



## Interim Report for the Higher Learning Commission

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**Action with Interim Monitoring.** IAC continued the accreditation of Highland Community College with the next Reaffirmation of Accreditation in or before 2027-28. In conjunction with this action, IAC required the following interim monitoring.

**Interim Report.** An Interim Report due 4/1/2020 providing evidence that the institution has reviewed and published all student outcome data for all programs.

**Federal Compliance Overview** (Effective for Federal Compliance Reviews beginning September 1, 2016)

*Review of Student Outcome Data*

Policy Number FDCR.A.10.080

An institution shall demonstrate that, wherever applicable to its programs, its consideration of outcome data in evaluating the success of its students and its programs includes course completion, job placement, and licensing examination information.

*Publication of Student Outcome Data*

Policy Number FDCR.A.10.070

Information about Student Achievement

An institution's information for students and the public shall include information regarding student achievement. This information shall include student retention rates, completion rates or other information appropriate for the mission of the institution and its goals for students.

## Publication of Student Outcome Data

In preparation for our Comprehensive Quality Review (CQR) Visit, hereafter referred to as “the visit,” Highland Community College’s Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Director of Institutional Research, both relatively new to their respective roles, worked together to post a document that showed “student retention rates, completion rates, or other information appropriate for the mission of the institution and its goals for students,” as Policy Number FDCR.A.10.070 stated at the time ([Appendix A](#)). The document was posted on our Student Outcome Data webpage along with definitions so students and parents could understand the various terms used ([Appendix B](#)).

The Federal Compliance Overview included the following in the explanation for this policy, “Data may be provided at the institutional or department level or both, but the institution must disclose student outcome data that address the broad variety of its programs” ([Appendix A, pg. 6](#)). We do not have academic departments. We only reported the institutional-level data. We had technical program data but did not include this information with the other published data. We have since published the technical program data.

Our [Student Outcome Data website](#) now has information about Technical Program enrollment, completion, and job placement in addition to Associate Degree completion. We have also published our NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN licensure exam results for Nursing and linked to College Scorecard, Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) data, and IPEDS. We publish our KBOR Performance Agreement. The KBOR Performance Agreement shows the core indicators used to evaluate our funding percentage for any new state funds. One of the core indicators is to, “Increase the percentage of graduates (certificate and degree) employed or transferred in Kansas one year after completion.” Another is to increase the number of degrees and certificates earned. As long as Gainful Employment data continues to be collected, we will post that information on our website along with Kansas wage information. The KBOR Kansas Higher Education Statistics (KHEStats) website also now publishes transfer success reports for each community college and each state university in Kansas.

In the CQR Visit Final Team Report, our visit team listed out all of the information we had published and made no comment regarding issues with what was published. They did cite an absence of “summary reports for PDCA projects, the SPEs, or embedded assessments.” After the visit, HCC took a giant step back to build a Comprehensive Assessment Plan from the group up. That process will be described in detail below. For this section on the Publication of Student Outcome Data, we would add that Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Projects were paused for one semester. Faculty resumed PDCA Projects in Spring 2019. These are individualized professional development projects where full-time faculty get to plan, do, check, and act on an idea, classroom innovation, or new technique in a pilot fashion. Based on what the faculty learn from the project, they may or may not make changes to their curriculum or teaching. When the PDCA Projects resumed, several questions were added to the results form to help “close the loop” and require faculty to reflect on what they learned and changed based on that learning.

The visit team’s reference to the “SPEs” above is related to the Student Evaluation on the SPEs that was discontinued until further notice because it was only collecting instructor opinions of whether a sample of students were meeting the Shared Performance Expectations (SPEs) which are HCC’s version of Common Learning Outcomes. There was no common rubric for each SPE so instructors were being entirely subjective about their ratings. Also, some instructors were not completing ratings for students who had stopped coming or weren’t there when they did the rating. Other instructors were giving these students the lowest marks possible and still including them. HCC decided to move forward with other assessment tasks at the course, program, and Gen Ed-levels (described below) which will feed up into institutional-level assessment in the future.

