



NTC Guide to

Assessment

Student Learning Outcomes
Curriculum Mapping
Performance Indicators
Continuous Improvement

And documenting each process.

2022-2024

An update to the NTC Annual Program Review Process 2020-2024

Compiled by Paula DeMars, Institutional Effectiveness & Assessment Coordinator



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Introduction:

This guide is intended to share the purpose and process that Northwest Technical College aims to perform in the development of a program of continuous improvement through Assessment and practicing institutional effectiveness.

There have been several very significant updates to the recommendations for Assessment practice from the Higher Learning Commission, our institutional accrediting agency. A large part of this Guide provides information on those updates and changes through the slide presentations of the Higher Learning Commission scholars and academic liaison officers.

Some of the more important updates include:

- Programs that have even one course or components of a course online are now considered Online/Distance programs.
- The new terms of Distance education (above) mean that those programs that now become included in the new DOE definition must be submitted to the HLC for approval as online programs and listed as such.
- All programs, especially Online/Distance programs, require documentation of regular and substantive interaction with students.
- All programs in an online format must have proof of authentication of the student. This is something that Minnesota State Colleges and Universities is working on at the system level.
- This Guide provides extensive breakdown of the Assessment processes that the Higher Learning Commission expects to see of institutions performing continuous improvement (primarily criterion 4B in the Standard Pathway Assurance Argument). This includes:
 - Understanding the difference between Program Effectiveness and Student Learning
 - Evaluation of the curriculum structure and the purpose of curriculum mapping
 - Developing Student Learning Outcomes at a higher standard of efficacy
 - The ability to create broad Student Learning Outcome statements with specific, measurable, and student-oriented objectives.
 - Limiting the number of Student Learning Outcomes at the Program and Course level to the 4 to 7 outcomes most important for student learning at each stage of the program
 - Developing the Assessment process through using Performance indicators that identify the summative data which illuminates opportunities for improvement.
 - Building the Assessment process into a dynamic opportunity for increasing innovation in teaching and learning that can generate data to illustrate successful implementation of change over time.

Details of the Annual Improvement Plan that assesses the needs for improvement to the 3-year Program Review which takes a broad look at the program structure and performance are included.

This guide will be adapted and updated to meet changes in Assessment planning or as program effectiveness technologies become available.

Compiled by Paula DeMars
Institutional Effectiveness & Assessment Coordinator
October 2022

Academic Program Assessment from the HLC

Academic Program Assessment

Program Assessment examines both Program
Effectiveness
Student Learning

Comparison of Assessment of Student Learning and Program Effectiveness:

- Purpose/Goals
- Components
- Methods
- Measures
- Process/Resulting Actions

Purpose/Goals

Assessment of Student Learning	Program Effectiveness
Systematic and ongoing process of gathering and analyzing program outcome data in order to understand, document, and improve student learning	Is your program functioning effectively in the context of overall institutional mission?

Components

Assessment of Student Learning	Program Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding what program graduates know and can do• Following through to improve student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Efficiency• Capacity• Cost Effectiveness• Impact

Methods

Assessment of Student Learning	Program Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct assessment• Indirect assessment• Understands that learning is cumulative over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Database analysis• Transcript analysis• Student interviews• Focus Groups• Analysis of assessment data

Measures

Assessment of Student Learning	Program Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Percentage of students meeting performance expectations on program learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• # of students enrolled in the program• % of courses with enrollments >XX% capacity• % of students who complete the program• % of students who pass the licensure exam (first attempt)• % of students employed within 6 month• Faculty : Student ratio• Enrolled : Capacity

Process/Resulting Actions

Assessment of Student Learning	Program Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Usually internal• Exists in the context of your Institution's Assessment Processes<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timelines• Forms• Databases• Program Review• Usually low stakes process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May involve external reviewer• Periodic• High level of scrutiny• Informs decisions by senior leadership• Can be high stakes process

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Academic Program Learning Assessment

Academic Program Assessment is NOT an evaluation of

- Individual students
- Faculty
- Staff

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Academic Program Learning Assessment

