

Accreditation Essentials

PRESENTED FOR

SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

GOVERNANCE DAY

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Disclaimer:

I am NOT speaking on behalf of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). I am speaking from my own accreditation experiences.

This presentation should not be construed as formal accreditation advice.

Links to the information shared in this presentation will be provided.

Pathways to Accreditation

Open Pathway – 10 Year Cycle

Regular monitoring of the institution through the annual update

Year 1 -3 writing Assurance Argument and adding evidence to the Evidence File

Year 4 Assurance Review (conducted by team at a distance)

- The team evaluates these materials and recommends whether the institution should continue in the cycle or whether additional monitoring is required

Open Pathway – Continued...

Years 5 -9 Quality Initiative (project proposed to and approved by HLC)

Also during Years 5-9 the institution should be developing, writing, and identifying evidence for the Assurance Argument for the Year 10 Comprehensive Evaluation (with visit)

Federal Compliance is completed in Year 10 during the Comprehensive Evaluation

Standard Pathway - 10 Year Cycle

Regular monitoring of the institution through the annual update

Year 1-3 writing Assurance Argument and adding evidence to the Evidence File

Year 4 Comprehensive Evaluation (with visit)

- If reaffirmation is granted, the institution is moved into year 5 of the Standard Pathway.

Years 5-9 the institution should be developing, writing, and identifying evidence for the Assurance Argument for the Year 10 Comprehensive Evaluation (with visit)

Federal Compliance is completed in both Year 4 and 10 during the Comprehensive Evaluation

Federal Compliance

Reviewed during Year 10 in the Open Pathway

Reviewed during Year 4 and 10 in the Standard Pathway

Review is completed by one peer reviewer at a distance, but may be included in the team's conference calls to review early findings (if any)

The peer review team's role is to confirm the Federal Compliance reviewer's initial findings are accurate once on campus

Federal Compliance Items (March 2020)

Assignment of credits, program length and tuition

- Related to Core Component 3A and Assumed Practice B1

Institutional records of student complaints

- Related to Core Component 2A and Assumed Practices A3 and A4

Publication of transfer policies

- Related to Core Component 2A and Assumed Practice A5D

Practices for verification of student identity

- Related to Core Component 2A

Publication of student outcome data

- Related to Assumed Practice A6

Standing with state and other accrediting agencies

- Related to Core Component 2B and Assumed Practices A7 and C4

Judging Core Components

Met: The institution meets or exceeds the expectations embodied in the **Core Component**.

Met with concerns: The institution demonstrates the characteristics expected by the **Core Component**, but performance in relation to some aspect of the component must be improved.

Not met: The institution fails to meet the **Component** in its entirety or is so deficient in one or more aspects of the **Component** that the **Component** is judged not to be met.

Judging Criteria for Accreditation

Met: The institution meets or exceeds the expectations embodied in the **Criterion**.

Met with concerns: The institution demonstrates the characteristics expected by the **Criterion**, but performance in relation to some aspect of the **Core Component** must be improved.

Not met: The institution fails to meet the **Criterion** in its entirety or is so deficient in one or more **Core Component** of the **Criterion** that the **Criterion** is judged not to be met.

Judging...

The institution meets the entire Criterion only if **all** Core Components are “met”.

The institution does not meet the Criterion if **one or more** Core Components is judged not to be met.

An institution remains in **compliance** with the Criteria for Accreditation as long as all five Criteria are judged “met” or “met with concern”.

Criterion 1 - Mission

Core Component 1A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.D	Core Component 1.D	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met With Concerns
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met With Concerns
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.E	Core Component 3.E	Met With Concerns
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met With Concerns
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met With Concerns
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.D	Core Component 5.D	Met With Concerns
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	

Revised Criteria and Crosswalks

The Commission obtained feedback from its membership regarding the Criteria for Accreditation.

There were several iterations of the Criteria before the Commission's Board adopted the final version.

Institutions transitioned to the new Criteria for Accreditation during the 2019-2020 academic year.

The revisions to the Criteria for Accreditation became effective September 1, 2020.

