



**Higher Learning Commission**  
A commission of the North Central Association

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December 18, 2013

Dr. Christopher Duree  
Chancellor  
Iowa Valley Community College District  
3700 S. Center Street  
Marshalltown, IA 50158

Dear President Duree:

Attached is the report of the team that conducted Iowa Valley Community College District's Quality Checkup site visit. In addition to communicating the team's evaluation of your compliance with the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation and the Commission's Federal Compliance Program, the report captures the team's assessment of your use of the feedback from your last Systems Appraisal and your overall commitment to continuous improvement.

A copy of the report will be read and analyzed by the AQIP Panel that reviews institutions for Reaffirmation of Accreditation at the time your review is scheduled.

Please acknowledge receipt of this report within the next two weeks, and provide us with any comments you wish to make about it. Your response will become a part of the institution's permanent record.

Sincerely,

Mary L. Green  
Process Administrator, AQIP Accreditation Services

# QUALITY CHECKUP REPORT

## **Iowa Valley Community College District**

Marshalltown, Iowa  
November 13-15, 2013

**The Higher Learning Commission**  
A Commission of the North Central Association

### QUALITY CHECKUP TEAM MEMBERS:

**Dr. Christine M. Manion**  
Director, Strategic Planning and Accreditation  
Milwaukee Area Technical College

**Dr. Joseph E. Collins**  
Executive Vice President  
College of DuPage

## **Background on Quality Checkups conducted by the Academic Quality Improvement Program**

The Higher Learning Commission's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) conducts Quality Checkup site visits to each institution during the fifth or sixth year in every seven-year cycle of AQIP participation. These visits are conducted by trained AQIP Reviewers to determine whether the institution continues to meet The Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, and whether it is using quality management principles and building a culture of continuous improvement as participation in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) requires. The goals of an AQIP Quality Checkup are to:

1. Affirm the accuracy of the organization's Systems Portfolio and verify information included in the portfolio that the last Systems Appraisal has identified as needing clarification or verification (System Portfolio Clarification and Verification), including review of distance delivery and distributed education if the institution is so engaged.
2. Review with organizational leaders actions taken to capitalize on the strategic issues and opportunities for improvement identified by the last Systems Appraisal (Systems Appraisal Follow Up);
3. Alert the organization to areas that need its attention prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation, and reassure it concerning areas that have been covered adequately (Accreditation Issues Follow Up);
4. Verify federal compliance issues such as default rates, complaints, USDE interactions and program reviews, etc. (Federal Compliance Review); and
5. Assure continuing organizational quality improvement commitment through presentations, meetings, or sessions that clarify AQIP and Commission accreditation work (Organizational Quality Commitment).

The AQIP peer reviewers trained for this role prepare for the visit by reviewing relevant organizational and AQIP file materials, particularly the organization's last *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* and the Commission's internal *Organizational Profile*, which summarizes information reported by the institution in its *Annual Institutional Data Update*. The Quality Summary Report provided to AQIP by the institution is also shared with the evaluators. Copies of the Quality Checkup Report are provided to the institution's CEO and AQIP liaison. The Commission retains a copy in the institution's permanent file, and will be part of the materials reviewed by the AQIP Review Panel during Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

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**Clarification and verification of contents of the institution's *Systems Portfolio***

Prior to the visit, team members reviewed the following documents:

- Iowa Recognition for Performance Excellence Application (IRPE);
- Baldrige Option Summary with HLC Criteria;
- IRPE Feedback Report;
- AQIP Systems Appraisal (Baldrige-Option);
- Federal Compliance Packet.