## Review of Student Outcome Data

At the recommendation of our HLC liaison, we are writing this report based on the Federal Compliance Guidelines in effect at the time of our filing submission date (September 1, 2016 effective date) and included the Review of Student Outcome Data. Policy number FDCR.A.10.080 states, “An institution shall demonstrate that, wherever applicable to its programs, its consideration of outcome data in evaluating the success of its students and its programs includes course completion, job placement, and licensing examination information.”

At the time of our visit, HCC did not have a clear definition of a program. Further complicating things at the time of the visit, was that our website and admissions and student services publications used the term “Programs of Study” which was interpreted by our Site Visit Team to mean degree programs. Instead these incorrectly labeled “Programs of Study” were areas of interest which did not include a program but rather a combination of electives in a specific academic discipline that might be recommended for a transfer student but not required for graduation. We have since remedied this issue and our Director of Advising has drafted advising guides with recommended courses for various areas of interest. We have been very intentional on when the word “Program” is used as we have updated the website, publications, and in advising conversations with students.

The following bullet point from the Federal Compliance Worksheet for Evaluation Teams is where our CQR Team recommended monitoring ([Appendix C](#)):

- Determine whether the institution uses this information effectively to make decisions about planning, academic program review, assessment of student learning, consideration of institutional effectiveness and other topics.

According to the CQR Visit Team’s Final Report, they were most concerned by the following:

- “The data focuses on indirect measures of student performance.”
- What HCC was calling our *comprehensive assessment plan* at the time had, “no narrative explaining the processes of each assessment, nor how and when the results are analyzed and incorporated into planning.”
- Our forms at the time of the visit were not “clearly aligned with planning.”
- “There appears to be little evidence that the reports have been systematically collected and analyzed for trends or patterns.”
- “Alignment between the various reports was not in evidence, nor were timelines for collecting the information or a workable mechanism for analysis.”
- “Most program reviews do not include an analysis of direct measures of student learning.”

We recognized going into our site visit that assessment was our greatest opportunity for improvement. Several faculty committees have been intensely involved with the development and launch of our new Comprehensive Assessment Plan. These committees are the Assessment Committee, the Instructional Council, and the Academic Standards Committee. Additionally, Assessment Peer Corps members are faculty leaders who receive a supplemental stipend to serve as peer coaches and mentors for fellow faculty for everything related to assessment at HCC. They have assisted the VPAA and the Director of IR with every step of this process.

### Timelines Critical to Understanding HCC’s Efforts

Even before we officially received the CQR Visit Team Final Report, we started taking steps to improve institutional knowledge of assessment and to build a Comprehensive Assessment Plan that was clear, ongoing, and systematic. We have since continued on that path for the past two years.

