

HLC Fact of the Day:
“HLC Assurance Argument: Subcomponent 4A4”
(with specific focus on “Quality and Rigor of Academic Courses and Programs”)
(September 12, 2017)

In the HLC Criteria for Accreditation, Subcomponent 4A4 says: *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.*

In our Assurance Argument being prepared for HLC, and in support of the 4A4 standard, this is what we say regarding “quality and rigor of academic courses and programs”:

Quality and Rigor of Academic Courses and Programs

Proposals to create new or change existing courses or programs follow a [collaborative review and approval process](#) to ensure 1) compliance with institutional standards and 2) system-wide awareness of changes. Minor revisions are addressed by the pertinent School/Division Curriculum Committee (SDCC). Course proposals are reviewed by the SDCC, the SDCC Chairs and Academic Deans, and the Provost. Program proposals are reviewed by the SDCC (in consultation with the School Dean); the Academic Program Advisory Committee (APAC), which includes the Academic Deans and members of the Faculty Council; the Provost; and the President.

For new programs, required completion of the [New Program Development Workbook](#) provides comprehensive data that the reviewing bodies use to decide on program implementation. [Proposals for new courses](#) must include a complete syllabus with corresponding prerequisites and/or co-requisites. [General Education course proposals](#) require additional review and approval from the GE committee. When evaluating a course, the reviewing bodies use the [Checklist for Course-Level Rigor](#) as a guide. The checklist describes the type of content and student learning expectations (with reference to Bloom’s Taxonomy) appropriate to undergraduate courses from the 00000-level to the 40000-level, as well as for courses at the graduate level.

Student course evaluations provide another source of quality assurance. Cumulative summaries of the instructor section of course evaluations are automatically generated in each instructor's [evaluation portal](#) for ongoing review. Academic administrators have access to [comprehensive course evaluation data](#). When evaluations indicate need, improvement goals are established collaboratively between instructor and supervisor and reviewed in the subsequent evaluation cycle. In spring and summer 2017, a faculty and staff committee undertook a [review process](#) to select and implement a new course evaluation platform to increase student response rates and improve data collection.

To learn more about accreditation and Lindenwood’s comprehensive evaluation and site visit scheduled for November 6-7, 2017, and to see the countdown clock to the visit, go to the HLC page on the Lindenwood website here: <http://www.lindenwood.edu/about/higher-learning-commission/>.

Past HLC Facts are archived [here](#).

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