



Public Disclosure:
Eastern Gateway Community College status changed
from “Accredited” to “Accredited – On Probation”
Effective: November 4, 2021
Updated: October 27, 2022

As an update to the information below, on October 21, 2022, a federal district court in Ohio ruled that, among other things, on at least a temporary basis:

1. The Department’s requirement that EGCC not enroll new students in the Free College Benefit Program is suspended. This means that EGCC may continue to enroll students in the Free College Benefit Program.
2. The Department’s requirement that EGCC not waive tuition and fees for non-Pell students is suspended. This means that EGCC may continue to waive tuition and fees for non-Pell students.

Litigation regarding the Free College Benefit Program remains ongoing. HLC will update this information as more information becomes available.

Due to information made available from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and through public media reports, students should be aware that:

- As part of an ongoing Program Review, USDE has concluded that Eastern Gateway Community College’s (EGCC) Free College Benefit program violates the Title IV prohibition against assessing charges to Title IV recipients that are higher than those charges assessed to non-Title IV recipients.
- USDE initially instructed EGCC to cease providing the Free College Benefit program. USDE stated that students who are currently enrolled in the Free College Benefit program, including those who had enrolled but not yet started classes as of July 18, would be permitted to continue in the program for fall semester 2022.
- USDE has transferred EGCC to the Heightened Cash Monitoring 2 (HCM2) method of payment as a result of serious and systemic issues identified during the ongoing program review.
- Finally, USDE has required EGCC to enter into a teach-out agreement with an institution or institutions to assist students if they are unable to finish their programs of study due to potential future changes to the Free College Benefit program.

Based on this information, in addition to the probation requirements, HLC has also required EGCC to submit a special monitoring report as part of its Assurance Filing in spring 2023 and teach out agreement(s) in fall 2022.

The submission of teach out agreement(s) will be reviewed, and final action will be determined based on HLC’s decision making policies and processes. The agreement(s) must be approved by HLC in order to be in effect.

The Higher Learning Commission has placed Eastern Gateway Community College of Steubenville, Ohio, on Probation. HLC took this action because it determined that the institution does not meet HLC's Criteria for Accreditation related to teaching and learning: quality, resources and support; and teaching and learning: evaluation and improvement.

Probation is a sanction meaning that an accredited institution is no longer in compliance with one or more of HLC's Criteria for Accreditation. The period of Probation is not more than two years.

What This Means for Students

While on Probation, the institution remains accredited, and it has the opportunity to remedy the issues that led to the sanction. In most cases, other colleges and universities will continue to accept the institution's credits in transfer or for admission to a higher degree program. All colleges and universities define their own transfer and admission policies. Students interested in pursuing a higher degree or transferring should contact the college or university they plan to attend so that they are knowledgeable about the admission and transfer policies for that college or university.

Noted Criteria for Accreditation

HLC concluded that the institution does not meet the following HLC Criterion/Criteria for Accreditation:

- Criterion Three, Core Component 3.C, "the institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services."
- Criterion Three, Core Component 3.D, "the institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching."
- Criterion Four, Core Component 4.A, "the institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings."
- Criterion Four, Core Component 4.B, "the institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students."
- Criterion Four, Core Component 4.C, "the institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs."

HLC concluded that the institution meets, but with concerns, the following HLC Criterion/Criteria for Accreditation:

- Criterion One, Core Component 1.C, "the institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves."
- Criterion Two, Core Component 2.A, "the institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff."
- Criterion Two, Core Component 2.B, "the institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public."

- Criterion Five, Core Component 5.A, “through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution’s leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.”
- Criterion Five, Core Component 5.B, “the institution’s resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.”
- Criterion Five, Core Component 5.C, “the institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.”

Next Steps

The institution is required to provide evidence that it has addressed the issues that led to the sanction, no later than February 1, 2023 in preparation for HLC’s on-site evaluation to be held no later than April 2023. In November 2023, the HLC Board of Trustees will determine whether the institution has demonstrated that it is in compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation and whether Probation can be removed.

About the Higher Learning Commission

The Higher Learning Commission accredits approximately 1,000 colleges and universities in the United States. HLC is a private, nonprofit accrediting agency. It is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Questions? Contact info@hlcommission.org or call 312.263.0456.

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