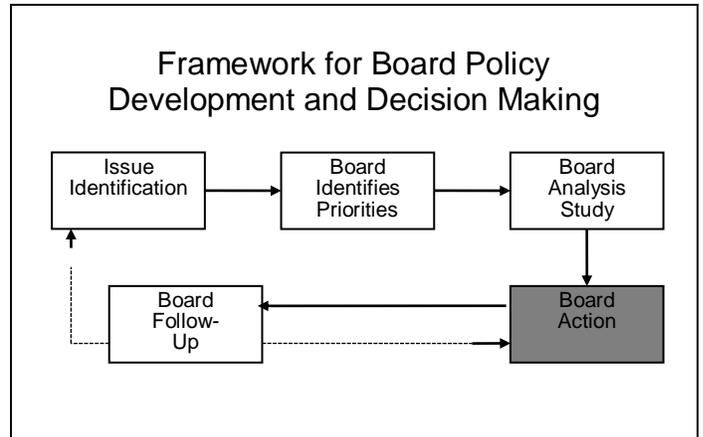


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

November 16, 2016



- Agenda Item:** Rules: 281 IAC Chapter 24 – Community College Accreditation (Notice)
- Iowa Goal:** Individuals will pursue postsecondary education in order to drive economic success.
- State Board Role/Authority:** Iowa Code section 256.7(5) gives the State Board of Education the statutory authority to adopt rules under chapter 17A.
- Presenters:** Jeremy Varner, Administrator
Division of Community Colleges
- Phil Wise, Administrative Rules Co-coordinator
- Attachments:** 1
- Recommendation:** It is recommended that the State Board give public notice of its intent to amend Chapter 24.
- Background:** These amendments update accreditation standards for Iowa’s community colleges. Included is the alignment of faculty standards in 281 Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) chapter 24 with those of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the regional accrediting body for Iowa’s community colleges.

There is also established a statewide task force to develop procedures and guidelines to ensure ongoing compliance with HLC standards.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT [281]

Notice of Intended Action

Pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code section 256.7(5), the State Board of Education hereby proposes to amend Chapter 24, “Community College Accreditation,” Iowa Administrative Code.

Revised Chapter 24 incorporate changes to sections of Iowa Administrative Code which establish accreditation standards for Iowa’s community colleges. Several definitions were added to or revised under 281 – IAC 24.3. Several subsections of 281 – IAC 24.5 are revised, including subsections regarding additional state standards pertaining to faculty qualifications, faculty load, and special needs. The proposed changes under 281 – IAC 24.5(1) *Faculty*, align IAC standards with those of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) (formerly the “North Central Association of Colleges and Schools”), the regional accrediting body for Iowa’s community colleges, recently revised and effective September 1, 2017. Revisions also establish a statewide task force [24.5(1)(d)] to develop procedures, guidelines and documentation and ensure ongoing compliance with HLC standards. Revisions to 281 – 24.5(2)(b) *Faculty Load* lift the daily restriction on Career and Technical Education faculty load (maximum 6 hours) and simply maintains the aggregate 30 contact hours per week. 281 – 24.5(3) *Special Needs*, the proposed title change to “Special needs and protected classes” aligns with Office for Civil Rights verbiage and expands this standard by incorporating other categories protected by state or federal civils rights legislation.

An agency-wide waiver provision is provided in 281 – Chapter 4.

Interested individuals may make written comments on the proposed rules until 4:30 p.m. on January 6, 2017. Comments on the proposed rules should be directed to Phil Wise, Iowa Department of Education, Second Floor, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146; telephone (515)281-4835; email phil.wise@iowa.gov ; or fax (515) 242-5988.

A public hearing will be held on January 6, 2017, from 11 to 12 p.m. in the State Board Room, Second Floor, Grimes State Office Building, East 14th Street and Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa, at which time persons may present their views either orally or in writing. Any person who intends to attend the public hearing and has special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact and advise the Department of Education of specific needs by calling (515) 281-5295.

