



Community College Accreditation Guidance – Facilities

Overview

This document contains guidance regarding the requirements of the facility plan for Iowa's community college state accreditation purposes.

Criteria for Accreditation

A facilities master plan will be evaluated according to the criteria described below. Each college is expected to have a board-approved, comprehensive (written) plan including, at a minimum, the components outlined in Criteria 2 below.

Criteria 1: Board approval

Planning includes tentative program approval of a master campus plan.

1.1. 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(a): Facilities master planning. Each community college shall present evidence of adequate planning, including a board-approved facilities plan. Planning shall include tentative program approval; a master campus plan; written educational specifications; and site plot showing location of proposed and existing facilities, elevations and floor plans.

An institution shall be in compliance with 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(a) if the institution provides the following documentation:

- A board meeting agenda, minutes, etc., which demonstrate the institution's board has approved the college's facilities plan.

Criteria 2: Minimum plan components

At a minimum, plans shall include the provisions outlined in 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(b), (c), (d), and (e).

2.1 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(b): Accessibility. All new or remodeled facilities (buildings and programs offered in such facilities) and services in such facilities shall be made functional and usable for persons with special needs and shall comply with Iowa Code Chapter 104A and the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. §12101).

An institution shall be in compliance with the accessibility provisions of 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(b) if the institution provides the following documentation:

- Policy statement(s) prescribing how the institution will adhere to the requirements of Iowa Code Chapter 104A and the Americans with Disabilities Act is included in the institution's facilities plan.
- The most recent equity-accessibility report resulting from an Iowa Department of Education equity review or the most recent self or third-party assessment conducted in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- A Department-approved Voluntary Compliance Plan or similar action plan that addresses the college's remedies for any concerns or compliance issues identified in the most recent equity-accessibility or ADA Compliance review.

2.2. 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(b): Safety. All new or remodeled facilities (buildings and programs offered in such facilities) and services in such facilities address issues of campus safety and security as required by Iowa Code Chapter 260C and the federal Clery Act (20 U.S.C. §1091(f)).

An institution shall be in compliance with the safety requirements of 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(b) if the institution provides the following documentation:

- A policy or policies detailing how the institution will comply with the safety requirements of 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(b). Policy or policies are included in the institution's facilities plan.
- Site plans or construction documentation regarding the installation of safety features such as entry locks, door monitors, campus cameras, emergency phones in parking lots, improved lighting, etc.
- A copy of the annual security report as required by and in compliance with 20 U.S.C. §1092(f) - the Clery Act.
- Per Iowa Code 260C.14(18), a written policy detailing the following areas related to sexual assault: counseling, campus security, education (including prevention, protection, and the rights and duties of students and employees of the community college); and facilitating the accurate and prompt reporting of sexual abuse to the duly constituted law enforcement authorities. The institution provides evidence that the information is disseminated during student registration and college and housing orientation.

2.3. 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(b): Roads and parking areas. All new or remodeled parking areas and roads shall comply with all state and federal rules and regulations dealing with roads, parking ramps, and accessibility requirements

An institution shall be compliance with the roads and parking area provisions of 281 – IAC 24.5(5)(b) if the institution provides the following documentation:

- A policy or policies which detail how the institution will comply with the requirements of 281 – IAC 22.5(5)(b) and all federal and state rules and regulations governing the design and construction of roads and parking areas.
- Evidence of compliance with state and federal regulations such as construction or landscape architectural documents or drawings, city variances regarding number of parking spaces, etc. Institutions shall make clear which state and federal regulation(s) the evidence satisfies.

2.4. 281 – IAC 24.5(5)(c): Adequate facilities. All administrative facilities, classrooms, laboratories and related facilities shall be educationally adequate for the purpose for which they are designed.

An institution shall be compliance with 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(c) if the institution provides the following documentation:

- A policy or policies which states the institution's vision for providing adequate and sufficient facilities, classrooms, laboratories, and related facilities, and the institution's criteria for determining the adequacy of facilities, classrooms, laboratories, and related facilities. The institution includes these policies in their facilities plan.
- Evidence of a self-assessment or recent (within last two years) review of the adequacy and capacity of the institution's facilities, classrooms, laboratories, and related facilities.

2.5. 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(d): Library or learning resource center. A library or learning resource center shall be planned as part of the master campus plan and space made for library or learning resource center services within the initial construction. The library or learning resource center shall be adequately staffed with qualified professionals and skilled nonprofessional personnel. The library or learning resource center materials collection of a community college shall be accessible and adequate in size and scope to serve effectively the number and variety of programs offered and the number of students enrolled, including students enrolled at distance and satellite sites. The library or learning resource center materials shall show evidence of having been selected by faculty as well as professional library or learning resource staff and shall be kept up-to-date. The budget of the library or learning resource center shall be appropriate for the programs and services offered by the community college.

An institution shall be compliance with 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(d) if the institution provides the following documentation:

- Evidence that adequate space has been allocated for a library or learning resource center in the facilities plan, including specific campus construction/remodeling documentation.
- Evidence that the library or learning resource center is appropriately accessible to all students, including distance learners. Such evidence shall include, but is not limited to:
 1. The hours of operation for the library or learning resource center;
 2. Network accessibility for online resources;
 3. Presence of a help desk, which is appropriately staffed;
 4. Policies which communicate all relevant information, including the information mentioned above. Such policies are included in the student handbook and college catalog.

2.6. 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(e): Student center. An area of the college shall be provided where students may gather informally and where food is available.

An institution shall be compliance with 281 - IAC 24.5(5)(e) if the institution provides the following documentation:

- Evidence that adequate informal gathering and eating space has been provided to students. Such space shall be clearly indicated on site plans. Institutions shall make students aware of such facilities in the student handbook.

Resources

- ADA.gov - Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice
- [Great Plains ADA Center](#)
- [Midwest Equity Assistance Center](#)
- [Iowa Civil Rights Commission](#)
- [State Building Code Provisions](#) - State Fire Marshall Division of the Iowa Department of Public Safety
- [The Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting](#) - U.S. Department of Education

Contact Amy Gieseke at amy.gieseke@iowa.gov or (515) 858-2234 with comments or questions regarding the facilities guidance or other state community college accreditation requirements. More information on the state accreditation process is available on the Department [website](#).