



Senior Year Plus

Postsecondary Course Audit Committee

Audit Plan for 2023-2024

April 2023



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Table of Contents

Committee Overview	4
Committee Membership.....	4
Overview.....	5
Initial Accreditation Activities	6
Reaccreditation Activities	7
Prior Year Report.....	8
Standards	8
Audit Plan for 2023-24	8
Appendix A: NACEP Accreditation Status of Iowa Community Colleges.....	9

Committee Overview

The Senior Year Plus Postsecondary Course Audit Committee was established by the Iowa Department of Education in May 2009. Mandated by Iowa Code 256.17, the committee is charged with reviewing samples of postsecondary courses delivered through Senior Year Plus programs. Standards for review are established by the committee and approved by the department.

If the committee determines that standards are not met for a concurrent enrollment course, the course is not eligible for school district supplementary weighted funding until the issue is remedied and the committee reinstates eligibility.

Findings are posted annually on the department's website in the form of this annual report. This annual report also includes the audit plan for fiscal year 2023-24. Committee membership includes representatives of K-12 school districts, community colleges and public universities.

Committee Membership

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Overview

The Senior Year Plus Postsecondary Course Audit Committee is charged with annually auditing postsecondary courses offered to high school students in accordance with Iowa Code chapter 261E. The committee adopted an efficient process to meet this charge that leverages the mandated audit to ensure community college participation in a larger, sustained quality improvement process. The plan for fiscal years 2010-2015 entailed the beginning of a thorough review of the quality of concurrent enrollment offerings while limiting duplication with existing accountability mechanisms. The initial fiscal year 2010 plan was approved by the director of the Iowa Department of Education in May 2009 and the most recent plan was approved in April 17, 2023.

During the years of the committee's work, the scope of the audit was limited to concurrent enrollment courses (delivered by community colleges). In future years, if provided necessary resources, the scope may be broadened to include other Senior Year Plus offerings including Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), Project Lead the Way or Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

The committee's review was limited to specific concurrent enrollment standards impacting community colleges and school districts. Review criteria include those stated in Iowa Code 256.17, as well as other criteria in the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnership (NACEP) standards. The charge of the committee is to review course syllabi, instructor qualifications, examples of student products and the results of student assessments. In total, NACEP utilizes 16 national standards for curriculum, partnership, faculty, students, assessment, and program evaluation that encompass the mandated review criteria, as well as other Senior Year Plus requirements (Iowa Code 261E and 256.11) and appropriate practices. NACEP standards are in close alignment with Senior Year Plus requirements, as well as the Standards for Concurrent Enrollment Courses adopted by the community college chief academic officers in 2008. The department prepared a [crosswalk](#) which details the alignment between Senior Year Plus requirements and NACEP standards.

To ensure that NACEP standards are met, the organization utilizes an accreditation process. The audit committee has accepted institutions' submission of evidence of obtaining accredited status to demonstrate audit criteria are met. This evidence is reviewed through the state's community college accreditation process.

The intent of coupling this initiative with the NACEP accreditation process is to leverage the audit committee to incentivize participation in a larger, sustained quality improvement effort. This effort aligns with other accountability mechanisms, including the state accreditation processes for community colleges and school districts. Those processes have been modified to increase accountability for Senior Year Plus programming.

The NACEP accreditation process involves a rigorous peer review of concurrent enrollment practices to ensure that institutions demonstrate they meet or exceed measurable criteria for each standard. The process includes a self-study and a thorough review by a peer group from accredited institutions which include public two and four-year universities. Once accredited, institutions go through a full reaccreditation process every seven years. Accredited status certifies that courses delivered through concurrent enrollment are the same as other community college courses in terms of faculty credentials, curricula and syllabi, assessment and learning outcomes.

Initial Accreditation Activities

As of the 2015-16 academic year, all 15 community colleges have become full members of NACEP. Following a recommendation of the community college chief academic officers, the Iowa Association of Community College Presidents stated its commitment to the process and having each college obtain accredited status expeditiously.

The audit committee stated in its 2011-12 audit plan if any college failed to make sufficient progress in obtaining NACEP accreditation, a rigorous alternative method for evaluating audit criteria would be implemented. The alternative method would ensure that the standards established by the committee and approved by the department were satisfactorily met. If any courses were found to have failed to meet the committee's standards through the alternative process, the course(s) would be ineligible for future school district supplementary weighted funding. The committee could reinstate course eligibility if corrective action was taken to remedy concerns and bring the course into compliance with the audit criteria within the specified timeframe. All audit findings would be shared with involved institutions and be shared with the public via the Department's website.

In May 2011, the audit committee determined that each of Iowa's 15 community colleges continued to make adequate progress toward obtaining accredited status. Des Moines Area Community College sought and obtained accreditation during the organization's 2009-10 accreditation cycle (accredited in fall 2010) and the other 14 signed letters of intent to apply during the 2011-12 cycle. An additional 11 Iowa community colleges attained accredited status the following year, for a total of 12 accredited institutions at the end of the 2011-12 application cycle.

If any college was not able to obtain accredited status and did not commit to seeking accredited status in the following application cycle (accredited in fall 2013), the audit committee would have reconvened and adopted an alternative method as previously described. This did not occur since the remaining colleges remained committed to obtaining accreditation from NACEP.

According to the 2012-13 audit plan, colleges that were unable to obtain accredited status during the 2011-12 application cycle were subject to state review. The reviews were limited in scope and focused on core requirements in Iowa Code 256.17, including instructor qualifications and course syllabi.

Per the 2012-13 audit plan, the department requested additional documentation from each of the remaining three nonaccredited colleges including: the NACEP peer evaluation report identifying deficiencies, the college's plan for addressing identified deficiencies, and a letter reaffirming the institution's commitment to obtaining accredited status.

The Department analyzed the documentation of the three colleges subject to the review, and two provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they did not violate the Senior Year Plus requirements that would be included in a limited state review. In July 2012, the committee noted these institutions were making sufficient progress and met expectations for fiscal year 2012. The third did not provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate review requirements were met and was subject to a site visit. One issue was identified through the review and was immediately remedied. In November 2012, the committee noted the last college met expectations for fiscal year 2012.

During fiscal year 2013, two of the remaining three community colleges obtained accredited status. Iowa Lakes Community College did not obtain accredited status but remained committed to the process. The committee determined that a mentoring arrangement between Hawkeye Community College and Iowa Lakes Community College would be used to demonstrate the college was meeting standards until its next application was processed. Through the arrangement, Hawkeye Community College identified deficiencies in Iowa Lakes' 2012-13 NACEP application and provided technical assistance regarding concurrent enrollment program delivery, documentation protocols and application preparation.

Iowa Lakes Community College's NACEP accreditation application was submitted in July 2014. The application, including all required evidence, was audited by a team of peer reviewers from accredited two- and four-year institutions. The review team submitted their findings to the NACEP Accreditation Commission, which made a final accreditation decision in April 2015. Following their April 2015 meeting, the NACEP Accreditation Commission announced that Iowa Lakes Community College obtained accredited status. Accordingly, all 15 of Iowa's community colleges have satisfied this committee's criteria for obtaining accredited status by NACEP.

Reaccreditation Activities

Des Moines Area Community College was the first institution to obtain NACEP reaccreditation in 2017. The majority (eleven) of the community colleges pursued and obtained reaccreditation in 2019: Eastern Iowa Community College, Hawkeye Community College, Indian Hills Community College, Iowa Central Community College, Iowa Valley Community College District, Kirkwood Community College, North Iowa Area Community College, Northeast Iowa Community College, Northwest Iowa Community College, Southwestern Community College and Western Iowa Tech Community College; and Southeastern Community College was granted reaccreditation during the 2019-20 NACEP application cycle.

Iowa Western Community College sought reaccreditation during the 2019-20 application cycle; however, based on the application for submission, the Commission voted and determined an extension of one year would be granted to the institution to provide evidence and address the Commission's concerns, which allowed the institution to remain accredited through the 2020-21 academic year. The Commission reached this decision based on the findings that the program provided evidence of compliance with the majority of NACEP's 16 accreditation standards. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission postponed the 2020-21 accreditation cycle and granted institutions receiving one-year extensions up to two years, if needed, to provide adequate evidence. As a result, Iowa Western was provided an extension of up to two years of its current accreditation term through the end of the 2021-22 academic year. As a result of newly implemented practices by NACEP, a site visit by the assigned peer review team is now required of all institutions seeking accreditation. NACEP conducted a site visit (virtually) with Iowa Western on March 21, 2022 to discuss their progress towards reaccreditation with a final vote to determine reaccreditation occurring during the NACEP Accreditation Commissions spring 2022 meeting.

Prior Year Report

All community colleges continue to maintain NACEP accredited status.

The NACEP Accreditation Commission convened on April 19, 2022 during their spring meeting and voted to accredit Iowa Western Community College. Iowa Western Community College remains accredited through academic year 2029-30.

Iowa Lakes Community College remains accredited through the end of the 2022-23 academic year. The institution began the NACEP re-accreditation process beginning in December 2021 when the institution submitted their pre-application for accreditation. Iowa Lakes submitted their full accreditation application and supporting evidence of NACEP's 16 accreditation standards in June 2022. A site visit was conducted (virtually) in January 2023 by the assigned coordinating commissioner and members of the peer review team. The visit provided Iowa Lakes with the opportunity to further demonstrate compliance with NACEP standards. The Commission will vote no later than May 1, 2023 to accredit, deny accreditation or provide a one-year accreditation extension to Iowa Lakes Community College.

Standards

Per a unanimous reaffirmation vote of the Postsecondary Course Audit Committee at its April 2023 meeting, the [NACEP standards](#) are the standards by which the committee reviews concurrent enrollment courses. The standards were approved by the Iowa Department of Education.

Audit Plan for 2023-24

The 2023-24 audit plan requires all community colleges continue to demonstrate that the committee's criteria are met through NACEP accreditation. The plan does not provide for an alternative means for demonstrating state standards are met. All community colleges must demonstrate standards are met through NACEP accredited status.

Concurrent enrollment courses provided by institutions without NACEP accredited status will not be eligible for supplementary weighted funding (to school districts) per Iowa Code 256.17. The committee has determined the NACEP accreditation process is effective in ensuring the quality of concurrent enrollment offerings. The committee will continue to review the effectiveness of this process in ensuring the quality of concurrent enrollment in future years.

The committee will also continue to review the scope of reviews and consider whether to broaden audits to courses delivered through other Senior Year Plus programs. The committee's plan was approved by the Iowa Department of Education in April 17, 2023.

Appendix A: NACEP Accreditation Status of Iowa Community Colleges

Institution	Concurrent Enrollment Partnership	Initially Accredited	Reaccredited	Reapply Date	Accredited through Academic Year
Des Moines Area Community College	DMACC Career Advantage	2010	2017	2024	2024-25
Eastern Iowa Community College	College Connection	2012	2019	2026	2026-27
Hawkeye Community College	College Now!	2012	2019	2026	2026-27
Indian Hills Community College	Connect 2 College	2012	2019	2026	2026-27
Iowa Central Community College	Earlybird Program	2012	2019	2026	2026-27
Iowa Lakes Community College	Career Connect	2015	Pending	2022	2022-23
Iowa Valley Community College District	Concurrent Enrollment Program	2012	2019	2026	2026-27
Iowa Western Community College	College Early Start Program	2013	2022	2029	2029-30
Kirkwood Community College	Credit in High School	2012	2019	2026	2026-27
North Iowa Community College	Career Link	2012	2019	2026	2026-27
Northeast Iowa Community College	High School Partnerships	2012	2019	2026	2026-27
Northwest Iowa Community College	College For You	2012	2019	2026	2026-27
Southeastern Community College	JumpStart	2013	2020	2027	2027-28
Southwestern Community College	Concurrent Enrollment Program	2012	2019	2026	2026-27
Western Iowa Tech Community College	College Now	2012	2019	2026	2026-27