an institution during its off-site or on-site committee reviews; (2) information revealed about an institution between periods of scheduled review; (3) information revealed by an institution during its meeting on the record with a Committee on Compliance and Reports, a standing committees of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees; (4) information received from the U.S. Department of Education regarding an institution's compliance responsibilities under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, including, as examples, an institution's most recent student loan default rates, the results of financial or compliance audits, program reviews, and any other information that may be provided by the U.S. Department of Education; and (5) information received from U.S. Department of Education recognized agencies regarding adverse action or the imposition of probation on a SACSCOC candidate or member institution.

The procedures for review of unsolicited information for each of the circumstances described above are as follows:

- (1) SACSCOC shall give appropriate consideration to significant accreditation-related information revealed about an institution during its Off-Site Reaffirmation, On-Site Reaffirmation, and Fifth-Year Interim committee reviews, which indicate potential non-compliance with a standard(s) in the *Principles of Accreditation*. Following submission of a committee report, the institution will be given an adequate period of time to respond to the information before any action is taken by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.
- (2) SACSCOC shall give appropriate consideration to significant accreditation-related information revealed about an institution between periods of scheduled review, typically from, but not limited to, a media source, which indicates potential non-compliance with a standard(s) in the *Principles of Accreditation*. Following review of the information by staff, the institution will be given an adequate period of time to respond to the information. If, after reviewing the response, Commission staff determines that the information is of factual substance and is accreditation-related, the information and documentation, along with the institution's response, will be forwarded to the Committees on Compliance and Reports for formal review or the President of SACSCOC can authorize a Special Committee to review the institution.
- (3) SACSCOC shall give appropriate consideration to significant accreditation-related information revealed by an institution during its meeting on the record with a Committee on Compliance and Reports, which indicates potential non-compliance with a standard(s) in the *Principles of Accreditation*. (See "Administrative Procedures for the Meetings of the Committees on Compliance and Reports" for procedures.)

- (4) SACSCOC shall give appropriate consideration to significant accreditation-related information, which indicates potential non-compliance with a standard(s) in the *Principles of Accreditation*, received from the U.S. Department of Education regarding an institution's compliance responsibilities under Title IV of the Higher Education Act as amended, including, as examples, an institution's most recent student loan default rates, the results of financial or compliance audits, program reviews, and any other information that may be provided by the U.S. Department of Education. Following review of the information by SACSCOC staff, the institution will be given an adequate period of time to respond to the information. If, after reviewing the response, Commission staff determines that the information is of factual substance and is accreditation-related, the information and documentation, along with the institution's response, will be forwarded to a Committee on Compliance and Reports for formal review, or the President of SACSCOC can authorize a Special Committee to review the institution.
- (5) SACSCOC shall give appropriate consideration to information received from U.S. Department of Education-recognized agencies regarding adverse action or the implementation of probation on a SACSCOC candidate or member institution. Institutions are also required to disclose this information to SACSCOC. (See "Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies" for procedures.)

Document History

(In 2000, Items 1-3 originally included as part of the SACSCOC policy "Standing Rules: SACSCOC Board of Trustees"; item 4 included in 2008)

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