



Higher Learning Commission

HLC Accreditation 2025

**Institutional Accountability Plan
Charter**

Prepared by the HLC Planning Group, September 2022

Institutional Accountability Plan Charter:

Outline of planning & execution of all necessary tasks to ensure continuous improvement and successful Reaffirmation of Accreditation following the HLC Comprehensive Evaluation and Peer Review in 2024-25

Plan Objectives:

- Recruit Reaffirmation Co-Chairs and Committee Co-Chairs
- Recruit members for Executive, Steering, Federal Compliance, Planning, and Criterion Committees
- Identify, gather, and generate evidence that KU meets the HLC Criteria for Accreditation and Assumed Practices
- Establish and manage the Quality Initiative
- Prepare and submit a Federal Compliance Filing, including Worksheet on the Assignment of Credit Hours
- Prepare and submit the Assurance Argument and Evidence File
- Gather public comments, conduct surveys, etc.
- Host an on-site Peer Review Team visit at the Lawrence and Medical Center (Kansas City) campuses
- Prepare and submit an institutional response to the final report

HLC Planning Group:

- Barbara Bichelmeyer, Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor
- Jennifer Roberts, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & Graduate Studies
- Mike Werle, Dean of Postdoctoral Affairs and Graduate Studies
- Jean Redeker, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & ALO
- Gina Wyant, Director, University Assessment/Assurance System Coordinator
- Stefani Buchwitz, Director, Self Graduate Programs/HLC Reaffirmation Operations Manager
- Cara Nossaman, Senior Management Analyst for Institutional Effectiveness/HLC Reaffirmation Project Manager
- Robin Lehman, Assistant Director for Programmatic Strategies/HLC Communications Manager
- Cari Alfors, Executive Assistant
- Cindy Pemberton, Consultant for HLC Reaffirmation

Institutional Accountability Plan Priorities:

- **Evidence and Assurance Argument** – The comprehensive self-study is an evidence-based submission with accompanying narrative limited to 35,000 words. The HLC now requires a broad range of proof that demonstrates compliance with the criteria and core components.
- **Identified Areas of Needed Improvement** – KU has identified several areas that require improvement in order to meet HLC requirements and assure educational quality. All identified areas have been or are in the process of being addressed.
- **Quality Initiative** – To ensure continuous improvement, HLC requires institutions to designate one major improvement effort to be undertaken between years 5 and 9 of the 10-year review cycle. KU has chosen “Developing and Scaling an Integrated Structure of Evidence-Based Assessment to Foster a Culture of Continuous Quality Improvement at KU.”

Key Milestones:

| Mo/Yr | Activity |
|----------------|--|
| March 2022 | Establish committee leadership: executive, steering, federal compliance, planning group |
| April 2022 | Committees begin forming; designated committee members attend HLC Conference |
| May 2022 | University-wide review of evidence to identify gaps for each criterion; initiate changes |
| June 2022 | Quality Initiative Proposal Submitted to HLC (Academic Affairs) |
| August 2022 | Official kick-off of reaffirmation process with all committee members |
| September 2022 | Steering Committee and Criterion Committees begin meeting and are provided list of evidence needed |
| October 2022 | Federal Compliance Committee begins meeting |
| December 2022 | Steering Committee holds quarterly meeting; hears subcommittee updates & provides guidance |

| Mo/Yr | Activity |
|------------------------|--|
| March 2023 | Executive Committee meets to hear update |
| | Team members attend HLC Conference |
| April – September 2023 | Criterion Committees complete criteria reports; Steering Committee reviews criteria drafts and requests clarifications/additional info as needed |
| | HLC Assumed Practices documented; Federal Compliance Packet completed |
| April 2024 | Designate editor to synthesize and polish criteria reports, write intro & changes since last review |
| | Write Quality Initiative Report reflecting on accomplishments and strategies used |
| September 2024 | Share self-study draft with university community |
| December 2024 | Submit Assurance Argument and evidence to HLC |
| Spring 2025 | Peer Review Team Conducts Evaluation Visit |

Communication Plan:

- hlc2025.ku.edu will be the primary method for distributing project-related information
- Variety of communication tools will be utilized to disseminate HLC information and progress to university community and other stakeholders
- Jennifer Roberts, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & Graduate Studies, is the primary contact person for HLC's Reaffirmation of Accreditation
- Regular HLC Planning Group meetings will ensure that project milestones are being met and efforts are underway to lead to successful reaffirmation of accreditation
- A semi-annual update will be provided to the Executive Leadership Committee
- MS Teams will be used as a repository for evidence and other important data and documents (drafts and final versions)

Constraints:

- Assurance Argument is limited to 35,000 words; evidence documents are the primary focus of the self-study
- KU is reported on as one university in the Assurance Argument
- HLC Criteria for Accreditation are fixed and must be adhered to
- The Federal Compliance requirements are non-negotiable
- KU will not have any influence regarding the selection of the peer review team that will conduct our HLC comprehensive evaluation

Identified Risks:

- KU has identified several areas of needed improvement to be addressed before the comprehensive evaluation occurs. Among them are these:
 - One-university mission statement must be adopted and approved by KBOR
 - Catalog does not list all program offerings and many program requirements are outdated
 - Faculty credentials are not sufficiently documented
 - No routine/institutional collection of syllabi for every course offering and no mechanism to ensure required elements are included
 - Tested experience policy is inadequate and does not address graduate courses
- An interim monitoring report was submitted in September 2022 to address a “Met with Concerns” ranking on Criterion 4B in KU’s mid-cycle review in 2019; KU’s remedial actions are in process
- KU has experienced significant changes in leadership over the past 10 years
- Changes to the Criteria for Accreditation have taken effect since the last comprehensive self-study in 2015