



*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097*

SPECIAL COMMITTEE PROCEDURES AND TEAM REPORT

Policy Statement

Special Committees are authorized by the Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) or its President to evaluate institutional circumstances that SACSCOC determines to be accreditation related. The principal role of the Special Committee is to judge whether the institution meets the requirements of the *Principles of Accreditation* in terms of the circumstances that prompted the authorization of the Special Committee visit and to determine continued compliance with the *Principles*, and/or to obtain information for review by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. The Committee's report and recommendations are forwarded to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for review and action.

Listed below are the protocols for conducting Special Committee reviews:

1. Special Committees may be authorized by the President of SACSCOC, the Committees on Compliance and Reports, or the Executive Council. Special Committees may not be combined with reaffirmation or substantive change reviews.

For an institution placed or continued on Probation, or placed or continued on Probation for Good Cause, a Special Committee is automatically authorized to evaluate the institution prior to the next scheduled review of the institution if the institution has not been visited within six months.

1. The Special Committee is charged with conducting an on-site review to recommend an institution's compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation* and to forward its findings to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees to enable a decision regarding the institution's accreditation status. To that end, it will review specific sections of the *Principles* cited in the notification letter from the President of SACSCOC. The Committee may extend its initial focus if any evidence of additional accreditation-related concerns comes to its attention.
3. A Special Committee should be of sufficient size to adequately review the issues and to make a recommendation regarding the institution's compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*.
4. A SACSCOC staff member is required to accompany all Special Committees.
5. If an institution has filed bankruptcy and it is determined by SACSCOC that the institution may not have sufficient faculty, staff, or resources to host a visit or to respond adequately to a review authorized by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees or its President, the SACSCOC President may

modify, reschedule, or discontinue the visit. In such cases, the institution is obligated to provide evidence of compliance with the *Principles* through other means specified by SACSCOC. See also the SACSCOC *Sanctions, Denial of Reaffirmation, and Removal from Membership* policy statement regarding procedures and Board authority during bankruptcy proceedings.

PROCEDURES FOR THE REVIEW

Materials for the Visit

It is the responsibility of the SACSCOC staff member to decide what materials will be sent to the Special Committee prior to the visit (including committee member writing assignments) and what materials will be available to the Committee during the on-site evaluation. It is the responsibility of the institution to provide materials as requested by SACSCOC staff and the SACSCOC Board, and to provide any additional documentation appropriate to support the institution's compliance with the *Principles*.

Scheduling of the Visit

The Special Committee visit will occur no later than six weeks prior to the meeting when the SACSCOC Board of Trustees is scheduled to take action on the institution's case.

The Exit Conference

The Special Committee will offer the institution's chief executive officer the opportunity to have an exit conference to hear the Committee's findings.

The Committee Report and Response of the Institution to the Report

Listed below are the protocols for the Committee Report and Institutional Response:

1. The Committee will complete the "Report of the Special Committee". A report form can be accessed on the SACSCOC website.
2. Within one week of the conclusion of the visit, the Chair provides the draft report to Committee members and to SACSCOC staff.
3. After the report is reviewed by members of the Special Committee and SACSCOC staff, the Chair of the Committee provides the draft report to the institution for the identification of factual errors only.
4. Following any necessary revisions, the Chair provides the final report to SACSCOC staff who will then provide access to the institution.
5. If the institution elects to submit a written response, a copy of that response will be provided to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees if submitted by the date in the letter of transmittal from SACSCOC staff—usually at least 10 working days in advance of the Board meeting.
6. The Report of the Special Committee and the response of the institution to the report will be provided to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for action.

The President of SACSCOC may grant an exception to the deadline for submitting documents only in unusual circumstances or for previously unavailable significant documents. In such cases, the institution must petition the President in writing and include copies of the previously unavailable documents. Any exception that may affect the Board's consideration of an existing sanction or placement on a sanction shall be taken in consideration with the SACSCOC *Sanctions* policy and communicated to the Board of Trustees.

Meetings on the Record with SACSCOC Board of Trustees

Representatives of an institution may be invited for a meeting on the record only if the institution's status is such that a meeting on the record is warranted in accordance with SACSCOC policy or is requested by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

EXPENSES OF THE VISIT

As with all committee visits, it is the policy of SACSCOC that the institution being reviewed bear the travel, meals, and lodging expenses of the Special Committee and the accompanying SACSCOC staff representative, incidental expenses for the chair and each committee member, and any clerical expenses. In addition, the institution will be assessed an administrative fee as part of SACSCOC's cost recovery program for the administration of special reviews. The total cost is billed to the institution by SACSCOC following the visit. Additional information regarding incidental expenses and the administrative fee is provided in SACSCOC policy, [*Dues, Fees, and Expenses*](#).

If an institution has filed bankruptcy and a Special Committee has been authorized to visit the institution, SACSCOC may opt to pre-bill the institution with the estimated cost of the visit to ensure payment. Pre-billing is a cost recovery measure and does not, by itself, constitute a basis for Board action to revoke accreditation for nonpayment during the pendency of bankruptcy.

Document History

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