During the visit, the team met with the Administrative Leadership Team (ALT) and received an overview of Iowa Valley Community College District's (IVCCD) quality journey since they received their last Systems Appraisal in 2009. The team also learned about their participation with the Iowa Recognition for Performance Excellence (IRPE). Since new leadership took over in 2009-10, the district's focus on quality and improvement processes has undergone a significant overhaul. As part of their Quality Journey, most of their leadership team, and a number of their management staff, have attended the IRPE examiner training. In addition, the Plan-Do-Check-Act improvement cycle is now the standard way of doing things at the district, with training provided for all employees. This past year, they underwent a new strategic planning process and purchased strategic planning software that is currently being populated with objectives and metrics. Although the Baldrige-Option will no longer be a part of their accreditation cycle, IVCCD intends on continuing with the Baldrige model because it is considered a value-added process and not just something to "check off" for accreditation.

The team reviewed the district's plans to address specific opportunities as noted in their Baldrige feedback. Their new planning software should help them align their improvement projects (AQIP Quality Action Plans—QAPs—and AQIP Strategic Action Projects—ASAPs) with their strategic objectives. Moving forward, they are creating Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) directly linked to their new strategic agenda and focusing their measurements of key processes as well.

In addition to meeting with the ALT and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC), which lead their quality improvement efforts, the team also sat down with two QAP teams—for their Retention Project and their Pathway Project. Also, meetings were held with members of their staff, faculty, and students. Throughout the visit, members of the IVCCD community participated fully and provided insight into the district's operations, processes, and plans. Team members observed frequent examples of high commitment to IVCCD's mission, values, and programs on the part of all stakeholders.

Documentation and performance related information were acceptable and are in compliance with

Commission and AQIP expectations.

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with the Commission's standards and AQIP's expectations.

### **Review of the organization's quality assurance oversight of its distance education activities.**

The Team verified that IVCCD has a comprehensive approach to offering a number of online courses that meet the HLC standards; 75 courses are offered in an online format. IVCCD recently began to use Quality Matters as a certifying agency to ensure that its online courses are of the appropriate quality. Six courses have gone through the Quality Matters certification process, with another six scheduled for this year. The District has taken the approach that all courses will be expected to meet the Quality Matters criteria, even though they may not put all courses through the certification process. In addition to the focus on ensuring the quality of its courses, some of the faculty have also gone through the Quality Matters course for online instructors. The online course program is overseen by the respective Deans of Academic Affairs at the two campuses, MCC and ECC.

The Team examined a sampling of syllabi from ten courses, comparing the face-to-face syllabus with the online syllabus. It is the opinion of the Team that the courses offered online are of the same quality as the face-to-face courses. The District does recognize that online success rates are not as high as face-to-face rates, with a higher number of withdrawals affecting the overall success rate. This is an area in which IVCCD may benefit from additional research and study.

In the team's judgment, the institution has presented satisfactory evidence that its distance education activities are acceptable and do comply with the Commission's standards and expectations.

### **Review of the organization's quality assurance and oversight of distributed education (multiple campuses)**

The District operates two autonomous Colleges: Marshalltown Community College and Ellsworth Community College. For the purpose of this review, MCC was considered the main campus, while ECC was considered an additional campus. The review of ECC can be found in Appendix B: Multi-Campus Visit.

In addition to MCC and ECC, the District also operates a satellite facility in Grinnell. This location consists of about 40,000 sq. ft. of instructional and office space. Five full-time faculty are located here,

with another five staff members. A number of part-time employees are also employed at this location. The Grinnell location serves about 400 students, with about 90 course sections offered each term. Three CTE programs are offered at Grinnell: Automotive Technology, Gunsmithing Technology, and Paralegal. Students are able to obtain the entire AAS degree in these programs without leaving the campus. The District has taken great effort to ensure that the full complement of student support services is available to students at this location, served by the campus at MCC.

In the team’s judgment, the institution has presented satisfactory evidence that its distributed education activities (operation of multiple campuses) are acceptable and comply with Commission’s standards and expectations.

**Review of specific accreditation issues identified by the institution’s last Systems Appraisal**

In the team’s judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution’s approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP’s expectations. No accreditation issues were identified.