Academic Program Assessment is NOT

- A collection of course assessment data
- Summaries of grades in specific courses

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Curriculum Structure

Sequence of courses to be taken

Understand different views of the curriculum

- ...the curriculum as designed by faculty
- ...the curriculum as taught by faculty
- ...the curriculum as taken by students

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Curriculum Structure

- Meta-requirements ("flagged courses")
 - Number of credits/courses supporting general education / institutional outcomes
 - writing critical thinking
 - speaking diverse perspectives

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Curriculum Structure

Structured Curriculum Pathway

Program's responsibility for assuring program curriculum supports learning outcomes



Open Curriculum

Advisor / Student responsibility to select courses that support the learning outcomes

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NTC's:
Structure

Curriculum Structure

Structured Curriculum Pathway



Specific course sequence

Minimal student choice in selecting courses

Open Curriculum

No specific curriculum path

Student have options / flexibility in selecting courses

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Curriculum Structure

The more structured the program, the easier it is to assess

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Types of Student Learning Outcomes

-- Course Outcomes

Identify what students will learn as the result of successfully completing the course.

Incremental knowledge and skills that students develop throughout the program

Aligned with – but narrower than – program outcomes

Support the achievement of program outcomes

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Types of Student Learning Outcomes

-- Program Outcomes

Students' cumulative learning at the end of the program

- preparation for further education
- preparation for career
- preparation for contributing to society

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Function of Program Outcomes

- Transforming classes to curriculum
- Promote learning across courses
- Serve as mechanism for assuring learning
- Align full and part-time faculty
- Contextualize general education / institutional learning outcomes
- Provide language for talking about learning

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Origin of Program Outcomes

- Mission
- Program faculty
- Institutional / General Education outcomes
- Professional Organizations / Accrediting / Licensure Agencies
- Employers
- State
- Receiving institutions
- Advisory Boards

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Academic Program Learning Outcomes

Program outcomes are NOT a collection of all the course outcomes in the program

Broad statements

Entry level skills, knowledge, and abilities your students should be able to demonstrate upon program completion

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Academic Program Learning Outcomes

Consider:

4 to 7 learning outcomes

Unless there is a pressing reason to have more (and you can always add to the list)

What are the (4-7) things a potential employer or receiving institution would want to make sure that students graduating from a program know and are able to do?

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Academic Program Learning Outcomes

An employer or receiving institution should hire / accept students from our program because they

<know this>

<and this> and

<can do this>

<and this>

...which prepares our graduates for success in the workplace or in an advanced program

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All Student Learning Outcomes

- Learner Centered
- Specific
- Measurable

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Academic Program Learning Outcomes

A Critical Moment of Reflection

Consider: Thinking ahead

Is there enough investment and interest in this outcome to be willing to invest the time and effort to figure out how to address any gaps in student learning we might find?

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Performance Indicators

- Define student learning outcomes
- Provide a common language for describing student learning
- Must be shared across faculty, and with students
- Number of performance indicators will vary by outcome
- Form the basis of your assessment measures and reporting

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Performance Indicators

Essentially grading criteria:

What are you looking for in the student's performance of the outcome?

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Curriculum Map

Assures the alignment between the program outcomes and the curriculum

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Program Level Student Learning Outcomes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1	R			R	R	R	A			A	A			A	C		C	
2	R	R		A		A		A	A			A		C		C		C
3			R		R		R			A	A			A		C	C	
4	R			R		R	A	A		A		A			A		C	C
5		R			R	R			A	A		C	C		C		C	
6	R			R		A	A			A				A		C		C
7	R		R			R		A	A		A			A		A	C	C

R = Remember /Understand ; A= Apply / Analyze; C= Evaluate /Create

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Program Level Student Learning Outcomes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1	R			R	R	R	A			A				A	C		C	
2	R	R		A		A								C		C		C
3			R		R		R			A	A			A		C	C	
4	R			R		R	A	A		A		A			A		C	C
5		R			R	R			A	A		C	C		C		C	
6	R			R		A	A			A				A		C		C
7	R		R			R		A	A		A			A		A	C	C

