

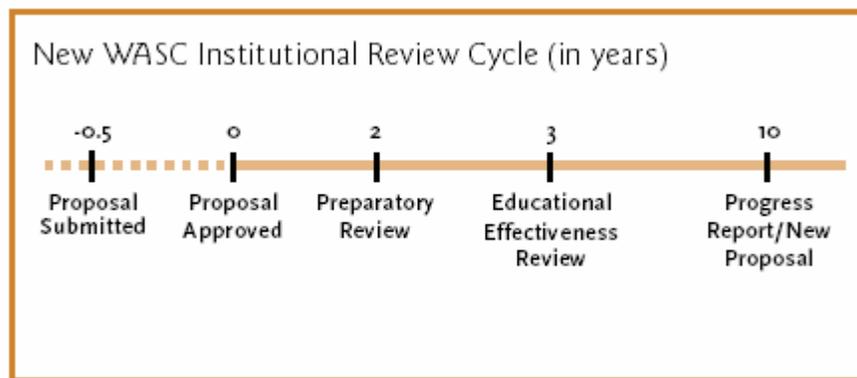
WASC Institutional Review Process

Core Commitments and Principles

In order to obtain accreditation or remain accredited, each institution is required to demonstrate that it fulfills the two Core Commitments of the Accrediting Commission:

1. **Commitment to Institutional Capacity:** The institution functions with clear purposes, high levels of institutional integrity, fiscal stability, and organizational structures to fulfill its purposes.
2. **Commitment to Educational Effectiveness:** The institution evidences clear and appropriate educational objectives and design at the institutional and program level, and employs processes of review, including the collection and use of data, that assure delivery of programs and learner accomplishments at a level of performance appropriate for the degree or certificate awarded.

Demonstration of these Core Commitments occurs through a staged and sequential accreditation review process that results in an Institutional Presentation comprised of a Proposal, a Preparatory Review, and an Educational Effectiveness Review. This three-staged cycle applies to all institutions, regardless of where they are in the accreditation process. In the case of institutions considered for Initial Candidacy or Initial Accreditation, primary focus will be placed on institutional performance to meet the expectations of the Standards. For those institutions that have a history of Commission sanctions, greater emphasis will be placed on reviewing responses to previous Commission decisions and the identified Standards.



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Notes on Core Commitments and Principles

- The elements of the new accreditation framework align under core commitments and principles and a three-stage, sequential institutional review process. (p. 4)
- Each institution is expected to demonstrate that it is committed to developing and sustaining Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness. (p. 5)
- Core commitment to **Institutional Capacity** enables the institution to consider resource issues from a holistic perspective, and to consider capacity as an institutional attribute beyond minimum compliance and a review of assets. (p. 5)
- **Educational Effectiveness:** a) articulating a collective vision of educational attainment, b) organizing for learning, and c) becoming a learning organization. (p. 6)
- **Articulating a vision:** Centers on the degree to which the institution sets goals and obtains results for student learning both at the institutional and program levels.
- **Organizing for Learning:** Centers on the alignment of appropriate institutional assets and characteristics with the goal of producing high level student learning, consistent with the mission of the institution.
- **Becoming a Learning Organization:** Centers on the degree to which the institution has developed systems to assess its own performance and to use information to improve student learning over time. Systems that are systematic and regular, reinforce a climate of inquiry, reflect input from stakeholders, identify key dimensions of performance that include student learning, and are based on standards of evidence that prominently feature educational results.

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Notes on Review Process

- The Commission has attempted to develop a *holistic system* of review.
- The system of review has a clear *focus* on effectiveness, both institutional and educational.
- The system of review has an integrated *organization* around the two Core Commitments, supported by the four Accreditation Standards. (p. 34)
- The system of review has a staged, sequential *structure and cycle* that permits adaptation and responsiveness to institutional context and priorities.
- The new accreditation process shifts focus from compliance to a review and validation of effective ongoing internal systems of quality review and improvement.
- The new sequential process moves away from long discursive reports to evidence-based Institutional *Presentations* comprised of focused portfolios of data and exhibits, supported by reflective and analytical essays. (The Institutional Presentation is comprised of the materials prepared in the three stages of review: the Proposal, the Preparatory Review, and the Educational Effectiveness Review). (p. 35)
- Expected *outcomes* of the accreditation review process include:
 - ✓ The development of and more effective use of indicators of institutional performance and educational effectiveness to support institutional planning and decision making;
 - ✓ Greater clarity about institutional educational objectives and criteria for defining and evaluating those objectives;
 - ✓ Improve capacity for self review and systems of quality assurance;
 - ✓ A deeper understanding of student learning, methods of assessing learning, and use of results to improve programs and practices;
 - ✓ Systematic engagement of faculty with issues of assessing and improving teaching and learning processes. (p. 36)

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Notes on Review Process (Continued)

In preparing the Institutional Presentation as a whole, institutions should be mindful of several important priorities relevant to all four Accreditation Standards. These include:

- **Establishment of clear objectives;**
- **Indicators and metrics of achievement, and/or specific bodies of evidence that can help the institution to determine the degree to which objectives are being achieved; and**
- **Actions taken on the basis of evidence in order to improve performance. (p. 42)**