

WASC Committees – Duties and Responsibilities

In addition to the committees of the Commission, WASC has four committees that work closely with the staff throughout the year to carry out WASC's work in specified areas. These committees are:

- Substantive Change
- Proposal Review
- Interim Report
- Eligibility Review.

Each committee is composed of representatives of institutions in the region, who are appointed annually in June by the President/Executive Director.

The committees meet in panels to review institutional reports and proposals, as set forth below. The committees also meet at least once annually to review and evaluate their work and make recommendations for improvement. The committees submit a report about their activities to the Commission annually.

If an institution's proposal or report is not accepted by a panel of a committee, the institution may ask the panel to reconsider its decision, by way of a written communication sent within 30 days of the decision being communicated to the institution. The institution's communication should contain relevant information and the basis or bases for the requested reconsideration. The panel that reviewed the institution's report or proposal will review the request and make a decision within 30 days of the date of the request, which decision will be communicated promptly to the institution. If the panel does not reverse its initial decision, the institution may ask the Executive Committee of the Commission to reconsider the matter by way of a written communication in writing within 30 days of the date when the panel's denial of the request for reconsideration is communicated. The Executive Committee will consider the request within 60 days of receipt and will communicate its decision promptly. The Executive Committee's decision is final.

Roles and Responsibilities of Substantive Change Committee

- Review proposals for new off-campus programs, sites, distance education programs, mergers and acquisitions, and programs offered at a degree level for which the institution does not have general or specific degree level approval as set forth in policies established by the Commission.
- Make visits to sites as required by policy.
- Act to grant interim approval, to deny approval, to proceed to site visit, and to refer matters to the Commission for action.
- Review such other programs as referred to it by the Commission.
- Review proposal for fast track review and expedited reviews of future proposals as appropriate.

- Following review of proposals, refer interim approvals to the Commission, its Executive Committee, or the Structural Change Committee as appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities of Interim Report Committee

Review written Interim Reports and supporting documents that have been requested by the Commission.

- Interim reports focus on specific issues of concern identified as part of the comprehensive review process, annual report submission, the complaint process, substantive change, or other interactions with the Commission.
- The purpose of interim reports is to ensure that institutions continue to meet the Core Commitments and Standards with respect to the identified areas of concern.
- After review, recommend issues for the next evaluation team to examine, require institutions to submit additional information and/or meet additional reporting requirements, or refer issues or requests for visits to the Executive Committee or Commission.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Proposal Review Committee

- Reviews all institutional Proposals submitted as part of the institutional review process to ensure that the institution's planned review will effectively demonstrate that:
 - The institution fulfills the two Core Commitments for accreditation: Capacity and Educational Effectiveness;
 - The institution's staged review processes (Capacity and Preparatory Review and Educational Effectiveness Review) are interrelated and concomitant;
 - The institution has provided the resources and time necessary for the review.
- May approve Proposals or request revisions to Proposals, which a panel then evaluates.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Eligibility Review Committee

- Oversees the drafting and updating of the WASC publication, "How to Become Accredited," including both the Criteria for Eligibility and the review process; ensures submission of any substantial changes in the publication to the Commission's Policy and Planning Committee for approval; posts and distributes the current version for public use.

- Conducts reviews of the applications received from institutions seeking Eligibility to determine if the institution:
 - Fits within the scope of institutions which WASC would likely accredit in terms of type and scope of program(s), and the applicant's self-definition within the higher education community
 - Meets each of the Eligibility criteria published in "How to Become Accredited" and provides specific feedback on those Criteria which the applicant does not meet
 - Demonstrates sufficient resources in terms of finances, leadership, constituent support, and depth of planning to show promise of moving on to Candidacy and Initial Accreditation within the timeframes approved by the Commission

- Brings to the attention of the Commission issues related to state or federal policies, emerging trends or patterns among applicants, or any unusual configurations or circumstances from a particular applicant, which require deliberation and action by the Commission