

16. Policy on Special Visits

A special visit is one ordered by the Accrediting Commission because of unusual circumstances or failure by the institution to meet its obligations to the Commission. The Commission's requirement for a special visit may be precipitated because of (1) a serious or an unusually large number of student *or other* complaints e.g., "*whistle-blower*" complaints; (2) *state or Federal* investigations or legal action taken against an institution, (3) an institution's failure to comply with a condition of accreditation, (4) reported conditions on negative financial events, (5) a show cause order issued by the Commission, (6) governmental complaints against the institution, or (7) similar serious concerns. (*Rev 10/11*)

If an institution refuses to agree to undergo a special visit, pay the fees for the visit in a timely manner, or observe the timelines specified by the Commission for executing the special visit as directed, it will be reported to the Commission for action, including withdrawing accreditation.

When the Accrediting Commission orders a special visit, it will be conducted in a timely fashion. In no case will the time frame for reporting and conducting the visit extend beyond 12 months from the date the Commission is first made aware of any condition requiring a special visit.

The Commission may grant an extension of time when it deems it is for a "good cause" as *defined in D.1.1. Actions Available to the Commission. (10/11)*

An institution preparing for a special visit should follow the spirit and direction of the *Guide to Self-Evaluation* in Appendix B, giving special attention to the areas of concern that have given rise to undergoing the special visit. Because the institution will be informed of the reason(s) for the special visit, it will know the specific areas of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) that should be given particular emphasis. By following the *Guide to Self-Evaluation*, the institution should be able to anticipate and accommodate the material needed in the SER.

Meeting Obligations of Accreditation

An institution's failure to meet its obligations of accreditation may also result in requiring a special visit. An accredited institution's obligations are:

- File an Annual Report (due January 31st each year);
- Submit course/program completion data and summary of student surveys with Annual Report;
- Pay its Dues and Fees (by April 30th);
- *Notifying the Commission of any "substantive change" as defined by C.1. Policy on Substantive Change and Notification prior to the event; (10/11)*
- File a Teach-Out Commitment (revised when ownership changes);
- Submit all new courses/programs for review *prior* to student enrollment;
- Correct any incorrect or misleading information; and

- Promptly and satisfactorily resolve any complaints brought to the institution’s attention by DETC.

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