



FRAUD AND ABUSE

Policy Change Adopted on Single Reading

The Higher Learning Commission's (HLC's) Board of Trustees adopted this policy on single reading at its meeting on February 23–24, 2017.

Background

HLC currently has no specific policy on fraud and abuse. Core Component 2.A on integrity might have particular applicability to fraud and abuse, but nothing in its current language identifies fraud and abuse as a relevant consideration related to the Core Component. However, HLC policy on its relationship with the U.S. Department of Education does indicate that HLC will report to the Department clear evidence of fraud and abuse that HLC acquires through student complaints, information from other evaluation teams, or other sources (HLC Policy COMM.C.10.030). In recent communications, the Department indicated it expects recognized accrediting agencies to have a policy on fraud and abuse. The adopted policy provides some context around fraud and abuse and sends a clear message that fraud and abuse is unacceptable and would constitute grounds for a finding that Core Component 2.A is not met.

HLC Bylaws and policy allow the Board to approve in a single reading changes to policy that are required by federal regulation or other legal mandate.

Implementation

This policy is effective immediately.

Adopted Policy

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**). These revisions have been made on HLC's policy website at policy.hlcommission.org.

Policy Title: Fraud and Abuse
Number: FDCR.A.10.075

An institution shall not engage in fraud and abuse, as outlined in state and federal law and regulation, or in practices or procedures that are designed or have the tendency to create a falsification or deceive students. If the Commission receives an allegation of fraud and abuse concerning an institution from the federal government, any state entity or other party, the Commission will determine whether the alleged fraud and abuse constitutes a violation of the Criteria for Accreditation, particularly related to institutional integrity. In considering any allegation of fraud and abuse, the Commission may consider the nature of the allegation, whether the alleged fraud and abuse appears to meet the Commission's understanding of fraud and abuse as outlined in this policy or in federal or state definitions of fraud and abuse, and whether the source of the allegation has provided any evidence of such fraud and abuse. **The Commission will review such allegations through its complaint process or through other mechanisms provided for in Commission policy and practice. An institution that has been determined through those processes to have engaged in fraud and abuse as outlined in this policy shall be considered to be in violation of Commission standards related to institutional integrity and may be found to be in violation of other Commission standards as well, and shall be subject to Commission sanctions or withdrawal of accreditation as outlined in those policies.**

The Commission shall report suspected incidents of fraud and abuse to the U.S. Department of Education as outlined in its policy on the Relation with the U.S. Government.

Policy Number Key

Section FDCR: Policies Required by Federal Regulation

Chapter A: Federal Compliance

Part 10: General

Last Revised: February 2017

First Adopted: February 2017

Revision History: February 2017

Notes: