

Campus Evaluation Visit

Information for Institutions and Peer Reviewers

Background

HLC policy [Monitoring of Substantive Change \(INST.G.10.030\)](#) requires an on-site evaluation visit to a new main campus or branch campus after the campus has been approved by HLC through the substantive change process and within six months of matriculation of students and initiation of instruction. The purpose of the campus evaluation visit is (1) to assure the quality of the campus and its educational programs in meeting the needs of its defined constituencies and (2) to assure the capacity to sustain that quality.

To assure ongoing quality, HLC evaluates existing campuses as part of the institution's comprehensive evaluation. See HLC's website for information on the evaluation of existing campuses during comprehensive evaluations, referred to as a [multi-campus visit](#).

See [HLC's Glossary](#) for the definition of a campus.

Mechanics of the Visit

Campus evaluation visits typically take place in one day and are conducted by a single peer reviewer who is trained specifically to evaluate additional locations and campuses. In rare cases, the visit may be conducted by two reviewers and/or take place over two days. HLC determines the length of the visit and the number of reviewers based on the scope, complexity and size of the new campus, as well as the availability of students, administrators and faculty members.

In some instances, representatives from the state higher education organization may [observe the visit](#).

Before the Visit

HLC will email the institution to schedule a campus evaluation visit after HLC's Institutional Actions Council (IAC) has acted to approve the new campus. This email will ask the institution to confirm the date that instruction and student matriculation will begin at the campus.

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

Institutional Materials Provided Prior to the Visit

Unless otherwise directed by HLC, the institution should submit the following materials to the reviewer(s) and HLC at least four weeks prior to the visit:

- **Update Report:** The update report should be no more than 2–3 pages and include information on the following:
 - Progress made in launching the new campus since the original substantive change application.
 - The implementation of and revisions to the business plan submitted with the change application.
 - The institutional response to issues identified during HLC's review and approval of the campus.
 - The current operations of the campus (programs, enrollment, budget, faculty, etc.).

- **Revised Business Plan (if applicable):** If the institution has revised the original business plan submitted with the change application for approval of the campus, the revised business plan should be submitted.

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

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

When submitting documents, 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 (for example, data on faculty qualifications). See HLC's [PII Guidelines](#) for more information.

All materials should be provided electronically, not in hard copy, to the reviewer and HLC. The institution should email the materials to the peer reviewer directly and submit them to HLC at hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Visit Materials" from the list of submission options to ensure the institution's materials are sent to the correct HLC staff member.

Once the materials have been received, the lead reviewer will contact the institution to finalize the logistics of the visit and to provide the institution with lists of the people the reviewer(s) expect to meet and the materials that the reviewer(s) will need during the visit.

During the Visit

Each visit to a branch campus 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 new campus. The reviewer(s) also will interview the new campus administrators, academic leaders, and some faculty and students.

During the visit, the reviewers will evaluate:

- The history, planning and oversight of the campus, including processes to assure appropriate governance and to sustain the quality of the campus.
- The physical and technological resources dedicated to the campus.
- The human resources dedicated to the campus and their qualifications.
- The management of, access to, and availability of student support services and academic resources.
- The oversight of educational programs and instruction.
- The evaluation and assessment processes that assure the capacity to sustain and improve academic quality, student learning, and student persistence and completion.
- The processes to assure continuous improvement of the quality of the campus and, if applicable, equivalency of the offerings and services at the campus to those of the main campus.

Institutional Materials Provided During the Visit

Unless otherwise instructed by HLC, a resource room is not required or expected. However, the institution should have a binder of or electronic access to the materials needed for the visit. Materials typically needed during such visits include:

- Institutional or extended operations planning documents and agreements (if not included in business plan) that indicate the relationship of the new campus to the broader strategic goals, mission and operations of the institution.
 - Budget and resource allocation projections.
 - Enrollment projections and planned growth.
 - Contractual and consortial arrangements (if applicable).
 - Oversight and governance of the campus and how these link to those in the overall institution.
- Operational data and recent operational reports.
 - Enrollment data by program/major/degree.
 - Financial, technological and physical resources.
- Educational offerings and related information.
 - Course, program and degree offerings, requirements and schedules.
 - Representative samples of curricula and syllabi.
 - Catalog and course bulletins.
 - Promotional and recruitment materials.
- Human resources.
 - Staffing dedicated to the campus.
 - Faculty dedicated to the campus and their credentials.
 - Other faculty and staffing.
- Student and faculty resources and support.
 - Evidence of access to academic and other student and faculty resources.
 - Admissions, enrollment, placement; i.e., student enrollment/advising/success services.
- Evaluation, assessment and improvement processes (for the campus, its processes, its staff and faculty, its offerings, and student learning, persistence and completion).

After the Visit

Within 30 days after the visit, the reviewer(s) will complete the [Campus Evaluation Visit Report Form](#). This report asks the reviewer(s) to (1) assure the quality of the campus and its educational programs in meeting the needs of its defined constituencies, and (2) assure the institution's capacity to sustain that quality in the future. The reviewer(s) will also be asked to determine whether further monitoring is necessary, either at the time of the next comprehensive evaluation or in the form of an interim report or focused visit. The institution will receive a copy of the campus evaluation visit report approximately 30 days after the visit. The institution will have an opportunity to respond to the report.

Institutional Response

HLC will request a response from the institution that is due two weeks from the date the campus evaluation visit report was sent to the institution. The response form should be submitted electronically and may include a written response to the report that is up to five pages in length. If the institution does not respond within the two weeks, HLC will forward the evaluation materials to the decision-making process without a response.

Decision Making

The IAC reviews the materials and makes a final decision on the recommendations resulting from the campus evaluation visit, including any additional monitoring. HLC informs the institution of the IAC's decision in a formal action letter, typically within three months from the date of the visit.

Records

The written report and the institutional response will become a part of the institution's official file and will be shared with the next comprehensive evaluation peer review team and with other evaluation teams as deemed appropriate.

Fees

Current fees for a campus evaluation visit are provided in HLC's Dues and Fees Schedule, available at hlcommission.org/dues.

Questions?

Contact accreditation@hlcommission.org