Dates	Timeline Tasks
<b>March 26-28, 2018</b>	Comprehensive Quality Review Site Visit
<b>April 2018</b>	Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) and Director of Institutional Research attended the National Community College Benchmarking Program Conference at Johnson County Community College. HCC hired an Assessment Consultant to assist in evaluating our past assessment practices and to help get us headed in the right direction.
<b>June 2018</b>	HCC sent a 6-person team to the HLC Strategic Assessment Workshop. The team included the VPAA, Director of IR, and four HCC faculty Assessment Peer Corps members. In addition to gathering ideas from the presentations, our group fulfilled our intention of using the workshop to draft a common definition and shared values for HCC ( <a href="#">Appendix D</a> ). VPAA and Director of IR also attended the Assessment by Design Workshop at Johnson County Community College.
<b>August 2018</b>	The drafts of the definition of assessment and shared values were presented to all full-time faculty at the Fall 2018 Faculty In-Service ( <a href="#">Appendix E</a> ). The agenda included several opportunities for faculty to break into small groups to examine Criteria 4.B and 4.C as well as the definition and shared values ( <a href="#">Appendix F</a> ).
<b>August 30, 2018</b>	Faculty forum was held on definition of assessment and shared values. Feedback was compiled and a 2 <sup>nd</sup> forum was determined to be unnecessary. Our Assessment Consultant also attended and presented on the importance of having a strong foundation to our Comprehensive Assessment Plan.
<b>September 2018</b>	Assessment Peer Corps on September 10 <sup>th</sup> reviewed the newest versions of the definition and shared values, made their final revisions, and reviewed the logic model ( <a href="#">Appendix G</a> ). Assessment Committee, Instructional Council, and Academic Standards Committee each met and approved the HCC Definition of Assessment and Shared Values ( <a href="#">Appendix H</a> ). Chairs of each assessment-related committee were given advice on their committee's next steps ( <a href="#">Appendix I</a> ).
<b>October – December 2018</b>	Assessment Peer Corps started looking at examples of the Shared Performance Expectations (SPEs) in alignment with our former Gen Ed Outcomes ( <a href="#">Appendix J</a> ). SPEs are what HCC calls our institutional-level Common Learning Outcomes. These examples would later be revisited when teaching the faculty about curriculum mapping. Academic Standards Committee, Instructional Council, and Assessment Committee did the analysis of current assessment practices, wrote narrative descriptions of key terms, and glossary definitions through December ( <a href="#">Appendix K</a> ).
<b>December 2018</b>	VPAA presented a Comprehensive Assessment Plan proposal to the Assessment Peer Corps on December 10 <sup>th</sup> . She also shared the first draft of the Individualized Assessment Timeline that would be given to each instructor. Originally the individualized plans phased in academic disciplines over 3 years (this later changed).

Dates	Timeline Tasks
	APC members were asked over email on 12-12-2018 to give their approval of moving forward with the proposal. This request was resent on 1/24/2019 and all replied in the affirmative, 4 by email and 1 verbally ( <a href="#">Appendix L</a> ).
<b>January 2019</b>	<p>Assessment Peer Corps members approved the Comprehensive Assessment Plan proposal and each committee chair began implementing the Spring task lists contained therein.</p> <p>Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Projects were resumed. Our CQR Visit Team specifically asked that we keep these since the faculty gained so much value from them. After a one semester hiatus, electronic forms were created for submitting PDCA project plans at the beginning of the semester as well as results at the end of the semester. The results form included additional questions about what was learned and how each instructor planned to incorporate what was learned into future courses (<a href="#">Appendix M</a>).</p>
<b>February – April 2019</b>	<p>Academic Standards Committee, Instructional Council, and Assessment Committee worked through their Spring task lists. The oversight of each committee was clarified so that Academic Standards Committee officially oversees anything related to course-level assessment; Instructional Council oversees program and Gen Ed-level assessment; and Assessment Committee oversees institutional-level assessment.</p> <p>Academic Standards Committee continued refining the glossary and created a new Master Course Outline template.</p> <p>In February, Instructional Council suggested everyone should start on the Comprehensive Assessment Plan cycle at the same time. The VPAA adjusted the assessment cycle and timelines and the other committees were in agreement with the change.</p> <p>In March and April, Instructional Council addressed the following:  Instructional Council was previously over Academic Program Review. In the past, Program Review was not conducted for Technical Programs which are Programs by HCC's definition. Instead academic disciplines and the courses Gen Ed faculty taught in that discipline were brought up for review. Additionally, Gen Ed-level assessment was not being done. To solve these multiple issues, the new Comprehensive Assessment Plan proposed a 3-year cycle where a) Technical Programs go up for Program Review before a Technical Instructional Council, b) non-technical academic disciplines are combined into Divisions based on Gen Ed curricular areas, and c) the latter group goes before Instructional Council as a Division for Gen Ed-level Review of accomplishment of Gen Ed Division Learning Goals and Gen Ed-level assessment (<a href="#">Appendix N</a>).</p>
<b>April 2019</b>	VPAA, Director of IR, and interested Assessment Peer Corps members attended the Assessment Matters Conference at Johnson County Community College.
<b>May 2019</b>	The Assessment Peer Corps members presented a preview of the Comprehensive Assessment Plan to the faculty before they left for the summer ( <a href="#">video link</a> ). This included an overview of the assessment cycle, the organizing of Gen Ed faculty into Gen Ed Divisions, how to think about Gen Ed

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	<p>Learning Goals, and a month to month look ahead at the Planning &amp; Mapping Year (<a href="#">Appendix O</a>).</p> <p>The VPAA expanded the Faculty Templates and Resources page on the HCC Intranet to include links to helpful info related to assessment among other things. The video and presentation were posted to the intranet for later viewing. We continued refining the Assessment Glossary in May and July.</p>
<b>June 2019</b>	<p>VPAA, Director of IR, Director of Technical Education, and the Admin Assistant to the VPAA attended the KBOR Data Conference. Afterward the VPAA and Director of Technical Education discussed the Technical Assessment Timeline and decided to break faculty into Technical and Non-Technical groups at Fall In-Service.</p>
<b>August 2019</b>	<p>Each faculty member received a Personalized Cover Sheet and a copy of either the Gen Ed Faculty Detailed Timeline or the Detailed Technical Assessment Timeline. These are similar but worded specifically for the type of faculty. The cover sheets are posted on the intranet for faculty reference. Fall 2019 In-Service agenda included sessions on the Comprehensive Assessment Plan, Learning Goals and Benchmark Assignments, and one on Developing Learning Goals (<a href="#">Appendix P</a>).</p>
<b>September 2019</b>	<p>Dr. Sheri Barrett presented to the HCC faculty on Assessment to Curricular Change on September 5<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Barrett is an HLC Peer Reviewer and is Director of the Office of Assessment, Evaluation, and Institutional Outcomes at Johnson County Community College. The <a href="#">video</a> and slides were posted on the intranet for faculty to access later (<a href="#">Appendix Q</a>).</p> <p>Academic Standards Committee worked on finalizing the Master Course Outline (MCO) template and discussed course mapping.</p> <p>Assessment Committee worked on recommendations for improving Student Retention.</p> <p>Instructional Council reviewed the draft Gen Ed Division Learning Goals that were written at in-service (<a href="#">Appendix R</a>).</p>
<b>October 2019</b>	<p>Eleanor Hensley, Chair of Academic Standards Committee, and Eric Ketchum, Chair of Instructional Council, presented to faculty on course-mapping on October 24<sup>th</sup>. The <a href="#">video</a> and slides were posted on the intranet for faculty reference (<a href="#">Appendix S</a>).</p> <p>At this presentation, it was requested that Intranet also include the membership lists of all assessment-related committees (<a href="#">Appendix T</a>).</p>
<b>October – November 2019</b>	<p>Liaisons were assigned from each committee to each full-time faculty member. First drafts of Gen Ed Division Learning Goals were published on the HCC Intranet. Examples of the Shared Performance Expectations (SPEs) were approved by all committees and posted to the intranet to assist with curriculum mapping (<a href="#">Appendix U</a>).</p>
<b>November 2019</b>	<p>A course-level Benchmark Assignment review rubrics was finalized by Academic Standards. Then Instructional Council modified this review rubric for Gen Ed-level Benchmark Assignments.</p> <p>November 21<sup>st</sup> - All full-time faculty were invited to participate in an assessment work time. Many took the offer for help and most finalized their</p>

Dates	Timeline Tasks
	Program or Gen Ed Division Learning Goals and Benchmark Assignments ( <a href="#">Appendix W</a> ).
<b>January 2020 – February 2020</b>	Academic Standards Committee finalized components for reviewing proposed benchmark assignments for course-level assessment and emailed the faculty with deadlines for March ( <a href="#">Appendix X</a> ). Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, Instructional Council planned to send a similar email to all faculty in late March with April due dates. Most faculty were already close to completion of their Program/Gen Ed-level Learning Goals and Benchmark Assignments but finalized versions had not all been submitted. (We still hope to gather the remaining items due for the Planning & Mapping Year prior to the end of the semester.)
<b>March 2020</b>	March 5 <sup>th</sup> was a second faculty assessment work time focused on any remaining Gen Ed Division Learning Goals and Benchmark Assignments to finalize as well as Master Course Outline mapping and course-level Benchmark Assignment planning. Spring Break started on Saturday, March 7 <sup>th</sup> , and the following week while faculty and students were gone, the COVID-19 outbreak hit the United States ( <a href="#">Appendix Y</a> ).

We plan to resume committee meetings via Zoom in April and still meet our Comprehensive Assessment Plan timeline. As long as we are able to do so then in August 2020 the Initial Collection and Reporting Year will begin as scheduled. Benchmark Assignments will be administered at the course and Gen Ed-level in non-Technical academic disciplines. Technical Program-level Benchmark Assignments will be finalized and administered in a summative course in Spring 2021. The Technical Instructional Council and Technical Academic Standards Committees will be established.

Academic Standards Committee, Instructional Council, Technical Instructional Council, and Technical Academic Standards Committee will finalize the processes and requirements of Course-level and Program/Gen Ed-level Academic Review in preparation for the first group of faculty to go up for review before the various committees in April 2021.

By December 2020, the first direct evidence of student learning collected across all sections of a course will be compiled for the first time in a very long time. This evidence will be analyzed, reflected on, and reported out to one of the above committees by April 2021 based on the faculty member’s individualized timeline.

HCC needed time to identify shared values, build engagement, and develop processes and operating definitions for assessment. We had too little institutional knowledge of assessment and too many faculty both new and veteran, who did not understand what or why we were doing assessment. We now have common definitions and shared values and a stronger understanding of our new Comprehensive Assessment Plan. We hope this Interim Monitoring Report provides sufficient evidence that we are heading in the right direction and making steady progress. By our Assurance Argument due in July 2022, we will have direct evidence of student learning collected and analyzed from our Initial Collection & Reporting Year and our Continuous Improvement Year. We will be able to report on all we have accomplished following our clear, ongoing, and systematic Comprehensive Assessment Plan.

We realize that we still have a long way to go with regards to assessment. We will continue to improve our Review and Publication of Student Outcome Data processes and publications. We will keep increasing our institutional knowledge of assessment as quickly as possible. Even in the very uncertain times of the COVID-19 crisis, we are certain that assessment is a crucial piece to improving instruction and student success and we remain committed to our intended plans.

## Appendices

[Appendix A Federal Compliance Overview 2016](#)

[Appendix B Original Student Outcome Data and Webpage](#)

[Appendix C Reviewer Worksheet Federal Compliance Report](#)

[Appendix D Strategic Assessment Workshop Prework and Drafted Definitions and Purposes](#)

[Appendix E Defining Assessment and Updates Since HLC](#)

[Appendix F Fall 2018 In-Service Agenda and Handouts](#)

[Appendix G Assessment Peer Corps Agenda 9-10-2018 and Final Shared Values 9-11-2018](#)

[Appendix H Committee Minutes September 2018](#)

[Appendix I Committee Tools Fall 2018](#)

[Appendix J November 2, 2018 SPE handout with examples](#)

[Appendix K October to December 2018 Committee Minutes](#)

[Appendix L Original Comprehensive Assessment Plan Proposal Dec 2018 and Approval Email](#)

[Appendix M Updated PDCA Process and Forms](#)

[Appendix N February to April Committee Minutes](#)

[Appendix O Assessment Peer Corps Presentation 5-9-2019](#)

[Appendix P Fall 2019 In-Service Agenda Presentation and Handouts](#)

[Appendix Q Assessment to Curricular Change Presentation](#)

[Appendix R September to November 2019 Committee Minutes](#)

[Appendix S Academic Standards Committee Course Mapping Workshop PowerPoint](#)

[Appendix T Assessment-Related Committee Lists](#)

[Appendix U Assigned Liaisons Gen Ed Goals and SPEs with examples](#)

[Appendix W Faculty Assessment Work Time Nov 21 email](#)

[Appendix X Academic Standards March Deadlines and Forms](#)

[Appendix Y March 2020 Work Time and Sample Progress Report](#)