

Guidelines for Determining
Recommendations,
Requirements, and
Proposed Commission Actions:
Decennial Evaluations and
Periodic Review Reports (PRRs)



Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Guidelines for Determining Recommendations, Requirements, and Proposed Commission Actions: Decennial Evaluations and Periodic Review Reports (PRRs)

Does the institution meet the Standards?				
If the team's answer is: ↓	Then the team shares the following with the institution in the team report:		And the team proposes the following <i>confidentially</i> to the Commission and only in the Chair's confidential Brief:	
	The team <i>must</i> provide this to the institution for each Standard evaluated:	And the team <i>may</i> , at its option, provide this to the institution:	The team <i>must</i> propose that the Commission take this action:	And the team <i>may</i> , at its option, propose that the Commission take this action:
Yes →		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss significant accomplishments, significant progress or exemplary/innovative practices; 2. Offer suggestion(s) for institutional improvement 	To reaffirm accreditation	To recognize the institution for progress to date. To commend the institution for the quality of its self-study or Periodic Review (report and/or process).
<p>Yes, the team is confident that the institution meets the Standards, but the team wants the institution to focus its attention on improvements in certain areas over the next few years. →</p>	Make Recommendation(s) (See Definition on back panel)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss significant accomplishments, significant progress or exemplary/innovative practices; 2. Offer suggestion(s) for institutional improvement 	To reaffirm accreditation	To recognize the institution for progress to date. To commend the institution for the quality of its self-study or Periodic Review (report and/or process).
<p>Yes, but assurance is needed that the institution is carrying out activities planned or being implemented. →</p>	Make Recommendation(s) (See Definition on back panel)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss significant accomplishments, significant progress or exemplary/innovative practices; 2. Offer suggestion(s) for institutional improvement 	To reaffirm accreditation and to request a progress report, due [date*], documenting [specific issues; tie explicitly to Standards]	To recognize the institution for progress to date. To commend the institution for the quality of its self-study or Periodic Review (report and/or process).
<p>Yes, but the team has concerns about continued institutional compliance with one or more Standards →</p>	Make Recommendation(s) (See Definition on back panel)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss significant accomplishments, significant progress or exemplary/innovative practices; 2. Offer suggestion(s) for institutional improvement 	To reaffirm accreditation and to request a monitoring report due [date*], documenting [specific issues that need attention or emphasis; tie explicitly to Standards]	To recognize the institution for progress to date. To commend the institution for the quality of its self-study or Periodic Review (report and/or process). A visit may/will follow submission of the monitoring report.

<p>If the team's answer is: ↓</p>	<p>The team <i>must</i> provide this to the institution for each <i>Standard evaluated</i>:</p>	<p>And the team <i>may, at its option</i>, provide this to the institution:</p>	<p>The team <i>must</i> propose that the Commission take this action:</p>	<p>And the team <i>may, at its option</i>, propose that the Commission take this action:</p>
<p>No, the institution is not in compliance with one or more Standards, but the team has confidence in the institution's ability to come into compliance within two years</p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p>	<p>Make Requirement(s) (See Definition on back panel)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer suggestion(s) for institutional improvement; 2. Make Recommendation(s) 	<p>To warn the institution that its accreditation may be in jeopardy due to insufficient evidence of compliance with Standard(s) [number(s)] and to request a monitoring report due [date*] documenting that the institution has achieved and can sustain ongoing compliance with Standard(s) [number(s)], including but not limited to [specific issues that need attention; tie explicitly to Standards]. To direct a prompt Commission liaison guidance visit. A visit will follow submission of the monitoring report.</p>	
<p>No, the institution is not in compliance with one or more Standards, and the team has concerns about the institution's ability to come into compliance within two years</p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p>	<p>Make Requirement(s) (See Definition on back panel)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer suggestion(s) for institutional improvement; 2. Make Recommendation(s) 	<p>To place the institution on probation due to insufficient evidence of compliance with Standards(s) [number(s)] and to request a monitoring report due [date*] documenting that the institution has achieved and can sustain ongoing compliance with Standard(s) [number(s)], including but not limited to [specific issues that need attention; tie explicitly to Standards]. To direct a prompt Commission liaison guidance visit. A visit will follow submission of the monitoring report.</p>	

Definitions

Suggestions – An important part of accreditation and quality enhancement processes is the opportunity for evaluators to offer collegial advice for institutional consideration in the form of non-binding suggestions for improvements. Evaluators may make suggestions for institutional improvement, based on accreditation standards, their professional experiences, or the Commission’s published guidelines that have been developed with peer input.

Recommendations – Recommendations indicate that institutional action is needed for the institution to continue to meet one or more of the standards in *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*. They should be based on evaluators’ explicit findings of fact and should reference the appropriate accreditation standard or requirement of affiliation. Recommendations are consistent with reaffirmation of accreditation. The institution must consider all recommendations and describe its response to them in its subsequent Periodic Review Report (or sooner, if the Commission requests a Progress Report or Monitoring Report).

Requirements – Requirements indicate that the institution does not comply with one or more accreditation standards or requirements of affiliation in *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*. Evaluators should state specifically in what ways the institution fails to meet a standard or a requirement of affiliation and specify particular steps that should be taken in order to meet the standard or requirement of affiliation. A proposal for reaffirmation of accreditation cannot be made if requirements are stated.

Warning – A Warning indicates that an institution has been determined by the Commission not to meet one or more standards for accreditation. A follow-up report, called a monitoring report, is required to demonstrate that the institution has made appropriate improvements to bring itself into compliance and a special visit follows.

Probation – Probation indicates that an institution has been determined by the Commission not to meet one or more standards for accreditation and is an indication of a serious concern on the part of the Commission regarding the level and/or scope of non-compliance issues related to the standards. The Commission will place an institution on Probation if the Commission is concerned about one or more of the following:

1. the adequacy of the education provided by the institution;
2. the institution’s capacity to make appropriate improvements in a timely fashion; or
3. the institution’s capacity to sustain itself in the long term.

Probation is often, but need not always be, preceded by an action of Warning or Postponement. If the Commission had previously postponed a decision or placed an institution on Warning, the Commission may place the institution on Probation if it determines that the institution has failed to address satisfactorily the Commission’s concerns in the prior action of Postponement or Warning regarding compliance with Commission standards. This action is accompanied by a request for a monitoring report, and a special visit follows.

*Dates for progress reports and monitoring reports must be 6-24 months after the Commission’s action (6-12 months for two-year institutions). Dates are normally April 1, October 1, or December 1 if no visit is to follow submission of the report, and March 1, September 1, or November 1 if a visit is to follow.

Note: Possible Commission actions also include postponement, show cause, and withdrawal of accreditation. Because these actions do not ordinarily stem from decennial evaluations or PRRs, they are not included in this chart. See the Commission’s policy statement, “Range of Commission Actions,” for information on these actions.