

# Change in Length of Term Affecting Allocation of Credit

Substantive Change Application

Institution:       City, State:

Name of person completing this application:

Title:       Phone:       Email:

Date Submitted:

*When to Apply for Prior HLC Approval*

Most institutions of higher education state their requirements for completion of academic programs in terms of credit hours earned over the period of a semester, quarter, trimester or some other period and do not use clock hours as a measure of credit. When such an institution changes how a unit of credit is measured in 25% or more of its courses, such a change must first be requested on this form and submitted to HLC for review and approval. (Institutions that do not change the unit of credit measure but substantially change the number of credits or clock hours in specific degree programs should use the HLC form designated for that purpose: [Clock/Credit Conversion or Substantial Increase or Decrease in Clock or Credit Hours Required for a Program](https://download.hlcommission.org/change/ClockCreditHourApplication_FRM.docx)).  
  
The changes covered by this form often occur with an increase or decrease in the duration of courses in weeks, such as a move from quarter to semester or vice-versa. Such changes would also occur even when an existing semester, quarter or other period remains but is partitioned into two or more periods with courses offered within those shorter periods. Finally, a third example involves changes in credit (say, from three hours to four hours) earned in a substantial proportion of courses. HLC’s review of such situations aims to ensure that neither the quality of the educational experience nor the cost to students or to providers of student financial aid is compromised by the proposed change. The threshold of 25% or more of courses is designed to avoid reviewing limited situations such as summer or special terms.

*General Instructions*

This completed form will constitute your request for approval of a substantive change. This form will be the basis for review of this application. The questions are designed to elicit brief, succinct, detailed information, rather than a narrative or references to extensive supporting documents. Do not attach other documents unless they are specifically requested in the questions and are germane to the request. Excluding attachments, the completed application form should be no more than 12–15 pages on a single classification of change. The total submission, including attachments, should not exceed 200 pages.  
  
If the person completing this application is not the CEO, CAO or the Accreditation Liaison Officer of the institution, it is understood that the person completing and submitting this application has consulted with and informed those individuals and has been authorized to submit this form on the institution’s behalf.  
  
Please note: HLC plans to update its application forms annually, on or about September 1 of each year. However, if an application form was accessed more than 90 days prior to filing, please visit [hlcommission.org/change](https://www.hlcommission.org/change) to ensure that there have been no changes to the form in the intervening time.  
  
Submit the completed application as a single PDF file at [hlcommission.org/upload](https://www.hlcommission.org/upload). Select “Change Requests” from the list of submission options to ensure the application is sent to the correct HLC staff member.

## Part 1: General Questions

1. **Requested Change(s).** Concisely describe the change for which the institution is seeking approval.
2. **Does another characteristic of the change requested in this application require prior HLC approval?**

No

Yes

If yes, please explain and submit the relevant application form (or indicate the date on which it was submitted):

1. **Classification of Change Request.***Note: not every substantive change requires prior review and approval. Visit* [*hlcommission.org/change*](https://www.hlcommission.org/change) *to make certain that current HLC policy requires the institution to seek approval.*

An institution submitting more than one change request should complete multiple applications, one for each type of change. Change requests may be related to the following topics:

• [New academic programs](https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/substantive-change-academic-programs.html), including degree and certificate programs

• [Changes to existing academic programs](https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/substantive-change-clock-credit-hours-program-content-and-length-of-term.html) involving credit/clock hours, method of delivery

or length of term

• Opening or closing [additional locations or branch campuses](https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/substantive-change-off-campus-activities.html)

• [Provisional Plans](https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/provisional-plans-and-teach-outs.html) (with or without Teach-Out Agreements, as applicable)

• [Teach-Out Agreement](https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/provisional-plans-and-teach-outs.html) if closing a campus or additional location that provides total degree

programs

• Access to HLC’s [Notification Program for Additional Locations](https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/substantive-change-off-campus-activities.html)

• Initiating or expanding [distance education or correspondence education offerings](https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/substantive-change-distance-or-correspondence-education.html)

• Offering programs through [competency-based education](https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/substantive-change-competency-based-education.html) (credit-based, direct assessment

or hybrid)

• Initiating or modifying [contractual arrangements](https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/substantive-change-contractual-arrangements.html)

• Change in [mission](https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/substantive-change-mission-or-student-body.html)

• Change in [student body](https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/substantive-change-mission-or-student-body.html)

1. **Special conditions.** Indicate whether any of the conditions identified below fit the institution (Yes or No). If Yes, explain the situation in the space provided.
2. Is the institution, in its relations with other institutional or specialized accrediting agencies, currently under or recommended for a negative status or action (e.g., withdrawal, probation, sanction, warning, show-cause, etc.)?
3. Is the institution now undergoing or facing substantial monitoring, special review, or financial restrictions from the U.S. Dept. of Education or other federal or state government agencies?
4. Has the institution’s senior leadership or board membership experienced substantial resignations or removals in the past year?
5. Is the institution experiencing other pressures that might affect its ability to implement the proposal (e.g., a collective bargaining dispute or a significant lawsuit)?
6. **Internal Approvals.** Attach documentation of internal (faculty, board) approvals that the institution has obtained for the proposed change. **All required approvals must be obtained before submitting the application to HLC.** If no approval is required, attach evidence that approval is not needed (e.g. applicable regulation, statute, or correspondence).
7. **State Approvals.** Attach documentation of state approvals that the institution has obtained for the proposed change. **All required approvals must be obtained before submitting the application to HLC.** If no approval is required, attach evidence that approval is not needed (e.g. applicable regulation, statute, or correspondence).
8. **System Approvals.** If applicable, attach documentation of system approval that the institutions has obtained for the proposed change. **All required approvals must be obtained before submitting the application to HLC.** If no approval is required, attach evidence that approval is not needed (e.g. applicable regulation, statute or correspondence). Check the box below if the institution is not part of a system.

