CAMPUS EVALUATION VISIT

Information for Institutions and Peer Reviewers

BACKGROUND

HLC policy Monitoring of Institutional Change (INST.F.20.060) requires an on-site evaluation visit to a new main campus or branch campus after the campus has been approved by HLC through the substantive change process and within six months of matriculation of students and initiation of instruction. The purpose of the campus evaluation visit is (a) to assure the quality of the campus and its educational programs in meeting the needs of its defined constituencies and (b) to assure the capacity to sustain that quality.

To assure ongoing quality, HLC evaluates existing campuses as part of the institution's comprehensive evaluation. Information on the evaluation of existing campuses during comprehensive evaluations can be found on HLC's website.

See HLC's Glossary for the definition of a campus.

MECHANICS OF THE VISIT

Campus evaluation visits are typically 1-2 days and involve 1-2 peer reviewers trained specifically to evaluate additional locations and campuses. HLC determines the length of the visit and the number of reviewers based on the scope, complexity and size of the new campus, as well as the availability of students, administrators and faculty members.

BEFORE THE VISIT

HLC will contact the institution to schedule a campus evaluation visit after HLC's Institutional Actions Council (IAC) has acted to approve the new campus.

This notification will request that the institution identify potential visit dates within the timeline provided by HLC.

Approximately three months prior to the visit, HLC will confirm the dates and purpose of the visit, as well as inform the institution of the name(s) and contact information of the reviewer(s). The institution is then expected to forward the required materials to HLC and the reviewer(s) at least six weeks prior to the visit.

Institutional Materials Provided Prior to the Visit
Unless otherwise directed by HLC, the institution should submit the following materials to the reviewer(s) and HLC:

Update Report: The update report should be no more than 2–3 pages and include information on the following:

- Progress made in launching the new campus since the original substantive change application.

- The implementation of and revisions to the business plan submitted with the change application.

- The institutional response to issues identified during HLC's review and approval of the campus.

- The current operations of the campus (programs, enrollment, budget, faculty, etc.).

Business Plan: If the institution has revised the original business plan submitted with the change application for approval of the campus, both the original and revised business plans should be submitted.

Change Application: The institution should submit the original change application for approval of the campus and any additional documents (in addition to the business plan) that were provided to the reviewers in the initial approval process.

When submitting documents, please carefully consider whether documents containing personally identifiable information (PII) must be included. If the documents must be included for evaluative purposes, please redact the PII where possible. If redaction of the PII will interfere with the evaluative value of the document, please clearly identify the document as containing PII (for example, through a cover page or prominent notation on the document). Institutions are not expected to redact or identify information or documents where the only PII included is employee or Board member names and work contact information.

PII is any information about an individual that allows the individual to be specifically identified. This includes, but is not limited to: name, address, telephone number, birthday, email, social security number, bank information, etc. A document does not include PII if personal information is de-identified (for example, student financial receivables without student names or bank routing information) or is provided in the aggregate (for example, data on faculty qualifications). See HLC's PII Guidelines for more information.

All materials should be provided electronically, not in hard copy, according to HLC's document submission guidelines. The institution should email the materials to the peer reviewer directly and submit them to HLC at hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Visit Materials" from the list of submission options to ensure the institution's materials are sent to the correct HLC staff member.

Once the materials have been received, the lead reviewer will contact the institution to finalize the logistics of the visit and to provide the institution with lists of the people the reviewer(s) expect to meet and the materials that the reviewer(s) will need during the visit (see next section).

DURING THE VISIT

Each visit typically begins with a meeting or conference call with the administrators at the main campus who are responsible for coordinating the

educational programs at the main campus with similar activities at the new campus. The reviewer(s) will also interview the new campus administrators, academic leaders, and some faculty and students. During the visit, the reviewers will evaluate:

- The history, planning, and oversight of the campus, including processes to assure appropriate governance and to sustain the quality of the campus.

- The physical and technological resources dedicated to the campus.

- The human resources dedicated to the campus and their qualifications.

- The management of, access to, and availability of student support services and academic resources.

- The oversight of educational programs and instruction.

- The evaluation and assessment processes that assure the capacity to sustain and improve academic quality, student learning, and student persistence and completion.

- The processes to assure continuous improvement of the quality of the campus and equivalency of the offerings and services at the campus to those of the main campus.

Institutional Materials Provided During the Visit
Unless otherwise instructed by HLC, a resource room is not required or expected. However, the institution should have a binder of or electronic access to the materials needed for the visit. Materials typically needed during such visits include:

- Institutional or extended operations planning documents and agreements (if not included in business plan) that indicate the relationship of the new campus to the broader strategic goals, mission, operations of the institution.

  - Budget and resource allocation projections.

  - Enrollment projections and planned growth.

  - Contractual and consortial arrangements (if applicable).

  - Oversight and governance of the campus and these link to those in the overall institution.

- Operational data and recent operational reports.
  - Enrollment data by program/major/degree.
  - Financial, technological, physical resources.
- Educational offerings and related information.
  - Course, program, and degree offerings, requirements, and schedules.
  - Representative samples of curricula and syllabi.
  - Catalog and course bulletins.
  - Promotional and recruitment materials.
- Human resources.
  - Staffing dedicated to the campus.
  - Faculty dedicated to the campus and their credentials.
  - Other faculty and staffing.
- Student and faculty resources and support.
  - Materials indicating student support services, access, etc., to appropriate academic and support services.
  - Evidence of access to academic and other student and faculty resources.
  - Admissions, enrollment, placement; i.e., student enrollment/advising/success services.
- Evaluation, assessment, and improvement processes (for the campus, its processes, its staff and faculty, its offerings, and student learning, persistence and completion).

AFTER THE VISIT

Within 30 days after the visit, the reviewer(s) will complete the Campus Evaluation Visit Report Form. This report asks the reviewer(s) to assure the quality of the campus and its educational programs in meeting the needs of its defined constituencies; and to assure the capacity to sustain that quality in the future. The reviewer(s) will also be asked to determine whether further follow-up is necessary either at the time of the next comprehensive evaluation or by means of a HLC-mandated follow-up mechanism, such as an interim report or focused visit. The institution will receive a copy of the campus evaluation visit report approximately 30 days after the visit. The institution will have an opportunity to respond to the report.

Institutional Response

HLC will request a response from the institution that is due two weeks from the date the campus evaluation visit report was sent to the institution. The response form should be submitted electronically and may include a written response to the report that is up to five pages in length. If the institution does not respond within the two weeks, HLC will forward the evaluation materials to the decision process without a response.

DECISION PROCESS

The IAC reviews the materials and makes a final decision on the recommendations resulting from the campus evaluation visit, including any additional monitoring. HLC informs the institution of the IAC's decision in a formal action letter, typically within three months from the date of the visit.

RECORDS

The written report and the institutional response will become a part of the institution's official file and will be shared with the next comprehensive evaluation peer review team and with other evaluation teams as deemed appropriate.

FEES

Current fees for a campus evaluation visit are provided in HLC's Dues and Fees Schedule, available at hlcommission.org/dues.

QUESTIONS?

Contact accreditation@hlcommission.org