

# Academy for Assessment of Student Learning

## Application Packet

This packet provides the materials needed for an institution to file an application to the Commission's Academy for Assessment of Student Learning. Included in this packet are:

- the Overview of the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning, which includes a set of understandings, benefits, and expectations for participating institutions and the Commission, as well as the current price structure for participation;
- Instructions for the Academy Application;
- the 2010-11 Academy Application;
- Institutional Contact Information form;
- the Academy Application Affirmation, which requires the CEO's signature; and
- the Criteria for Selection to the Academy.

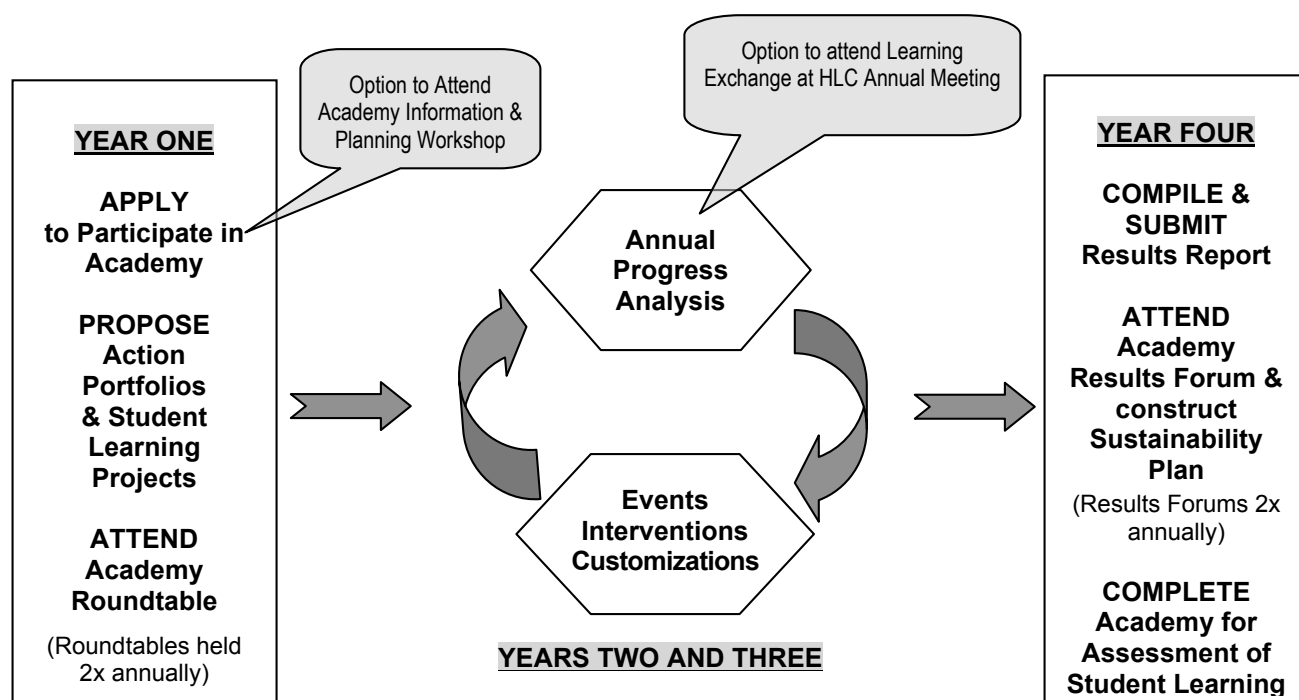
### Questions and More Information

Kim Davis, Academy Process Administrator, [kdavis@hlcommission.org](mailto:kdavis@hlcommission.org), (312) 263-0456 x117 can respond to general questions about the Academy, the admissions timetable, and application materials. For specific curricular or program questions, contact Lynn Priddy, Vice President for Accreditation Services, [lpriddy@hlcommission.org](mailto:lpriddy@hlcommission.org), (312) 263-0456 x129.

## Overview of the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning

The HLC Academy for Assessment of Student Learning offers member institutions a four-year sequence of events and interactions that focus on accelerating and advancing the assessment and improvement of student learning and building institution-wide commitment to these efforts. The Academy is designed for institutions that are committed to assessing and improving student learning, are working on effective implementation, and yet continue to confront challenges and barriers to establishing a supportive culture.

When planned and conducted comprehensively and carefully by the institution, participation in the Academy can produce evidence for the Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components in upcoming accreditation evaluations and can serve in place of mandated progress reports, monitoring reports and focused visits on assessment of student learning (PEAQ) or in place of one or more action projects (AQIP).



### Year 1: Apply, Propose Action Portfolios, and Attend Academy Roundtable

An institution joins the Academy, proposes projects related to assessing and improving student learning that comprise their **Action Portfolio** and sends a team to the three-day **Academy Roundtable**. At the Roundtable, institutions critique and improve their own and other institutions' action projects in consultation with Academy mentors and Commission staff.

### Years 2 & 3: Complete Biannual Progress Analyses & Participate in *optional* Programs

Institutions implement their action portfolios and receive mentoring, critique, and validation through **Biannual Progress Analyses** and participate in the **Electronic Network**, which serves as a

gathering place for resources and meetings throughout the Academy. Institutions may choose to participate in the annual **Academy Learning Exchange and Showcase** at the Annual Meeting.

#### **Year 4: Complete Results Report. Participate in Results Forum, Complete Academy**

Each institution writes a brief **Results Report** and sends a team to the two-day **Academy Results Forum** to showcase accomplishments, to compare and share good practices and to define post-Academy strategies. Each institution receives a **Results Response** from its reviewers. Through the four years, the Academy will compile **Publications** that showcase accomplishments and inventory good practices.

### **Academy Features and Benefits for Institutions**

<b>Academy Features</b>	<b>Academy Benefits</b>
Four-year sequence of events, interactions, and analyses focused on improving student learning	Support and achieved results that impact and improve student learning
Forums for institutional teams to receive consultation from mentors, receive & provide feedback, network, and share good practice	Increased institutional awareness of and commitment to assessing and improving student learning
Web-based library of Action Portfolios (expected outcomes, assessment strategies and models, instruments, and results), progress analyses, and mentor and peer feedback	Opportunity to compile, share, and compare good practices (including learning outcomes, assessment models, instruments, and results) for assessing and improving student learning
Analysis, critique, and feedback on project design, progress, and other components of Action Portfolios	Documented evidence for accreditation evaluations and follow-up monitoring
Forums for documenting results and impact and sustaining efforts to improve student learning	Replace Commission-mandated follow-up on assessment
Access and reduced pricing to other services for assessing and improving student learning	Collaborative relationship with the Commission in building institutional commitments to improving student learning

## Examples of Academy Action Portfolio Topics

<b>Systemic, Comprehensive Processes</b> Establishing consistency and stability within current assessment practices across the entire institution; a systemic approach and well-established processes.	<b>Using Assessment data</b> Utilizing assessment data to improve curricula, teaching and learning environments, and inform institutional processes and decision-making structures.
<b>General Education/Core Curricula</b> Assessing and improving general education/core curriculum or continued expansion and improvement of these efforts.	<b>Shared Responsibility</b> Improving ownership, engagement, and buy-in of faculty, administrators, staff, and students in defining, assessing, and improving student learning.
<b>Program/Departmental Review</b> Improve program and departmental level evaluation efforts through the use of learning and assessment evidence within Academic and non-Academic (e.g., Co-curricular) units.	<b>Measures, Tools, and Performance Criteria</b> Identifying and/or developing effective measures, tools, instruments, and approaches--as well as performance standards--to gather meaningful and effective data.
<b>Communicating Evidence/ Improving Transparency</b> System for communicating evidence of student learning across the organization; sharing assessment information with internal and external stakeholders.	<b>Resources &amp; Professional Development</b> Providing faculty, staff, and administrators resources (e.g., grants, technology, expertise) that help develop effective ways to assess and improve learning.

