

Accreditation Liaison Officers: Welcome to the Role

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) asks each member institution to identify an Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). Along with the institution's chief executive officer, the ALO is a primary contact point between HLC and institution. They receive communications from HLC regarding policies, procedures, news and other updates, and are responsible for coordinating efforts to ensure their institution meets its obligations of HLC membership.

Responsibilities

General Communications With HLC

- Serve as a recipient of HLC communications regarding the institution's accreditation, in addition to the chief executive officer.
- Stay current with HLC policies and procedures.
- Provide comments to HLC as requested in its consideration of [proposed policies](#), procedures and issues affecting the accreditation relationship.
- Facilitate responses to HLC inquiries, including [complaints](#) referred by HLC staff to the chief executive officer.

On Campus

- Disseminate information and answer questions about HLC policies and procedures for all audiences within the institution.
- Maintain the institution's file of official documents and reports related to the [institution's relationship with HLC](#).

Reporting Requirements

- Provide oversight and direction for the institution's Data Update Coordinator to ensure the accuracy of information submitted in the [Institutional Update](#).
- Notify HLC if any of the following actions are taken by the U.S. Department of Education, state agencies or other recognized accreditors:
 - **U.S. Department of Education:** If the institution is placed on or removed from provisional certification for participation in Title IV or the Heightened Cash Monitoring 2 or Reimbursement payment methods for financial aid disbursements, complete the [Federal Student Aid Status Form](#).
 - **State Agencies:** If a state issues a pending or final action that affects the institution's legal status or authority to grant degrees, notify HLC at legalaffairs@hlcommission.org.
 - **Other Recognized Accreditors:** If the institution receives a pending or final action from or has been placed on sanction by any other recognized accreditor, notify HLC at legalaffairs@hlcommission.org. In the email, include a copy of the action letter from the accreditor.

Substantive Change

- Notify HLC of changes to the institution's operations and academic offerings, as required by HLC's substantive change [policy](#) and [procedures](#).
- Provide oversight and direction for the timely submission of [substantive change requests and reports](#) required by HLC policy.

Membership Dues and Fees

- Ensure that the institution meets its financial obligations to HLC through the timely payment of [dues and fees](#).

Resources

ALO Training

HLC offers an online orientation for new ALOs to learn more about their role and expectations and processes for HLC accreditation, as well as webinars and annual conference programming to keep current with HLC policies and processes. See HLC's website for [upcoming offerings and online resources](#).

Canopy

Canopy is HLC's online system for institutions to manage their accreditation records. ALOs can view their institution profile, update the institutional contacts on file with HLC, and manage their additional location and branch campus records.

Log into Canopy at canopy.hlcommission.org.

See HLC's website for more [details about the system and training resources](#).

Institutional Status and Requirements (ISR) Report

The [ISR Report](#) is a resource to allow ALOs or CEOs to review information regarding the institution's accreditation relationship with HLC. ALOs and CEOs may download their institution's ISR Report in [Canopy](#).

Features of the report include complete institutional history with HLC, information on the status of current or upcoming accreditation events, and information on the institution's designated Pathway for Reaffirmation of Accreditation and related events.

HLCommission.org

HLC's website provides in-depth information regarding HLC's [policies](#), [procedures](#), [events](#), [publications](#) and [initiatives](#).

Leaflet Newsletter

[The Leaflet](#) is a snapshot of the work HLC does to fulfill its mission. Published six times a year, it provides updates, news and resources regarding HLC, accreditation and the higher education industry.

Annual Resource Guide

HLC publishes a [Resource Guide](#) each year in time for its annual conference. The guide provides a quick reference on HLC's policies, procedures and programming.

HLC Staff Liaison

HLC assigns each member institution a vice president of accreditation relations, also known as a [staff liaison](#), who serves as the institution's primary contact. ALOs should contact their institution's staff liaison with questions related to the institution's status with HLC and any accreditation process. Staff liaisons are available by email or phone and are available to [visit](#) institutions to discuss more substantive issues related to accreditation.

A staff liaison's responsibilities include the following:

- Advise the institution about the policies and procedures of HLC.
 - Provide historical information about the institution's relationship with HLC.
 - Identify HLC resources that may help the institution manage its accreditation.
 - Facilitate accreditation processes.
 - Manage expectations related to substantive change.
 - Advise on the institutional preparation for upcoming evaluations.
 - Counsel the institution regarding the transition to a new Pathway for Reaffirmation of Accreditation.
- Coordinate the peer review and decision-making process.
 - Work with HLC Accreditation Services staff to identify and prepare peer review teams for institutional evaluations.
 - Review reports and finalize documents to facilitate decision making by established HLC decision-making bodies.