**Screening of Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components**

The following section identifies any areas in the judgment of the Quality Checkup Team where the institution either has not provided sufficient evidence that it currently meets the Commission’s *Criteria for Accreditation* (and the core components therein) or that it may face difficulty in meeting the *Criteria* and core components in the future. Identification of any such deficiencies as part of the Quality Checkup affords the institution the opportunity to remedy the problem prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation. Items judged to be “Adequate but could be improved” or “Unclear or incomplete” during the Checkup Visit screening will not require Commission follow-up in the form of written reports or focused visits. However, Commission follow-up will occur if the issues remain apparent at the point of reaffirmation of accreditation.

Criterion 1: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	1A	1B	1C	1D	
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X	X	
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 2: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X	X	X
Adequate but could be improved.					

Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 3: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	3A	3B	3C	3D	3E
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X	X	X
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 4: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	4A	4B	4C		
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X		
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					
Criterion 5: Evidence found in the Systems Portfolio	Core Component				
	5A	5B	5C	5D	
Strong, clear, and well-presented.	X	X	X	X	
Adequate but could be improved.					
Unclear or incomplete.					

In the team’s judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution’s approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP’s expectations.

**Review of the institution’s approach to capitalizing on recommendations identified by its last Systems Appraisal in the Strategic Issues Analysis.**

In the team’s judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution’s approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP’s expectations. IVCCD used the state quality award (Baldrige Option) approach in lieu of the standard Systems Appraisal. The feedback report was received in December of 2012. In the year since IVCCD received the report, much has been accomplished in addressing the Opportunities for Improvement (OFI’s) contained in the report. First and foremost was a strategic planning event held in May, which charted a plan to tackle the OFI’s contained in the report. A key development is the acquisition of strategic planning software that uses the Hoshin approach. Many of the OFI’s have been imbedded in this new software tool. This is an excellent method for institutionalizing the OFI’s identified in the Baldrige Option. IVCCD has also made strides in addressing other OFI’s identified in the feedback report, which include: definition of core competencies; systematically using data sources in fact-based decision-making; and aligning organizational processes with the strategic agenda.

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**Review of organizational commitment to continuing systematic quality improvement**

Throughout the visit, the IVCCD leadership team demonstrated their commitment to their quality improvement journey in a number of ways, including their new strategic planning process, IRPE training, restructuring of their committees, and changes in how they create and use their improvement project charters. Although not all the faculty and staff are fluent in “Baldrige-ese,” they have been trained and continue to implement the PDCA improvement cycle in many of their daily processes. Most were very aware of the concerns raised in the 2009 Systems Appraisal and all seem to understand the importance of turning things around in the past few years. The IVCCD community displays a genuine excitement and confidence in their current leadership and its ability to push the school from good to great. It is generally acknowledged that many of the AQIP improvement concepts did not take hold until the leadership team decided to apply for the Baldrige-Option, and this accomplishment has pushed them to the next level of their quality journey.

In the team’s judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution’s approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP’s expectations.

**Other AQIP Considerations or Concerns**

None noted.

## Federal Compliance Worksheet for Evaluation Teams

Effective for visits beginning January 1, 2013

### Evaluation of Federal Compliance Components

The team reviews each item identified in the Federal Compliance Guide and documents its findings in the appropriate spaces below. Generally, if the team finds in the course of this review that there are substantive issues related to the institution's ability to fulfill the Criteria for Accreditation, such issues should be raised in appropriate sections of the Assurance Section of the Team Report or highlighted as such in the appropriate AQIP Quality Checkup Report.

This worksheet outlines the information the team should review in relation to the federal requirements and provides spaces for the team's conclusions in relation to each requirement. The team should refer to the Federal Compliance Guide for Institutions and Evaluation Teams in completing this worksheet. The Guide identifies applicable Commission policies and an explanation of each requirement. **The worksheet becomes an appendix to the team's report.**

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### Assignment of Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

*Address this requirement by completing the "Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Assignment of Credit Hours and on Clock Hours" in the Appendix at the end of this document.*

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### Institutional Records of Student Complaints

*The institution has documented a process in place for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints as evidenced by the data on student complaints since the last comprehensive evaluation.*

1. Review the process that the institution uses to manage complaints as well as the history of complaints received and processed with a particular focus in that history on the past three or four years.
2. Determine whether the institution has a process to review and resolve complaints in a timely manner.
3. Verify that the evidence shows that the institution can, and does, follow this process and that it is able to integrate any relevant findings from this process into its review and planning processes.
4. Advise the institution of any improvements that might be appropriate.
5. Consider whether the record of student complaints indicates any pattern of complaints or otherwise raises concerns about the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation or Assumed Practices.

6. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

- ( X ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
- ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
- ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
- ( ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: None.

Additional monitoring, if any: None.

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## Publication of Transfer Policies

*The institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.*

1. Review the institution's transfer policies.
2. Review any articulation agreements the institution has in place, including articulation agreements at the institution level and program-specific articulation agreements.
3. Consider where the institution discloses these policies (e.g., in its catalog, on its web site) and how easily current and prospective students can access that information.

Determine whether the disclosed information clearly explains the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions and any articulation arrangements the institution has with other institutions. Note whether the institution appropriately lists its articulation agreements with other institutions on its website or elsewhere. The information the institution provides should include any program-specific articulation agreements in place and should clearly identify program-specific articulation agreements as such. Also, the information the institution provides should include whether the articulation agreement anticipates that the institution under Commission review: 1) accepts credit from the other institution(s) in the articulation agreement; 2) sends credits to the other institution(s) in the articulation agreements that it accepts; or 3) both offers and accepts credits with the other institution(s).

4. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:

- ( X ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

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- ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
  - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
  - ( ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: None.

Additional monitoring, if any: None.

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### **Practices for Verification of Student Identity**

*The institution has demonstrated that it verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education and appropriately discloses additional fees related to verification to students and to protect their privacy.*

1. Determine how the institution verifies that the student who enrolls in a course is the same student who submits assignments, takes exams, and earns a final grade. The team should ensure that the institution's approach respects student privacy.
2. Check that any fees related to verification and not included in tuition are explained to the students prior to enrollment in distance courses (e.g., a proctoring fee paid by students on the day of the proctored exam).
3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:
  - (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
  - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
  - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
  - ( ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: None.

Additional monitoring, if any: None.

## **Title IV Program Responsibilities**

*The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program.*

**This requirement has several components the institution and team must address:**

- **General Program Requirements.** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*
- **Financial Responsibility Requirements.** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion Five if an institution has significant issues with financial responsibility as demonstrated through ratios that are below acceptable levels or other financial responsibility findings by its auditor.)*

**Default Rates.** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about its three year default rate. It has a responsible program to work with students to minimize default rates. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. Note for 2012 and thereafter institutions and teams should be using the three-year default rate based on revised default rate data published by the Department in September 2012; if the institution does not provide the default rate for three years leading up to the comprehensive evaluation visit, the team should contact Commission staff.*

- **Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures.** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.*
- **Student Right to Know.** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The disclosures are accurate and provide appropriate information to students. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion One if the team determines that disclosures are not accurate or appropriate.)*
- **Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance.** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The institution has demonstrated that the policies and practices meet state or federal requirements and that the institution is appropriately applying these policies and practices to students. In most cases, teams should verify that these policies exist and are available to students, typically in the course catalog or student handbook. Note that the Commission does not necessarily require that the institution take attendance but does*

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*anticipate that institutional attendance policies will provide information to students about attendance at the institution.*

