

OSU – Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Accreditation Resource Guide

HLC Peer Reviewers will visit the OSU-Stillwater, Tulsa, and CHS campuses on Monday, April 20th, and Tuesday, April 21st, 2026.

OSU demonstrates that it meets HLC accreditation standards by providing an assurance argument and associated evidence. To support the assurance argument, OSU identified documents and evidence of activities from across the university to show how we fulfill each criterion below. A team of OSU faculty, staff, and administrators who were well situated to provide information regarding OSU's processes and procedures compiled the evidence used in our argument. The HLC team is now thoroughly reviewing the argument and evidence to evaluate OSU's reaffirmation of accreditation. Below are the specific criteria on which the peer-review team will evaluate OSU to determine the university's accreditation status.

HLC Criteria

Criterion 1: Mission

The core components of this criterion focus on the overarching use of the mission by all facets of the institution; the institution's commitment to good of the public; and opportunities that the institution provides to aid with civil engagement in our multicultural and connected world.

1.A. Mission Alignment

The institution's educational programs, enrollment profile and scope of operations align with its publicly articulated mission.

1.B. Mission and Public Good

The institution's operation of the academic enterprise demonstrates its commitment to serving the public good.

1.C. Mission and Diversity of Society

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Criterion 2: Integrity – Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The core components of this criterion focus on the implementation and transparency of the institution's policies and procedures; the integrity of the institution's governing board and its associated actions; the guarantee of academic freedom and freedom of expression; and the ethical maintenance of funding, research, and academic endeavors.

2.A. Integrity

Actions taken by the institution's governing board, administration, faculty and staff demonstrate adherence to established policies and procedures.

2.B. Transparency

The institution presents itself accurately and completely to students and the public with respect to its educational programs and any claims it makes related to the educational experience.

2.C. Board Governance

In discharging its fiduciary duties, the institution's governing board is free from undue external influence and empowered to act in the best interests of the institution, including the students it serves.

2.D. Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression

The institution supports academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of knowledge as integral to high-quality teaching, learning and research.

2.E. Knowledge Acquisition, Discovery and Application

The institution adheres to policies and procedures that ensure responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge.

Criterion 3: Teaching and Learning for Student Success

The core components of this criterion focus on the rigor and content of academic offerings (including general education courses); the qualifications and sustainability of staff and faculty to support said academic offerings; and the provision of resources to support student learning (both academic and cocurricular).

3.A. Educational Programs

The institution maintains learning goals and outcomes that reflect a level of rigor commensurate with college-level work, including by program level and the content of each of its educational programs.

3.B. Exercise of Intellectual Inquiry

The institution's educational programs engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in practicing modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

3.C. Sufficiency of Faculty and Staff

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

3.D. Support for Student Learning and Resources for Teaching

The institution provides student support services that address the needs of its student populations, as well as the teaching resources and infrastructure necessary for student success.

3.E. Assessment of Student Learning

The institution improves the quality of educational programs based on its assessment of student learning.

3.F. Program Review

The institution improves its curriculum based on periodic program review.

3.G. Student Success Outcomes

The institution's student success outcomes demonstrate continuous improvement, taking into account the student populations it serves and benchmarks that reference peer institutions.

Criterion 4: Sustainability – Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The core components of this criterion focus on the assessment and ongoing improvement of academic programs through the assessment of student learning. This takes place on the program level through student learning outcomes assessment and programmatic improvements as well as institutionally through educational improvement plans regarding student retention, persistence, and completion of programs.

4.A. Effective Administrative Structures

The institution's administrative structures are effective and facilitate collaborative processes such as shared governance; data-informed decision making; and engagement with internal and external constituencies as appropriate.

4.B. Resource Base and Sustainability

The institution's financial and personnel resources effectively support its current operations. The institution's financial management balances short-term needs with long-term commitments and ensures its ongoing sustainability.

4.C. Planning for Quality Improvement

The institution engages in systematic strategic planning for quality improvement. It relies on data, integrating its insights from enrollment forecasts, financial capacity, student learning assessment, institutional operations and the external environment.

Open Forum Questions

Below are some possible questions that could be asked at the Open Forums that will take place on April 20th. For more information about these forum dates and times, and to RSVP, please visit: <https://academicaffairs.okstate.edu/accreditation/open-forums-invitation>

Criterion 1 Example Questions

Mission and Public

1. How do you see OSU's land-grant mission reflected in your experience as a student, faculty member, or staff member?
2. For faculty and staff: How does the university's mission influence your teaching, advising, research or daily work? Do you see the mission reflected in your day-to-day activities?
3. For students: In what ways has your experience at OSU prepared you to contribute to your community or profession when you graduate?
4. How well do OSU's academic programs and initiatives reflect the university's commitment to serving Oklahoma and the public good?
5. What opportunities do students have to engage in service, outreach, or community partnerships through their programs?

Criterion 2 Example Questions

Integrity, Policies, and Transparency

6. Have you found university policies and resources easy to access and understand?
7. How effectively does the university communicate important policies or changes to students, faculty, and staff?
8. Do you feel the university operates in a transparent and trustworthy way? Why or why not?

9. Do you feel comfortable raising concerns or asking questions about policies, procedures, or institutional decisions?

Criterion 3 Example Questions

Teaching, Learning, and Student Success

1. How would you describe the overall quality of teaching and learning at OSU?
2. For students: What experiences—such as internships, research, or study abroad—have had the greatest impact on your learning?
3. What academic resources or support services have been most helpful in supporting student success?
4. How well do advising, course availability, and program requirements support students in progressing toward graduation?
5. For faculty: How are assessment results or program review findings used to improve courses or programs?
6. How involved are you in assessment, and how do you find it useful to inform changes that have an impact on your teaching experience?
7. How accessible are opportunities for undergraduate or graduate students to participate in research or experiential learning?

Criterion 4 Example Questions

Institutional Effectiveness and Resources

1. How well do you think OSU listens to feedback from students, faculty, and staff when making decisions?
2. Do you feel that the university provides the facilities, technology, and resources needed to support teaching, learning, and research?
3. How effectively does the university use data or feedback to improve programs, services, or student support?
4. In your experience, what is one thing OSU does particularly well in supporting students or employees?
5. What is one area where OSU could improve to better support learning, teaching, or campus life?