

Accreditation and Assessment FAQ

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1. How does the Open Pathway process for re-affirmation of accreditation differ from the previous the previous process?

The last time IIT's accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association (NCA) was re-affirmed was in 2006. At that time, IIT was subject to HLC's PEAQ process. The table below compares the current Open Pathway process to the PEAQ process

	Previous (PEAQ) Process	Open Pathway Process
Goal(s)	Quality assurance	Quality assurance Quality improvement
Self-study	Hardcopy, book-length document with no direct links or references to evidence files.	Replaced by Assurance Argument : electronic document with a maximum limit of 35,000 words. Each statement must contain a direct link to electronic evidence.
Evidence	Evidence consists of hardcopy documents that filled a room	Evidence File is an accumulated electronic collection of materials submitted by the institution. Each evidentiary must be specifically linked to a t least one Criterion or Core Component and must be referenced in the analysis to which it is linked.
Peer Review	Occurs during in-person site visit in Year 10	Assurance Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted in Years 4 and 10 • Based on evidence stored • Conducted at a distance in Year 4 supplemented by telephone conference. • Conducted in person in Year 10 • In both Year 4 and 10, team writes an Assurance Analysis and an Assurance Recommendation.
Quality Improvement		Quality Initiative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consists of a quality initiative that is of value to the institution. (Project does not necessarily flow from Quality Assurance Review.) • 3 Variations: do something original, choose from a menu provided by HLC, or engage in a Commission-directed activity, e.g., participate in the HLC Assessment Academy. • Can be a piece of an ongoing effort, or just the beginning of a long-term effort. • Occurs within the 5-year period between the Assurance Reviews in Years 4 and 10. • Don't have to succeed, just have to make a good faith effort.

2. What is the schedule for IIT’s next reaffirmation review under Open Pathway?

The Open Pathway process is still a 10-year cycle. To help create a seamless transition from the previous process, IIT entered the Open Pathway process in Year 6. Therefore, IIT did not have a review in Year 4, but is required to conduct a Quality Improvement Initiative in Years 7-9. IIT’s 10-year review will occur in 2016.

Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Pathway Cycle	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Assurance Process	Establish an internal structure & processes for gathering evidence	Institution may contribute documents to HLC Online Evidence File			Assurance Argument Filed
					Assurance Review (with Site Visit)
Improvement Process	Quality Improvement Initiative Proposal Filed				
	Quality Improvement Initiative Proposal Reviewed				
		Quality Improvement Initiative Report Filed			
		Quality Improvement Initiative Report Reviewed			
Commission Action					Action to re-affirm Accreditation
New Criteria	Final version approved by HLC Board	Effective for all members 1/1/13			
Other Monitoring	The Commission will continue to review data submitted by affiliated institutions through the Annual Institutional Update (AIDU), will apply change processes as appropriate to planned institutional developments, and will monitor institutions through reports, visits, and other means as it deems appropriate.				

3. How have the accreditation criteria changed since 2006?

- More emphasis on ethical practices
- More emphasis on transparency through public disclosure of information
- More emphasis on continuous assessment and improvement

Comparison of 2006 and Open Pathway Criteria

Criterion	2006 Version	Criterion	Open Pathway Version
1. Mission & Integrity	The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff & students.	1. Mission	The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.
		2. Integrity	The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.
2. Preparing for the Future	The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning <i>demonstrate its capacity to fulfill</i> its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.		

Criterion	2006 Version	Criterion	Open Pathway Version
3. Teaching & Learning	The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.	3. Teaching and Learning – Quality, Resources & Support	The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.
4. Acquisition, Discovery & Application of Knowledge	The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.	4. Teaching and Learning – Evaluation and Improvement	The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.
5. Engagement & Service	As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.	5. Resources, Planning & Institutional Effectiveness	The institution's resources, structures and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

4. What is IIT’s approach to preparing for re-affirmation of accreditation?

The Provost has appointed a Faculty Lead (Siva Balasubramanian) and a Staff Lead (Carol Emmons) for this process. Siva and Carol should be viewed by the academic units as resources.

Additionally, each Dean was asked to nominate a faculty member to serve on the Accreditation Advisory Committee. The role of each committee member will be to:

- Create a structure for gathering evidence within the college.
- Work to create a culture of assessment and continuous improvement within the college.
- Share templates, examples and “best practices” from discipline-based accreditation with other colleges.

Finally, the Accreditation Advisory Committee has formed three Subcommittees to focus on different components of IIT’s preparation. The subcommittees are: Assessment, the Quality Improvement Initiative, and the Administrative Criteria.

5. What are the HLC’s expectations regarding student learning assessment?

The HLC expects institutions to have a deeply embedded culture of assessment and continuous improvement. Operationally, this means there must be a sustainable assessment process for each degree program, the results of which are used to continuously improve programs of study. The Assessment Subcommittee will be working with the academic units over the next several years to help them establish or refine their assessment processes and compile evidence for IIT’s Assurance Review in 2016.

6. How can the Faculty help?

The Faculty can familiarize themselves with the HLC accreditation criteria, use Blackboard so that evidence will be available in electronic format, participate in and support learning assessment activities, and use the data from learning assessment to continuously improve courses and programs of study.