Not Applicable

1. **Foreign Country Approval(s).** If applicable, attach documentation of foreign country approval(s) that the institution has obtained for the proposed change. **All required approvals must be obtained before submitting the application to HLC.** If no approval is required, attach evidence that approval is not needed. Check the box below if the proposed change is not related to offerings in a foreign country.

Not Applicable

1. **Specialized Accreditation.** Complete this section only if specialized accreditation is required for licensure or practice in program(s) covered by this change application.

The institution has already obtained the appropriate specialized accreditation. Attach a copy of the letter from the agency granting accreditation.

The institution has begun the process of seeking or plans to seek specialized accreditation. Specify the name of the agency and the timeline for completing the process in the space below. (If approval is a multi-stage process, the institution should contact the HLC staff liaison to discuss the timeline before submitting this change application form.)

The institution does not plan to seek specialized accreditation. Provide a rationale for not seeking this accreditation in the space below.

1. **Changes Requiring Visits.** This section is not for HLC-mandated visits such as additional location confirmation visits or campus evaluation visits.

Complete this section only if the institution is already aware that the proposed change will need to be reviewed through a visit. The institution may submit Part 1 of the change request application to begin the process of scheduling a Change Visit or adding the proposed change to an already scheduled visit. The full application must be submitted at a later date. (If the institution is unsure whether a visit is required, leave this section blank and submit the full change application. HLC will advise the institution based on the information provided.)

1. Select the type of visit the institution is requesting:

Request to embed a Change Visit into an already scheduled visit.

**Note:** Such requests must be submitted at least six months before the visit date. HLC staff will determine whether to embed a Change Visit based on peer reviewer availability and the complexity of the scheduled visit, among other factors. HLC may not be able to accommodate all requests.

Change Visits typically are scheduled approximately four months from the date an institution submits its change request. The full change application and other required materials will be due to HLC and the peer review team eight weeks before the visit date. See [Change Visit: Required Materials and Submission Procedures](https://www.hlcommission.org/change-visit) for more information.

Request to add a proposed change to an already scheduled visit. **Note:** Such requests must be submitted at least six months before the visit date.

Specify type of visit and date scheduled:

The institution’s full change application should be submitted along with other materials required for the already scheduled visit.

1. Provide URLs to the institution’s Faculty/Staff Handbook and Catalog below. If the URLs are not available, please provide PDF versions of these documents when submitting other required materials prior to the visit.

Faculty/Staff Handbook URL:

Catalog URL:

## Part 2: Topic-Specific Questions

### Section A. Characteristics of the Change Requested

1. Identify the effective date and the scope of the proposed change as indicated below:
2. The degree level(s) affected
3. The modes/times of delivery affected (e.g., all, on-ground, online, accelerated, evening)
4. The major instructional units affected (e.g., all, College of Business, Division of Adult Education).
5. For those courses that would be affected, indicate the following:
6. Duration of course in weeks in the current and proposed calendars
7. Weekly instructional contact hours per credit in the current and proposed calendars
8. Explain any changes in the awarding of credit for evidence of prior learning (other than credit transferred from formal courses or awarded from Advanced Placement) that will be made with the proposed change. Be sure to include any change in the allowable level of such credit.

### Section B. Rationale, Formula, and Plans for Implementation

1. What is the rationale for the change and its likely financial impact?
2. Describe the formula used in modifying the current unit of credit measure to that proposed, focusing on courses with the most common increase or the most common decrease, as applicable. Include the number and duration of weekly organized class meetings and effort expected in homework or other out-of-class activities.
3. Explain the projected effect on learning objectives. Include current and proposed syllabi of (1) two popular lower-division course sequences, one lecture-only, and one with a significant lab component; (2) two popular upper-division courses, one lecture-only, and the other with a significant lab or clinical component.
4. Outline the institution’s plans for transitioning the program to the new unit of credit measure, including the implications for students currently enrolled.

### Section C. Impact on Student Load, Degree Completion, and Tuition

1. For *full-time* students affected by this change, indicate the current and proposed credits per term as shown below:

**Minimum credits per term for undergraduates**

Current:       Proposed:

**Minimum credits per term for graduate students**

Current:       Proposed:

**Typical credits per term for undergraduates**

Current:       Proposed:

**Typical credits per term for graduate students**

Current:       Proposed:

1. For each degree level affected by the proposed change, indicate the following information for degree completion:

**Minimum credits for degree**

Current:       Proposed:

**Typical time for degree completion**

Current:       Proposed:

1. If the proposed change will alter the amount of time given to complete the same amount of material, how is the institution ensuring that students will have an appropriate amount of time in instruction, homework, etc., and that the objectives of each course are commensurate with the level of credit?
2. What will be the impact of the change on tuition per course, on full-time tuition per year, and on total tuition needed to complete degree programs, especially if there are changes in the typical time to degree completion?

### Section D. Institutional Staffing, Faculty and Student Support

1. What will be the impact of the change on the number of faculty involved in providing the instruction for the program and on faculty loads?
2. What will the impact of the change be on faculty workload?
3. What library and information resources—general as well as specific to the program(s)—and staffing and services are in place to support the revised program?

### Section E. Evaluation

1. How will the institution monitor and evaluate the overall effectiveness and quality under the new credit-hour model?
2. Explain how the results of the evaluation will be used to improve the curriculum, teaching, services, and operations.