

HLC Criteria and Summary of Core Components for Accreditation

Criterion One. Mission: The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1a/b. Core Components include ensuring the institution's mission is clear, understood, and articulated publicly.

1a. The University's planning and budgeting priorities must align with and support the mission.

1c. The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1d. The mission must demonstrate that the institution services the public, not solely the institution.

1d. Educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

Criterion Two. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct – The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2a. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions.

2b/c. The governing board serves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interest, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

2c. The governing board shall delegate day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expect the faculty to oversee academic matters.

2d. The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

2e. The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support – The institution provides high quality education wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3a. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs while ensuring those goals are consistent across all modes of delivery.

3b. The University demonstrates that the application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

3b. The general education program is grounded in a philosophy appropriate to the mission while providing knowledge and intellectual concepts to students that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

3b. Purpose, content, and intended learning outcomes are well defined for all education requirements, particularly those in the general education classification.

3c. The institution shall have sufficient numbers and continuity of appropriately credentialed faculty members to carry out both classroom and non-classroom roles which include oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

3c. The institution incorporates processes and resources for assuring instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it also supports their professional development.

3c. Staff members providing student support services are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

3d. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students.

3e. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

3e. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Criterion Four. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement – The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services; it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4a. The institution demonstrates quality of its programs by maintaining a practice of regular program reviews.

4a. The institution assures that dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

4a. The institution evaluates success of its graduates as well as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs.

4b. Commitment to educational achievement is demonstrated through ongoing assessment of student learning and achievement of student learning goals as well as achievements of learning outcomes for curricular and co-curricular programs.

4b. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

4b. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

4c. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs including using this information to make improvements warranted by the data.

4c. Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates.

Criterion Five: Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness – The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

5a. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

5b. The University engages internal constituencies including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.

5b. Enables involvement of the institutions administration faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes.

5c. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.