

# Academy for Student Persistence and Completion

## Application Packet

This packet provides the materials needed for an institution to file an application to participate in the Commission's Academy for Student Persistence and Completion. The institution completes this application whether participating in the Academy for its own purposes, as its Open Pathway Quality Initiative, or as one or more AQIP action projects. For institutions that propose to participate in the Academy as their Quality Initiative, the application review process for the Academy replaces the review process for the Quality Initiative proposal.

This packet includes:

- instructions for the Academy Application;
- the 2014-15 Academy Application;
- the Institutional Contact Information form;
- the Academy Application Affirmation, which requires the CEO's signature; and
- the Criteria for Selection to the Academy.

### Eligibility to Participate in the Academy

Institutions on sanction or seeking status with the Commission are not eligible to participate in the Academy. Institutions with pending action by the Commission must wait to apply after the completion of the decision process. If an institution is in the Academy and receives a recommendation for sanction, the institution must suspend participation in the Academy.

### Instructions for the Academy Application

The purpose of the application is to: (a) clarify why the institution wishes to participate in the Academy, (b) ensure that the investment in the Academy will benefit the institution, (c) to focus the institution on specific goals and results for the Academy, and (d) affirm the institutional and leadership commitment necessary for a successful Academy experience. Given that the Academy provides a forum for experimentation and challenge in a low-risk, high-benefit environment, the institution should take the opportunity to aim high, defining challenging goals and results it aspires to achieve.

### Application Timeline

Academy applications for 2014-15 will be accepted beginning September 1, 2013, and will continue until cohorts are filled.

## Application Submission

An interested institution should submit its application to [academy@hlcommission.org](mailto:academy@hlcommission.org) (paper applications are not accepted). Applications should:

- be submitted in PDF format,
- be no longer than eight pages, with standard margins and 10-point or larger type, and
- include the Application Affirmation, which requires the CEO's signature. If necessary, the Application Affirmation can be faxed to the Commission to the attention of the Academy at 312.263.7462.

## Selection Process

Commission staff and Academy mentors will conduct a three-step process for reviewing institutional applications.

1. Staff affirm that the application is complete.
2. Commission staff and Academy mentors evaluate each application and make initial recommendations on Cohort, timing, and track A or B of the Academy.
3. Commission staff review the application in relationship to: a) availability and types of institutions that have applied for the same entry date, b) probable Academy Track (A or B), c) time constraints in terms of accrediting process (Academy as Open Pathway Quality Initiative) or Commission decision process, and d) submission date of application (space is filled on a first-come, first-served basis).

**Possible outcomes:** Acceptance to the Academy on one of the preferred point of entry dates, acceptance to the Academy on a different point of entry date, denial of admission to the Academy, or request for resubmission if application is determined to be incomplete.

## Letter of Agreement

The institution signs a Letter of Agreement within 60 days of acceptance to the Academy. This letter, which is customized to reflect each institution's context, identifies understandings of participation, and addresses any expectations pertaining to the accrediting relationship. If changes occur in the institution's accrediting relationship with the Commission during its Academy participation, the Letter of Agreement will be amended to reflect those changes. The letter also outlines the Commission's commitments to the institution.

## Questions and Additional Information

Claire Berkley, Academy Process Administrator, [cberkley@hlcommission.org](mailto:cberkley@hlcommission.org), 312.263.0456, x145 can respond to general questions about the Academy, the admissions timetable, and application materials. For specific curricular or program questions, contact Amber Holloway, Associate Vice President for Quality Services, [aholloway@hlcommission.org](mailto:aholloway@hlcommission.org), 312.263.0456, x149.

## Academy Application 2014-15

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Name of Institution

City, State

Application Date

### Points of Academy Entry

Please identify dates in order of preference.

\_\_\_\_\_ June 18-20, 2014 (required Information and Planning Workshop event March 17-18, 2014)

\_\_\_\_\_ October 2014 (required Information and Planning Workshop event July 2014; dates TBD)

\_\_\_\_\_ February 2015 (required Information and Planning Workshop event November 2014; dates TBD)

**Note:** The Commission determines Academy entry point based on the selection process, which includes the process of constructing cohorts based on needs, goals, institutional types, mission, size, and other factors.

