



The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the  
North Central Association  
of Colleges and Schools



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Serving the common good by assuring and advancing the quality of higher learning

## Public Disclosure Notice on Ellis University

June 15, 2009

The following public information is provided by The Higher Learning Commission regarding Ellis University to assist current and prospective students and other individuals seeking information about the accreditation status of the institution. The Higher Learning Commission is the regional accrediting agency that accredits organizations of higher learning in the 19 states of the North Central region.

### What is the accreditation status of Ellis University?

Ellis University, headquartered in Chicago, IL, is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission. The Commission granted initial accreditation on May 28, 2008 to the University as it emerged as a freestanding institution from Ellis College of New York Institute of Technology (NYIT). NYIT is accredited in the Middle States region. The effective date of its accreditation with the Commission was changed to August 22, 2008, to reflect the date on which Ellis first had its own students, which is required by the Commission in order for an institution to be eligible for accredited or candidate status. (See history of accreditation developments in the next section.)

### What is the history of accreditation developments that led to this situation?

In February 2008 a comprehensive visit was conducted by the Commission to determine whether Ellis College of NYIT met the requirements to become a separately accredited institution as Ellis University. The team conducting the visit included a representative of the Middle States Association Commission on Higher Education (Middle States), the regional accrediting body for NYIT. That team found that the requirements were met and recommended that Ellis University be accredited. This finding and recommendation were based largely on the understanding that NYIT was releasing its Ellis College students to Ellis University prior to, or at the time of, the Commission's accreditation action. A Review Committee met on May 5, 2008 and accepted the recommendation of the team. The Higher Learning Commission Board of Trustees validated the Review Committee's action, and the institution's accredited status became effective May 28, 2008.

However, shortly after issuing the accrediting action, the Commission received information that students of Ellis College of NYIT had not been given the option of transferring to Ellis University or finishing their studies as NYIT students completing their credits with Ellis University, thus leaving Ellis University with no enrollment, a circumstance under which Ellis University would not satisfy the Commission's Eligibility Requirement #3. The Commission later received, with the concurrence of both Ellis and NYIT, a schedule under which NYIT students of Ellis College were to be released to Ellis University. The Commission monitored the institution's compliance with this schedule.

Beyond the matter of the release of students not taking place according to the schedule given to the February 2008 visiting team, several other issues emerged after the Review Committee meeting of May 2008 that raised questions about the institution's compliance with Criterion One (Mission and Integrity) and Criterion Two (Preparing for the Future).

The University had already been scheduled to undergo an on-site evaluation in January 2009 focused on its transition from Ellis College of NYIT. The focus of this evaluation was expanded to include concerns related to Criterion One and Two. On October 31, 2008, the Board of the Commission directed the Commission President to review the report of that evaluation and make recommendations, if warranted, beyond those made by the team. The team for the January 2009 visit recommended that the date of initial accreditation be changed to August 22, 2008, to reflect the point that Ellis first had its own

students. In addition, the team recommended that another on-site visit take place by February 2010 focused on agreements and all service arrangements with Cardean Learning Group, an organization with a financial interest in Ellis. Beyond these recommendations, the team also recommended that an audit as of June 30, 2009 be filed with the Commission and that a report be filed by January 15, 2010 if the institution is not approved to participate in Title IV Financial Aid. At its meeting of June 4-5, 2009, the Commission Board accepted the team's recommendations without change.