A Participant Institution is one that elects to maintain its Commission accreditation by regularly providing the Academic Quality Improvement Project with evidence of the vitality of its academic quality improvement initiative and the results that initiative has achieved — instead of going through the traditional NCA re-accreditation process involving self-study and a comprehensive on-site evaluation visit. Participation is subject to approval by AQIP and the Commission. The Academic Quality Improvement Project’s goal is to create a culture, a set of shared understandings, with its Participant Institutions that will:

- enhance communication, ongoing learning, and public understanding of systematic academic quality improvement;
- encourage systems-thinking and provide resources that will stimulate continuous improvement and accountability;
- promote, within and among institutions, a culture of involvement and shared responsibility for academic quality; and
- develop the critical judgment, skills, and capabilities required for systematic quality improvement.

Participant Institution Responsibilities:

Establish and align systems, processes, and structures to stimulate and sustain institutional quality improvement initiatives, organizing human, financial, physical, and technological resources to enhance the success of these efforts, by:

- engaging faculty, staff, and other constituents in defining and implementing quality improvement efforts so that an institution-wide culture and understanding of systematic academic quality improvement evolves;
- providing broad-based involvement in activities and in professional development that build an awareness and understanding of the principles and practices of systematic quality improvement at all levels of the institution; and
- establishing systems for communication across staff, students, and other constituents and stakeholders regarding the institution’s involvement and progress in systematic Academic Quality Improvement.

Participate in AQIP for the foreseeable future (with the understanding that ceasing to pursue continuous quality improvement systematically will return the institution to the traditional accreditation process with a comprehensive visit within five years) by:

- participating in a Strategy Forum (formerly known as the Collaborative Goal-Setting Workshop) within one year after becoming an AQIP Participant Institution, a quality review approximately three years later, as well as annual updates;
- continuing to participate in Strategy Forums, annual updates, and quality reviews on a 3 – 5 year cycle;
- informing AQIP promptly of major institutional conditions, events, or changes that could negatively affect the institution’s viability, operations, or quality improvement efforts;
- continuing to observe other Commission policies and obligations of membership (e.g., concerning institutional change and dynamics, complaints, public information, etc.); and
- continuing to satisfy the Commission’s General Institutional Requirements (or their successor requirements), responding promptly to any inquiries the Commission receives regarding possible violations of these fundamental NCA membership expectations.