- ***Contractual Relationships.*** *The institution has presented a list of its contractual relationships related to its academic program and evidence of its compliance with Commission policies requiring notification or approval for contractual relationships (If the team learns that the institution has a contractual relationship that may require Commission approval and has not received Commission approval the team must require that the institution complete and file the change request form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Contractual Change Application on the Commission's web site for more information.)*
  
  - ***Consortial Relationships.*** *The institution has presented a list of its consortial relationships related to its academic program and evidence of its compliance with Commission policies requiring notification or approval for consortial relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a consortial relationship that may require Commission approval and has not received Commission approval the team must require that the institution complete and file the form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Consortial Change Application on the Commission's web site for more information.)*
1. Review all of the information that the institution discloses having to do with its Title IV program responsibilities.
  2. Determine whether the Department has raised any issues related to the institution's compliance or whether the institution's auditor in the A-133 has raised any issues about the institution's compliance as well as look to see how carefully and effectively the institution handles its Title IV responsibilities.
  3. If an institution has been cited or is not handling these responsibilities effectively, indicate that finding within the federal compliance portion of the team report and whether the institution appears to be moving forward with corrective action that the Department has determined to be appropriate.
  4. If issues have been raised with the institution's compliance, decide whether these issues relate to the institution's ability to satisfy the Criteria for Accreditation, particularly with regard to whether its disclosures to students are candid and complete and demonstrate appropriate integrity (*Core Component 2.A and 2.B*).
  5. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:
    - (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
    - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
    - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
    - ( ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: None.

Additional monitoring, if any: None.

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## Required Information for Students and the Public

1. Verify that the institution publishes fair, accurate, and complete information on the following topics: the calendar, grading, admissions, academic program requirements, tuition and fees, and refund policies.
  
2. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:
  - (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
  - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
  - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
  - ( ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: None.

Additional monitoring, if any: None.

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## Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information

*The institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with the Commission and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.*

1. Review the institution's disclosure about its accreditation status with the Commission to determine whether the information it provides is accurate and complete, appropriately formatted and contains the Commission's web address.
2. Review institutional disclosures about its relationship with other accrediting agencies for accuracy and for appropriate consumer information, particularly regarding the link between specialized/professional accreditation and the licensure necessary for employment in many professional or specialized areas.

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3. Review the institution's catalog, brochures, recruiting materials, and information provided by the institution's advisors or counselors to determine whether the institution provides accurate information to current and prospective students about its accreditation, placement or licensure, program requirements, etc.
  4. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:
    - ( X ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
    - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
    - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
    - ( ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: None.

Additional monitoring, if any: None.

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## Review of Student Outcome Data

1. Review the student outcome data the institution collects to determine whether it is appropriate and sufficient based on the kinds of academic programs it offers and the students it serves.
2. Determine whether the institution uses this information effectively to make decisions about academic programs and requirements and to determine its effectiveness in achieving its educational objectives.
3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:
  - (X) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
  - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
  - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
  - ( ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: None.

Additional monitoring, if any: None.

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## Standing with State and Other Accrediting Agencies

*The institution has documented that it discloses accurately to the public and the Commission its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditor and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence.*

***Important note: If the team is recommending initial or continued status, and the institution is now or has been in the past five years under sanction or show-cause with, or has received an adverse action (i.e., withdrawal, suspension, denial, or termination) from, any other federally recognized specialized or institutional accreditor or a state entity, then the team must explain the sanction or adverse action of the other agency in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report and provide its rationale for recommending Commission status in light of this action. In addition, the team must contact the staff liaison immediately if it learns that the institution is at risk of losing its degree authorization or lacks such authorization in any state in which the institution meets state presence requirements.***

1. Review the information, particularly any information that indicates the institution is under sanction or show-cause or has had its status with any agency suspended, revoked, or terminated, as well as the reasons for such actions.
2. Determine whether this information provides any indication about the institution's capacity to meet the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. Should the team learn that the institution is at risk of losing, or has lost, its degree or program authorization in any state in which it meets state presence requirements, it should contact the Commission staff liaison immediately.
3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:
  - (X ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
  - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
  - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
  - ( ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: None.

