Policy Title: **Management of Commission Information**
Number: **COMM.D.10.010**

Defining and Establishing Ownership of Commission Information
The Commission shall have ownership of the following information:

1. Information created for the Commission by one of it consultants, evaluators, staff or other party in furtherance of a Commission process or review;
2. Information created for the Commission by institutions or submitted to the Commission by institutions in support of an application for new or continuing status, approval of substantive change or other Commission process or request for information;
3. Information collected or received by the Commission from other sources including peer reviewers; and
4. Any other information known by the Commission or otherwise collected or received in support of its mission and purposes.

Information referenced under this policy may exist in electronic, written or other format

Commission Retention and Management of Information
The Commission shall have the right to retain and manage such information as appropriate to fulfill its mission and purposes. Such management will include organizing, digitizing, displaying and storing such information. The Commission shall adopt appropriate procedures governing the retention and management of information. These policies shall be applicable to the Commission and its staff as well as to any individual acting as a reviewer or decision-maker for the Commission. The Commission shall work with third-party agents or contractors to ensure that information retention and management is handled in observance of such procedures to the fullest extent possible within the terms of that relationship.

Commission Release of Information
The Commission shall release Commission information in compliance with the following policies:

Institutional File Information. The Commission shall release information about an affiliated institution in response to a request by the following:

1. the President or Chief Executive Officer of that institution officially designated as such in the Commission's records;
2. an individual designated by the President or Chief Executive Officer to receive such information; or
3. a resolution from that institution's governing board signed by the current Chair of that board.

The Commission shall release information to any other individual or to a consultant or attorney representing the institution only when the Commission has received a written request from the President or CEO of the institution.

Peer Review Information. In preparation for Commission review the Commission may release information to institutions about peer reviewers including contact information, credentials and other information for the purpose of assuring that Commission processes are free of conflict of interest.

The Commission may provide oral or written comments or explanation in conjunction with the release of the above information and non-particularized information about Commission precedent.

Within Commission Processes or to External Agents of the Commission. The Commission may provide information as identified in this policy under Defining and Establishing the Ownership of Commission Information, to individuals acting as reviewers and decision-makers for the Commission within its processes. The Commission also may provide such information to Commission consultants or other individuals or entities retained by the Commission to provide assistance, expertise or other function in support of Commission processes. As a condition of a relationship with the Commission, all reviewers, decision-makers, and consultants shall agree in writing to maintain the confidentiality of such information.

Researchers. The Commission may provide its information to a researcher(s) who, in the sole discretion of the Commission, has appropriate academic credentials and who outlines an appropriate research project related to the work of the Commission. As a condition of any relationship with the Commission, all researchers must agree in writing to maintain the confidentiality of the information and to other terms as outlined in an appropriate agreement or contract.

Third Parties. The Commission shall release information about an institution or peer reviewer(s) or about Commission policies, procedures or activities in furtherance of its processes to, or in response to a written request form, the following entities:

1. The U.S. Department of Education or other federal agency with appropriate jurisdiction to request the information;
2. A validly-issued subpoena from a court of law with appropriate jurisdiction; and
3. Another recognized accrediting agency with which the institution(s) may have an affiliation or status or be seeking such affiliation or status;

The Commission may, at its sole discretion, release information to a state higher education or other governmental agency with appropriate jurisdiction.

The Commission may provide oral or written comments or explanation to such entities in conjunction with, or separate from, the release of such information.

Public. The Commission shall release the following information to the public and any other interested parties by means of its Web site, fax or other disclosure:

1. the name and contact information for any institution that holds, or has held, status with the Commission along with information about its campuses, sites and educational programs as well as any other data it regularly collects through its Annual Institutional Data Update process;
2. the name and contact information of any institution scheduled for an evaluation for initial status;
3. the Statement of Affiliation Status and Organizational Profile for affiliated institutions;
4. Public Disclosure Notices and, when appropriate, certain other public statements made by the Commission;
5. summary of all Commission actions posted within 30 days of taking such action, including voluntary withdrawals and other information within 30 days of the Commission receiving such information;
6. the list of institutions being evaluated by the Commission in the upcoming academic year and the invitation for third-party comment about appropriate institutions;
7. the policies and procedures of the Commission and related information;
8. the results of aggregate data analyses and other information the Commission staff determine to be appropriate for public release;
9. the names of all active peer reviewers and other information including title and contact information in their organization; and
10. the names, internal contact and areas of responsibility for all staff members.

The Commission may provide oral or written comments or explanation of such information to the public.

Mailing or Address Lists for Marketing Purposes. The Commission shall not give or sell mailing lists of institutions or peer reviewers or similar information to any company, organization, institution, or individual for use in marketing or solicitation. However, the Commission may provide information about individuals who attend a conference or workshop to appropriate business partners. All such business partners must agree to provide appropriate mechanisms by which a recipient may decline to receive additional promotional material.

Other Commission Release of Information. The Commission may include Commission information in any submission it shall make on behalf of the Commission. Such submissions shall include, but are not limited to, Commission petitions for continued recognition from the U.S. Department of Education or the Council on Higher Education Accreditation, or Commission petition or response in any lawsuit or action it initiates or which has been initiated by another party.

The Commission may release the team report or other documents to third parties or the public if the institution or one of its agents has released information or excerpts from documents created by or for the Commission in such a way that information from those documents, or information with regard to Commission status or findings, has been misrepresented.

The Commission may, at its sole discretion, release information about an institution publicly or to another entity if requested by that institution.

Policy Number Key
Section COMM: Commission Policies
Chapter D: Management of Commission Information
Part 10: General

Last Revised: November 2012
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Revision History:
Notes: Policies combined in November 2012 – 2.3, 2.3(a), 2.3(b), 2.3(b)1, 2.3(b)2, 2.3(b)3, 2.3(b)4, 2.3(b)5, 2.3(b)6, 2.3(b)7
Related Policies: