

Dual Credit

For Institutions and Peer Reviewers

Introduction

These guidelines provide additional information for institutions and peer reviewers about the application of HLC requirements in the context of dual credit. They address issues that fall within the scope of HLC's Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices, including academic rigor, learning outcomes and resources, and institutional policies and procedures for determining faculty qualifications. They also provide a framework for consistency in evaluating dual credit activities across all member institutions and through all teaching modalities.

HLC defines dual credit courses as those that are taught to high school students for which the students receive both high school credit and college credit. These courses or programs are offered under a variety of names; the requirements related to "dual credit" apply to all of them as they involve the accredited institution's responsibility for the quality of its offerings.

Related HLC Requirements

The following Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practice directly refer to dual credit or are otherwise particularly applicable with respect to dual credit:

Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Core Component 3.A.

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

This Core Component as related to dual credit is further explained by sub-component 3:

3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Core Component 3.C.

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

Assumed Practice B.2: Faculty Roles and Qualifications

The concept of faculty qualifications is also addressed in Assumed Practice B.2.a:

- a. The institution establishes and maintains reasonable policies and procedures to determine that faculty are qualified. The factors that an institution considers as part of these policies and procedures could include, but are not limited to: the achievement of academic credentials, progress toward academic credentials, equivalent experience, or some combination thereof. The institution's obligations in this regard extend to all

instructors and all other entities to which it assigns the responsibility of instruction. HLC will maintain “Institutional Policies and Procedures for Determining Faculty Qualifications Guidelines” to further explain requirements for reasonable policies and procedures in accordance with this Assumed Practice.

Criterion 4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Core Component 4.A.

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

This Core Component as related to dual credit is further explained by sub-component 4:

4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

Quality Assurance for Dual Credit Courses or Programs

The following concepts are essential to determining quality assurance for dual credit courses or programs:

1. Faculty qualifications (Criterion 3; Assumed Practice B.2.a)

The institution uses the same policies and procedures for determining faculty qualifications for faculty in dual credit courses or programs that it does for its other higher education courses.

2. Rigor of courses or programs and curricular standards (Criterion 4)

The institution mandates the same level of rigor in dual credit courses or programs as it does for its

other higher education courses or programs. Dual credit courses or programs meet the same curricular standards and undergo the same institutional approval processes as the institution’s other courses or programs.

3. Expectations for student learning and learning outcomes (Criterion 4)

Expectations for student learning and learning outcomes in dual credit courses or programs are consistent with the same courses or programs that the institution offers at the higher education level.

4. Access to learning resources (Criteria 3 and 4)

Students as well as faculty in dual credit courses or programs have the same level of access to learning resources (libraries, laboratories, databases, etc.) as the institution’s students and faculty in the same higher education courses or programs.

5. Institutional monitoring, oversight and transparency (Criteria 2, 3 and 4)

The institution, specifically faculty as appropriate, exercises proper monitoring and oversight of its dual credit activity to ensure that dual credit courses or programs meet higher education standards. The institution informs students clearly and accurately whether courses taken for dual credit (i.e., at a high school via a community college) will transfer to other institutions, including four-year institutions.

When Dual Credit Is Reviewed

Evaluation of dual credit activities will occur at least at the time of an institution’s comprehensive evaluation but may also be a subject of examination at other times if dual credit courses or programs become a matter of concern at an institution.

Questions?

Please contact the institution’s HLC staff liaison.