R = Remember /Understand ; A= Apply / Analyze; C= Evaluate /Create

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Program Level Student Learning Outcomes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1	R			R	R	R	A			A	A			A	C		C	
2	R	R		A		A								C		C		C
3			R		R		R			A	A			A		C	C	
4	R			R		R	A	A		A		A			A		C	C
5		R			R	R			A	A		C	C		C		C	
6	R			R		A	A			A				A		C		C
7	R		R			R		A	A		A			A		A	C	C

R = Remember /Understand ; A= Apply / Analyze; C= Evaluate /Create

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Reasons to Map the Curriculum

- Affirm outcomes
- Promote understanding of curriculum
- Control course drift
- Identify curricular gaps
- Integrate new courses
- Understand implications of course selection
- Understand course sequencing

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Mapping the Curriculum

Highly structured programs

- Assumes courses are taken in a sequence
- Program's responsibility to assure outcomes are supported

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Assessment Methods

Selecting assessment **methods**

Methods should be

Direct as possible – we see students demonstrate their learning

Authentic as possible – demonstrating learning in an appropriate context

Practical and manageable

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Assessment Methods

Direct

- Demonstration of Knowledge/skills
- Student self-reflection/report on their knowledge and skills

Both can be valuable, but be aware there is a different level of confidence in resulting data

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Possible sources of data

Course Data

- Objective Tests (e.g., multiple choice, true-false, fill-in-the-blank items)
- Essay Tests
- Embedded Questions and/or Assignments
- Classroom Assessment Techniques (e.g., 1-minute papers, course focus groups, free-writing, etc.)

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<http://www.apa.org/ed/governance/bea/assessment-cyberguide-v2.pdf>

Possible sources of data

Individual Projects/Performance Assessment

- Written Products (e.g., term papers, lab reports, critiques)
- Oral Presentations (e.g., speeches, role plays)
- Graphic Displays
- Poster Presentations
- Structural/Situational Assessments

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<http://222.apa.org/ed/governance/bea/assessment-cyberguide-v2.pdf>

Possible sources of data

Summative Performance Assessment

- Standardized Tests
- Locally-Developed Exams
- Capstone Experiences
- Internships/Professional Applications
- Portfolios

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Possible sources of data

Interviews and Surveys (Attitude Measurement)

- Satisfaction Measures (e.g., seniors, alumni, employers, graduate school advisors, parents)
- Performance Reviews (e.g., alumni, employers, graduate school advisors)
- Exit Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Follow-up Alumni Interviews
- External Examiner Interviews (exit interviews conducted by objective, external expert)

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<http://www.ahac.org/ahac/glossary/assessment-and-evaluation/>

Assessment Methods

A single assessment method can be intentionally structured to evidence multiple outcomes

- Capstone projects or exam
- Clinical, Practicum
- Recital, exhibition
- Portfolio

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Assessment Methods

Levels of standardization

Same test / assignment / experience

Menu of agreed upon test questions / assignments / experiences from which a faculty member may select

Identified types of test questions / assignments / experiences from which a faculty member can design a learning experience

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Assessment Methods

Levels of response complexity

Selected Response	Limited Response	Constructed Response
Multiple choice	Specific Correct Response	Original response

Assessment Methods

Standardized Exam

Senior Portfolio



Assessment Methods

Different Outcomes: Same Method

Technical Skills	Internship
Professionalism	Internship
Teamwork Problem solving	Internship
Customer Service	Internship

Assessment Methods

Different Outcomes: Same Method

Critical Thinking	Senior project
Research Methods	Senior project
Application of Theory	Senior project
Written Communication	Senior project
Public Speaking	Senior project

Assessment Methods

Different Outcomes: Same Method

Critical Thinking	National Exam
Research Methods	Term Paper
Application of Theory	Essay
Written Communication	Case Analysis
Public Speaking	Presentation

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Assessment Methods

Multiple Methods

Technical Skills	Internship, Simulation
Professionalism	Internship, Case Analysis
Teamwork	Internship, Project Team
Problem solving	Internship, Lab
Customer Service	Internship, Exam

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Selections from: Higher Learning Commission. (2021). *Program Assessment Seminar*.