## Application Timeline and Pricing

Events and Dates for 2010-11	
Information and Planning Workshop Roundtable Event	October 14-15, 2010 November 17-19, 2009
Information and Planning Workshop Roundtable Event	February 14-15, 2011 March 2-4, 2010

Pricing Structure for 2010 Academy Institutions *	
<b>YEAR ONE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Academy Roundtable (multi-day event; five-person team included in pricing, additional team members may be added at additional costs)</li> <li>◆ Learning Exchange and Showcase at HLC Annual Meeting</li> <li>◆ Academy's Electronic Network with mentor and consulting services</li> <li>◆ Optional: Other events, programs, and customizations (additional fee)</li> </ul>	<b>\$7,500</b>

<b>YEAR TWO:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Bi-annual Progress Analyses (Peer &amp; Mentor Feedback and Consultation on Student Learning Projects)</li> <li>◆ Learning Exchange and Showcase at HLC Annual Meeting</li> <li>◆ Academy's Electronic Network with mentor and consulting services</li> <li>◆ Optional: Other events, programs, and customizations (additional fee)</li> </ul>	<b>\$4,500</b>
<b>YEAR THREE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Bi-annual Progress Analyses (Peer &amp; Mentor Feedback and Consultation on Student Learning Projects)</li> <li>◆ Learning Exchange and Showcase at HLC Annual Meeting</li> <li>◆ Academy's Electronic Network with mentor and consulting services</li> <li>◆ Optional: Other events, programs, and customizations (additional fee)</li> </ul>	<b>\$4,500</b>
<b>YEAR FOUR:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Results Forum (two-day event; five-person team included in pricing, additional team members may be added for additional cost)</li> <li>◆ Results Report &amp; Sustainability Plan (includes publications and certificates of accomplishment)</li> <li>◆ Learning Exchange and Showcase at HLC Annual Meeting</li> <li>◆ Academy's Electronic Network with mentor and consulting services</li> <li>◆ Optional: Other events, programs, and customizations (additional fee)</li> </ul>	<b>\$4,500</b>

\*Pricing does not include institutional expenses, including travel, lodging, and related costs.

## Instructions for the Academy Application

### Application Deadline

Academy applications for 2010-11 will be accepted beginning May 15, 2010, and will continue until both the fall 2010 and spring 2011 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.

### Application Questions

The **Academy Application** asks an institution to explain its current context regarding assessment of student learning and to define the goals and intended results for its participation in the Academy. The purpose of the application is (a) to clarify why an institution wishes to participate in the Academy, (b) to 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) to 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, an institution should take the opportunity to aim high, defining challenging goals and results it aspires to achieve.

**(Question 1) Recent Efforts.** This question requests the institution to evaluate its "assessment of student learning story." The response should provide succinct, honest evaluations of where the institution is in its assessment efforts, what has been accomplished, what persistent challenges or barriers exist, and what the immediate priorities are related to assessing and improving student learning.

**(Questions 2, 3, and 4) Needs and Benefits.** Question 2 asks an institution to identify the pressing needs and critical student learning questions it will address while in the Academy. These needs may also be reflected in responses to Question 3, which asks the institution to consider why participating in the Academy makes sense at the present time, what the internal and/or external motivation are, and how the Academy aligns with other institutional initiatives. **If an institution wishes to request that participation in the Academy serves in place of mandated Commission follow-up on assessment of student learning or serve as an AQIP action project(s),** this request should be stated upfront at the beginning of Question 3. In Question 4, the goals and intended results should be clearly stated and should be challenging but realistic.

**(Question 5) Commitment and Focus.** Question 5 asks for clear evidence that the institution has the presidential and academic leadership and commitment necessary for Academy participation, as

well as the capacity and support needed to achieve its intended goals. Further, the response should identify the institution's core team for Academy participation and discuss how key groups and people across the institution will be mobilized, as appropriate.

**(Questions 6 and 7) Potential Impact.** Finally, Questions 6 and 7 ask an institution to explain how its participation in the Academy will have an impact on student learning, educational quality, and institutional ability to assess and improve student learning. The response should define the broader influence and significant impact intended on student learning, teaching, and the educational enterprise.

## Selection Process

The Commission uses a two-step process based on Criteria for Selection for reviewing institutional applications for the Academy. Trained Admissions Panelists from member institutions serve in this process.

