

Multi-campus Visit

Information for Institutions and Peer Reviewers

Institutions with one or more branch campuses undergo a multi-campus visit as part of certain HLC comprehensive evaluations. This process ensures (1) the quality of the institution's extended operations and its educational offerings in meeting the needs of its students and (2) the institution's capacity to sustain that quality.

In preparation for the multi-campus visit, the institution will submit a report on the branch campuses to be reviewed along with its comprehensive evaluation materials. Members of the peer review team conducting the comprehensive evaluation will review this report and conduct an on-site visit to each branch campus that is selected to be reviewed.

When Multi-campus Visits Take Place

Per HLC policy [Evaluative Activities Applicable to All Institutions \(INST.C.10.040\)](#), multi-campus visits are conducted as part of the following comprehensive evaluations:

- Comprehensive evaluation for candidacy
- Comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation
- Comprehensive evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation, including:
 - Standard and Open Pathway Year 10 comprehensive evaluation
 - Standard Pathway mid-cycle comprehensive evaluation for institutions undergoing their first comprehensive evaluation after being granted initial accreditation or being removed from Probation or Show-Cause

Branch Campus Definition

(Based on the federal definition)

A branch campus is a physical facility that is geographically separate from and independent of the main campus of the institution and within the same ownership structure of the institution. HLC considers a location of an institution to be independent of the main campus if it has all four of the following attributes:

- It is permanent in nature.
- It offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate or other recognized educational credential.
- It has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization.
- It has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

Identifying the Campuses to Review

If an institution has three or fewer campuses, all are reviewed; if an institution has four or more campuses, HLC determines the sample of campuses to be reviewed. In rare cases, the review of campuses may also include a review of additional locations if an institution has two or fewer additional locations. Additional locations are facilities at which it is possible for students to complete 50% or more of a degree, certificate or other recognized educational credential, but that do not meet the definition of a branch campus (see the full definition of an additional location in [HLC's Glossary](#)). HLC provides the institution and the peer review team with the list of branch campuses to be reviewed approximately six months before the comprehensive evaluation visit.

Reclassifying a branch campus as an additional location: If the institution determines that a branch campus included in the sample has decreased its operations to the point that it no longer meets the definition of a branch campus, the institution may request that HLC [reclassify the campus as an additional location](#). This request should be made as early as possible.

Institutional Report

In preparation for the multi-campus visit, the institution prepares a report that addresses each campus being reviewed and any additional locations included in the review. The total report should be no longer than 5,000 words and begin with an overview that explains the governance and oversight of the institution's operations, including the processes for assuring and improving educational quality, resource allocation, evaluation and planning, staffing, services, and budget and revenue. The overview should also describe the patterns of administrative structures, resources, instructional delivery methods, and means of access to services and resources at different campuses.

In addition to the overview, the report should provide the following data for each branch campus being reviewed:

- Date of inception.
- Programs offered.
- Actual enrollments for each program.
- Projected enrollments for the next three years.
- Number of full-time and part-time faculty who teach at the facility.
- Number of administrators on site.
- Student services available at the campus.
- Additional locations linked to the campus.
- Campus-specific information for any campus that might function differently than the institution's standard branch campus practices.

Submitting the Multi-campus Report to HLC

When completed, the institution uploads its multi-campus report on the Forms tab in the Assurance System, unless instructed otherwise by HLC. The institution must upload the report before its Assurance System lock date.

Peer Review

The multi-campus visit is completed by one or more members of the team conducting the institution's comprehensive evaluation. The team chair assigns the reviewer(s) who will conduct the multi-campus visit, in consultation with all team members. The designated team member(s) review the institution's multi-campus report and visit each campus included in the evaluation. The reviewer(s) will evaluate the following:

- The history, planning and oversight of the campus, including processes to assure appropriate governance and to sustain the quality of the campus.
- The physical and technological resources dedicated to the campus.
- The human resources dedicated to the campus and their qualifications.
- The management of, access to, and availability of student support services and academic resources.
- The oversight of educational programs and instruction.
- The evaluation and assessment processes that assure the capacity to sustain and improve academic quality, student learning, student persistence and completion.
- The processes to assure continuous improvement of the quality of the campus and equivalency of the offerings and services at the campus to those of the main campus.

Arranging the Campus Visits

The assigned team member(s) contacts the institution to schedule the on-site campus visits, which may be held prior to or immediately after the comprehensive evaluation visit. All of the visits must occur before the team report is complete. The individual on-site visits are conducted by one peer reviewer—regardless of how many team members are assigned to review the sample of branch campuses—and are typically half a day in length.

Each on-site visit typically begins with a meeting or conference call with the administrators responsible for coordinating the educational offerings at the main campus with similar activities at the branch campus. The peer reviewer will also interview the campus administrators, academic leaders, and some faculty and students.

Multi-campus Reviewer Form

The assigned peer reviewer(s) completes a [Multi-campus Reviewer Form](#) for each campus visited and emails them to the rest of the comprehensive evaluation peer review team. The team discusses and integrates the findings into its final comprehensive evaluation report in the Assurance System, including any concerns or recommended follow-up. The team chair should upload a copy of all Multi-campus Reviewer Forms to hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Final Reports" from the list of submission options to ensure the forms are sent to the correct HLC staff member.

Decision Making

Any concerns or recommended follow-up regarding the institution's branch campuses will be included in the team report for the comprehensive evaluation. The institution may review the report and the team's recommendations for errors of fact before the team submits its final report to HLC. The institution may also submit a response to the team report. The final team report and institutional response are then sent to an HLC decision-making body for review and action. The Multi-campus Report from the institution and the Multi-campus Reviewer Forms become part of the institution's administrative record and are shared as appropriate with future evaluation teams.

Questions?

Contact accreditation@hlcommission.org