FROM THE CURRENT CRITERIA TO THE REVISED CRITERIA

Current Criteria	Revised Criteria
Criterion 1	
1.A.	1.A.
1.B.	1.A.
1.C.	1.C.
1.D.	1.B.
Criterion 2	
2.A.	2.A.
2.B.	2.B.
2.C.	2.C.
2.D.	2.D.
2.E.	2.E.
Criterion 3	
3.A.	3.A.
3.B.	3.B.
3.C.	3.C.
3.D.	3.D.
3.E.	2.B.
Criterion 4	
4.A.	4.A.
4.B.	4.B.
4.C.	4.C.
Criterion 5	
5.A.	5.B.
5.B.	5.A.
5.C.	5.C.
5.D.	5.C.

FROM THE REVISED CRITERIA TO THE CURRENT CRITERIA

Revised Criteria	Current Criteria
Criterion 1	
1.A.	1.A. and 1.B.
1.B.	1.D.
1.C.	1.C.
Criterion 2	
2.A.	2.A.
2.B.	2.B. and 3.E.
2.C.	2.C.
2.D.	2.D.
2.E.	2.E.
Criterion 3	
3.A.	3.A.
3.B.	3.B.
3.C.	3.C.
3.D.	3.D.
Criterion 4	
4.A.	4.A.
4.B.	4.B.
4.C.	4.C.
Criterion 5	
5.A.	5.B.
5.B.	5.A.
5.C.	5.C. and 5.D.

Providing Evidence

Evidence should demonstrate that the institution is compliant with HLC's requirements and meets the Criteria for Accreditation.

The Commission outlines three types of evidence:

- ❖ Clear evidence which is precise and explicit.
- ❖ Corroborating evidence which is supplementary.
- ❖ Circumstantial evidence which is inferential in nature.

Criteria for Accreditation (September 1, 2020)

Criterion 1 – Mission

Criterion 2 – Integrity: Ethical and Responsible
Conduct

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

Criterion 4 – Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and
Improvement

Criterion 5 – Resources, Planning, and Institutional
Effectiveness

Criterion 1 – Mission

Core Component 1A – The institution’s mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution

Core Component 1B – The institution’s mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

Core Component 1C – The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally-connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 1A

Documentation of the history, development and adoption of the institution's mission statement.

Documentation the mission statement is regularly reviewed by the administration and reviewed and approved by the governing board.

Documentation that academic programs, student support services and planning and budgeting priorities align with the mission (e.g., documents with budget allocations to instruction, student services, etc.)

Enrollment profile.

Information about new student, employee, and board member orientation that imparts the mission.

Information about where the mission statement, purpose, vision, values, plans and goals are located and their accessibility to staff, faculty, students and the general public.

Documentation of the policies and actions implemented or discontinued to achieve clearer alignment between an institution's practices and its mission.

Recruitment materials.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 1B

The institution's mission documents, if they specifically address the institution's role in the community.

List of efforts, programs and certificates that meet community or constituent needs.

Information about the institution's sustainability program.

A list of partnerships and consulting arrangements with local businesses.

Documentation of public events and series the community is able to attend.

Documentation of the utilization of campus facilities by the community.

Engagement of faculty, staff, and students in the community (i.e., community service, service learning, etc.).

Providing Evidence for Core Component 1C

Documentation of course-based activities that promote civic engagement, including alternative spring break experiences, capstone experiences, community service projects, international service projects, professional or clinical practicum, community-based student employment, organized mission- or faith-based services in the community, military service or entrepreneurship.

Documentation of student or residential-life-based service or experiences, such as service clubs, fraternity or sorority service projects, athletic team service activities, resident advisor employment or residential life service projects, or institution-led volunteer experiences.

Documentation of extramural and independent volunteer or community service activities, including arts and culture-based activities, children/youth based service, human rights service or advocacy, public health and public policy-based activities, environmental and sustainability activities, food security/hunger-relief volunteering, church based community service, or political campaign volunteering.

Documentation of how diversity and inclusion are addressed in the institution's mission documents and strategic plan.

Student demographics and enrollment strategies that demonstrate a focus on diversity and inclusion.

List of on-campus centers, offices and committees that address societal diversity, inclusion, and/or global awareness.

List of student organizations that support societal diversity, inclusion, and/or global awareness.

Listing of activities that the institution hosts or participates in that emphasize diversity, inclusion, and/or global awareness.

Criterion 2 – Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

Core Component 2A – The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

Core Component 2B – The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

Core Component 2C – The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

Core Component 2D – The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Core Component 2E – The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 2A

Hiring qualifications and processes for faculty and staff, including a search committee procedure or handbook.

External (independent) and internal audits since last comprehensive evaluation.

Investment policy and documentation demonstrating compliance.

Internal budget control policies.

Bond rating since last comprehensive evaluation, if available.

Schedule of and minutes for board audit and/or finance committee meetings.

Documentation supporting ongoing training related to integrity issues and ethical behavior for all employees and board members (e.g., sexual harassment, sexual assault, campus- safety, etc.).

Annual conflict of interest affirmation forms signed by board and senior leadership.

Handbooks for employees (staff and/or faculty), students, student athletes (if applicable).

List of auxiliary functions and information about each (e.g., dining services, residential life, bookstore, parking, student health services).

Grievance policy for faculty, staff and students if not delineated in faculty, staff and student handbooks.

Academic catalog.

Institutional policies on non-discrimination, anti-harassment, FERPA, anti-nepotism, intellectual property, Title IX, etc.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 2B

Academic catalog that includes program requirements for all degree levels.

Course schedule for all degree levels offered.

Published list of all current accreditations and statuses.

Listing of tuition and fees and net price calculator.

Faculty and staff roster.

Recruitment and admissions documents for prospective students indicating requirements for institutional and program entry.

Information pertaining to the entity that is responsible for the fiscal and operational oversight of the institution.

Sample evaluations of activities that support the learning claimed in activity.

A sample of academic student organizations and clubs demonstrating the diversity of groups on campus.

Agendas and minutes from student athlete advisory committee and/or student government association.

Information about athletic academic services.

A list of fine arts offerings.

Documentation of partnerships with internal and external entities to offer community service opportunities or service-learning experiences.

Documentation of any volunteer clubs and detail of student participation.

Campus newspapers, magazines, radio programming, and/or cable TV shows.

List of cultural events and research and academic symposiums.

Study abroad opportunities.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 2C

Board manual, policies and bylaws, including a conflict of interest policy.

List and bios of board members.

Documentation of the selection process for board members and for selection of chair, vice- chair, etc.

Dates, agendas and minutes of board meetings for multiple years (and town hall or community meetings with the board).

On-boarding and orientation process for new board members.

Information about professional development and training for board members.

Board approval of planning and budgeting documents.

Board selection, evaluation, and right to terminate president of institution.

Board self-evaluation.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 2D

Institutional learning principles.

Listing of activities supported and sponsored by the institution that allow for a discussion of varying views and opinions.

Policy on freedom of expression and/or academic freedom.

Course listing including the range of options for general education courses.

Policies and procedures for peaceful assembly of students.

Statement on censorship.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 2E

Research opportunities and policies.

Policy on academic integrity.

Protocol, by-laws, and training documentation for Institutional Review Board (or similar entity).

Institutional animal care and research policy, if appropriate.

Training programs on plagiarism, citations, use of library resources, online research, etc.

Applicable policies and procedures in student and faculty handbooks, including student honor code.

Judicial affairs or student conduct meeting and training agendas.

Information about sponsored program and grant office.

Documentation of research symposia, highlighting faculty and student scholarship

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

Core Component 3A – The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

Core Component 3B – The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

Core Component 3C – The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

Core Component 3D – The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 3A

Academic catalog.

Documentation that the institution is in compliance with federal policy for credit hour requirements, where appropriate.

Agendas and minutes from graduate council, faculty senate and/or curriculum review committee meetings.

Examples of course- and program-learning goals for each degree level across all modes and locations.

A syllabus template or guidelines for course outlines.

Documentation that supports the method in which the institution determines program levels, e.g., Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains or other methodology or framework.

