

Federal definition of a program

1. A legally authorized postsecondary program of organized instruction or study that:
 - i. Leads to an academic, professional, or vocational degree, or certificate, or other recognized educational credential, or is a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program, as described in 34 CFR part 668, subpart O; and
 - ii. May, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, utilize direct assessment of student learning, or recognize the direct assessment of student learning by others, if such assessment is consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program utilizing the results of the assessment and with the provisions of 34 CFR § 668.10.
2. HLC does not consider that an institution provides an educational program if the institution does not provide instruction itself (including a course of independent study) but merely gives credit for one or more of the following: Instruction provided by other institutions or schools; examinations or direct assessments provided by agencies or organizations; or other accomplishments such as “life experience.”

NEW Programs & Certificates

All new programs, certificates, and endorsements must be submitted for approval or notification to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). This also applies to the addition of new credentials with clustered curricula that are transcribed. Please contact Assessment & Accreditation during the initial planning stage to determine levels of approvals needed (state, programmatic accreditation, etc.) to launch the new credential and consideration of time needed to receive final approval.

- New degree programs: *Complete [Academic Degree Program Inquiry Form](#)
 - Degree programs are defined as any packaged set of courses that are transcribed:
 - Degrees
 - Majors
 - Minors
 - Concentrations
- New certificate or endorsement programs: *Complete [Certificate Program Screening Form](#)
 - Certificate and endorsement programs are defined as any packaged set of courses that are:

- Financial aid eligible and/or
- Six courses and more

*Forms need to be submitted by NLU's Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO)-contact the Assessment & Accreditation

Changes to Existing Degree Programs

The following changes will be tracked by the accreditation team and will be reported to HLC within 30 days of the program changes being implemented. The accreditation team will use existing processes in place including UCO; CIS; PCS and/or an Academic Alert or POI approvals. These changes will be tracked in the Program Change Tracker and can be accessed [here](#).

- Change in modality of an existing program/certificate/endorsement
- Development of an Advanced Pathway of an existing program/certificate/endorsement
 - Advanced pathways are those in which graduate courses are taken by undergrads to create an accelerated graduate pathway
- Addition of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) options to an existing program or general education courses
- 25% Change (at once or cumulative total of changes since last HLC reaffirmation) of an existing program/certificate/endorsement
 - Include in the 25% programmatic change calculation when there is a change in:
 - Total number of credit hours (increase or decrease) - count credits of course(s) toward overall credits in program [HLC approval is required when this change is 25% or more prior to implementing]
 - Course length - count credits of course(s) toward overall credits in program
 - A 25% programmatic change will also occur if 25% of the courses associated with the packaged curricula change. Programmatic change is based upon creation of a new UCO/CIS/PCS and/or Academic Alert or POI related to curriculum change.

Approvals must be in place before advertising or launching a new/changed program.

Type of Change	HLC Requirement	State Requirement Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Florida Commission of Independent Education (CIE)	Programmatic Accreditation Requirement *Please check accreditor requirements for specifics	NLU BOT Approval Required	Timeline to Approval from Submission
New certificate program - Certificate and endorsement programs are defined as any packaged set of courses that are: - Financial aid eligible (minimum 16 semester hours or minimum 24 quarter hours) and/or - Six courses and more	HLC APPROVAL through Certificate Screening Form	IBHE APPROVAL (only if offered in non-home regions) CIE APPROVAL (90 days)	YES	YES (certificate only)	30-90 days
New academic program - Degree programs are defined as any packaged set of courses that are transcribed: - Degrees - Majors - Minors - Concentrations	HLC NOTIFICATION through Academic Degree Program Inquiry Form	IBHE APPROVAL (only if offered in non-home regions) CIE APPROVAL (90 days)	YES	YES	30-90 days
Change in Modality of an existing program	HLC NOTIFICATION	CIE APPROVAL (90 days)	ISBE CAEP CACREP CSWE APA	NO	90 days

Development of an Advanced Pathway of an existing program/certificate/endorsement Advanced pathways are those in which graduate courses are taken by undergrads to create an accelerated graduate pathway	HLC NOTIFICATION			NO	
Addition of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) options to an existing program or general education courses	HLC NOTIFICATION			NO	
25% Aggregate Change of an existing program, certificate, or endorsement Change in credit hours (increase or decrease) Course length Creation of new UCO/CIS/PCS and/or Academic Alert or POI related to curriculum change.	HLC APPROVAL for change in credit hours HLC NOTIFICATION of all changes			NO	
Establishment of an additional location (50% or more of a <i>credential</i> [degree program, certificate, endorsement] offered or can be completed by a student at the location) See Offsite Locations for details	HLC APPROVAL	IBHE APPROVAL (only if offered in non-home regions) CIE APPROVAL			90 days
The initiation, modification or renewal of a contractual or other arrangement wherein an institution outsources some portion of its educational programs (including instruction, oversight of the curriculum, assurance of the consistency in the level and quality of instruction and in expectations of student performance and/or the establishment of the academic qualifications for instructional personnel) to any of the following parties: an unaccredited institution; an institution that is not accredited by an	HLC NOTIFICATION/ APPROVAL	N/A			30-90 days

accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education; or a corporation or other entity. See Partnerships Overview for details.					
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Meeting Month	NLU Board of Trustees (BOT)	HLC Board	IBHE Board	CIE Board
January				*
February		*		
March	*		*	*
April				
May				*
June	*	*	*	
July				*
August			*	
September	*		*	*
October				
November		*		
December	*		*	

Changes to Existing Programs - reported to other entities

- **CIE** - report changes to programs when there's more than 20% change (we have always used this as 20% or greater change all at once)
- **IBHE** - "Change Request" means a written proposal to modify an approved certificate or degree program. A modification is a change to any of the following: certificate offered; degrees offered; certificate or degree title or designation; Classification of Instruction Programs code (CIP code); program status; and the admission, retention or graduation requirements of approved programs. This only applies to non-home regions (Lisle mostly)
- **ISBE** - approves all programs leading to licensure and all endorsements. Changes to admissions criteria, exit criteria or program coursework must be submitted to ISBE using a program change form. Changes in required standards

alignment must also be submitted to ISBE. ISBE also approves all new programs leading to licensure and all new endorsements.

- **IACBE** - identify only program-level changes, e.g., changes in program names, program curricula, etc.
- **CACREP - Types of Substantive Change**

Substantive changes include, but are not limited to the following:

1. changes in management, oversight, and/or ownership of the program, including merging with another program or university;
2. changes in geographical setting, including moving a program to a new location, or establishment of a branch campus or a new off-campus cohort program;
3. adding or modifying courses that represent a significant departure in terms of either the content or method of delivery from those that were offered at the last review, such as online courses (here a substantive change is operationally defined as 25% or more of the credit hours of the accredited curriculum); and
4. substantial turnover of core faculty, operationally defined as 51% or more within an academic year.

The decision as to whether a change is substantive is a judgment specific to an individual program, since the change must be considered in the context of the whole program and institution. CACREP staff members are authorized to decide if a substantive change report is required.

- **CSWE**
- **CAEP** - The CAEP annual report requires we notify CAEP of the following changes when submit the annual reports in April:

(The statements below apply to programs that lead to endorsements or licensure)

Section 3. Substantive Changes

Have any of the following substantive changes occurred at your educator preparation provider or institution/organization during the 2019-2020 academic year?

- 3.1 Changes in the established mission or objectives of the institution/organization or the EPP.
 - 3.2 Any change in the legal status, form of control, or ownership of the EPP.
 - 3.3 The addition of programs of study at a degree or credential level different from those that were offered when most recently accredited.
 - 3.4 The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, in terms of either content or delivery, from those that were offered when most recently accredited.
 - 3.5 A contract with other providers for direct instructional services, including any teach-out agreements. Any change that means the EPP no longer satisfies accreditation standards or requirements:
 - 3.6 Change in regional accreditation status
 - 3.7 Change in state program approval
- **APA** - According to the APA website (Report program changes in the CoA Portal (apa.org)) , we are required to complete a Substantive Change report based upon the following:
 - Accredited programs must inform CoA in a timely manner of changes that could alter the program's quality. Such updates include changes in policies/procedures, administrative structure, faculty resources, supervision resources, areas of emphasis or tracks/rotations.
 - The specific Substantive Change categories listed within the portal include the following ([Substantive change at a glance \(apa.org\)](#)):
 - Administrative Structure
 - Areas of Emphases
 - Consortia (Structure, Design)
 - Doctoral substantive area
 - Doctoral Degree offered
 - Postdoctoral practice area
 - Faculty/resources
 - Model
 - Policies/Procedures
 - Supervision/resources

- Tracks/rotations (New, additional, eliminated)
 - Training sites (new, additional, eliminated)
 - other
- **ACF - NONE**