Online, Held May 13, 14 & 20, 21, 2021. Presenters: Susan Hatfield, Senior Scholar, Higher Learning Commission; Jan Smith, Scholar, Higher Learning Commission; Susan Murphy, Event Facilitator, Vice President for Academic Affairs (Emerita), Central New Mexico Community College.

Assessment Process Plans, Reports, and Reviews

Academic Assessment processes of Annual Improvement Planning and Program Review are required for Institutional Accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission, by individual program national accreditation standards where applied, and also by Minnesota State Colleges & Universities [Policy 3.36](#) for Academic Programs. This policy states that “Minnesota State Colleges and Universities provide learning opportunities to develop graduates who are:

- prepared for work, life, and citizenship
- creative, innovative, and able to respond with agility to new ideas, new technologies and new global relationships
- able to lead their professions and adapt to the multiple careers they will have over their lifetimes
- able to think independently and critically and resourcefully apply knowledge to new problems
- able to embrace change and be comfortable with ambiguity
- able to communicate and work effectively across cultural and geographic boundaries

Introduction to Annual Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Policy 3115-1-01 through 3115-4-04 aka: **Annual Improvement Plan**

The Annual Improvement Planning process provides the foundation for improvement planning and implementation which is ongoing and reported in the 3-year Program Review.

Goals:

This process ensures that the College's program requirements are appropriately designed and delivered so that students who successfully complete the program will have had the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills needed by an entry-level employee in the identified occupation.

- Clearly communicate knowledge, skills and/or attitudes that the student will be able to perform
- Annually validate program learning outcomes to ensure that they are and remain appropriate, industry-verified, entry-level outcomes
- Tell what graduating students can expect to know and be able to do by successfully completing their program
- Provide support and training to enable college faculty to plan for program improvement
- Review program outcomes for compliance with college expectations for program outcomes

Participants

All for credit academic programs, departments, and supporting courses that contribute required coursework to the award must participate in the Annual Student Learning Outcomes Improvement Planning.

Participation Cycle:

The Annual Improvement process includes input from all Program Faculty for all award programs.

Description

The review of Student Learning Outcomes and Outcomes Validation through the Annual Improvement Plan & Report addresses the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. The review is an annual process established to ensure all areas of Program Student Learning Outcome related progress is reviewed with a goal of continuous improvement.

The processes address the following subject areas, among others:

- Establishing and updating program goals and action plans
- Reporting of related progress of improvement of goals/plans
- Course and program completion
- Teaching and assessment of program student learning outcomes and Core Abilities (ILOs) with each graduating cohort

- Alignment of course and program outcomes
- Review of course student learning outcomes on an annual basis
- External trends and constituency needs related to the program
- Fiscal considerations
- Resource needs
- Assessment of academic program vitality
- Curriculum and mission alignment

For answers to questions about the process or additional training, faculty members should contact their respective Dean or the Institutional Effectiveness & Assessment Coordinator.

Process Overview:

The Annual Improvement Plan process begins with the Inservice planning and/or training sessions prior to the start of the semester. Institutional Effectiveness & Assessment Coordinator collects and distributes Yearly Data Reports for all Programs to the NTC-HLC Team Files and creates and distributes forms necessary for the completion of the process. Faculty initiate reviews of curriculum maps, articulation agreements, and set Advisory Board meetings.

The Annual Program Outcome Validation process (3115-2-01) ensures Student Learning Outcomes are updated with Advisory Board input and knowledge of new career and technology developments in the industries. Minutes from Advisory Committee meetings where Student Learning Outcomes are reviewed and validated is required to be filed in the NTC HLC Team program channel. This process is required by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities [Policy 3.30](#), Subpart C.

Validation of Program Outcomes through the Advisory Committee processes parallels yet is separate from the Annual Student Learning Outcomes Improvement process with new Advisory Board recommendations being approved through AASC in January and with administrative review and approval for implementation in the following Fall semester.

Annual Student Outcomes Assessment Process

Annual Student Learning Outcomes Improvement process consists of a series of steps recording a review and assessment of effective program planning annually by all faculty in all programs.

Primary focus: All academic programs at Northwest Technical College develop and implement plans for assessing effectiveness. These plans include assessment of all approved Learning Outcomes for the program to provide evidence of learning at occupational entry-level and/or at the level deemed appropriate for graduates of the technical college programs. This process guides faculty in how to assess the level of achievement of students in the academic programs – both technical program learning outcomes and general learning outcomes. Results of these assessments shall be used by the program faculty to plan strategies for continuous quality improvement.

Program Faculty

Program Faculty complete the Annual Improvement Plan & Report (form 3115-4-02) of the

Student Learning Outcomes Improvement process, available on the Faculty Resources>Annual Improvement Plan webpage. Program Faculty make use of relevant data and work from previous years (e.g., goals, and assessment) to analyze their programs following the appropriate timeline. Completed elements of the update are submitted to the Dean for feedback and review then posted to the NTC-HLC Team program channel in pdf format along with supporting data.

Elements required to be reviewed annually:

- Curriculum Maps
- Articulation agreements
- Advisory Board Review Meeting Minutes & Outcomes
- Program Student Learning Outcomes
- 1/3 or all Course Student Learning Outcomes
- Yearly data on Programs provided by Institutional Research & Effectiveness
- Previous Improvement Plan results
- Course Assessment results and improvement plans
- Faculty assessment of program effectiveness plan

Division Chair

The Division Chair facilitates the work of the academic program Faculty members, providing feedback and support, and ensuring appropriate progress is made toward completing each section of the Annual Improvement Plan on schedule. The Division Chair ensures the Annual Improvement Plan includes supporting data/evidence for its conclusions and follows the prescribed format and quality standards. The completed form is submitted to the Dean who will provide feedback on any needed revisions and summarize findings for the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC) in January.

Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC)

The AASC reviews the Deans' Summary of all Annual Improvement Plans, and supporting documents, at the January meeting. The Dean presents the findings to include whether targets were met, summarizing the findings and tells what actions will be/were taken to improve the results. This review of summary findings informs the members of the AASC of the direction for improvement planned by each Program for the coming year.

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with other administrative areas as necessary (e.g., Institutional Effectiveness, Human Resources, Student Services, Finance, President), reviews each Annual Improvement Plan with Deans and provides feedback as needed to the Deans on progress or process accordingly.

Introduction to Academic Program Review

Policy 3075-1-01 thru 3075-4-01

Goals

At Northwest Technical College, Academic Program Review facilitates a purposeful and

continuous cycle of improvement led by program faculty and academic staff through two related processes: the three-year Academic Program Review and Annual Student Learning Outcomes Improvement Planning and Reporting. Both are integral parts of an overall institutional evaluation, planning, and development process that is designed to:

- Direct the focus of academic programs to advancing student success and serving the needs of the community
- Ensure that academic program development is consistent and logical, applying the principles of continuous quality improvement
- Enhance the quality of academic programs by assessing program strengths and opportunities for improvement
- Align academic program needs, college priorities, and planning and budget processes; and
- Ensure that academic program priorities are consistent with the college's mission and strategic plan.
- Provide a comprehensive review of all program and all course student learning outcomes on a scheduled 3-year rotation

Participants

All credit academic programs, disciplines, and departments that offer any of the following will participate in Academic Program Review and Annual Improvement Planning

Participation Cycle

The Academic Program Review is completed by academic program Faculty every three years. Additionally, every year, programs address continuous improvement evaluation and planning through the annual Student Learning Outcomes Improvement Plan. See the Academic Program Review Rotation Schedule and Program & Course Student Learning Outcomes schedule on the [Program Review](#) webpage under Faculty Resources.

Description

Both the Academic Program Review and the annual Student Learning Outcomes Improvement processes begin with reflection and analysis of relevant program data. The guiding purpose of these processes is to improve program effectiveness, leading to student success in their chosen field of study. Faculty respond to questions/prompts that are designed to facilitate their analysis of data and are encouraged to include other relevant data as needed.

The form outlining faculty responses and required data for a 3-year Program Review is 3075-4-01 found on the [Program Review](#) webpage under Faculty Resources.

The processes address the following subject areas, among others:

- Establishing and updating program goals and action plans
- Reporting of related progress on goals/plans
- Course and program completion rates of students
- Overall student success (e.g., transfer data, employment data)
- Teaching and assessment of program student learning outcomes and Core Abilities (ILOs)

- Alignment of course and program student learning outcomes
- External trends and constituency needs related to the program
- Fiscal considerations: budgetary needs, expenditures, leveraged equipment, etc.
- Resource needs of the program
- Assessment of academic program vitality
- Curriculum and mission alignment
- Substantive interaction with students

For answers to questions about the process or additional training, program faculty members should contact their respective Dean or the Institutional Effectiveness & Assessment Coordinator.

New requirements for all programs by the U.S. Department of Education:

In 2020 the U.S. Department of Education set forth new requirements for documentation on Substantive Interaction to be provided by all educational programs. Included in this policy change is that the Higher Learning Commission will be required to review an institution's Student Identity Verification Protocols for all distance delivery courses and programs annually and during any Peer Review for accreditation.

The definition of what constitutes an online program also has been modified. Because of this the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requires submission of any Substantive Change to programs be submitted for review and approval by the HLC.

Following are snapshots of the modified processes and requirements from the HLC presentation in April 2022.

Definitions – Distance Education

Education that uses one or more of the [following] technologies (i) to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and (ii) to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, synchronously or asynchronously.

The technologies used may include:

- (i) the internet; (ii) one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; (iii) audio conferencing; or (iv) other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed above.

Definitions – Distance Education

- Instructor

An individual responsible for delivering course content and who meets the qualifications for instruction established by an institution's accrediting agency. (See HLC Assumed Practice B.2.)

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Note these!

~Paula

Definitions – Distance Education

An institution **MUST** ensure regular interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors by:

- Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and
- Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success and ensuring in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

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Definitions – Distance Education

Substantive interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and, also includes at least two of the following:

- Providing direct instruction;
- Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;
- Providing information or responding to questions about the course or competency; or
- Other instructional activities approved by the institutional or programmatic accrediting agency

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Letter Redefining Distance Education Programs

- In January 2021, the U.S. Department of Education informed accreditors and institutions that it rescinded Dear Colleague Letter-06-17.
- In effect, this change means that if an institution offers any program in whole or in part through distance education—even as few as one distance education course in an otherwise in-person program—it must be evaluated and approved to offer distance education programs by its accreditor. Key change!!
- Distance education courses remain at 75% threshold.
- See <https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/substantive-change-distance-or-correspondence-education.html>

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Change Request Process

- Essential elements of distance delivery:
 - Planning and design
 - Capacity (sufficiency, faculty experience)
 - Services and support
 - Evaluation, assessment and improvement
 - Quality and integrity of proposed change
- Recommend approval or denial of request with brief rationale
 - Modification can occur
- IAC acts on recommendation

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Evaluation of Distance Education Programs

Institutions provide information about distance education regulations on the federal compliance worksheet and provide evidence of quality programs within the criteria in both Open and Standard Pathway reviews.

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Protocol for Reviewing Distance Delivery

Peer reviewers focus on the following to ensure institutions are meeting quality standards for distance delivery:

- **Institutional capacity**
 - What are the current scope, organizational structure, number and types of distance and correspondence education programs offered?
 - What are plans for future growth?
- **Educational quality**
 - What are their processes for developing, approving and assuring academic quality?
 - What training and support is provided for faculty?
 - Are courses and programs consistent across delivery modalities?

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Protocol for Reviewing Distance Delivery

- **Student Learning and Success**
 - Is there adequate access to the necessary student support?
 - Effective communications?
 - Appropriate course materials?
 - Access to faculty?
- **Effective Planning, Evaluation & Improvement Processes**
 - What are their processes for planning and assuring adequate financial resources?
 - Are there considerations for student learning, persistence and completion?

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Protocol for Reviewing Distance Delivery

- **Instructional Design & Technology**

- How will information about upgrades, maintenance, back-up, etc. for changes in software or system be communicated?
- What processes are in place to protect student identity and personal information?
- How does the institution assure student authentication and identity?

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Selections from: Higher Learning Commission presentation “Building and Maintaining Quality Distance Education Programs” April 2022 by Tom Bordenkircher, Vice President of Accreditation Relations, and Karen Solomon, Vice President, and Chief Transformation Officer.

Academic Program Review Process

Policy 3075-2-01

Academic Program Review is completed in a three-year rotation. See schedule at the end of this manual.

Primary focus:

To ensure that programs meet academic standards of learning achievement, accreditation, licensure, or certification requirements and that the programs continue to contribute effectively to the mission of the college. Programs undergo annual review of agreed-upon efficiency measures, with a comprehensive review of both viability and effectiveness at least every three years. Programs not meeting acceptable standards of viability in the annual review may be subject to more frequent comprehensive review, suspension, or closure. [NTC Policy 3075-1-01](#)

Academic Program Faculty

Each term Program Faculty complete a specific section of the Academic Program Process, beginning with the Annual Student Learning Outcomes Improvement Plan and the Program Outcome Validation during Fall Semester. At the beginning of the Spring semester where Program Review is performed, Program Faculty complete the form 3075-4-01 providing supporting documentation where applicable and using the Annual Improvement Plan throughout the Report process to respond to curriculum statements. The Program Review is due according to the date and/or based on discussion with the Dean.

Division Chair

The Division Chair may facilitate the work of the academic program Faculty members, providing feedback and support. The Division Chair ensures the Program Review includes sufficient depth and breadth of analysis, as well as supporting data/evidence for its conclusions, follows the prescribed format and quality standards, and is completed and submitted according to the Academic Program Review timeline set by the Dean.

Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC)

The chair of AASC receives the Academic Program Review and posts it for review of the entire Council membership in preparation for presentations by the Program Faculty. Presentations usually consist of a short presentation (PowerPoint or Video) on the findings of the Program Review report. AASC membership are responsible for ensuring that the Program Review includes evidence supporting the Program Review, that the Program is complying with the expectations of continuous improvement, makes recommendations to the Program through the Dean for ongoing development.

Program Review Presentation

Presentations should include:

- A summary of key data such as enrollment trends, retention, and completion stats
- A review of major improvements or effectiveness plans based on assessment data, curriculum review, reflections, and reactions
- Update on previous academic program improvement plans, with clear improvement objectives for the next four years
- Program cost/benefit analysis: breakdown showing Capital expense schedule (major equipment purchase replacement/maintenance scheduling), data on cost/benefit from the state, FYE current and projected, supplies expended for past 3 years

Revisions and Final Submission

Program Faculty may adjust their written Academic Program Review based on the Dean's initial review feedback prior to the documents being reviewed by the AASC. Faculty may work in small groups with all department faculty, the Division Chair, the Dean and/or Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Coordinator.

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Deans and other administrative areas as necessary (e.g., Institutional Effectiveness, Human Resources, Student Services, Finance, President), will evaluate each Academic Program Review according to the Institutional Strategic Plan and advancement of the Program to meet the objectives of the Strategic Plan. The EVP will form the direction in collaboration with the Dean and other administrative areas to provide the progression and innovations to ensure successful integration into the Strategic Plan objectives.

Appendix A: Annual Improvement Plan Flow Chart

Annual Program Student Learning Outcome Improvement Plan