Additional monitoring, if any: None.

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## Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment

*The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comments. The team has evaluated any comments received and completed any necessary follow-up on issues raised in these comments. **Note that if the team has determined that any issues raised by third-party comment relate to the team's review of the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, it must discuss this information and its analysis in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report.***

1. Review information about the public disclosure of the upcoming visit, including sample announcements, to determine whether the institution made an appropriate and timely effort to notify the public and seek comments.
2. Evaluate the comments to determine whether the team needs to follow-up on any issues through its interviews and review of documentation during the visit process.
3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team's conclusions:
  - ( X ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.
  - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.
  - ( ) The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.
  - ( ) The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: None.

Additional monitoring, if any: None.

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## Institutional Materials Related to Federal Compliance Reviewed by the Team

Provide a list of materials reviewed here: College Website [www.iavalley.edu](http://www.iavalley.edu)  
MCC Student Handbook; ECC Student Handbook; Student Right to Know Information; College Catalogs; Worksheet for Use by Institutions on the Assignment of Credit Hours and on Clock Hours; Transcript\_Evaluation\_Process.doc; IVCCD Independent Auditors Reports FY11; HLC Institutional Update 2012-2013 Composite Financial Index; ECC 2013-14 Default Prevention Plan; MCC 2013-14 Default Prevention Plan; Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid Students; State\_Accreditation\_2008.doc; and IVCCD Iowa Recognition for Performance Excellence Application.

## Appendix A

# Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution's Program Length and Tuition, Assignment of Credit Hours and on Clock Hours

## Part 1: Program Length and Tuition

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### Instructions

The institution has documented that it has credit hour assignments and degree program lengths within the range of good practice in higher education and that tuition is consistent across degree programs (or that there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition).

Review the "*Worksheet for Use by Institutions on the Assignment of Credit Hours and on Clock Hours*" as well as the course catalog and other attachments required for the institutional worksheet.

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### Worksheet on Program Length and Tuition

#### A. Answer the Following Questions

Are the institution's degree program requirements within the range of good practice in higher education and contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

Yes       No

Comments:

Are the institution's tuition costs across programs within the range of good practice in higher education and contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

Yes       No

Comments:

## B. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution's program length and tuition practices?

Yes

No

Rationale:

Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date:

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## Part 2: Assignment of Credit Hours

### Instructions

In assessing the appropriateness of the credit allocations provided by the institution the team should complete the following steps:

1. Review the Worksheet completed by the institution, which provides information about an institution's academic calendar and an overview of credit hour assignments across institutional offerings and delivery formats, and the institution's policy and procedures for awarding credit hours. Note that such policies may be at the institution or department level and may be differentiated by such distinctions as undergraduate or graduate, by delivery format, etc.
2. Identify the institution's principal degree levels and the number of credit hours for degrees at each level. The following minimum number of credit hours should apply at a semester institution:
  - Associate's degrees = 60 hours
  - Bachelor's degrees = 120 hours
  - Master's or other degrees beyond the Bachelor's = at least 30 hours beyond the Bachelor's degree
  - Note that one quarter hour = .67 semester hour
  - Any exceptions to this requirement must be explained and justified.
3. Scan the course descriptions in the catalog and the number of credit hours assigned for courses in different departments at the institution.

