



## EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

### Policy Change Adopted on Second Reading

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The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) adopted this policy on second reading at its meeting on February 25, 2022.

#### Background

The adopted policy changes consolidate previous policy language that provided, in various contexts, that HLC staff, peer reviewers and members of HLC decision-making bodies may benefit from external consultation at various points in HLC evaluations and decision-making processes. Such external consultants could include, for example, legal counsel, financial advisors or other experts with relevant, specialized expertise. Such consultants do not directly participate in any evaluative process. The adopted changes also clarify that any decision to seek out external consultation rests with HLC staff.

Conforming changes have also been made to related HLC policies, including removing similar language in other policies, such as:

- Substantive Requirements for Reaffirmation of Accreditation (INST.C.10.010)
- Routine Monitoring and Data Collection (INST.F.10.010)
- Special Monitoring (INST.F.20.010)
- Change of Control (INST.F.20.070)
- Staff Role and Responsibility (COMM.B.10.010)

HLC circulated these policy changes to the membership and other interested parties after the Board’s November 2021 meeting. No comments were received warranting changes in language. One comment was received with a suggestion that institutions be given notice when an external expert is used. In general, this tracks to HLC practice and would be handled through existing procedures and processes.

#### Implementation

This policy is effective immediately.

## Adopted Policy

Wording that was deleted or revised is shown as strikethrough (~~old wording~~); new language, whether through addition or revision, is shown in bold (**new wording**). These revisions have been made on HLC's website at [hlcommission.org/policies](https://hlcommission.org/policies).

Policy Title: External ~~Expertise in Sanctions or Show Cause~~ **Consultation**

Number: ~~INST.E.40.010~~ **COMM.B.10.030**

As determined in the sole discretion of HLC staff, HLC staff, peer reviewers or ~~the Board~~ members of ~~decision-making bodies~~ may seek external assistance from **other** peer reviewers or **other** individuals with appropriate expertise who do not participate as peer reviewers in ~~the~~ an evaluation process or **other** HLC process but provide particularized advice and assistance where appropriate to HLC Board, staff or evaluation team members.

### Policy Number Key

*Section INST: Institutional Processes* Section COMM: HLC Obligations

*Chapter E: Sanctions, Adverse Actions, and Appeals* Chapter B: HLC Staff

*Part 40: External Expertise in Sanctions or Show Cause* Part 10: General

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*Last Revised: February 2022*

*First Adopted: June 2012*

*Revision History: February 2022*

*Notes: Former policy number 2.5(d). In February 2021, references to the Higher Learning Commission as “the Commission” were replaced with the term “HLC.”*

*Related Policies:*