

What is the Higher Learning Commission (HLC)?

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is an independent corporation that was founded in 1895 as one of six regional institutional accreditors in the United States. HLC accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the North Central region.

Why is post-secondary accreditation important?

An HLC peer review of college operations ensures quality programming, which qualifies post-secondary institutions to grant federal financial aid to students and allows potential credit transferability to four-year partners.

Why does HLC accreditation extend to dual (transcribed) credit?

Dual credit (transcribed credit) is defined as a duplication of an NWTC course delivered by a secondary teacher that is trained in post-secondary curriculum delivery. Because the transcribed/dual credit course is an extension of NWTC coursework, high school dual credit instructors must meet HLC credential guidelines.

How and why were the high school credential guidelines developed?

Due to the increase in dual credit offerings throughout the nation, HLC conducted a study of Dual Credit Programming. [Dual Credit in U.S. Higher Education: A Study of State Policy and Quality Assurance Practices](#) was conducted in 2012.

This study found quality concerns regarding rigor of coursework taught by high school instructors with secondary faculty credentials and capabilities cited as a critical quality issue.

The resolution to the rigor discrepancy was to enforce dual credit teacher credential requirements.

What are the HLC requirements for dual credit teachers that teach General Studies or Core Subject area courses?

Master's Degree or higher in the teaching discipline taught or a Master's degree in another discipline along with a minimum of 18 graduate credits in discipline being taught.

For example, a teacher that teaches Intro to Psychology would meet requirements with the following:

- Master's degree in Educational Leadership plus 18 graduate credits in Psychology

OR

- Master's degree in Psychology

How does HLC define General Studies or Core Subject Area coursework at NWTC?

Math, English/Writing, Communication, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Foreign Language

What are the HLC requirements for dual credit teachers that teach Career and Technical Education/Occupational courses?

Completion of a degree in the discipline or subfield in which they teach, with coursework at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. Unless an occupational license or credential is required for a specified course.

For example, a teacher that teaches Automation 1 would meet the requirement with the following:

- Bachelor's degree in Education with licensure in Technology Education

OR

- Bachelor's degree in Engineering

How does HLC define Career and Technical Education/Occupational Coursework at NWTC?

Technology Education, Agriculture, Engineering, Business Education, Marketing, Information Technology, Family and Consumer Education, Health Sciences, Culinary, Early Childhood, Para-educator, Art

Does NWTC's pool of dual credit instructors currently meet the HLC requirements?

NWTC dual credit instructors within the area of Career and Technical Educational/Occupational coursework **meet** the HLC requirements.

The great majority of NWTC dual credit instructors within the area of General Studies/Occupational courses **do not meet** the HLC requirements.

What has NWTC done to abide by HLC requirements?

Like most post-secondary institutions within the North Central region of the U.S., we have filed and been granted an extension until September 2023 to meet the dual credit credential requirements.

What is NWTC doing to help teachers gain these heightened credentials?

NWTC partnered with Northeast Wisconsin Educational Resource Alliance (NEWERA) to:

- create access to coursework/credentials in a variety of modes of instruction
- explore reduced funding costs related to course tuition and/or grant options

- partner with area school districts through work groups to create incentives for teachers to pursue heightened credentials

Who will pay for these heightened course requirements?

Dual credit instructors are encouraged to work within their District process/policies to gain financial support for course tuition. NEWERA will continue to seek grant and legislative support to help in financing HLC credential requirements, however; nothing is established at this time.