



What is Accreditation?

Accreditation is a process of external quality review created and used by higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities, and education programs for quality assurance and quality improvement. Through institutional self-evaluation, peer review, and institutional response, accreditation evaluates formal educational activities as well as other activities essential to the effectiveness of a college, such as governance and financial stability.

The University of Nebraska is a member of the North Central Association (NCA), an organization of colleges and universities from nineteen states. The NCA has accredited UNL since the association first began accrediting colleges and universities in 1913. The most recent accreditation was in 2006. In 2016-17, a peer review team from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) will conduct an onsite visit as part of UNL's reaffirmation of accreditation.

Why is it Important?

Accreditation provides assurances that the institution meets nationally endorsed standards, that it is engaged in continuous improvement, and that it is accountable for achieving its role and mission. Reaffirmation of UNL's accreditation is important because it

- Affirms that UNL is providing a quality education.
- Provides valuable feedback on how well UNL is meeting its goals for student learning.
- Creates an opportunity to assess, evaluate, and improve our programs and practices.

UNL's Goals for Accreditation

Continuous Improvement - Recognizing programs and practices that contribute to UNL's success and identifying those programs and practices that can be created and/or nurtured in support of UNL's overall mission of teaching and research excellence.

Engagement - Soliciting broad participation by representative and diverse constituencies in gathering evidence for the comprehensive review, analyzing institutional performance, and reviewing conclusions and recommendations.

Reaffirmation - Achieving continued institutional accreditation by meeting all HLC Criteria for Accreditation (see page 2) and achieving all Federal Compliance requirements.

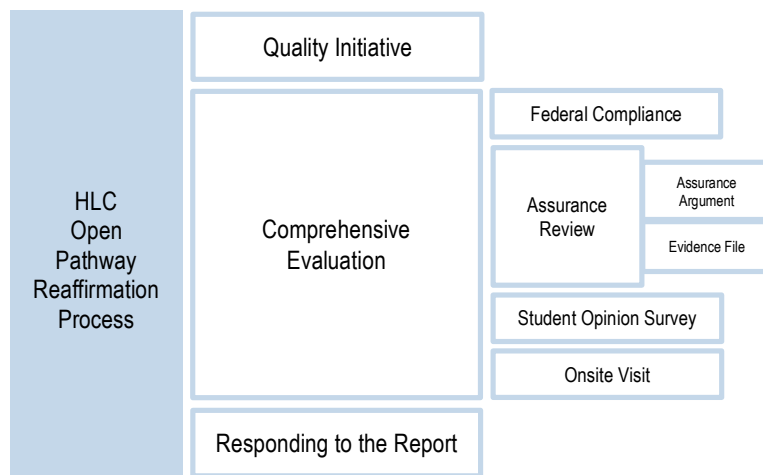
Transparency - Keeping the campus community and other stakeholders informed about the HLC accreditation process.

THE TIMELINE

Planning for our 2016-17 HLC Accreditation has begun. The Assurance Review drafts will be ready for public comment in 2015-16 and the onsite visit will take place in 2016-17.

The Reaffirmation Process

The Open Pathway model separates the reaffirmation of accreditation process into three components: (1) the Quality Initiative; (2) a comprehensive evaluation (Assurance Review); and (3) the peer-review team report and recommendations.



(1) UNL's Quality Initiative, "Implementing and Assessing the ACE 10 Outcome: Exploring Learning and Career Preparation within the Undergraduate Major," is a two-year project designed to engage faculty and staff in systematic conversations about the role that curriculum, advising, and mentoring within each major plays in students' career exploration and development. This is underway and will be completed in 2015-16.

(2) The Comprehensive Review includes an Assurance Filing documenting the extent to which UNL meets Criteria for Accreditation and other Commission expectations such as Federal Compliance requirements. A site visit by a peer review team, selected by the HLC, will conduct a preliminary analysis of UNL's Assurance Filing and the results of the Student Opinion Survey. The student opinion survey, conducted by the HLC, is intended to help the peer review team identify questions for its meetings with faculty, staff, and students during the onsite visit.

(3) After the site visit, the peer review team prepares a draft report indicating the degree to which the institution meets the HLC Criteria for Accreditation and compliance with Federal Compliance Requirements. There is an opportunity to provide a response to the final report.

GET INVOLVED

As a member of the UNL community, your involvement is essential. The UNL Accreditation Steering Committee, Leadership Team and Criterion Work Groups ask that you:

- *Stay informed.* Watch for updates on UNL Today and visit the accreditation website reaffirm2016.unl.edu.
- *Contribute.* Participate in the process by providing input, information, and feedback.
- *Prepare for the Site Visit.* Details to follow.



Higher Learning Commission Criteria as of January, 2013

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

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.B.** The mission is articulated publicly.
- 1.C.** The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.
- 1.D.** The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

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.
- 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.

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.
- 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.
- 3.C.** The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.
- 3.D.** The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.
- 3.E.** The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

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

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.
- 5.B.** The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.
- 5.C.** The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.
- 5.D.** The institution works systematically to improve its performance.