### Cohort Groups in the Academy

Institutions will join the Academy in cohorts of 16 institutions. Within these cohorts, the Commission plans to group institutions by general type, by Academy Track (A or B), and if possible, by size. Some institutions have indicated that they'd like to participate based on the student group that is the focus of the work. Other institutions have indicated that they wish to join in conjunction with one or more institution(s) and to work collaboratively with these institutions on the shared issues while in the Academy. **In these cases, the institution should indicate such interest in the email message submission of its application to the Academy. While efforts will be made to group cohorts accordingly, applying in conjunction with one or more institutions does not guarantee admission to the Academy.**

### Purpose for Academy Participation

Institutions in the PEAQ, AQIP, Standard, and Open Pathways may join the Academy at any time. For institutions on the Open Pathway, the Academy may serve as the Quality Initiative if engaged at the appropriate time in the accreditation cycle. For institutions in AQIP, the Academy may serve as one or more action projects.

**Check the applicable purpose below.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Open Pathway Quality Initiative (Institutions must begin participation no later than June of Year 5 and complete no later than June of Year 9. Institutions may join in Year 4 at the completion of their Year 4 review and decision process, if applicable.)

\_\_\_\_\_ AQIP Action Project(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other institutional purposes

## **Application Questions**

The institution should provide its responses to the following questions in no more than eight pages at ten-point type.

### **Recent Efforts**

1. Provide a brief overview of the institution's students.
2. Provide a brief overview of the institution's recent efforts to improve student persistence and completion. Include the individuals and groups that have been involved in these efforts.
3. List the data sets the institution has related to persistence, retention, and completion and how the institution has used the data to determine ways to improve persistence and completion. Please be specific and relate the data to student types/groups.

### **Scope and Significance**

4. Explain the issues the institution wants to address while in the Academy and why these issues are significant and relevant at this time.
5. Define the goals for participating in the Academy and the intended impact on the institution as a whole.
6. Explain how the goals align with current academic or strategic priorities.

### **Purposes and Outcomes**

7. Explain the specific outcomes the institution wishes to achieve in terms of the issues and goals. Identify which student groups are your focus.
8. Describe potential challenges and issues in implementing the initiative.

### **Commitment and Capacity**

9. Describe the level of internal support from faculty, staff, and administrators for Academy participation and the planned work on persistence and completion.
10. Identify the groups and individuals that will lead or be directly involved in implementing the initiative.
11. List the human, financial, technological and other resources that the institution has committed to this initiative.

## Institutional Contact Information

### Primary Institutional Contact Person for Academy Participation:

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Name

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Position title

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Institution name

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Office address

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City, State, Zip

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Office phone(s) and extension(s)

Office fax

Email address

### Name and address to which the Commission should send invoices for Academy participation:

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Name

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Position title

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Institution name

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Office address

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City, State, Zip

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Email address

***Academy for Student Persistence and Completion***

Before emailing the *Academy Application* to [academy@hlcommission.org](mailto:academy@hlcommission.org), make certain it has been reviewed and approved by the institution's CEO. See Affirmation page.

## Academy Application Affirmation

I affirm that the application emailed to [academy@hlcommission.org](mailto:academy@hlcommission.org) presents the institution accurately, and that the institution agrees, if admitted, to commit to meaningful and productive participation in the Academy for Student Persistence and Completion.

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Signature of Institutional CEO

Date

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Printed/Typed Name and Title

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Institution name

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Institution Address

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Institution City, State, Zip

Include the affirmation in the electronic delivery of the application or fax it to the Commission, attention Academy: (312) 263-7462.

## Criteria for Selection to the Academy

The following selection criteria are effective for institutions applying for the Academy in 2014-15.

### Evidence of Need and Benefit

- ◆ Need prompted by current opportunities, challenges, or barriers in student persistence and completion
- ◆ Need prompted by institutional goals or strategic priorities
- ◆ Benefit by integrating institutional goals or strategic priorities with accreditation efforts
- ◆ Other needs that can be met through Academy participation

### Commitment and Focus

- ◆ Clear and succinct statements of needs and goals
- ◆ Reasonable and realistic goals appropriate to the institution's history and to participation in the Academy
- ◆ Expectations, commitment level, and desired results appropriate to the purposes and intent of the Academy
- ◆ Senior leadership commitment for the full cycle, and for genuine effort and participation
- ◆ Assurance that key people and groups will be involved to maximize the benefits of the Academy
- ◆ Assurance of effective team membership for Academy activities (CAO and appropriate cross-representation of faculty, administrators, and others from across the institution as appropriate; students may be involved)

### Potential Impact

- ◆ Clear expectations for what will be gained via the Academy, particularly the anticipated impact on student persistence and completion
- ◆ Evidence that Academy participation is significant and challenging to the institution and will result in broad, meaningful impact on student persistence and completion

### Cohort Mix

- ◆ Balance of institutional types making up the cohort entering the Academy
- ◆ Cross-section or mix of institutions that best promotes inter-institutional learning