Policy on Noncompliance with Commission Standards, Policies, and Procedures

The Commission expects that institutions will remain in compliance with the Standards for Accreditation and its policies and procedures. However, it appreciates that occasionally there are circumstances beyond the institution’s control where, for a period of time, the institution may be out of compliance with one or more standards, policies, and procedures. Examples of such circumstances include:

1) a natural disaster or other catastrophic event significantly impacting an institution's or program's operations;

2) accepting students from another institution that is implementing a teach-out or closing;

3) significant and documented local or national economic changes, such as an economic recession or closure of a large local employer;

4) changes relating to State licensure requirements; or

5) the normal application of the agency's standards creates an undue hardship on students.

An institution that finds itself in one of these circumstances may make a written request to the Commission for approval for a period of noncompliance. Institutions considering a request for approval of a period of noncompliance are encouraged to discuss the matter with Commission staff.

The report prepared by an institution requesting approval for a period of non-compliance should include the following:

1) a description of the circumstances that led to the noncompliance;

2) an indication of the standards, policies, and/or procedures with which the institution is noncompliant;

3) evidence that the institution has the resources necessary to achieve compliance with the standards, policies, and/or procedures within the time allotted; and

4) evidence that the period of noncompliance will not

    a) Contribute to the cost of the program to the student without the student's consent;
    b) Create any undue hardship on, or harm to, students; or
    c) Compromise the quality of the institution’s academic programs.
In approving an institution’s request, the Commission will specify a time period for non-compliance not to exceed three years and will specify ongoing monitoring during the period of non-compliance, to include at least a report, annually, of the institution’s progress in bringing itself back into compliance. The Commission may, for good cause, extend the period of non-compliance beyond three years.

Approval of a period of noncompliance with Commission standards, policies, or procedures does not affect the subsequent schedule of Commission reviews for the institution.

March 2020