# LCE Application Checklist

*(updated August 2018)*

### NCLCA Mission:

- To establish professional standards for all learning centers in higher education in the areas of administration and management; program and curriculum design; and evaluation and research.
- To recognize outstanding learning centers which demonstrate excellence in following best practices and establishing programs that provide students in higher education with the resources and opportunities to achieve academic success.

### NCLCA Background

The National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA) is an organization of professionals dedicated to promoting excellence among learning center personnel. The mission of NCLCA is to support learning assistance professionals as they develop and maintain learning centers, programs, and services to enhance student learning at the post-secondary level. This support includes the following:

- Promoting professional standards in the areas of administration and management; program and curriculum design, evaluation, and research;
- Acting on learning assistance issues at local, regional, and national levels;
- Assisting in the creation of new and enhancement of existing learning centers and programs;
- Providing opportunities for professional development, networking, and idea exchange through conferences, workshops, institutes and publications;
- Coordinating efforts with related professional associations; and
- Offering forums for celebrating and respecting the profession.

### NCLCA Definition of a Learning Center

The National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA) defines a learning center at institutions of higher education as interactive academic spaces which exist to reinforce and extend student learning in physical and/or virtual environments. A variety of comprehensive support services and programs are offered in these environments to enhance student academic success, retention, and graduation through applying the best practices of student learning theory and addressing student-learning needs from multiple pedagogical perspectives. Staffed by professionals, paraprofessionals, faculty, and/or trained student educators, learning centers are designed to reinforce the holistic academic growth of students by fostering critical thinking, metacognitive development, and academic and personal success.

**Purpose of the Learning Centers of Excellence**

The purpose of the Learning Centers of Excellence program is to:
- promote professional standards of excellence for learning centers
- recognize the need for flexibility and inclusiveness in meeting these standards
- encourage centers to develop, maintain and assess quality programs and services to enhance student learning
- honor the history of established and unique centers
- celebrate the outstanding achievements of centers that meet and exceed these standards

**Learning Center of Excellence Evaluation Criteria**

Inspired by the works of Frank Christ[1], Council on Advancement of Standards in Higher Education[2], and John Gardner[3], NCLCA has developed seven major categories and subsets of those categories under which application packets will be evaluated. Each category is individually weighted in determining the final evaluation of the application packet. (NCLCA endorses the ATP Principles of Ethical Standards (http://www.myatp.org/?s=Ethical+Standards) and the CAS Statement of Shared Ethical Principles (http://www.cas.edu/ethics).)

I. Programs and Services (10%)
II. Organizational Framework (20%)
III. Academic Integrity and Learning Environment (10%)
IV. Funding, Resources and Design (10%)
V. Staff and Professional Development (15%)
VI. Promotion and Public Relations (15%)
VII. Assessment and Evaluation (20%)

**Application Procedure**

All applicants must complete the application form according to the directions in each subsection below. There is an accompanying checklist to aid applicants in completing the application in identifying the appropriate evidence to meet the criteria to be designated a Learning Center of Excellence.

A review committee of at least 3 to 5 members from the NCLCA Past President's Council or current Executive Board will review the applications for consideration. Criteria come from the standards outlined in the table of guidelines and are rated according to demonstration of meeting the standards for the Centers of Excellence Award Designation. Applicants can submit additional information at the request of the evaluators to further explain or enhance their application.

The committee will meet *annually* to review all applications and make recommendations/provide feedback.

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[1] Christ, F. L. (2009). Best and Promising Practices for Learning Support Centers: A Handout for Workshop at NCLCA Conference in Golden, CO on October 3, 2009.

[2] Council on Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) website to review and purchase the standards - http://www.cas.edu/index.php/standards

[3] Model for the Centers of Excellence was Institutions of Excellence in the First College Year - http://www.jngi.org/institute/past-initiatives/institutions-of-excellence-in-the-first-college-year/

## Deadlines, Fee Structure & Designation Timeline

Deadlines for submissions to be reviewed:
- Initial Application:  January 15th –   Notification by May 15th
- Renewal Application: September 1st  – Notification by November 30th (in the year that certification expires)

Fees and designation duration
- Initial designation (3 years)   –         $500
- Renewal (5 years)              –         $250

Designation will include:
      A plaque to be displayed in the learning center
      A .jpeg to be included on your digital materials
      A letter to your college/university president/chancellor
      A press release sample to share with your publications/marketing departments
      A listing on the NCLCA website

# Evaluation Criteria, Evidence, and Scoring Information

## I. PROGRAMS & SERVICES (10%)
Criteria 1-3 & 5-7 = 0 points for Needs Improvement; 0.5 points for Meets Standards; 1 point for Exceeds Standards
Criteria 4 = 0 points for Needs Improvement; 1.5 points for Meets Standards; 3 point for Exceeds Standards
Total possible raw score = 9 (Weighted score = 10)

| Criteria | Evidence | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Provides interactive academic spaces | | |
| 2. Reinforces and extends student learning | | |
| 3. Effectively uses physical and/or virtual environments | The evidence for this section will be presented in two parts. The first section will be the narrative overview text box (500 word limit) describing the programs and services offered in your learning center. In the second part, please address each of the criteria areas listed on the application form as they relate to your programs and services; address each of the 7 criteria in the text boxes on the application - 250 word limit per text box. | |
| 4. Provides a variety of comprehensive support services and programs | | |
| 5. Enhances student academic success, retention, and graduation | Include general statements about each section - more detailed information should be provided in subsequent sections of the application. Labeled photographs or a virtual tour of the facilities should be included in the appendices. The labels or narration should explain how your center is organized and how each area is utilized. | |
| 6. Aligns with best practices of student learning theory and addressing student-learning needs | | |
| 7. Fosters critical thinking, metacognitive development, and academic and personal success | | |

## II. ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK (20%)

All criteria = 0 points for Needs Improvement; 1 point for Average; 2 points for Above Average; 3 points for Excellent
Total possible raw score = 18 (Weighted score = 20)

| Mission statement | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Evidence** | **Notes** |
| 1. Mission Statement is in alignment with its division and institutional mission statement as well as any institutional strategic plans, goals and outcomes. | Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section:<br><br>● Include a copy of the Center's current mission statement.<br>● Include a copy of the division (if appropriate) and institutional mission statements.<br>● **Prepare a short statement to explain the alignment** with institution strategic plans, mission statement, goals and outcomes. | |
| 2. There is a regular review process for the mission statement. | ● Describe the mission statement review process and timeline. | |
| 3. Mission statement is appropriate for the student population. | ● Write a statement that describes the student population you serve and justifies the connection to your mission. | |

| Leadership | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Evidence | Notes |
| 1. Learning Center Director or Coordinator has appropriate blend of professional degrees, certifications and work experience for their position. (Minimum requirement of LCLC Level 2 Certification OR meet requirements for Level 2. (See NCLCA website for LCLC requirements.) | Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section (2 parts):<br>● Provide as an appendix item a current professional vitae listing professional degrees, certifications, and work experience including dates.<br>AND<br>● Provide one of the two options below:<br><br>● Documentation of LCLC certification (minimum of Level 2, see NCLCA website) | |

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OR
- In the appropriately labeled appendices the following 2 documents:
  - a personalized learning assistance position statement of 1-2 pages outlining your beliefs about learning assistance at your institution and/or the field at large
  - a personal professional development plan of 1-2 pages outlining what you want to accomplish as you delve deeper into the opportunities available to you via your institution, your region/state, the Web, NCLCA, other professional organizations and/or the field at large.

(NOTE:  See the LCLC requirements on the NCLCA website for more detailed information about the documents.)

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2. Other Learning Center professionals (if applicable) have appropriate blend of professional degrees, certifications and work experience for their position. (Minimum requirement of LCLC Level 1 Certification OR meet requirements for Level 1)

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Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section (2 parts):
- Provide as an appendix item a current professional vitae listing professional degrees, certifications, and work experience including dates.

AND

- Provide one of the two options below:

  - Documentation of LCLC certification (minimum of Level 1, see NCLCA website)
                    OR
  - In the appropriately labeled appendices the following 2 documents:
    - a personalized learning assistance position statement of 1-2 pages outlining your beliefs about learning assistance at your institution and/or the field at large
    - a personal professional development plan of 1-2 pages outlining what you want to

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| Criteria | Evidence | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| | accomplish as you delve deeper into the opportunities available to you via your institution, your region/state, the Web, NCLCA, other professional organizations and/or the field at large.<br><br>(NOTE:  See the LCLC requirements on the NCLCA website for more detailed information about the documents.) | |
| 3.  The Learning Center professionals are represented on the campus/university-wide committees. | ● Use the grid on the application form to provide list of university/campus committees with LC representation, including name and position within the Learning Center.  (Include level of committee – department, division, university, etc. for each person's committee assignments and dates served) | |

# III. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT  (10%)
All criteria = 0 points for Needs Improvement; 1 point for Average; 2 points for Above Average; 3 points for Excellent
Total possible raw score = 18  (Weighted score = 10 )

| Ethics and Policies | | |
|---|---|---|
| Criteria | Evidence | Notes |
| 1.  All staff members are trained on ethical practices and institution policies. | Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section:<br>● Describe your training process.<br>● Provide copy of training process and content (include a sample agenda for the training) as an appendix item. | |
| 2.  Learning Center employees respect student privacy and confidentiality. | ● Provide documentation for FERPA training, including process and dates of training. (Include as an appendix item).<br>● Describe the process for annual renewal/review of FERPA training. | |

| | Criteria | Evidence | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | Scholarly integrity and academic honesty is upheld in all learning center programs and services. | ● Provide description of how this is achieved through trainings and/or compliance with institutional policies | |

| Diversity | | |
|---|---|---|
| Criteria | Evidence | Notes |
| 1. The center staff members are sensitive to the needs of diverse populations through staff composition and/or diversity training of staff members. | Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section:<br>● Provide description of staff composition and/or components in training that address diversity. | |
| 2. The academic support needs of diverse student groups are considered when planning programs. | ● Provide description that breaks down the entire student population (including minority groups and special categories of students – i.e. probation, 1st generation, veterans) and how learning center programming has addressed particular needs as appropriate. | |
| 3. All staff members provide fair and impartial academic support for all students and promote a harassment free environment. | ● Provide a description of the processes, policies and environment that ensures fair treatment for all students in the learning center including complaint and compliance procedures. | |

## IV. FUNDING, RESOURCES AND DESIGN (20%)
All criteria = 0 points for Needs Improvement; 1 point for Average; 2 points for Above Average; 3 points for Excellent
Total possible raw score = 18 (Weighted score = 20)

| Funding and Staff Support | | |
|---|---|---|
| Criteria | Evidence | Notes |
| 1. Funding is effectively used to provide services that meet the needs of the student population, in accordance with the mission and goals of the center. | Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section:<br>● Describe your budget process and how the center uses it to meet the mission and goals of the learning center. You do not need to supply us with a copy of your budget, but do include how your budget is funded (i.e. institutional support, student fees, grant, etc.) and how this budget meets sustainability of current programs, services and staffing and what processes or procedures are available for future growth.<br>● If you were to have additional funding, please provide a short description of the budgetary needs/funding would like to have to enhance program and service delivery. Include your plans to provide for future growth. What processes and procedures are available for funding for future growth?<br>Note - *Include your discussion of funding for space and technology in the section below: "Technology, Space and Universal Design"* | |
| 2. Administrative/clerical support is sufficient to provide strong customer service for students and effective management of the learning center. | ● Provide a short description of the composition of the support staff and their role in supporting strong customer service. (Include classification: full time, part time, GA, undergraduate, etc) | |
| 3. Learning center professional staff is adequate to manage learning center programs and to promote the learning center. | ● Provide a short description of the composition of the professional staff and their role in supporting strong customer service. | |

| Technology, Space and Universal Design | | |
|---|---|---|
| Criteria | Evidence | Notes |
| 1. The learning center uses technology to enhance individual student learning and to deliver its programs and services. And, learning center professionals and student/peer professionals have access to online resources and technology to use in their work with students. | Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section:<br>● Describe how the learning center uses technology to deliver programs and services.  Don't include basic assumed technology use of computers for staff and databases you might use. Do include a discussion of how you are using technology to deliver programs/services, teach courses, develop training, and/or advertising to students. (might include a discussion of any labs you oversee or how you use online tutoring or web-conferencing or social media advertising or other ways you are using technology to reach students. When possible, provide links to any online.<br>● Describe resources websites, social media, etc.  (How are you keeping them up to date?  How extensively are they used?) | |
| 2. Physical Environment:  The learning center is easily located, accessible, and usable; it has adequate equipment and furnishings. | ● Describe center location and operating schedule.<br>● Describe how the learning center is housed in your facility utilizing Universal Design[4] principles for adequate accessibility for all students and staff (including elevators, ramps as needed, automatic doors, accessible restroom facilities, tables/chairs/desk). | |
| 3. Virtual Environment:  The learning center website, social media, online tutoring, and other virtual programs are easily located and accessible for all students. | ● Describe how your virtual services incorporate principles of UNIVERSAL DESIGN[4] and W3C[5] in all aspects of the programs and services, including design and delivery. | |

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[4] Center for Universal Design in Education (www.washington.edu/doit/CUDE/)

[5] W3C standard on accessibility: https://www.w3.org/standards/webdesign/accessibility

# V. STAFF AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (15%)

 All criteria = 0 points for Needs Improvement; 1 point for Average; 2 points for Above Average; 3 points for Excellent

Total possible raw score = 18 (Weighted score =15)

## Student/Peer Professional Training/Professional Development
(Includes Academic Coaches, Mentors, Tutors and/or SI Leaders as well as Professional Staff)

| Criteria | Evidence | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. A staff planning meeting is held at least once every academic year for all student/peer programing. | Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section:<br>● Describe the objectives, topics and format of the staff planning meeting(s), date(s) | |
| 2. Basic and advanced training is offered for all student/peer programing. | ● Describe the objectives, topics and format of this training (Do not just include and refer to training manual. If you do include manual, be specific about location of this information.) | |
| 3. Certified by appropriate professional organizations and/or local certification bodies. | ● Provide documentation (e.g. Copy of latest CRLA documentation for tutor or mentor training, ATP certification, NADE certification/accreditation, SI Training) | |

## Learning Center Staff Evaluation & Professional Development

| Criteria | Evidence | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Evaluations of staff occur at least annually. | Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section:<br>● Provide a description and timeline of the human resource and/or internal processes for performance evaluation for your each of your professional and support/administrative staff listed in *Section C of application form: Putting your Center in Context*. Include process for any goal setting and mid-year updates. | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2. Learning center professionals belong to at least one learning assistance organization and/or professional listservs and discussion forums. | ● Provide list of center professionals and their affiliations, and how long they have been involved. (Complete the grid with requested information on the application.) | |
| 3. Learning center professionals participate in professional development/leadership opportunities at national, regional and/or local learning assistance (or related) organizations (including face-to-face and/or online). | ● Provide list (up to 10) of most recent professional development activities/leadership experiences (include dates and names of participating personnel in grid on the application form). | |
| 4. Learning center professionals are active in or contribute to the profession of learning assistance through publications and/or presentations at national, regional and/or local learning assistance (or related) organizations (including face-to-face and/or online). | ● Use APA or MLA format to provide list (**up to 10**) of most recent publications/presentations (provide dates/appropriate citation information). | |

## VI. PROMOTION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS (15%)
All criteria = 0 points for Needs Improvement; 1 point for Average; 2 points for Above Average; 3 points for Excellent
Total possible raw score = 18 (Weighted score = 15)

| Student Population Relations | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Criteria** | **Evidence** | **Notes** |
| 1. Branding (comprehensive image) of the learning center is well-recognized on campus. | Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section: <br> ● Describe branding and how it is used, including logos, taglines, etc. | |
| 4. The learning center has a virtual presence through a website and social media. | ● Describe and provide representative examples of how your virtual presence is used in PR and promotion of your center. | |
| 5. Informational/promotional materials are made available to students at least three times a semester/term, through any combination of course syllabi, campus tv/radio/newspaper, newsletters, handouts, bookmarks, library, classroom presentations, email, or other modalities. | ● Describe and provide representative examples of promotional materials  (Use appendices for representative examples.) | |
| **6.  Institutional Relations** | | |
| 1. Utilizes an advisory board.[6] | Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section: <br> ● Provide the composition (ie, 3 faculty, 1 alumnus, 1 student, 1 administrator) of the board members and how they are selected/appointed and for how long <br> ● How is your board utilized? <br> ● Provide a sample agenda in the appendices. | |

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[6] Craig, A., Richardson, E., & Harris, J. (in press). Learning center advisory boards: Results of an online exploratory survey. *The Learning Assistance Review, 23*(2).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *2.* Provides program information to key institutional stakeholders (i.e. academic advisors, faculty and administration) on a regular basis. | ● Describe the process for providing information (including what, how, and when). | |
| *3.* Feedback is solicited from key institutional stakeholders (i.e. academic advisors, faculty and administration) members on a regular basis. | ● Describe process for getting feedback (i.e., surveys, focus groups), what kind of feedback is collected, how often, and how the feedback is used. | |

## VII. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION (20%)
All criteria = 0 points for Needs Improvement; 1 point for Average; 2 points for Above Average; 3 points for Excellent
Total possible raw score = 18 (Weighted score = 20)

| The PLAN for Assessment and Evaluation | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Learning outcomes are clearly defined with a sustainable system in place to measure whether the outcomes are met. | Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section:<br>● Provide student learning outcomes and learning center/program outcomes and how the effectiveness is measured | |
| 2. Process is in place to provide continual review and quality improvement in programs/services – including analysis of strengths and challenges and appropriate corrective actions (at least annually). | ● Describe review process and how updates/ improvements are implemented | |

| The PROCESS of Data Collection, Organization and Analysis | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Criteria** | **Evidence** | **Notes** |
| 1. Data Collection Process | Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section:<br>• Provide a short description of the process and tools used to collect and track data.<br>• Discuss the type(s) of data you are collecting regularly and over time.<br>• Program usage (e.g., number of participants, use of materials, clicks on webpage)<br>• Program impact (e.g., satisfaction, course grades, retention, graduation) | |
| 2. Analysis Process | Provide a short description of the process and tools used to analyze data. Pay special attention to how you analyze for:<br>• Effectiveness (i.e. academic progress, satisfaction)<br>• Impact on student (i.e. retention, satisfaction, graduation)<br>• Longitudinal trends (i.e. usage, services, effectiveness, satisfaction) | |
| The PRODUCT of Assessment - Annual & Other Reports (if used) | | |
| 2. Any reports resulting from the assessment process should align with the assessment plan. | • Demonstrates the learning center's alignment with and advancement of division and institutional missions, strategic plans, goals and outcomes.<br>• Provides evidence of the achievement of student learning outcomes and program/services outcomes.<br>• Highlights significant achievements, recognitions, and contributions of learning center and learning center personnel. | |
| 3. An annual report is compiled every year, including quantitative and qualitative information/data, and includes an executive summary. | Use the following to provide evidence of meeting the criteria in this section:<br>• Provide the most recent annual report as an appendix item. | |