After analysis and review of this rule making, no impact on jobs has been found.

These amendments are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 260C.47 and 260C.48, and align the Iowa Department of Education's accreditation processes with those of the Higher Learning Commission, the regional accrediting body.

The following amendments are proposed:

Adopt the following amendments to 281 – Chapter 24.

ITEM 1. Amend rule 24.3 as follows:

281—24.3(260C) Definitions. For purposes of interpreting rule 281—24.5(260C), the following definitions shall apply:

“Applied liberal arts and sciences course.” An applied liberal arts and sciences course is a course classified as arts and sciences in Iowa’s common course numbering system that primarily consists of hands-on or occupational skill development, including, but not limited to accounting, ceramics, criminal investigation, dance, drama, music, photography, and physical education.

“Department.” Department refers to the Iowa department of education.

“Director.” Director refers to the director of the department.

“Field of instruction.” ~~The determination of what constitutes each f~~Field of instruction indicates the discipline or occupational area within which an instructor teaches, which aligns with the content should be based on accepted practices of the course being taught as indicated by the course prefix, title, or description~~regionally accredited two- and four-year institutions of higher education.~~

“Full-time instructor.” An instructor is considered to be full-time if the community college board of directors designates the instructor as full-time. ~~Consideration of~~ Determination of full-time status shall be based on local board-approved contracts.

“Higher Learning Commission.” The Higher Learning Commission is the regional accrediting authority recognized by the United States Department of Education ~~within the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools~~. Iowa Code sections 260C.47 and 260C.48 require that the state accreditation process be integrated with that of the ~~North Central Association of Colleges and Schools~~ Higher Learning Commission.

“Instructors meeting minimum requirements.” ~~A community college instructor meeting the minimum requirements of Iowa Code Supplement section 260C.48(1) as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, House File 2679, is an instructor under contract for at least half time or more teaching college credit courses. Beginning July 1, 2011, a community college instructor meeting the minimum requirements is an instructor teaching college credit courses. College credit courses shall meet requirements as specified in rule 281—21.2(260C), and meet program requirements for college parallel, and career and technical education, and career option programs as specified in rule 281—21.4(260C) and Iowa Code chapter 260C.~~

“Joint enrollment.” Joint enrollment refers to any community college credit course offered to students enrolled in a secondary school. Courses offered for joint enrollment include courses delivered through contractual agreements between school districts and community colleges, courses delivered through the postsecondary enrollment options program, and college credit courses taken independently by tuition-paying secondary school students.

“Minimum of 12 graduate hours.” ~~Full time arts and sciences instructors must possess a master’s degree and complete a minimum of 12 graduate hours in their field of instruction. The 12 graduate hours may be within the master’s degree requirements or independent of the master’s degree, but all hours must be in the instructor’s field of instruction.~~

“Organization.” ~~Organization is synonymous with community college and is used in~~

~~this chapter to align with accreditation terminology used by the Higher Learning Commission.~~

“Qualifying graduate field or major.” A qualifying graduate field or major represents an academic discipline in which an instructor must have earned credit in order to teach courses in specified fields of instruction.

~~“Recent and relevant Relevant tested work experience.”~~ An hour of recent and ~~r~~Relevant work~~tested~~ experience is equal to 60 minutes. ~~The community college shall determine what constitutes recent~~refers to the breadth, relevant~~depth, and currency of work experience that relates to the instructor’s occupational and teaching area. The college shall maintain documentation of~~outside of the classroom in real-world situations relevant to the instructor’s educational and work experience field of instruction.

ITEM 2. Amend rule 24.5 as follows:

281—24.5(260C) Accreditation components and criteria—additional state standards. To be granted accreditation by the state board of education, an Iowa community college shall also meet additional standards pertaining to minimum or quality assurance standards for faculty (Iowa Code section 260C.48(1)); faculty load (Iowa Code section 260C.48(2)); special needs and protected classes (Iowa Code section 260C.48(3)); career and technical education program evaluation (Iowa Code section 258.4(7)); Facilities, parking lots and roads; strategic planning; quality faculty plan (Iowa Code section 260C.36); and senior year plus programs (Iowa Code chapter 261E).

ITEM 3. Amend subrule 24.5(1) as follows:

24.5(1) Faculty. Community college-employed instructors ~~who are under contract for at least half-time or more, and by July 1, 2011, all instructors who teach in~~ college credit courses ~~career and technical education or arts and sciences shall meet minimum standards and institutional quality faculty plan requirements. In accordance with Iowa Code Supplement section 260C.48(1) as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, House File 2679,~~ s~~Standards shall at a minimum require that all community college instructors who are under contract for at least half-time or more, and by July 1, 2011, all instructors meet the following requirements:~~

a. Instructors teaching courses in the ~~subject~~-area of career and technical education shall be registered, certified, or licensed in the occupational area in which the state requires registration, certification, or licensure, ~~and shall hold the appropriate registration, certificate, or license for the occupational area in which the instructor is teaching,~~ and shall meet either of the following qualifications:

(1) ~~APossess a baccalaureate or graduate degree or higher in the area-field of instruction or a related area of study or occupational area~~ in which the instructor is teaching classes.

(2) ~~Special~~ Possess a combination of education, training, and at least 6,000 hours of recent and relevant worktested experience in the occupational area or related occupational areafield of instruction in which the instructor teaches classes. If the instructor possesses less than a baccalaureate degree is a licensed practitioner who holds a career and technical endorsement under Iowa Code chapter 272, relevant work experience in the occupational area includes, but is not limited to, classroom instruction in a career and technical education subject area offered by a school district or accredited nonpublic school.

b. Instructors in the ~~subject~~-area of arts and sciences shall meet eitherone of the following qualifications:

(1) Possess a master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited graduate school; ~~and have successfully completed a minimum of 12 credit hours of graduate level courses in each field of instruction in which the instructor is teaching classes.~~

(2) ~~Have two or more years of successful experience~~ Possess a master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited graduate school and have completed a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in a professional combination of the qualifying graduate fields or area identified as related to the field of instruction in which the instructor is teaching classes and in which postbaccalaureate recognition or professional licensure is necessary for practice, including but not limited to the fields or areas of accounting, engineering, law, law enforcement, and medicine. These 18 graduate semester hours must include at least six credits in the specific subject area-course content being taught, with at

least 12 credits required for courses that serve as prerequisites for junior-level courses at transfer institutions.

(a) For the transition period, an instructor deemed qualified to teach with a master's degree and 12 graduate semester hours within a field of instruction who demonstrates adequate progress toward meeting the goals of his or her individual quality faculty plan shall remain qualified to teach until the date specified in the quality faculty plan or September 1, 2017, whichever comes first.

(3) For courses identified as applied liberal arts and sciences, possess at least a bachelor's degree and a combination of formal training and professional tested experience equivalent to 6,000 hours. Instructors shall hold appropriate registration, certification, or licensure in occupational areas in which such credentials are necessary for practice.

~~c Developmental education and adult education noncredit instructors employed half-time or more may or may not meet minimum requirements depending on their teaching assignments and the relevancy of~~ are not subject to standards to the courses they are teaching and the transferability of such courses under this section. If instructors are teaching credit courses reported in arts and sciences or career and technical education, it is recommended that these Adult education instructors shall meet minimum standards set forth in 281—subrule 21.3(1), paragraph “a” or “b” 23.6. By July 1, 2011, all instructors teaching credit courses shall meet minimum standards.

d. A faculty standards council shall be convened by the department to review procedures for establishing and reviewing minimum instructor qualifications and definitions for “field of instruction,” “applied liberal arts and sciences courses,” “qualifying graduate field or major,” and “relevant tested experience.” Definitions shall be based on accepted practices of regionally accredited two- and four-year institutions of higher education.

