

	Policy Number: 725	
	Policy Category: <i>Academic Policies</i>	
	<i>Continuous Improvement & Assessment Policy</i>	
	Policy Summary: <i>All degree, certificate-granting academic programs/majors and co-curricular programmatic areas will engage in student learning assessment annually or in accordance with external accreditation requirements.</i>	
	Approval Date: 3/6/23	Effective Date: Upon approval
	Policy Owner: <i>President</i>	
	Scheduled for Review: <i>Spring 2028</i>	

Policy Statement

All co-curricular, degree and certificate-granting programs, including all instructional methods (traditional, hybrid, online/distance education) will engage in assessment and continuous improvement activities annually (hereafter annual assessment). Annual assessment contributes to Academic Program Reviews, which are on five (5)-year cycles. Thus, All Program Learning Outcomes should be assessed and reassessed at least once in the four-year period leading to an Academic Program Review (APR) with the fifth year dedicated to the APR.

Academic programs with external accreditation requirements will follow the Assessment Reporting Policy and Procedures for Programs with External Accreditation.

Non-degree granting programs are also subject to assessment and accountable for continuous improvement at the request of the Dean or President (minors, concentrations, etc.). Co-curricular and academic programs should submit annual assessment reporting of student learning outcomes as described in the Continuous Learning and Improvement through Assessment (CLIMATE) Procedures and provided templates.

Assessment Reporting Policy for Programs with External Accreditation

Any program subject to accreditation by an external agency may satisfy the College's assessment process by meeting the assessment requirements of its accrediting agency. Such an arrangement may only occur if the external accreditor has a substantial requirement for program assessment consistent with The Higher Learning Commission requirements. These requirements include identification of student learning outcomes by the program faculty, measurement of student achievement of those outcomes, and demonstration of the use of assessment data by the faculty to improve the program. The Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) must approve this arrangement and be notified whenever the program is undergoing an accreditation review. If approved, the program should submit reporting required by the external accreditor pertaining to the assessment of student learning outcomes as described in the Assessment Procedures for Programs with External Accreditation.

Definitions

Academic Program: An academic program is a set of course offerings and a set of requirements that lead to a degree or certificate. The curriculum of all academic programs is supervised by a program faculty and, in many cases, overseen by an academic unit. An Academic Program is differentiated from an Academic Unit and Program Faculty.

Academic Unit: An academic unit is a level of organization that is approved to offer curriculum and administer academic programs. An academic unit may be limited to a single program or may be organized into a department, for example, A department can administer more than one academic program.

Assumed Practices: “Assumed Practices are (1) generally matters to be determined as facts, rather than matters requiring professional judgment and (2) not expected to vary by institutional mission or context.....The Assumed Practices set requirements related to ethical and responsible conduct; quality, resources and support for teaching and learning; evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning; and resources, planning and institutional effectiveness. Every institution must be in compliance with all Assumed Practices at all times” (CRRT.B.10.020; HLC Policy Book - November 2022).

Criteria for Accreditation: “The Criteria for Accreditation are the standards of quality by which HLC determines whether an institution merits accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation. The five Criteria address mission; ethical and responsible conduct; quality, resources and support for teaching and learning; evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning; and institutional effectiveness, resources and planning” (see CRRT.B.10.010; HLC Policy Book - November 2022). Additionally, “...HLC assures that all candidate and accredited institutions are complying with the expectations of specific federal regulations” (see FDCR.A.10.010; HLC Policy Book - November 2022).

Curriculum Matrix: A tool that shows how program learning outcomes are aligned across the courses and their course learning objectives that comprise the academic program and lead to the achievement of student learning. Sometimes also called a Curriculum map.

Distance Education: Prescott College delivers distance education in accordance with Federal Policy and the definition of distance education as follows:

“Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (2)(i) through (iv) of this definition to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor or instructors and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor or instructors, either synchronously or asynchronously.” 34 CFR 600.2

“For purposes of this definition, 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 -

- (i) Providing direct instruction;
- (ii) Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;

- (iii) Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;
- (iv) Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or
- (v) Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.”
34 CFR 600.2

“An institution ensures regular interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors by, prior to the student's completion of a course or competency -

- (i) 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
- (ii) Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.” 34 CFR 600.2

Reason for Policy

To outline the policies related to continuous improvement of academic programs.

Responsibilities

For following policy:	All faculty and programs
For enforcement of policy:	Dean, Academic Affairs
For oversight of policy:	Dean, Academic Affairs
For procedures implementing the policy:	Dean, Academic Affairs
For notification:	Policy Librarian

Cross Referenced Policies

Higher Learning Commission accreditation criteria:
https://download.hlcommission.org/policy/HLCPolicyBook_POL.pdf

Revision History