- At semester-based institutions courses will be typically be from two to four credit hours (or approximately five quarter hours) and extend approximately 14-16 weeks (or approximately 10 weeks for a quarter). The description in the catalog should indicate a course that is appropriately rigorous and has collegiate expectations for objectives and workload. Identify courses/disciplines that seem to depart markedly from these expectations.
  - Institutions may have courses that are in compressed format, self-paced, or otherwise alternatively structured. Credit assignments should be reasonable. (For example, as a full-time load for a traditional semester is typically 15 credits, it might be expected that the norm for a full-time load in a five-week term is 5 credits; therefore, a single five-week course awarding 10 credits would be subject to inquiry and justification.)
  - Teams should be sure to scan across disciplines, delivery mode, and types of academic activities.
  - Federal regulations allow for an institution to have two credit-hour awards: one award for Title IV purposes and following the above federal definition and one for the purpose of defining progression in and completion of an academic program at that institution. Commission procedure also permits this approach.
4. Scan course schedules to determine how frequently courses meet each week and what other scheduled activities are required for each course. Pay particular attention to alternatively-structured or other courses with particularly high credit hours for a course completed in a short period of time or with less frequently scheduled interaction between student and instructor.
5. **Sampling.** Teams will need to sample some number of degree programs based on the headcount at the institution and the range of programs it offers.
- At a minimum, teams should anticipate sampling at least a few programs at each degree level.
  - For institutions with several different academic calendars or terms or with a wide range of academic programs, the team should expand the sample size appropriately to ensure that it is paying careful attention to alternative format and compressed and accelerated courses.
  - Where the institution offers the same course in more than one format, the team is advised to sample across the various formats to test for consistency.
  - For the programs the team sampled, the team should review syllabi and intended learning outcomes for several of the courses in the program, identify the contact hours for each course, and expectations for homework or work outside of instructional time.
  - The team should pay particular attention to alternatively-structured and other courses that have high credit hours and less frequently scheduled interaction between the students and the instructor.
  - Provide information on the samples in the appropriate space on the worksheet.

6. Consider the following questions:

- Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution?
- Does that policy address the amount of instructional or contact time assigned and homework typically expected of a student with regard to credit hours earned?
- For institutions with courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy also equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the timeframe allotted for the course?
- Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)
- If so, is the institution's assignment of credit to courses reflective of its policy on the award of credit?

7. If the answers to the above questions lead the team to conclude that there may be a problem with the credit hours awarded the team should recommend the following:

- If the problem involves a poor or insufficiently-detailed institutional policy, the team should call for a revised policy as soon as possible by requiring a monitoring report within no more than one year that demonstrates the institution has a revised policy and evidence of implementation.
- If the team identifies an application problem and that problem is isolated to a few courses or single department or division or learning format, the team should call for follow-up activities (monitoring report or focused evaluation) to ensure that the problems are corrected within no more than one year.
- If the team identifies systematic non-compliance across the institution with regard to the award of credit, the team should notify Commission staff immediately and work with staff to design appropriate follow-up activities. The Commission shall understand systematic noncompliance to mean that the institution lacks any policies to determine the award of academic credit or that there is an inappropriate award of institutional credit not in conformity with the policies established by the institution or with commonly accepted practices in higher education across multiple programs or divisions or affecting significant numbers of students.

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## **Worksheet on Assignment of Credit Hours**

**A. Identify the Sample Courses and Programs Reviewed by the Team** (see #5 of instructions in completing this section)

Sampled programs reviewed include: Accounting AAS (64 semester credit hours); Construction Technology AAS (71 credit hours); English AA (64 credit hours); Political Science AA (64 credit hours); Physical Therapy AA (64 credit hours); Machine Tool Technology Tool and Die AAS (75 credit hours); Education AA (64 credit hours); and Science/Math AA (64 credit hours).

Sampled courses reviewed include Introduction to Psychology; Public Speaking; Computer Systems & Applications; Art Appreciation; Composition I; Composition II; Human Growth & Development; and Introduction to Business.

**B. Answer the Following Questions**

**1) Institutional Policies on Credit Hours**

Does the institution's policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution? (Note that for this question and the questions that follow an institution may have a single comprehensive policy or multiple policies.)

Yes

No

Comments:

Does that policy relate the amount of instructional or contact time provided and homework typically expected of a student to the credit hours awarded for the classes offered in the delivery formats offered by the institution? (Note that an institution's policy must go beyond simply stating that it awards credit solely based on assessment of student learning and should also reference instructional time.)

