

Preparing for Accreditation

HLC 101



DAKOTA COLLEGE
AT BOTTINEAU

What is Accreditation?

The act of accrediting or the state of being accredited, specifically, the granting of approval to an institution of learning by an official review board after the school has met specific requirements.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, New College Edition

What is Accreditation?

- Voluntary peer review process focused on outcomes
- A focus and commitment to become a better college through assessment and continuous improvement

Why is it important to be accredited?

- Participate in federal financial aid programs and award federal financial aid
- Insure credit transfer

Who accredits us?

- **Higher Learning Commission (HLC)**
 - Member of North Central Association of Colleges
 - One of 6 regional U.S. institutional accreditors
 - Establishes Criteria for Accreditation
 - A set of guiding values
 - Evidence of continual improvement and aspiration on the part of member institutions

Statement of Affiliation with the HLC

- ▶ [HLC Website - DCB Accreditation Status](#)

Foundation for Accreditation

Guiding Values

Assumed Practices

Criteria and Core Components

Federal Compliance

Guiding Values

- ▶ Focus on student learning
- ▶ Education as a public purpose
- ▶ Education for a diverse, technological, globally connected world
- ▶ A culture of continuous improvement
- ▶ Evidence-based institutional learning and self-presentation
- ▶ Integrity, transparency, and ethical behavior or practice
- ▶ Governance for the well-being of the institution
- ▶ Planning and management of resources to ensure institutional sustainability
- ▶ Mission-centered evaluation
- ▶ Accreditation through peer review

Assumed Practices

- ▶ Set of practices shared by institutions of higher education in the U.S.
- ▶ Accreditation criteria are built on the Assumed Practices
- ▶ Typically considered to be in place by all HLC institutions unless there is evidence to the contrary or an institution is seeking accreditation

Assumed Practices

- ▶ [HLC Website - Assumed Practices](#)

Criteria for Accreditation and Its Core Components

These are the standards of quality by which the Higher Learning Commission determines whether an institution merits accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation.

Criterion One: Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Criterion Two: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Criterion Three: Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

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

Criterion Four: 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.

Criterion Five: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Criteria and Core Components

[HLC Website - Criteria and Core Components](#)

Federal Compliance

- ▶ Assignment of Credits, Program Length, and Tuition
- ▶ Institutional Records of Student Complaints
- ▶ Publication of Transfer Policies
- ▶ Practices for Verification of Student Identity
- ▶ Title IV Program Responsibilities
- ▶ Required Information for Students and the Public
- ▶ Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information
- ▶ Review of Student Outcome Data
- ▶ Standing with State and Other Accrediting Agencies
- ▶ Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment

Federal Compliance

[HLC Website - Federal Compliance](#)

Pathways

▶ Standard

- ▶ Accredited less than 10 years, under “Notice,” or undergoing major change, other issues or concerns.

▶ Open (This is DCB’s Pathway)

- ▶ Follows a 10-year cycle.
- ▶ Focused on quality assurance and institutional improvement. The Open Pathway is unique in that its improvement component, the Quality Initiative, affords institutions the opportunity to pursue improvement projects that meet their current needs and aspirations.
- ▶ DCB’s Quality Initiative is the HLC Academy for Persistence and Completion

▶ PEAQ

- ▶ Also focused on quality assurance and institutional improvement, but with an added emphasis on helping institutions achieve continuous quality improvement.
- ▶ Many of the processes are built around the AQIP Pathway Categories, which provide a framework that institutions can use to examine their key processes and analyze, understand, and explore opportunities for improvement. The AQIP Pathway follows an eight-year cycle.

Evidence Based Process

- ▶ Need to show the facts
 - ▶ Process
 - ▶ Policy
 - ▶ Procedures
 - ▶ Minutes
 - ▶ Actual data
 - ▶ How changes are made in response to data

Evidence - Not

- ▶ I know we used to do something like that...
- ▶ I heard that...
- ▶ We don't have anything in writing, but...
- ▶ I'm sure that the Business Office does that...
- ▶ Everyone knows how to process the...
- ▶ All colleges do it the same way we do...

Evidence - Yes

- ▶ Transcripts that document faculty qualifications
- ▶ Curriculum change approvals documented in writing via minutes, signed forms
- ▶ Data showing retention rates
- ▶ Documented changes made based on OATF processes
- ▶ Written policies and procedures guide practice
- ▶ Accurate and current budget reports

HLC Planning at DCB

- ▶ 2017-2018
 - ▶ Goal is to review and update evidence to be uploaded into the Assurance system
 - ▶ 7 Committees to be formed
 - ▶ 5 Criteria Committees
 - ▶ 1 Federal Compliance Committee
 - ▶ 1 Committee to Oversee Document/Evidence into Assurance files
 - ▶ Committee membership
 - ▶ 4-5 people with knowledge of the subject matter to be reviewed
 - ▶ DCB HLC Coordinator - Dr. Lexi Kvasnicka-Gates

HLC Planning at DCB

- ▶ 2018-2019
 - ▶ Committees continue their work
 - ▶ May be revised to include additional members
 - ▶ Objective is to complete the Assurance Review
 - ▶ “This will be a lot of work”
- ▶ 2019-2020
 - ▶ Site visit
 - ▶ Last visit was April, 2009



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