

Focused Visit Report

After the team reaches a consensus, the team chair completes this form to summarize and document the team's view. Notes and rationale statements should be essential and concise.

For visits with more than five areas of focus: Contact evaluations@hlcommission.org for an expanded version of this form.

Determinations Regarding the Criteria for Accreditation

Refer to HLC policy [Evaluative Framework for the HLC Criteria \(INST.A.10.020\)](#) for guidance on determining whether a Core Component or other HLC requirement is met, met with concerns, or not met.

Submission Instructions

Draft report: Email the report to the institution's HLC staff liaison.

Final report: Submit the report as a single PDF file to "Final Reports" at hlcommission.org/upload.

Institution: Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College

City, State: Logan, WV

Visit Date: 03/11/24- 3/12/2024

Peer Reviewers (List each reviewer's name, title and affiliation. Note the team chair in parenthesis.)

Brad Piazza, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Waukesha Count Technical College (chair)

Kimberley Turner-Rush, Interim Dean of Business, Career, Education, and Workforce Innovation at North Hennepin Community College

Part A: Context and Nature of Visit (Areas of Focus)

1. **Purpose of the Visit** (Provide the visit description from the Institution Event Summary.)

A focused visit on faculty credentials and assessment of student learning. Following a Comprehensive Visit in 2022-23, the Assurance Review Team report recommended Southern West

Virginia Community and Technical College (Southern) follow up with a Focused Visit in March of 2024. The following criteria should be reviewed.

Criterion 3c

Given the credentialing concerns identified through a faculty files audit, specifically, faculty assigned to teach in the sciences and Respiratory Therapy, the visiting team should confirm appropriate credentials for full-time, part-time, dual credit and those teaching through application of the tested experience policy. Findings should confirm that all faculty at Southern are appropriately credentialed per HLC guidelines to teach their assigned courses.

Criterion 4b

The persistence of the issue of adequately conducting assessment processes concerned the current team given that the 2018 and 2020 reviews cited this Core Component as inadequately addressed. The college must present details on the development of its general education, program-level and co-curricular assessment processes. Specifically, the college should describe 1) how its plans for general education assessment have been implemented and how these efforts are beginning to lead to data to inform improvements in student learning, 2) how it conducts program level assessment and how the implementation of plans is leading to actionable data for improvement of student achievement, and 3) how its plans for co-curricular assessment are maturing and are starting to inform student learning.

The Team recommends an Interim Report to be filed in October 2025 that provides results and actions taken in response to assessment data in the areas of general education and program level outcomes achievement, and measures in the co-curriculum. The Team believes that the spring 2024 Focused Visit may only allow enough time for the institution to be able to describe implementation of processes and procedures in assessment endeavors. The Team believes that the institution's needs until fall of 2025 in order to collect data, conduct data analysis and determine what actions might lead to improvements in student learning. The Interim Report should identify assessment findings in general education, programs, and the co-curriculum. The report should identify any appropriate data, actions, and results that the institution can identify as contributing to maturing assessment practice.

2. Organizational Context

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College (Southern) was established as an independently accredited community college in 1971. In 1976 the West Virginia Board of Regents who oversees public institutions of higher education in West Virginia established service areas for institutions and Southern assumed responsibility for a large region and multiple counties. Over the decades, the college grew in enrollment and programs with primary emphasis on career and technical education but recently has focused on general education as a significant transfer effort and dual enrollment with the region's numerous high school districts. Additionally, the College has added online and hybrid coursework to reach its regional student body.

Most recently, the institution, consistent with other community colleges in the state, has suffered enrollment declines and has made difficult decisions regarding restructuring and financial/budget changes. Particularly over the last four years, the institution's stability has been challenged by multiple and rapid administrative turnover and significant friction/morale problems resulting from that turnover. That turnover has affected employee perceptions of communication and trust.

3. Unique Aspects of Visit

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4. Interactions With Institutional Constituencies and Materials Reviewed. List the titles or positions, but not names, of individuals with whom the team interacted during the review and the principal documents, materials and web pages reviewed.

Assistant Professor, Business
Assistant Professor, English (2)
Assistant Professor/Director of Medical Laboratory Technology
Assistant Professor, Physical Science
Assistant Professor of Sociology
Assistant Professor, Speech
Associate Professor, Business
Associate Professor, Allied Health
Associate Professor, Mathematics
Associate Professor, Radiologic Technology
Associate Professor, Surgical Technology (2)
Chief Academic Officer/ALO
Chief External Relations Officer
Chief Facilities Management Officer
Chief Finance Officer
Chief Human Resources Officer
Chief Information Officer
Chief Student Services Officer
Coordinator Student Success Center
Dean, Allied Health and Nursing
Dean, Professional and Transfer Programs
Director, Accreditation and Assessment
Dual Enrollment Faculty (2)
Instructor, Biology
Instructor, English
President
Professor/Director of Nursing
Professor, Biology
Professor, Speech and History

5. Areas of Focus. Complete the following questions for each area of focus assigned as part of the visit (see the Institution Event Summary, action letter assigning the visit and/or the team report recommending the visit, as applicable), or that are otherwise identified by the team during the visit. Note that each area of focus should correspond with only one Core Component or other HLC requirement.

Area of Focus 1

Statement of Focus:

Faculty Credentials

- This area of focus was originally assigned as part of the visit.
- This area of focus was identified by the team during the visit.

Relevant Core Component or other HLC requirement (if none, write N/A):

3c. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services. Note that this visit was only for a review of faculty credentials, not all of 3c.

Determination:

- There is no specific HLC requirement associated with this Area of Focus. The institution demonstrates adequate progress in the Area of Focus. *(Note: This option is only applicable to focused visits that are held as an immediate follow-up to HLC's approval of an application for Change of Control, Structure, or Organization.)*
- The HLC requirement is met.
- The HLC requirement is met with concerns (only applicable for Core Components).
- The HLC requirement is not met.

Note: Provide the team's determination for this HLC requirement in Part C as well.

Rationale:

In October 2023 HLC adopted a new policy regarding faculty qualifications which changed the focus from reviewing faculty files to ensure compliance with the stated HLC requirements to one of evaluating the institution's policies and procedures for faculty qualifications. As such the team focused on how Southern created policy and procedure for faculty credentials. This was done through a series of three meetings of different faculty and staff to verify that there is consistency with what was written in the report.

Southern's Policy SCP-2171 Establishing Minimum Standards and Qualifications for Faculty and Instructional Specialists became effective in January 2020 and last reviewed in January 2024. Along with SCP-2171, the College has Procedure 2171 that outlines the process by which faculty at Southern are determined to be qualified and the process by which this occurs. The Procedure was last reviewed in December 2023. Specifically, the Procedure sets forth how the Chief Academic Officer ensures that each faculty member employed at Southern possesses the academic preparation, training, and equivalent experience or has a Professional Progression Plan to meet the minimum requirements that the College has created.

In the regions that Southern serves, there has been a continued challenge in finding faculty members, particularly, in Math and Science, who met the traditional faculty academic qualifications guidelines. In each of the three meetings that the team conducted around faculty credentials the challenge in STEM fields was articulated. In addition to the challenges in Math and Science there was a general theme of difficulty of finding qualified faculty solely based on highest degree earned. With that in mind, Southern revised their faculty qualifications to include the use of equivalent experience and to lower the hiring requirements for general education to 12 graduate hours in the field and to use a Professional Progression Plan to reach the 18 graduate hours within four years of hire. To date, there are four faculty who are on the Plan and their progression is monitored by the respective Dean.

The peer-review team that conducted the comprehensive reaffirmation visit found issues with incomplete faculty files and non-adherence to the faculty qualifications policy. These two concerns caused the focused visit in 2024. In conversations with faculty and staff, Southern took this concern seriously and did a thorough review of every faculty file to ensure that it contained all the necessary documentation for qualifying their faculty. Through this process they discovered that there were multiple files for faculty which are now combined into one. All faculty had to review their own file to ensure that it was up-to-date and to add any missing documentation. It is important to note that this process was not just done for the full-time faculty but also adjuncts and dual credit faculty. A dashboard was created by the Chief Information Officer that lists courses faculty are approved to teach based on their respective credentials. Error reports are generated each day and reviewed to ensure compliance.

The process to ensure that each faculty member has the appropriate credentials starts with the Academic Deans and then sent to the Office of Human Resources to do a validation review. The Deans are responsible for generating the list of courses that the faculty members are qualified to teach based on their qualifications Policy. In meeting with the Academic Deans and Human Resources personnel they understand the process and have put it into action.

To understand how faculty were involved in the creation of the new Policy and Procedure there was a meeting with faculty from general education and technical programs. One of the faculty in attendance was also the Faculty Senate Chair. The process used appears to be one that was collaborative with many conversations and drafts going between the Faculty Senate, Deans, and the Executive Cabinet. Once a “final draft” of the Policy and Procedure was created the 10 faculty who are part of the Faculty Senate took it to their respective faculty groups for a review. Once that was complete the Policy and Procedure was then sent to the Faculty Assembly for approval. The next step involved sending it to the Policy and Procedure committee, which is made up of faculty and classified staff, voted for approval; from there it went to the Executive Cabinet. The Cabinet then sent it to all employees at Southern for a 30-day review and final comments. Once that was complete the Executive Cabinet did the final approval and implementation. This thorough process is evidence that the Southern community was involved with and had input on the new Policy and Procedure.

A theme that emerged from the three meetings about faculty credentials is the satisfaction with some degree of flexibility in hiring as it now provides additional opportunities for local high school students to get college credits through Southern and it eases up the overload assignments for the full-time faculty as they can hire additional adjuncts. The combination of the hiring at 12 graduate credits in the field with a progression to 18 over four years and the use of equivalent experience has overall support, has been implemented, and is being monitored.

Area of Focus 2

Statement of Focus:

Assessment

- This area of focus was originally assigned as part of the visit.
- This area of focus was identified by the team during the visit.

Relevant Core Component or other HLC requirement:

4b. The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

Determination:

- The HLC requirement is met.
- The HLC requirement is met with concerns (only applicable for Core Components).
- The HLC requirement is not met.

Note: Provide the team's determination for this HLC requirement in Part C as well.

Rationale:

In response to the HLC findings from 2022, Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College has implemented a number of changes including to directly impact the institution's process for assessment of student learning. The assessment model and glossary provide a common language for assessment across the campus as well as a structure that clearly identifies the type of assessment, methodology, and a timeline for each specific area (course, general education, and program).

The College built a comprehensive website that includes definitions for each assessment area, rubrics, templates, and schedules. Program outcomes are provided in a single document as well as curriculum maps for designation of course assessments to meet each program outcome. Examples of completed maps are available in a transparent format that illustrates the collection of data. Continuous improvement is evident in how action steps will be identified and associated with the data.

Course Level Outcomes: Faculty select one course they teach each semester, and then select one outcome from that course to measure. Faculty are responsible for producing one assessment report per semester. Upon the collection of all assessment reports, the Director of Accreditation and Assessment produces a summary that is available on the college's website.

General Education Outcomes: The faculty have grouped General Education Outcomes into categories focused on assessment of:

- Written Communication,
- Verbal Communication,
- Quantitative Literacy,
- Critical Thinking, and
- Intercultural Knowledge and Competence

There are common rubrics used in assessing the general education outcomes.

A new process has been established, and in the fall of 2023, faculty were trained on assessment of general education outcomes and capturing data in Brightspace. Moving forward, each semester faculty will be contacted by the Director of Accreditation and Assessment to identify two general education outcomes to be assessed. Standardized rubrics have been developed by faculty that will be used to collect data on the selected course assessments. Each semester, the Director of Accreditation and Assessment will collect and summarize the data. This data will be used to provide an Assessment Report to provide information for continuous improvement in goal areas assessed.

The new process was piloted in the Summer of 2023 and the program launched in August of 2023. The timeline for data collection is based on the semester schedule with data collection being in September, October, and November for fall semesters and January, February, and March for Spring semesters.

Program Level Outcomes: PLOs are measured through three methods; five-year program review, annual program review, and annual program outcome and curriculum mapping review.

Each program is in the process of completing a program curriculum map. These maps identify courses that introduce, reinforce, and master the program learning outcomes. The program outcome and curriculum mapping process is reviewed annually to ensure courses are up to date and assessments are still aligned as indicated.

Annually, Program Directors submit annual reports that provide information on assessment for that academic year. Each semester faculty will assess a minimum of 20% of the program outcomes (rotated until all outcomes are assessed). This process insures all outcomes are assessed during the five-year program review cycle.

Finally, the College has established a five-year Program Review cycle that utilizes the collected maps and data along with a self-study to identify strengths of weaknesses of each program. These reports are submitted to the Board of Governors.

Co-Curricular Assessment: Co-curricular assessment is in the early stages. While it has been determined that the process will incorporate General Education Outcomes and will be based on the Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) recommendations. The college is now developing program outcomes for each department offering co-curricular activities on campus.

Faculty did demonstrate a deep knowledge of the assessment process, and could discuss the process and importance of assessment. There are several faculty on campus who are enthusiastic and champions for the assessment effort on campus. These faculty have been instrumental in the training of faculty and staff.

Southern will need to continue to expand on the foundation they have built including maintaining the strong momentum faculty current have around assessment. Collaboration between Student Services and Academic Affairs could be stronger as there are currently two separate assessment teams that could easily be merged for collaboration and support.

The foundation of a strong assessment process is in place at Southern. The College will need to continue building and adjusting the process as they move forward with continued data collection and action planning around continuous improvement. The faculty and staff discussed a culture that is student centered and that assessment has been about student success and improving programs and service to provide the best education possible.

Area of Focus 3

Statement of Focus:

- This area of focus was originally assigned as part of the visit.
- This area of focus was identified by the team during the visit.

Relevant Core Component or other HLC requirement:

Determination:

- The HLC requirement is met.
- The HLC requirement is met with concerns(only applicable for Core Components).
- The HLC requirement is not met.

Note: Provide the team's determination for this HLC requirement in Part C as well.

Rationale:

Area of Focus 4

Statement of Focus:

- This area of focus was originally assigned as part of the visit.
- This area of focus was identified by the team during the visit.

Relevant Core Component or other HLC requirement:

Determination:

- The HLC requirement is met.
- The HLC requirement is met with concerns (only applicable for Core Components).
- The HLC requirement is not met.

Note: Provide the team's determination for this HLC requirement in Part C as well.

Rationale:

Area of Focus 5

Statement of Focus:

- This area of focus was originally assigned as part of the visit.
- This area of focus was identified by the team during the visit.

Relevant Core Component or other HLC requirement:

Determination:

- The HLC requirement is met.
- The HLC requirement is met with concerns (only applicable for Core Components).
- The HLC requirement is not met.

Note: Provide the team's determination for this HLC requirement in Part C as well.

Rationale:

Part B: Recommendation and Rationale

Recommendation:

- Evidence demonstrates that no monitoring is required.
- Evidence demonstrates that monitoring is required.
 - Interim report
 - Focused visit
- Evidence demonstrates that HLC sanction is warranted.
 - Notice
 - Probation
- Evidence demonstrates that an HLC Show-Cause Order is warranted.
- Evidence demonstrates that withdrawal of HLC accreditation is warranted.

Only for reviews of institutions on extended Probation:

- Evidence demonstrates that Probation should be removed with no monitoring.
- Evidence demonstrates that Probation should be removed with monitoring.
 - Interim report
 - Focused visit

Rationale for the team’s recommendation:

The two-person peer-review team was tasked with ensuring that Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College has created, implemented, and is following a faculty qualifications policy that ensures they are hiring qualified faculty whether they are full-time, adjunct, or dual credit. Based on the multiple team meetings and the report that the College submitted, it is clear that they have done as required per the Higher Learning Commission.

The second area that the Team was charged with reviewing was assessment of student learning. Specifically, Southern had to provide evidence as to plans for general education assessment implementation and how the efforts are leading to data used to inform improvements in student learning, how Southern conducts program-level assessment and how the implementation of plans is leading to actionable data for improvement of student achievement, and how Southern’s plans for co-curricular assessment are maturing and starting to inform student learning. Based on meetings with various faculty and staff it is clear that they are making positive progress in the assessment of student learning. The College is creating a culture of assessment that is being led by some very dedicated faculty and the Director of Accreditation and Assessment. The Director position was newly created and the individual in the position has a very good understanding of and importance of robust assessment practice at the College.

Changes to the Institution’s HLC Stipulations

If recommending a change in the institution’s stipulations, state both the old and new stipulation and provide a brief rationale for the recommended change. Check the Institutional Status and Requirement (ISR) Report for the current wording. (Note: After the focused visit, the institution’s stipulations should be reviewed in consultation with the institution’s HLC staff liaison.)

N/A

Monitoring

Interim Report

If the team recommends a follow-up interim report, indicate the topic (including the relevant Core Components or other HLC requirements), timeline and expectations for that report. (Note: the team should consider embedding such a report as an emphasis in an upcoming comprehensive evaluation in consultation with the institution’s HLC staff liaison.)

Focused Visit

If the team recommends a follow-up focused visit, indicate the topic (including the relevant Core Components or other HLC requirements), timeline and expectations for that visit. (Note: The team should consider embedding such a visit as an emphasis in an upcoming comprehensive evaluation in consultation with the institution’s staff liaison.)

Part C: Summary of HLC Requirements Evaluated by the Team

Core Component Determinations

Indicate the team’s determinations for the Core Components identified in Part A, questions #5.

Important: If a Core Component was **not** evaluated by the team, mark it as “Not Evaluated.”

Number	Title	Not Evaluated	Met	Met With Concerns	Not Met
1. Mission					
1.A	Core Component 1.A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.B	Core Component 1.B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.C	Core Component 1.C	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct					
2.A	Core Component 2.A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.B	Core Component 2.B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.C	Core Component 2.C	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.D	Core Component 2.D	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.E	Core Component 2.E	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support					
3.A	Core Component 3.A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.B	Core Component 3.B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.C	Core Component 3.C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.D	Core Component 3.D	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement					
4.A	Core Component 4.A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.B	Core Component 4.B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Number	Title	Not Evaluated	Met	Met With Concerns	Not Met
4.C	Core Component 4.C	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning					
5.A	Core Component 5.A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.B	Core Component 5.B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.C	Core Component 5.C	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Determinations Related to Other HLC Requirements

Indicate the team’s determinations for any Eligibility Requirements, Assumed Practices, Federal Compliance Requirements or Obligations of Membership identified in Part A, questions #5. (Add rows to the tables below as needed.)

Eligibility Requirements	Team Determination (Met or Not Met)

Assumed Practices	Team Determination (Met or Not Met)

Federal Compliance Requirements	Team Determination (Met or Not Met)

Obligations of Membership	Team Determination (Met or Not Met)

INTERNAL



Institutional Status and Requirements (ISR) Worksheet

Review Details

Institution: Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College, West Virginia

Type of Review: Monitoring - Focused Visit

Description: A focused visit on faculty credentials and assessment.

Review Dates: 03/11/2024 - 03/12/2024

No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements

Accreditation Status

Status: Accredited

No Change

Recommended Change:

Degrees Awarded: Associates

No Change

Recommended Change:

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2022 - 2023

Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2032 - 2033

No Change

Recommended Change:

Accreditation Stipulations

General:

The institution is approved at the following program level(s): Associate's

The institution is not approved at the following program level(s): Bachelor's, Master's, Specialist, Doctoral

- No Change
- Recommended Change:

Additional Locations:

Prior HLC approval required.

- No Change
- Recommended Change:

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

Approved for distance education courses and programs. The institution has not been approved for correspondence education.

- No Change
- Recommended Change:

Competency-Based Education:

- No Change
- Recommended Change:

Pell-Eligible Prison Education Program:

- No Change
- Recommended Change:

Accreditation Events

Pathway for Reaffirmation of Accreditation: Standard Pathway

- No Change
- Recommended Change:

Upcoming Reviews:

Federal Compliance Review - 2032 - 2033

Comprehensive Evaluation Visit - 2032 - 2033

Mid-Cycle Review - 2026 - 2027

No Change

Recommended Change:

Upcoming Branch Campus or Additional Location Reviews:

No Upcoming Reviews

No Change

Recommended Change:

Monitoring

Upcoming Monitoring Reviews:

Interim Report - 2025 - 2026

An interim report on assessment

No Change

Recommended Change: None. The team determine monitoring on assessment was not needed following the focused visit.

Institutional Data

Academic Programs Offered:

Undergraduate Programs		
Associate Degrees:	19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Change <input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Change:
Baccalaureate Degrees:	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Change <input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Change:
Graduate Programs		
Master's Degrees:	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Change <input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Change:

Specialist Degrees:	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Change <input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Change:
Doctoral Degrees:	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Change <input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Change:
Certificate Programs		
Certificates:	11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Change <input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Change:

Contractual Arrangements:

No Contractual Arrangements

- No Change
- Recommended Change:

Off-Campus Activities

Branch Campuses:

Boone/Lincoln Campus, 3505 Daniel Boone Pkwy, STE A, Danville, West Virginia 25053 UNITED STATES

Wyoming/McDowell Campus, 128 College Drive, Saulsville, West Virginia 25876 UNITED STATES

Williamson Campus, 1601 Armory Drive, Williamson, West Virginia 25661 UNITED STATES

- No Change
- Recommended Change:

Additional Locations:

Lincoln County High School Site, 81 Lincoln Panther Way, Hamlin, West Virginia 25523 UNITED STATES

- No Change
- Recommended Change: