

# Criteria Revision Process

## Policy Change Adopted on Second Reading

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The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) adopted this policy on second reading at its meeting on February 23–24, 2023.

### Background

The policy change modifies the process for revising HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation to preserve staff flexibility in designing appropriate methods for engaging HLC’s constituents in that process.

HLC circulated these policy changes to the membership and other interested parties after the Board’s November 2022 meeting. No external comments were received warranting changes in language.

### Implementation

This policy is effective immediately.

### Adopted Policy Change

Wording that was deleted or revised is shown as strikethrough (~~old wording~~); new language, whether through addition or revision, is shown in bold (**new wording**). These revisions have been made on HLC’s website at [hlcommission.org/policies](https://hlcommission.org/policies).

**Policy Title:** Application and Regular Review of HLC Requirements and Institutional Accreditation Policies

**Number:** PPAR.A.10.000

HLC will apply all institutional accreditation policies in a fair and consistent manner, ensuring due process, as aligned with this policy.

Where necessary HLC will take follow-up action to ensure that an institution that does not meet HLC requirements either has its accreditation or candidacy withdrawn or denied following policies related to those processes, or, if applicable, comes into compliance within no more than three years, inclusive of any good cause extensions where provided for in policy. All institutions are responsible for regularly reviewing

all HLC policies in their entirety, including any noted related policies, and related procedures and guidelines as may be published by HLC.

The Board of Trustees recognizes that higher education is rapidly changing and that HLC policies need to reflect those changes. Therefore, the Board of Trustees commits to regularly reviewing its policies and procedures, particularly but not exclusively related to institutional dynamics and change, to evaluate their responsiveness to the higher education environment, their effectiveness in providing quality assurance, and their usefulness in enhancing institutional and educational improvement.

HLC, through its system of self-evaluation, will regularly seek from member institutions and Peer Reviewers comment on the effectiveness of HLC's policies, programs and activities. HLC's review process will provide opportunities for a broad group of stakeholders, such as employers, students, parents, business leaders, etc., to evaluate the program **of evaluation** and requirements for accreditation. The feedback from the stakeholders may lead the Board of Trustees to modify or change HLC's programs and requirements. In addition, the Board of Trustees will, ~~convene an advisory panel~~ at least every five years, ~~to~~ review the effectiveness of, and proposed changes and programs for, the Criteria for Accreditation. ~~The panel will include representatives from various constituencies within HLC as well as members of the Board of Trustees.~~

Should the Board of Trustees learn from its review of policies that a change in HLC policy is necessary to ensure that the policy is being interpreted properly by institutions or peer reviewers or is being properly applied in the evaluation process, the Board will ensure that such change is made within no more than 12 months of the Board learning about the necessary change.

The Board of Trustees may amend, delete, or add to the policies at any time. In general, the adoption of new or revised policies shall take place at a regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting subsequent to the first meeting when the proposed new or revised policy was presented. Policies affecting institutions shall be circulated in writing to all member institutions for a comment period of not less than 60 days between the first and second reading of the proposed policy. The Board of Trustees will consider any comments on any proposed policies it has approved on first reading before it takes action to adopt such policy revisions on second reading. This policy does not preclude HLC Board or staff making technical amendments to clarify the meaning of policies without necessarily providing a notice and comment period.

## Policy History

Last Revised: February 2023

First Adopted: November 2012

Revision History: November 2020, February 2023

Notes: In February 2021, references to the Higher Learning Commission as “the Commission” were replaced with the term “HLC.”

Related Policies: