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The Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components

Please Note: On February 24, 2012, the Commission Board of Trustees adopted new Criteria for Accreditation, Assumed Practices, and Obligations of Affiliation. The final versions appear below. They are effective for all institutions as of January 1, 2013.

In the past the Criteria for Accreditation had been reviewed in their entirety every five years. Beginning in 2013, the Board will consider clarifying modifications to the Criteria, including the Assumed Practices, annually, usually with first reading in February and second reading in June.

The first such update has been posted in the policies and is available in the Criteria Booklet. It includes minor changes to Assumed Practices A.7.a, b, c, B.1.b, c, C.5, D.5, and D.6, and Institutional Obligation 13. In February 2013, the Board accepted the changes on first reading. The proposed changes were shared with institutions and comments invited. The Board took final action on the modifications on June 26, 2013. They are effective immediately.

More about the Criteria

[Guiding Values](#)

[Criteria for Accreditation](#) Effective January 1, 2013

[Assumed Practices](#) Effective January 1, 2013

[Obligations of Affiliation](#) Effective January 1, 2013

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All of these sections are available in the New [Criteria Booklet](#).

Resources

[Orientation to the Criteria](#)

Information about the Old Criteria

[Old Criteria for Accreditation](#) Effective until December 2012

[Minimum Expectations within the Criteria for Accreditation](#) Effective until December 2012

Questions?

800.621.7440

The Criteria for Accreditation are the standards of quality by which the Commission determines whether an institution merits accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation. They are as follows:

Criterion One. Mission

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

Core Components

1.A. The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

1.B. The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of 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 document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

1.C. The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1.D. The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Criterion Two. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

Core Components

- 2.A. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.
- 2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.
- 2.C. The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.
1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
 2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
 3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
 4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.
- 2.D. The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.
- 2.E. The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.
1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
 2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
 3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

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

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

Core Components

- 3.A. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.
1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
 2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
 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).
- 3.B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.
1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
 2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
 3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
 4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
 5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.
- 3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.
1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
 2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
 3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
 4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
 5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
 6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.
- 3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

Gen Ed

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
 2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
 3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
 4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
 5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.
- 3.E. The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.
1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
 2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Student Support Services

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.

Core Components

4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
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.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, 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).

Prereqs

4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

4.C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

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.

Core Components

5.A. The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
 2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
 3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
 4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
 5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.
- 5.B. The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.
1. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
 2. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
 3. The institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.
- 5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.
1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
 2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
 3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
 4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
 5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.
- 5.D. The institution works systematically to improve its performance.
1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
 2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

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Compliance Assist Assessment Questions

Standing Requirements

- 1) Mission Statement
 - a. What is your program's mission statement?
- 2) Program Learning Outcomes/Goals
 - a. Articulate your program's learning outcomes/goals
- 3) Curriculum map

Annual Assessment Cycle 2012-2013 (Continuous Improvement Plan)

- 1) Choose two of your student learning outcomes for measurement and action
- 2) Measures of Student Learning
 - a. How are the achievement of these two learning outcomes measured?
 - b. How will data be collected to provide evidence of these two outcomes?
- 3) Results
 - c. What specific evidence do you have that your students are or are not achieving these learning outcomes?
- 4) Action:
 - a. Give specific examples of how your program:
 - i. has used this evidence to improve student learning -- or will use this evidence to improve student learning
 - ii. will or has reported the results and actions to the public and various stakeholders?
 - b. What is your timeline for successfully achieving these learning outcomes?
- 5) Additional Information
 - a. Is there any additional information you would like to share about your program's assessment of student learning?

Joseph Rankin

From: Provost <provost@wayne.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, August 07, 2013 11:11 AM
To: Faculty; Department Chairs
Subject: Course learning outcomes (chairs: please distribute to GTAs and part-time faculty)

Having trouble viewing? [View Online](#)

ANNOUNCEMENT *from the* PROVOST

August 7, 2013

Dear colleagues:

The following addresses changes to course syllabi required by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for our upcoming university accreditation process in 2016-17. However, regardless of HLC requirements, the following essential addition to your course syllabi will be helpful to students, faculty, and academic programs as the university moves forward in efforts to assess student learning.

Syllabus Guidelines

Both the Council of Undergraduate Administrators and the Curriculum and Instruction Committee of the Academic Senate have provided input and endorsement of the course syllabus guidelines found at <http://undergrad.wayne.edu/pdf/syllabus-guidelines.pdf>. These guidelines cover a variety of categories of information that are intended to assist instructors in creating more informative and comprehensive syllabi for their classes. The guidelines are meant to supplement (not replace) school, college, or departmental syllabus guidelines or requirements that may already be in use; these guidelines are not intended to replace course-specific materials provided by the individual instructor.

Many of the guideline items are already found in course syllabi (e.g., faculty contact information, required readings, and grading policies). Other materials (e.g., information on religious holidays or the Academic Success Center) are meant simply to be "cut and pasted" into your syllabus as needed for your classes.

Course Learning Outcomes

As we prepare for the 2016-2017 Higher Learning Commission (HLC) university-wide accreditation process, the HLC evaluators will be eyeing our course syllabi for information mainly contained in the first

four bullet points of the syllabus guidelines. In particular, we need to introduce **learning outcomes** into all our course syllabi. Currently, syllabi for all new course proposals must contain learning outcomes; within the next few semesters we need to include such outcomes in all our Wayne State syllabi. Some of the colleges and schools (e.g., Engineering, Education, Social Work) already require syllabi to contain course learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes are informative for the students in clarifying course expectations and content. Such outcomes also can help the instructor focus on the most important course materials and goals by assisting in the alignment of student assessment and instruction. Moreover, course learning outcomes help each department with the assessment of its program learning outcomes. Course outcomes are meant to be measured in ways appropriate for that course (e.g., exam, project, portfolio, presentation); the achievement of outcomes through the course measurements is evidence that students are learning.

Please note that course learning outcomes should be identical across all sections of the same course. The various instructors of the same course, and departments or programs generally, will most certainly want to confer on this matter.

Helpful Web Links

For those who would like to read some helpful materials on the definition and creation of course outcomes, a number of useful web links can be found below. Hopefully, these materials will provide answers to questions you might have regarding the creation of your own course outcomes. While some authors use the terms “goals,” “objectives,” and “outcomes” interchangeably, others note specific differences among these terms (mainly in regard to scope or generality, moving from the most general term [goals] to the most specific [outcomes]). Try not to get hung up on a precise definition or differences among the terms. Instead, create approximately 3 to 10 somewhat general outcomes you want your students to learn or be able to do by the end of the semester. For example, “At the end of this course, students will be able to work cooperatively in a small group environment.” Or, “at the end of this course, students will be able to understand the four major theoretical perspectives and their historical evolution.”

<http://www.csub.edu/tlc/options/resources/handouts/syllabus/integratinglearningobj.html>

<http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/topics/coursedesign/learning-outcomes/examples.htm>

<http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/tutorials/id/developObjectives.asp>

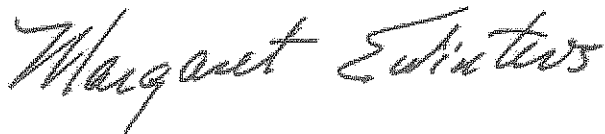
Other Helpful Resources

Googling the title of your course (e.g., “Introduction to Geology”) and adding “learning outcomes,” “learning goals,” or “learning objectives” to the Google search will probably result in a number of “hits” you will likely find helpful as examples as you consider your own priorities and write learning outcomes for your

courses.

In the Fall 2013 semester, the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) will offer workshops that include support for the creation of course learning outcomes. If you prefer one-on-one assistance, both the OTL and Dr. Naida Simon (n.simon@wayne.edu) can provide individual consultations.

Sincerely,



Margaret E. Winters

Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

AIM HIGHER

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Leadership & Governance

September 30, 2013

How a College Took Assessment to Heart

An accreditor's warning forced Lebanon Valley to take a hard look at the cost of its quest for survival

By Jack Stripling
Annville, Pa.

Lewis E. Thayne, president of Lebanon Valley College, strolls through the gymnasium here with a look of marvel. Opened a decade ago, the 1,650-seat facility is a testament to what Lebanon Valley has done well: luring students in south-central Pennsylvania to a small liberal-arts college with upgraded buildings and other enticements like generous merit-based scholarships.

"For a school our size and for our endowment, I've never seen anything quite this nice," says Mr. Thayne, glancing up at a banner that commemorates the Flying Dutchmen's 1994 Division III men's basketball championship.

A building boom that began in the 1990s helped bolster enrollment and staved off an existential crisis, but what the college failed to do then is painfully clear now. In June 2012 its accreditor placed Lebanon Valley on warning, announcing that the college had no good mechanisms for assessing student learning and revealing that administrators spent money with little regard for how doing so might improve student success.

Lebanon Valley is a microcosm of some of the most vexing problems facing colleges in the 21st century. At a time when the public is increasingly skeptical of the quality of higher education, the college found itself ill-positioned to prove that its product was worth the \$45,000 sticker price. There was a firm belief among the faculty that students were learning something important, but little hard evidence to support that position.

Deanna Dodson, director of curriculum, says the college lacked a strong centralized system for tracking student outcomes.

Middle States
Commission on
Higher Education

526 member
institutions

From 2011 through
Sept. 30, it has
placed 35 insts.
on "Warning."

Of these 35
insts, 30 were
found noncompliant
w/ 1 or more
of 2 key standards
tied to assessment