

EARLY INITIAL ACCREDITATION

POLICY CHANGES PROPOSED ON FIRST READING

Background

Per HLC policy, an eligible institution may apply for early initial accreditation after two years in the four-year candidacy period if the institution has a solid evaluation for candidacy, and a peer review team finds the institution is already showing strong indications of meeting the Criteria for Accreditation.

In some early initial accreditation cases, an institution may meet the Criteria for Accreditation, but several of the Core Components may be met with concerns. This policy change provides the Board with the discretion, in such cases, to keep the institution in candidacy to strengthen its performance in those areas so that by the end of the fourth year of candidacy, it meets all of the Criteria for Accreditation with no concerns.

Key to Proposed Changes

Policy wording to be deleted or revised is shown as strikethrough (~~old wording~~); new policy language, whether through addition or revision, is shown in bold (**new wording**).

Comments Invited

HLC invites comments on these changes before the Board takes final action at its meeting on November 5-6, 2015. Comments can be sent to policycomments@hlcommission.org. Comments on these policies are due by September 8, 2015. 🌿

<p>Policy INST.B.20.030</p>	<p>Accreditation</p>
	<p>Grant of Initial Accreditation The Board of Trustees reviews an institution’s application for initial accreditation and all related materials after the institution has undergone evaluation by a team of peer reviewers and an Institutional Actions Council hearing, as defined in Commission policy. Only institutions that have completed candidacy, or been exempted from candidacy by the Board of Trustees following Commission policies on candidacy, shall be eligible for initial accreditation. The Board of Trustees may grant or deny initial accreditation based on its determination of whether the institution meets the Eligibility Requirements, Criteria for Accreditation, Core Components, and Federal Compliance Requirements. If it grants initial accreditation, it may grant such accreditation subject to interim monitoring, restrictions on institutional growth or substantive</p>

change, or other contingency.

Early Initial Accreditation

An institution may apply for early initial accreditation after two or three years of candidacy following Commission policies on candidacy. The Board of Trustees shall have the discretion to continue candidacy, instead of granting early initial accreditation, in circumstances including, but not limited to, the following: if the Board determines that one or more of the Core Components are not met or met with concerns; if a recommendation for early initial accreditation is conditioned on the scheduling of interim monitoring; or in other circumstances where the Board concludes that a continuation of candidacy, or extension of candidacy to a fifth year, is warranted. Any extension of candidacy to a fifth year shall be granted following Commission policies on extension of candidacy. Such actions to extend candidacy, thereby denying early initial accreditation, shall not be considered denial of status and are not subject to appeal.

Accreditation Cycle

Institutions must have accreditation reaffirmed not later than four years following initial accreditation, and not later than ten years following a reaffirmation action. The time for the next reaffirmation is made a part of the accreditation decision, but may be changed if the institution experiences or plans changes. The Commission may extend the period of accreditation not more than one year beyond the decennial cycle or one year beyond the initial accreditation cycle for institutions that present good and sufficient reason for such extension.

Effective Date of Accreditation

The effective date of initial accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation or other Commission action will be the date the action was taken.

The Commission's Board may grant initial accreditation, with the contingency noted in this subsection, to an institution that applies for accreditation and is determined by the Commission to have met the Criteria for Accreditation but has not yet graduated a class of students in at least one of its degree programs, as required by the Eligibility Requirements. Institutions shall have completed the two-year required minimum candidacy period or received a waiver from the Commission's Board of Trustees. Such action shall be contingent on the institution's graduation of its first graduating class in at least one of its degree programs within no more than thirty days of the Board's action. In such cases, the effective date of accreditation will be the date of this graduating class.

Assumed Practices in the Evaluative Framework for Initial and Reaffirmation of Accreditation

An institution seeking initial accreditation, accredited to candidate status, or removal of Probation or Show-Cause, must explicitly address these requirements when addressing the Criteria. The institution must demonstrate conformity with these Practices as evidence of demonstrating compliance with the Criteria. Institutions undergoing reaffirmation of accreditation will not explicitly address the Assumed Practices except as identified in section INST.A.10.030. Any exemptions from these Assumed Practices must be

	granted by the Board and only in exceptional circumstances.
	<p><i>Policy Number Key</i> <i>Section INST: Institutional Policies</i> <i>Chapter B: Requirements for Achieving and Maintaining Affiliation</i> <i>Part 20: Defining the Affiliated Entity</i></p>
	<p><i>Last Revised: February 2012</i> <i>First Adopted: August 1987</i> <i>Revision History: renumbered November 2010, revised February 2012</i> <i>Notes: Policies combined November 2012 - 1.1(a)1, 1.1(a)2, 1.1(a)3, 1.4, 2013 - 1.1(a)1.2, 1.1(a)1.3, 1.1(a)1.4.</i></p>