

Additional Location Confirmation Visit

Information for Institutions and Peer Reviewers

Background

Currently, HLC policy requires additional location confirmation visits in two distinct contexts.

- **Opening Additional Locations**

HLC policy [Monitoring of Substantive Change \(INST.G.10.030\)](#) requires an on-site evaluation visit to an institution's first three active additional locations after the additional locations have been approved by HLC through the substantive change process and within six months of the initiation of instruction and student matriculation.

The purpose of the additional location confirmation visit is to validate that the additional location is as described in the institution's documents on which HLC's approval was based. The visit may be conducted separately or as an additional component of an already scheduled visit.

- **Initiating Pell-Eligible Prison Education Programs**

HLC policy related to Pell-eligible prison education programs (PEPs) requires an on-site evaluation to the first two additional locations that HLC has approved for the express purpose of offering PEPs to students who are incarcerated. Similar to other such visits, HLC conducts these visits within six months of the initiation of instruction and student matriculation. (See [Monitoring of Substantive Change \(INST.G.10.030\)](#).)

See [HLC's Glossary](#) for related definitions.

Mechanics of the Visit

Additional location confirmation visits are typically one-day visits and involve a single HLC peer reviewer trained in evaluating locations. The visit itself should take no more than four hours.

In some instances, representatives from another accreditor or state agency may observe the visit. See [Observation of HLC Visits by Recognized Accreditors or State Agencies](#) for more information.

Before the Visit

HLC will email the institution to schedule an additional location confirmation visit after HLC's Institutional Actions Council (IAC) has acted to approve the new additional location or new PEP, as applicable. This email will ask the institution to confirm the date that instruction and student matriculation will begin at the additional location.

HLC will use this information to invite a reviewer. Once assigned, HLC will inform the institution of the name and contact information for the reviewer. The institution will work with the assigned reviewer to schedule the visit date within the timeline provided by HLC. When the visit date has been determined, the reviewer must inform HLC.

Materials Provided Prior to the Visit

Unless otherwise directed by HLC, the institution should submit an update report to the reviewer and HLC at least four weeks prior to the visit. The report should be no more than 2–3 pages and must include information on the following:

- Progress made in launching the new additional location or PEP, as applicable, since the original substantive change application.
- The institutional response to issues identified during HLC's review and approval of the additional location or PEP, as applicable.
- The current operations of the location or PEP (program[s] offered, enrollment numbers, budget allocations, faculty and instruction, etc.).
- Institutions hosting a visit for PEP purposes must specifically include in the update report: 1) an update on the status of U.S. Department of Education approval for the PEP, if any and 2) a discussion of the successes and/or challenges associated with the implementation of the program identified (or designated as "first") in the original substantive change application.

HLC will provide the following materials to the reviewer at least six weeks prior to the visit:

- **Substantive Change Application:** The original application for approval of the additional location or PEP and any additional documents that were provided in the initial substantive change process.
- **Change Routing and Review Form (CRRF):** This document guided the original application for approval of the additional location or PEP, as applicable, through the substantive change process. If the application was reviewed by desk review, the CRRF documents the approval recommendation made to IAC.
- **Change Panel Analysis Report (if applicable):** If the institution's application was reviewed by a change panel, this document provides the panel's analysis of the original application and its recommendation to IAC.
- **Action Letter:** This letter notifies the institution regarding IAC approval of its application.
- **Institutional Status and Requirements (ISR) Report:** The ISR Report details the institution's membership with HLC, including its upcoming reviews, stipulations, program offerings, off-campus activities and review history.

When submitting the update report, 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. See HLC's [PII Guidelines](#) for more information.

The update report should be provided electronically, not in hard copy, to both the reviewer and HLC. The institution should email the report to the peer reviewer directly and submit it to HLC at [hlcommission.org/upload](#). Select "Visit Materials" from the list of submission options to ensure the report is sent to the correct HLC staff member.

Once the reviewer receives the materials from the institution and HLC, the reviewer will contact the institution to finalize the logistics of the visit and to provide the institution with lists of the people the reviewer expects to meet and the materials that the reviewer will need during the visit.

During the Visit

Each visit to a new additional location 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 additional location. The reviewer will also interview the additional location administrators, academic leaders, and some faculty and students.

While visits to a PEP typically will include a conference call with administrators at the main campus, nearly all of the reviewer's activities will be conducted on-site at the correctional facility that constitutes the PEP. The reviewer will collaborate extensively with the institutional administrator (typically a program director

or other institutional staff member) directly responsible for the institution's administration of the PEP. In addition, the reviewer will interact directly with students enrolled in the PEP and those responsible for delivering instruction. Significant protocols for security will apply according to the particular correctional facility's requirements.

Guidebook on Prison Education Programs

For insight into the unique context and goals of postsecondary education in correctional facilities, see [Postsecondary Education in Prison Programs and Accreditation: General Considerations for Peer Reviewers and Accreditors](#). HLC collaborated on this guidebook with the Vera Institute of Justice.

After the Visit

HLC has two distinct templates for visit reports related to additional locations and PEPs:

- [Visit report form for additional locations](#)
- [Visit report form for PEPs](#)

Within 30 days after the visit, the reviewer will complete the relevant form and submit it to HLC. The reviewer does not need to send a draft report to the institution to review for corrections to errors of fact. Following review by staff for completeness, HLC will send the report to the institution.

If the reviewer recommends monitoring, HLC will invite the institution to submit a response to the reviewer's recommendation. HLC then submits the institutional materials, reviewer's recommendation and institutional response to the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) for review and action. If the reviewer does not recommend monitoring, the report will be accepted by the IAC as an item of information and no action will be taken.

Records

The additional location confirmation visit report and, if applicable, the institutional response will become a part of the institution's administrative record and will be shared with the next comprehensive evaluation peer review team and with other evaluation teams as deemed appropriate.

Fees

Current fees for an additional location confirmation visit are outlined on HLC's Dues and Fees Schedule, available at hlcommission.org/dues.

Questions?

Contact HLC at accreditation@hlcommission.org.