
Policy on Selection, Ethics, and Responsibilities of Commissioners

The New England Commission of Higher Education is composed of at least 21 individuals. Up to six of every seven members are currently affiliated with member colleges and universities, including faculty and administrators employed at individual institutions or multi-institutional systems of accredited institutions or members of the governing board of a member institution. The remaining members, comprising at least one-seventh of the total, are representatives of the public interest, who may include students. Each Commissioner is elected for a three-year term and is eligible to serve a second three-year term.

Commissioners normally shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms, with two exceptions:

- (1) the terms of the Commission Chair and Vice Chair may be extended to allow them to serve their terms of office; and
- (2) when it is determined to be in the best interest of the Commission, such as but not limited to special knowledge, experience, and/or ensuring a balance on the Commission with regard to overall length of service among Commissioners, a Commissioner who has previously served two consecutive three (3) year terms may be elected to a third and final three (3) year term provided that at least one (1) year has elapsed between the end of the second and the beginning of the third term. It is expected that electing a Commissioner to serve a third term shall be an occasional occurrence. Candidates for a third term shall meet all qualifications for office as described below.

Commissioners are elected by a majority vote of the delegates of institutional members at its annual business meeting held in December. A slate of nominees is presented by the Commission, and an opportunity is offered for nominations from the floor. In compiling its slate of nominees, the Commission solicits suggestions from the chief executive officer of each member college and university as well as interested others. Terms for Commissioners elected at the annual business meeting begin the following July 1.

Vacancies occurring on the Commission at a time other than that of the annual business meeting are filled by the Commission. Individuals elected in this manner serve until the time of the next annual business meeting where they may be nominated for the balance of a three-year term. Candidates for a third term shall only be considered for election by the institutional members at the annual business meeting.

I. Criteria for Selection

A. Commissioners Affiliated with Institutions:

1. Balance among the wide range of accredited institutions served by the Commission inside and outside the United States: public and private; large and small; two-year, four-year, and graduate; liberal arts, church-related, professional, other specialized.
2. Balance between faculty and administrators.
3. Balance between men and women and representation of the racial and ethnic makeup of the region.
4. Representation from each of the six New England states.
5. Competent and knowledgeable, qualified by education or experience, with stature in the profession.
6. Interest in and experience with the accrediting process.
7. Willingness to devote the time necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of Commissioner.

B. Commissioners Representing the Public Interest:

1. Competent and knowledgeable with an understanding of higher education.
2. Sensitivity to the mission and goals of the diverse institutions of higher education inside and outside the United States.
3. Not active as a professional educator for the past ten years.
4. Not an employee, member of the governing board, owner, or shareholder of, or consultant to an institution accredited by the Commission or one that has applied for accreditation.
5. Not a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of an individual identified in #4.
6. Not a member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated with, or associated with the Commission.
7. Willingness to devote the time necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of a Commissioner.

II. Ethics

1. Accepts and subscribes to purposes of accreditation as defined in Commission policy.
2. Does not discuss matters outside of the meeting, refers all inquiries to staff or the Commission chair.
3. Holds in confidence all documents that come from the staff in preparation for meetings.
4. Adheres to the Commission's Policy Statement on Conflict of Interest.

III. Responsibilities

1. Makes every effort to attend all Commission meetings and remains until business is concluded.
2. Reads documents as assigned prior to the meetings and participates in the discussion.
3. Votes according to professional judgments consistent with basic accrediting policy.
4. Recommends new or revised policy.
5. Interprets accreditation to his/her own institution and to others.
6. Assists the staff in training programs and other activities.
7. Serves on ad hoc committees of the Commission as requested.

November, 1998
September, 2001
November, 2005
March, 2010
November, 2012
September, 2016
November, 2017
July, 2020
March, 2023