Yes

No

Comments:

For institutions with non-traditional courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the timeframe and utilizing the activities allotted for the course?

Yes  No

Comments: IVCCD stated that it does not offer non-traditional courses in alternative formats.

Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

Yes  No

Comments:

## 2) Application of Policies

Are the course descriptions and syllabi in the sample academic programs reviewed by the team appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of credit? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

Yes  No

Comments:

Are the learning outcomes in the sample reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit?

Yes  No

Comments:

If the institution offers any alternative delivery or compressed format courses or programs, were the course descriptions and syllabi for those courses appropriate and reflective of the institution's policy on the award of academic credit?

Yes  No

Comments: IVCCD does not offer alternative delivery or compressed format courses.

If the institution offers alternative delivery or compressed format courses or programs, are the learning outcomes reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution's policy on the award of credit? Are the learning outcomes reasonably capable of being fulfilled by students in the time allocated to justify the allocation of credit?

Yes                       No

Comments: IVCCD does not offer alternative delivery or compressed format courses.

Is the institution's actual assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution reflective of its policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

Yes                       No

Comments:

### **C. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate**

*Review the responses provided in this section. If the team has responded "no" to any of the questions above, the team will need to assign Commission follow-up to assure that the institution comes into compliance with expectations regarding the assignment of credit hours.*

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution's credit hour policies and practices?

Yes                       No

Rationale:

Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date:

### **D. Identify and Explain Any Findings of Systematic Non-Compliance in One or More Educational Programs with Commission Policies Regarding the Credit Hour**

None.

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## Part 3: Clock Hours

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### Instructions

Complete this worksheet **only if** the institution offers any degree or certificate programs in clock hours OR that must be reported to the U.S. Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes even though students may earn credit hours for graduation from these programs. Non-degree programs subject to clock hour requirements (an institution is required to measure student progress in clock hours for federal or state purposes or for graduates to apply for licensure) are not subject to the credit hour definitions per se but will need to provide conversions to semester or quarter hours for Title IV purposes. Clock-hour programs might include teacher education, nursing, or other programs in licensed fields.

For these programs Federal regulations require that they follow the federal formula listed below. If there are no deficiencies identified by the accrediting agency in the institution's overall policy for awarding semester or quarter credit, accrediting agency may provide permission for the institution to provide less instruction provided that the student's work outside class in addition to direct instruction meets the applicable quantitative clock hour requirements noted below.

Federal Formula for Minimum Number of Clock Hours of Instruction (34 CFR §668.8)

- 1 semester or trimester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction
- 1 quarter hour must include at least 25 clock hours of instruction

Note that the institution may have a lower rate if the institution's requirement for student work outside of class combined with the actual clock hours of instruction equals the above formula provided that a semester/trimester hour includes at least 30 clock hours of actual instruction and a quarter hour include at least 20 semester hours.

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### Worksheet on Clock Hours

#### A. Answer the Following Questions

Does the institution's credit to clock hour formula match the federal formula?

Yes

No

Comments:

If the credit to clock hour conversion numbers are less than the federal formula, indicate what specific requirements there are, if any, for student work outside of class?

Did the team determine that the institution's credit hour policies are reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that if the team answers "No" to this question, it should recommend follow-up monitoring in section C below.)

Yes

No

Comments:

Did the team determine in reviewing the assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution that it was reflective of the institution's policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

Yes

No

Comments:

**B. Does the team approve variations, if any, from the federal formula in the institution's credit to clock hour conversion?**

Yes

No

(Note that the team may approve a lower conversion rate than the federal rate as noted above provided the team found no issues with the institution's policies or practices related to the credit hour and there is sufficient student work outside of class as noted in the instructions.)  
**NA.**

**C. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate**

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution's clock hour policies and practices?

Yes

No

Rationale:

Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date: