

Quality Initiative Report Process

Information for Institutions and Peer Reviewers

At the end of the Quality Initiative, an institution writes its Quality Initiative Report. The Quality Initiative Report offers the institution the opportunity to reflect on what it has accomplished, to document the achievements and strategies used, and to define new priorities and challenges. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) encourages institutions to use the Quality Initiative to take risks, innovate, take on a tough challenge, or pursue a yet unproven strategy or hypothesis. Thus failure of an initiative to achieve its goals is acceptable. An institution may learn much from such failure. What is not acceptable is failure on the part of the institution to pursue the initiative with genuine effort. Genuineness of effort, not success of the initiative, constitutes the focus of the Quality Initiative review and serves as its sole point of evaluation.

Quality Initiative Report and Its Submission

Quality Initiative Reports are to be submitted by August 31 of Year 9 of the Open Pathway cycle. HLC recommends that institutions with comprehensive evaluations in the first half of Year 10 submit their report at least six months prior to their Assurance System lock date. The institution completes the report using the provided [template](#).¹

1 Note: Institutions participating in HLC's Assessment Academy or the Persistence and Completion Academy for their Quality Initiative do not follow this report and review process. Institutions in a facilitated program engage in a concluding event and use a different report template.

The Quality Initiative Report should be:

- No longer than 6,000 words.
- Submitted electronically in PDF format to pathways@hlcommission.org with a file name that follows this format: QI Report No Name University MN. The file name must include the institution's name (or an identifiable portion thereof) and state.
- Accompanied by the signed report form.

Quality Initiative Report Review

1. **HLC Staff Review.** Within three weeks of receipt, HLC staff reviews the Quality Initiative Report for completeness and forwards it for peer review.
2. **Peer Review.** A panel of two or three peer reviewers evaluates the Quality Initiative Report, at distance, and prepares a review using the provided [template](#) that addresses the genuineness of effort on the part of the institution. If the panel has questions about the institution's Quality Initiative, the panel leader will contact the institution for clarification, typically via email.

The panel recommendation is limited to the following:

- The panel confirms genuine effort on the part of the institution.
- The panel cannot confirm genuine effort on the part of the institution.

3. **Final Review and Institutional Response.** The panel sends its preliminary recommendation to the institution's HLC staff liaison. If necessary, the liaison discusses the review with the panel before the panel submits the final recommendation. HLC sends the final recommendation to the institution. After receiving the final review, the institution completes and returns its institutional response.

4. **Decision Process.** HLC bundles the panel recommendation and institutional response with the recommendation and documentation from the Year 10 comprehensive evaluation and forwards them to

the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) for decision making. If the institution's Quality Initiative Report has been judged not acceptable by the reviewers, the institution will lose eligibility for the Open Pathway or AQIP Pathway. The Quality Initiative in itself cannot result in monitoring or a sanction. The IAC takes action on the institution's reaffirmation of accreditation and on the institution's pathway eligibility. 