Program-level admission requirements.

External reviews conducted of programs.

Documentation of any linkages between undergraduate and graduate level programs and differentiation of student learning outcomes by level.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 3B

Documentation of the process for developing curriculum and course outlines.

List of graduate and undergraduate internship and practicum program sites.

Agendas and minutes of committees related to educational programs.

Departmental improvement plans.

Agendas, minutes and activities of multicultural committees.

General education learning goals and curriculum.

Notification from the state that the institution meets the state requirements for general education coursework, if applicable.

Notable faculty and student achievements relative to scholarship and creative work.

Dual credit guidelines.

Documentation that programs meet programmatic accreditation requirements.

Research symposia.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 3C

Statement on faculty expectations and minimum qualifications.

Student-to-faculty ratio (overall, on-ground, online).

Faculty handbook.

Summary of qualifications of Student Affairs staff.

Documentation of professional development and training opportunities for staff and faculty, including support for instructional design.

Sabbatical policy.

Complete faculty roster (full-time, part-time, adjunct, online, dual credit) with information on highest degree and teaching content area with evidence of courses taught.

Guidelines and process for hiring faculty (includes full-time, part-time, adjunct, online, dual credit) that are in compliance with HLC and specialized accreditors, as appropriate.

Faculty and staff professional development plans and annual evaluations.

Orientation program for all faculty (includes fulltime, part-time, adjunct, online, dual credit).

Providing Evidence for Core Component 3D

Student handbook.

Academic catalog.

List of student support services, disability services, financial aid, advising, career counseling, campus childcare, co-curricular activities and health services (include for all modalities).

Information about writing and math assistance, tutoring programs, or other support provided to students.

Schedule or documentation of student activities, programming and organizations.

List of veterans' affairs office activities.

Listing of remedial or developmental courses.

Documentation on how campus advising works (matriculation through graduation).

Information about computer labs, clinical sites, scientific labs and performance spaces.

First-year experience program (academic and co-curricular).

Documentation of undergraduate and graduate student processes and research.

Documentation of programming offered by residence life and student affairs.

Plagiarism and academic integrity training.

Information about libraries and resources (e.g., interlibrary loan, reference services, Ask a Librarian).

Information about utilization of data from internal resources and external national surveys, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement or Community College Survey of Student Engagement

Criterion 4 – Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

Core Component 4A – The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

Core Component 4B – The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

Core Component 4C – The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 4A

Program review policy, processes, schedule and guidelines.

Sample program review.

Program advisory board agendas and minutes. Curriculum review committee minutes.

Transfer credit policies, course equivalency guides, and credit validation process for prior learning and third-party providers.

Transfer student resources.

Advanced Placement and College Level Examination Program policies and procedures.

Academic catalog, specifically information about transfer credit and experiential learning.

Internal and external curricular review process.

Guidelines for hiring faculty and a hiring process.

Dual credit programs and guidelines.

Published list of all current accreditations and statuses.

Data on where students go after graduation, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and AmeriCorps).

State degree requirements and evidence of compliance.

Documentation of a process for reviewing, approving and implementing new programs.

Licensure or certification exam results.

Surveys of alumni.

Articulation agreements with other institutions.

Documentation of engagement of faculty, academic administration, and governing board in academic program review process.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 4B

General education and course, program- and institutional-level learning goals and outcomes.

Annual reports of the assessment process.

Faculty senate minutes.

Curriculum maps.

Faculty expectations and evaluation processes.

Assessment and/or curriculum committee minutes.

Meeting minutes and agendas demonstrating departmental use of assessment data with evidence of action taken based on review and analysis of data.

Institutional learning outcomes and rubrics.

Documentation of co-curricular assessment and improvements based on data.

Assessment plan and/or process and calendar/ cycle.

Documents and reports using direct measures for assessment of student learning.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 4C

Current rates of and goals for institutional persistence, retention and completion (include the institution's definitions of these terms).

Strategies or initiatives implemented based on review and analysis of data to make improvements in persistence, retention and completion, such as agendas, meeting minutes and action items of units working in these areas.

