

# Institutional Actions Council Authority

## 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 June 22, 2023.

### Background

HLC policy specifies the types of accreditation decisions for which the Board retains authority and the types of accreditation decisions on which the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) is authorized to take action. The adopted policy changes clarify that the IAC has the authority to take action on all accreditation decisions for which exclusive authority is not retained by the Board of Trustees. The revisions then provide a non-exhaustive list of examples of some such accreditation decisions.

HLC circulated these policy changes to the membership and other interested parties after the Board’s February 2023 meeting. No comments were received warranting changes in language. However, staff made minor changes to clarify language.

### Implementation

This policy is effective immediately.

### Adopted Policy Change

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**). Wording that was moved is shown with a double underline in its new location (moved to) and a double strikethrough in its previous location (~~~~moved from~~~~). Changes between first and second reading, other than minor editing, are indicated in italics (*new wording*, ~~*old wording*~~). These revisions have been made on HLC’s website at [hlcommission.org/policies](https://hlcommission.org/policies).

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#### IAC Authority to Take Action on Accreditation Decisions

The IAC, acting through its committees, is authorized to take action on accreditation decisions ~~to:~~ **other than those for which the Board of Trustees retains exclusive authority, as consistent with HLC policy.**

**This includes, but is not limited to, taking certain actions regarding:**

- ~~1. reaffirm~~ **Reaffirmation of accreditation and Pathway placement;**
- ~~2. Mid-cycle~~ **Open Pathway Assurance Reviews and Standard Pathway comprehensive evaluations;**
- ~~2. 3. approve recommendations resulting from~~ **Biennial visits in during** candidacy;
- ~~3. 4. approve or deny~~ **Applications for substantive change requiring review by a decision structure and decision by a decision-making body, but not including Change of Control, Structure, or Organization; and**
- ~~4. 5. approve~~ **Recommendations for and resulting from focused evaluations; and interim monitoring.**
- ~~5. approve recommendations from staff or financial/non-financial panels for required monitoring or changes in the Statement of Accreditation Status.~~

For these cases **decisions within its purview**, the IAC is authorized to set **or modify** the next comprehensive evaluation visit date, establish a schedule of required monitoring, and make other changes in the Statement of Accreditation Status.

#### IAC Authority to Make Recommendations for Accreditation Decisions That Require Board Action

The IAC, acting through its committees, is authorized to review the following recommendations arising from an evaluation process and to forward a recommendation to the Board of Trustees ~~to:~~ **for any accreditation decision for which the Board retains exclusive authority, as consistent with HLC policy.**

**This includes, but is not limited to, making recommendations regarding whether to:**

1. grant or deny ~~initial~~ status, including candidacy and initial accreditation;

2. issue or ~~withdraw~~ **remove** a sanction, including ~~a~~**N**otice or ~~p~~**P**robation, ~~except where the Board of Trustees in a previous accreditation decision may have outlined specific provisions for a recommendation related to the sanction to move directly to the Board;~~
3. issue **or remove** a Show-Cause Order; and
4. withdraw ~~accredited or candidate~~ status, **including candidacy or accreditation.**

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## Policy Number Key

Section INST: Institutional Processes

Chapter D: Decision-Making Bodies and Process

Part 20: Institutional Actions Council

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Last Revised: November 2022

First Adopted: June 2011

Revision History: April 2013, June 2014, November 2019, June 2020, November 2020, June 2021, June 2022, November 2022

Notes: Policies combined November 2012 - 2.2(d)1.2, 2.2(d)1.2a, 2.2(d)1.2b, 2.2(d)1.2b1, 2.2(d)1.2b2. In February 2021, references to the Higher Learning Commission as “the Commission” were replaced with the term “HLC.”

Related Policies: **INST.D.10.010 Board of Trustees**, INST.D.40.010 Institutional Actions Council Processes