(1) The council shall include faculty and academic administrators and meet at least annually. The council shall make recommendations to a committee consisting of the chief academic officers of Iowa's fifteen community colleges, which shall adopt definitions

and minimum faculty qualification standards to be utilized for the state accreditation process. Each community college shall adhere to the adopted definitions and minimum faculty qualification standards.

(2) When utilizing relevant tested experience to qualify an instructor to teach classes within a specific field of instruction, each community college shall maintain well-defined policies, procedures, and documentation in alignment with the adopted definitions and minimum faculty qualification standards. This documentation shall demonstrate that the instructor possesses the experience and expertise necessary to teach in the specified field of instruction and is current in his or her discipline. When assessing tested experience, an hour of relevant work is equal to 60 minutes and one full-time year of relevant work is equal to 2,000 hours.

ITEM 4. Amend paragraph 24.5(2)(b) as follows:

b. Career and technical education. The full-time teaching load of an instructor in career and technical education programs shall not exceed ~~6 hours per day, and an~~ aggregate of 30 hours per week or the equivalent. An instructor may also teach the equivalent of an additional 3 credit hours, provided the instructor consents to this additional assignment. When the teaching assignment includes classroom subjects (nonlaboratory), consideration shall be given to establishing the teaching load more in conformity with that of paragraph 24.5(2), paragraph “a.”

ITEM 5. Amend subrule 24.5(3) as follows:

24.5(3) *Special needs and protected classes.* Community colleges shall provide equal access to the full range of program offerings and services including, but not limited to, in recruitment, enrollment, and placement activities for students with ~~disabilities~~ special education needs or protected by state or federal civil rights regulation. Students with disabilities shall be given access to the full range of ~~course~~ program offerings at a college through reasonable accommodations.

ITEM 6. Amend subrule 24.5(4) as follows:

24.5(4) *Career and technical education evaluation.* The director of the department

shall ~~ensure that Iowa's community colleges~~ annually review at least 20 percent of ~~the~~ approved career and technical education programs ~~as a basis for continuing approval~~. The community college career and technical program review and evaluation system must ensure that the programs:

ITEM 7. Amend paragraph 24.5(4)(c) as follows:

c. Meet educational needs of the students and employment community, including students with ~~disabilities, both male and female students, and students from diverse racial and ethnic groups~~ special education needs or protected by state or federal civil rights regulations.

ITEM 8. Amend paragraph 24.5(4)(g) as follows:

g. Provide students with support services and eliminate access barriers to education and employment for ~~both traditional and nontraditional students, men and women, persons from diverse racial and ethnic groups, and persons with disabilities~~ students with special education needs or protected by state or federal civil rights regulations.

ITEM 9. Amend subparagraph 24.5(7)(b)(9) as follows:

(9) Compliance with the faculty accreditation standards of the ~~North Central Association of Colleges and Schools~~ Higher Learning Commission and with faculty standards required under specific programs offered by the community college that are accredited by other accrediting agencies. It is recommended that the plan provide for the uniform reports with substantiating data currently required for ~~North Central Association of Colleges and Schools~~ the Higher Learning Commission accreditation.

ITEM 10. Amend subparagraph 24.5(7)(c)(3) as follows:

(3) Documentation submitted by the college that the college is implementing the approved plan, including, but not limited to, evidence of plan monitoring, evaluation and updating; evidence that the faculty has attained, or is progressing toward attaining, minimum competencies and standards contained in Iowa Code section 260C.48 as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, House File 2679, and 2007 Iowa Acts, Senate File 588; evidence that faculty members have been notified of their progress toward attaining

minimum competencies and standards; and evidence that the college meets the minimum accreditation requirements for faculty required by the ~~North Central Association of Colleges and Schools~~ Higher Learning Commission.