
Policy on Notification of Actions Affecting the Accreditation Status of Affiliated Institutions and Providing Other Information

Recognizing that the Federal Government, state agencies, the public, and others rely on accreditation decisions, the following steps are taken to assure the timely and broad dissemination of actions taken regarding the accreditation status of affiliated institutions.

Commission adverse actions are defined as, and limited to, denial of candidacy for accreditation, withdrawal of candidacy for accreditation, denial of accreditation, placement on probation, and withdrawal of accreditation.

Initiation of an Adverse Action

In those cases where the New England Commission of Higher Education has voted to initiate an action adverse to an institution's accreditation or candidacy for accreditation, the institution has the right to show cause why the action should not be taken. The Commission informs the affected institution of its action in writing and specifies reasons for the show-cause action. The issuance of a Show-Cause order is a public action; it is a final action not subject to appeal. The institution's candidacy or accreditation status continues during the show-cause period.

- As required by federal regulations, the Commission will provide notification of the show-cause action to the U.S. Secretary of Education and appropriate state agencies and accrediting agencies at the same time it notifies the institution, but no later than 30 days after it reaches the decision. The Commission will also make available on its website where it is available to the general public, not more than one (1) business day after notifying the institution of the show-cause action, a statement that will be developed by the Commission in consultation with the institution. However, the Commission reserves the right to make final determination as to its nature and content.
- Within seven days of receipt of written notice of the show cause action, an institution is obliged to disclose its status to prospective students, those currently enrolled, and the public, on its website.

Adverse Actions

Adverse actions (i.e., denial or withdrawal of candidacy; denial or withdrawal of accreditation; placement on probation) taken by the Commission may be appealed under the New England Commission of Higher Education's Policy and Procedure for the Appeal of Adverse Accreditation Action Affecting Institutional Accreditation or Candidate for Accreditation Status. If the institution does not file a notice of intent to appeal within seven

days of being informed of an adverse action, the Commission's decision becomes final. If the institution appeals the Commission's action, the institution's status remains unchanged until the completion of the appeal. The Commission, at its discretion, may make the adverse action public before the decision becomes final or the appeal is completed. In so doing, the Commission will provide information about the appeal process.

- The Commission provides written notification to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and appropriate state and accrediting agencies of final decisions to place an institution on probation or deny or withdraw the accreditation or candidate status of the institution at the same time the institution is notified, but no later than 30 days after it reaches the decision.
- Within one business day of notifying the institution of the show-cause action or of the final decision on any adverse action, the information is posted on the Commission website where it is available to the general public. The institution is required to disclose the show-cause action or adverse action to current and prospective students within seven (7) business days of receipt of the letter communicating the final decision.

A statement summarizing the reasons for an adverse action, along with the official comments that the affected institution may wish to make with regard to that decision, or evidence that the affected institution has been offered the opportunity to provide official comments, is made available to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, appropriate state agencies, and the public within sixty (60) days of the final decision on any adverse action.

An institution may choose to release its own statement regarding the adverse action. The Commission may make public the letter notifying the institution of the adverse action and may issue a public statement.

Voluntary Withdrawal from Status

The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, appropriate state and accrediting agencies, and the public are informed within ten (10) days of a decision by a candidate or accredited institution to voluntarily withdraw from its status or to let its accreditation or candidacy status lapse. Notice is also included in subsequent notices of Commission actions as well as on the Commission website <http://neche.org>.

Other Actions

The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, appropriate state agencies, and appropriate accrediting agencies are informed within thirty (30) days of final actions granting candidacy or accreditation and reaffirming candidacy or accreditation. This information is also made available to the public on the Commission website and is otherwise widely distributed.

Other Information

Annually, to provide the Secretary of Education with a membership roster of affiliated institutions, the Commission updates its entries in the institutional database maintained by the U.S. Department of Education.

Upon request of the Secretary, the Commission will provide information regarding an accredited or candidate institution's compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, including its eligibility to participate in such programs, for the purpose of assisting the Secretary in resolving problems with the institution's participation in these programs.

The Commission also will provide the Secretary information regarding any change in its policies, procedures, or accreditation standards that might alter its scope of recognition or compliance with federal regulations.

If requested, the Commission will provide the Secretary a summary of major accrediting activities during the past year.

Finally, as required by federal regulation, the Commission will respond to requests from the Secretary of Education for information that may bear upon an accredited or candidate institution's compliance with its Title IV HEA program responsibilities, including the eligibility of the institution to participate in Title IV HEA programs. The Commission will also notify the Secretary of the name of an institution or program that it has reason to believe is failing to meet its Title IV program responsibilities or is engaged in fraud or abuse, along with the Commission's reasons for these concerns. Except in cases when the matter warrants a confidential report to the Secretary of Education, the Commission shall notify the institution if its name is submitted to the Secretary of Education under this provision.¹

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June 2005

Per NEASC Board of Trustees policy, revised April 2009

April 2010

September 2011

Editorial changes, March 2014

April 2015

July 2020

August 2021

September 2022

June 2024

Editorial Changes, March 2025

¹ Federal regulations require a case-by-case review of the circumstances surrounding the Commission's contact with the U.S. Secretary of Education and the need for confidentiality of that contact. If it is determined it is necessary to hold the contact confidential, then the institution will not be notified of the report made. Also, if the U.S. Department of Education requests a report remain confidential, then there will be no notification to the institution.