

# University of Louisville

## Frequently Asked Questions About Accreditation

### **What does the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) do?**

The [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges \(SACSCOC\)](#) is a regional accreditor whose purpose is to ensure that institutions and their programs meet standards for program quality and that they are committed to continuous improvement. Accredited institutions undergo rigorous review before accreditation is granted and are regularly evaluated to ensure continued compliance with standards and policies that demonstrate the quality of the institution. To obtain SACSCOC accreditation, the institution must demonstrate that it is in compliance with the Principles of Accreditation. The [SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation](#) includes approximately one hundred standards that are the foundation of the decennial review and reaffirmation process.

Postsecondary institutions must be accredited by a regional or national accrediting agency or accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) in order to award federal financial aid. SACSCOC is recognized by the USDOE.

SACSCOC does not accredit athletic programs or regulate the university's membership in various sports conferences. SACSCOC does not regulate or oversee program-level or discipline-specific accreditations.

### **Why is accreditation important?**

Accreditation fosters program accountability to the public and engagement in continuous peer review and improvement. Having a degree from a program that is regionally or nationally accredited not only speaks to the quality of the education, but it can also mean that credits taken are transferable to other accredited programs or institutions. It provides a basis for determining eligibility for federal student assistance. Students must attend an accredited institution to apply for federal grants or loans. Accreditation is always beneficial to the institution in the consideration for most extramural funding and research opportunities.

### **What is the current status of UofL's SACSCOC accreditation?**

UofL is in good standing with SACSCOC. The university's current accreditation is effective until December 2017, at which time the SACSCOC Board of Trustees will vote on the university's reaffirmation of accreditation through 2027.

### **What is the time frame of the SACSCOC review, visitation, and assessment?**

The University of Louisville is undergoing its regular decennial review by SACSCOC. The 2017 Reaffirmation of Accreditation is in progress. There are two components to the full ten-year reaffirmation review process:

1. Compliance Certification Report – is a document completed by the institution that indicates the extent of its compliance with each of the Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Requirements.
2. Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) - is a document developed by the institution that focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning.

SACSCOC completes two reviews: an off-site, online review of the compliance certification report and an on-site review committee visit to UofL to discuss the QEP, meet with university leadership, and address any compliance concerns. The results of the off-site review will be received by the university in November 2016 and the on-site visit/review will take place in April 2017.

More information on the reaffirmation process is available at:

<http://louisville.edu/oapa/uofl-institutional-accreditation>

### **What is SACSCOC currently reviewing?**

#### **A. Decennial reaffirmation review as scheduled for 2017.**

The decennial compliance certification review is organized into three categories: Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Requirements. These categories cover educational programs, faculty, financial resources, governance, institutional effectiveness, library and learning/information resources, physical resources, and student services. The UofL Compliance Certification Report was completed and delivered to SACSCOC in September 2016. The university's QEP is under-development and will be submitted to SACSCOC in March 2017 in advance of their on-site visit taking place in April 2017.

#### **B. Special Reports requested by SACSCOC.**

SACSCOC is aware of the current governance circumstances affecting UofL and has requested additional reports. Their review of these reports is separate from the decennial reaffirmation process. The university is making every effort to address each area of concern accurately and completely. The SACSCOC assessment of university compliance with [governance principles](#) will be determined based on significant investigation and their due process procedures. An initial assessment will be provided at their annual meeting in December 2016.

The university has an opportunity to provide input and documentation at each step of the compliance assessment. Possible outcomes could include monitoring reports, special review committee(s), sanctions, probation, or loss of accreditation. Loss of accreditation, while an option, is very unlikely given the availability of other outcomes that allow for the university to address areas of concern while still remaining in good standing.

### **Who at the university is responsible for the university's interaction with SACSCOC?**

SACSCOC expects to interact with the president and the accreditation liaison on any official university business. The on-site visit reaffirmation committee will be in contact with university representatives including the president; provost; board of trustees; selected faculty, staff, and students; and others involved with the QEP. Individuals or entities external to UofL have no assigned role in the on-site visit process.

### **What is the impact of the current governance inquiry?**

While the public and university community have many questions and concerns about UofL's accreditation status, everyone should keep in mind that the university remains in good standing with SACSCOC. UofL will have ample opportunity to address any and all accreditation concerns. Loss of accreditation is very unlikely given the excellent reputation the university has maintained since its initial accreditation by SACSCOC in 1915.