1. **Independent Review.** Admissions Panelist reviews each application independently and makes an initial recommendation.
2. **Consensus Review.** Commission staff facilitate a phone conference among the Admissions Panelists on the initial recommendations, provide input, and record the decision.

The Admission's Panel may decide that the institution be accepted to the Academy; that the institution be accepted to the Academy, but for a later date; or that the institution not be accepted to the Academy. The institution is notified of the selection results and next steps. **Formal admission into the Academy is postponed if accreditation decisions are pending.**

## Letter of Agreement

The institution signs a Letter of Agreement within 60 days of acceptance to the Academy. This letter is customized to reflect each institution's context, identifies understandings of participation, and addresses any expectations pertaining to the accrediting relationship. If the institution has been assigned Commission follow-up on assessment, the follow-up issues must be addressed through participation in and completion of the Academy. In addition, the letter outlines the Commission's commitments to the institution.

## 2010-11 Academy Application

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Name of Institution

City, State

Application Date

Preferred Point of Entry to the Academy:

\_\_\_\_\_ November 2010

\_\_\_\_\_ March 2011

Note: The Commission determines Academy entry point based on the Admissions Panel's recommendations and the process of constructing cohorts based on needs, goals, institutional types, mission, size, and other factors. **Formal admission into the Academy is postponed if accreditation decisions are pending.**

### Application Questions

#### ***Recent Efforts***

1. What is your "assessment story"? Evaluate your past and present efforts (include here things such as your accomplishments, issues, barriers, results, strategies).

#### ***Needs and Benefits***

2. What are the most pressing needs that you expect to be addressed via your participation?
3. Why is the Academy key to your success at this time?
4. What are your goals for the Academy participation? What do you think will be your focus during the Academy (e.g., projects, initiatives, activities, work)?

#### ***Commitment and Focus***

5. What evidence demonstrates your commitment to and capacity for assessment of student learning (include things such as evidence of presidential and academic commitment to full participation, plans for involving the people and groups to accomplish your goals, financial and other resource support, inclusion of the broader institutional community)?

#### ***Potential Impact***

6. What results do you want to achieve by the end of four years in the Academy? What is the potential for impact on the institution? On learning and teaching? On organizational culture?
7. How will your work in the Academy contribute to improvement of student learning at your institution?

## Institutional Contact Information

### Primary Contact Person for Academy Participation:

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Name

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Position Title

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Organization 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, Title

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Organization Name

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Office address

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City, State, Zip

### *2010-11 HLC Academy for Assessment of Student Learning*

Before you email your *Academy Application* to [academy@hlcommission.org](mailto:academy@hlcommission.org), make certain it has been reviewed and approved by your institution's CEO.

## Academy Application Affirmation

I affirm that the application emailed to [academy@hlcommission.org](mailto:academy@hlcommission.org) presents our institution accurately, and that we agree, if admitted, to commit to meaningful and productive participation in the four-year HLC Academy for Assessment of Student Learning.

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Signature of Organizational CEO

Date

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Printed/Typed Name and Title

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Name of Organization

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Address

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Address

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City, State of Organization, ZIP code

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 entering the Academy in 2010-2011.

### Evidence of Need & Benefit

- ◆ Need prompted by current efforts, challenges, or barriers in assessing student learning that are institutional priorities to address in the Academy
- ◆ Need resulting from institutional reflection following self-study (PEAQ) or systems appraisal (AQIP)
- ◆ Need prompted by Commission relationship (e.g., mandated Commission follow-up, and/or upcoming comprehensive visit (PEAQ) or reaffirmation of accreditation (AQIP)
- ◆ 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, four-year cycle, and for fruitful 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 assessment of student learning efforts
- ◆ Evidence that Academy participation is significant and challenging to the institution and will result in broad, meaningful impact on student learning and improved institutional effectiveness

### Cohort Mix

- ◆ Balance and diversity of the institutional cohort entering the Academy
- ◆ Cross-section or mix of institutions that best promotes interinstitutional learning

*The Commission retains the prerogative to make final decisions on institutions selected for participation in the Academy. **Formal admission into the Academy is postponed if an accreditation decision is pending.***