Enrollment management plan.

Documentation of a consortium for student retention data exchange.

Information about the institution's student success center.

Documentation of utilization of datasets to make improvements.

Analysis of graduation and retention rates by distinctive student populations (e.g., age, gender, race, ethnicity, first-generation status).

Documentation of campus services to support student needs (e.g., writing center, math tutoring, study skills, time management, etc.).

Suspension and probation trends.

Student advising procedures and policies.

Participation in Federal TRiO programs as it relates to persistence, completion, and retention, if applicable.

Student exit survey results and action taken to address as applicable.

Criterion 5 – Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

Core Component 5A – Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

Core Component 5B – The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Core Component 5C – The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 5A

List of campus committees and teams, such as faculty or university senate, assessment committee, general education committee, library committee, etc.

Bylaws, policies, procedures and schedules for the institution's faculty or university senate, student government association, staff senate or council, and governing board.

Documentation outlining the organizational structure.

Document resolutions and meeting minutes of different constituent groups.

Agendas and minutes of governing board demonstrating knowledge and oversight of finances and academic functions.

Providing Evidence for Core Component 5B

Independent audited financial statements and Composite Financial Index patterns for multiple years.

Documentation of investments in facilities and technology, including deferred maintenance.

Campus master plan including additions and deferred maintenance.

Policy for faculty and staff credentials.

Information about training and professional development for faculty and staff.

Documentation of strategic plan investments.

Budget requests and procedures delineating flow of decision-making.

Projected budgets/Pro-forma.

Compliance with bank covenants and lines of credit.

Endowment drawdown policy.

Process for monitoring expenses.

Mission statement and activities of institution's foundation or advancement office.

Fundraising documentation and results.

Enrollment plan, current enrollment and projections.

Allocation of budget for instruction, strategic plan, mission, professional development, etc.

Duration and amount of grants received by the institution.

Evidence of linkage to planning initiatives related to current educational programs.

Collective bargaining agreement(s).

Providing Evidence for Core Component 5C

History and process of strategic plan creation and constituencies involved.

Annual updates to strategic plan.

Budget requests and procedure for budget planning.

Budget allocation by major area.

Budget projections for multiple years.

Enrollment management plan.

Environmental scan results.

Evidence of resources used to aid in planning activities, such as, state reports on demographics, industry/vocational employment demands, etc.

Facilities and technology plans.

Evidence of attainment of strategic planning goals.

Documentation delineating linkage between planning, budgeting and evaluation/assessment.

Retention and completion data and reports.

Student success data and reports.

Documentation of institutional effectiveness plans and strategies, including goals and measurable outcomes for identified functional areas.

Student learning and academic program assessment documentation.

Documentation regarding assessments of and satisfaction with facilities, libraries, technology, human resources, security, and other services (e.g., counseling, dining, residence life, student recreation, student activities, parking, etc.).

Key performance indicators/dashboard.

Meeting minutes, agendas and/or task lists indicating review and analysis of data to inform improvements of operational activities (e.g., counseling, residence life, information technology, parking, student activities).

Resources:

Higher Learning Commission

- <https://www.hlcommission.org/>

Criteria for Accreditation

- <https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/criteria-and-core-components.html>

Providing Evidence for the Criteria for Accreditation

- https://download.hlcommission.org/ProvidingEvidence2020_INF.pdf

Federal Compliance

- <https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/federal-compliance-program.html>

Evaluative Framework for HLC Criteria

- <https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/evaluative-framework-for-the-hlc-criteria.html>

Assumed Practices

- <https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/assumed-practices.html>

Obligations of Affiliation

- <https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/obligations-of-affiliation.html>

HLC Recorded Presentations for the Criteria for Accreditation (effective 9/1/2020)

Criterion 1

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLmQ5DXapD8&feature=youtu.be>

Criterion 2

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCylmFqok7U>

Criterion 3

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGxYKYIlgNgQ>

Criterion 4

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hC4NadW -cw&feature=youtu.be>

Criterion 5

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M SJ1DefGc4&feature=youtu.be>

Questions?
