

MCC News: Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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In the United States, schools and colleges seek accreditation from non-governmental bodies voluntarily. There are two types of accreditation: institutional and specialized. Institutional accreditation is provided by regional and national associations. Mohave Community College is accredited by a regional accrediting body called the Higher Learning Commission. There are six regional associations named after the region in which they serve. An institutional accrediting agency evaluates an organization as a whole unit in terms of its mission and the accrediting agencies standards or criteria.

The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) was founded in 1895 to improve the relations between high schools and colleges and facilitate alignment of educational objectives. NCA is made up of two independent corporations, the Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (CASI) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). CASI accredits schools offering education at the k-12 levels, as well as non-degree granting postsecondary schools. HLC accredits degree granting post-secondary institutions.

The Commission provides three pathways for maintaining accredited status: the Standard Pathway, the Open Pathway, and the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). Mohave Community College is on the Standard Pathway.

Two comprehensive evaluations take place in the ten-year Standard Pathway accreditation cycle—one in Year 4 and one in Year 10. Both quality assurance and quality improvement are integrated into these comprehensive evaluations. In addition, the institution addresses quality assurance and improvement through interim monitoring, as required. In the Standard Pathway, both assurance and improvement are directly related to the Criteria for Accreditation.

The components of the comprehensive evaluation in the Standard Pathway are these:

1. An Assurance Review, with an improvement component
2. A review of Federal Compliance
3. An on-site visit
4. If applicable, a multi-campus review

The institution addresses both assurance and improvement requirements in the Assurance Argument and Evidence File. For the Assurance Review, peer reviewers determine whether the institution continues to meet the Criteria for Accreditation by analyzing the institution's Assurance Filing (Assurance Argument and Evidence File). In conjunction with this Assurance Review, the peer reviewers evaluate the progress the institution has made in addressing issues identified in previous evaluations as needing improvement. The review begins with a

preliminary analysis of both assurance and improvement and is followed by a campus visit. The purposes of the campus visit are to validate claims made in the institution's Assurance Filing, to evaluate the required improvements made by the institution, and to compare those materials with what the team finds during planned activities while on site.

All comprehensive evaluations include a review of whether the institution meets the [Federal Compliance Requirements](#). In addition, comprehensive evaluations include visits to branch campuses as applicable.