

PROGRAM APPROVAL

GUIDELINES FOR IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

ISSUED MAY 2014



COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

Phone: 515-281-8260

Fax: 515-242-5988

www.educateiowa.gov

Jeremy Varner

Administrator

515-281-8260

jeremy.varner@iowa.gov

Kent Farver

Bureau Chief

515-281-0319

kent.farver@iowa.gov

Barbara Burrows

Consultant

515-725-2247

barbara.burrows@iowa.gov

Pradeep Kotamraju

Bureau Chief

515-281-4716

Pradeep.kotamraju@iowa.gov

**State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa
50319-0146**

State Board of Education

Charles C. Edwards, Jr., President, Des Moines
Michael L. Knedler, Vice President, Council Bluffs
Brooke Axiotis, Des Moines
Michael Bearden, Gladbrook
Diane Crookham-Johnson, Oskaloosa
Angela English, Dyersville
Rosie Hussey, Clear Lake
Mike May, Spirit Lake
Mary Ellen Miller, Mason City and Corydon
Hannah Rens, Student Member, Sioux City

Administration

Brad Buck, Director and Executive Officer
of the State Board of Education

Division of Community Colleges

Jeremy Varner, Division Administrator

Bureau of Community Colleges

Kent Farver, Bureau Chief
Barbara Burrows, Program Quality Consultant

Bureau of Career and Technical Education

Pradeep Kotamraju, Bureau Chief

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.). If you have questions or complaints related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E. 14th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, telephone number: 515-281-5295, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661-4544, telephone number: 312-730-1560, FAX number: 312-730-1576, TDD number: 877-521-2172, email: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov.

Foreword

Dear community college colleagues,

With the promulgation of administrative rules and the implementation of a web-based program and common course numbering management system (CurricUNET), it was appropriate to update the Department of Education's guidelines for the community college program approval and review processes.

The program approval process is designed to ensure the quality of instructional programs and their compliance with state, regional, and federal requirements. To that end, all new career and technical education programs and changes to existing programs must be approved by the Department.

In Iowa, individual colleges have the primary responsibility for developing and modifying instructional programs, as well as for administrating and overseeing their own program evaluation processes. The Department's program approval and review processes support and complement these college programmatic processes to ensure compliance with Iowa Code and accreditation standards. Department consultants and administrators are committed to providing content and technical assistance to shepherd colleges through these processes expeditiously.

The development and evaluation of CTE programs ensures quality and cost-effective delivery of instruction to students. This manual provides an overview of the program approval and review processes, program/degree requirements in Iowa Code and Iowa Administrative Rules, and guidance on efficient utilization of CurricUNET's academic program and common course numbering management system.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad A. Buck". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Brad A. Buck
Director
Iowa Department of Education

State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa
50319-0146

Division of Community Colleges

Jeremy Varner, Division Administrator

Bureau of Community Colleges

Kent Farver, Bureau Chief

Bureau of Career and Technical Education

Pradeep Kotamraju, Bureau Chief

Department of Education Consultants
Related to the Program Approval Process or CurricUNET

Barbara Burrows, *Program Quality and CurricUNET*

Vlad Bassis, *Community College MIS and Reporting/Data in CurricUNET*

Kelli Diemer, *Perkins Consultant for Regions 11*
Discipline Consultant - Business, Computers, Marketing

Dale Gruis, *Perkins Consultant for Regions 2,6,7*
Discipline Consultant - Agriculture

Del Hoover, *Perkins Consultant for Regions 13,14*
Discipline Consultant - Family & Consumer Sciences, Education

Pat Thieben, *Perkins Consultant for Regions 4,12*
Discipline Consultant - Health Occupations

Andy Wermes, *Perkins Consultant for Regions 3,5*
Discipline Consultant - Industrial Technology

Tom Cooley, Administrative Consultant, CTE/Perkins

Table of Contents

Overview of Community College Program Approval.....	6
Program Approval Process.....	7
<i>New Program Notice of Intent</i>	
<i>New Program Proposal</i>	
<i>ICCPHSE Intent Process</i>	
Program Approval Process Flowchart.....	8
Guidelines for the New Program Intent Form.....	9
<i>(Table) Education Program Consultants Contact Information</i>	
Guidelines for the New Program Proposal Form.....	9
Award Types and Requirements.....	10
CTE Program Length Requirements.....	11
Program Length Waiver Process.....	11
Credit Hour Requirements.....	12
<i>Alternative Instructional Formats</i>	
CTE Program Requirements.....	13
<i>Program Content</i>	
<i>General Education</i>	
<i>Programmatic Accreditation</i>	
<i>Licensure and Certification</i>	
<i>Program Articulation Requirements</i>	
<i>Board of Directors/Trustees Approval</i>	
<i>Program Need</i>	
<i>Duplication</i>	
<i>Faculty Credentials and Experience</i>	
<i>(Table) Labor Market Information Resources</i>	
<i>Financial Support and Program Budget</i>	
<i>Jointly-Offered (i.e., Shared) Programs</i>	
<i>Facilities and Equipment Plan</i>	
<i>Program Admission Criteria</i>	
CIP Numbers & ITSO Codes (<i>CIP/ITSO Reclassification</i>).....	16
Program Modification Approval Process.....	17
<i>Program Modification Process</i>	
<i>Program Options</i>	
<i>AS-CO Phase-Out</i>	
<i>Program Deactivation</i>	
<i>Program Compliance Evaluation</i>	
Overview of Program Review Process.....	18
CurricUNET Checklist and Information.....	19

Overview of Community College Program Approval

Program approval and review are critical accountability tools by which community colleges demonstrate the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the programs and services they offer their students.

The Iowa Department of Education's Division of Community Colleges recognizes that individual colleges have the primary responsibility for establishing and evaluating the content, implementation, modification, and review of instructional programs. Consequently, the Department's approval process is conducted in a collegial manner via CurricUNET, a web-based software that provides a structured environment for colleges to submit new program proposals and existing program modifications. The Department's role in the approval process is to provide oversight and guidance to ensure programmatic compliance with state and federal laws, as well as with state and regional accreditation standards.

In Iowa, university transfer programs leading to Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degrees have been approved as a single program and no additional action is currently required for colleges to initiate or modify these programs. However, career and technical education (CTE) programs leading to an Associate of Applied Science degree, diploma, or certificate require Department approval per Iowa Code Chapter 258 and 281, and Iowa Administrative Code 46. Additionally, CTE programs must be approved for students to be eligible to access Title IV financial aid funds.

Each community college wishing to initiate a new instructional program must go through a two-stage approval process, with the first stage being the submission of a notice of intent (NOI) to offer the program. This notice is submitted on an *Intent Form* via CurricUNET, on which the college originator should pay particular attention to the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code and program description. Based on the CIP code, a discipline consultant will be assigned to the proposed new program and work with the originator to progress through the approval process.

Once the NOI is submitted and approved, all Iowa community college **C**hief **A**cademic **O**fficers are notified of the proposed program and given 14 calendar days to raise concerns, with particular attention to the duplication of programs. If a college has a concern, the CAO will file a *Notice of Concern* through CurricUNET and a consultant will work with the proposing and concerned colleges to resolve the concern. If this intervention is not successful, the Department's Program Quality Steering Committee will attempt to devise a strategy for resolution or allow the college to continue developing their program. The proposal will then be scrutinized to see if the concern was addressed and, if not, may deny the proposal.

Following the intent process, a formal *New Program Proposal* must be submitted via CurricUNET to the Department for approval. The proposal is reviewed by the assigned discipline

consultant and approved if it complies with state and federal regulations. These regulations pertain to the award type to be granted; program length; the determination of credit hours; and program content, which includes clearly defined standards and benchmarks. If issues arise, the consultant will provide content and technical assistance to guide the college to compliance, if possible.

Upon consultant approval, the program is reviewed by a CurricUNET administrator and the Division of Community Colleges administration. Upon recommendation, final approval is granted by the Director of the Department of Education and the college is notified via CurricUNET and email.

Once CTE programs are approved and active, Iowa Code requires that they be reviewed at least once every five years to ensure compliance with current state, regional, and federal requirements and accreditation standards. This mandate has been placed on the colleges to systematically review programs and use the findings to make decisions about program improvement, budget allocation, and continuation.

Each institution's program review processes are evaluated and approved by the Department via the state accreditation process to ensure that program demand, quality, effectiveness, and efficiency are routinely assessed and modified accordingly. Any program modifications deemed necessary to better meet the dynamic needs of industry requires Department approval to ensure ongoing compliance.

The approval process for program modification has also been streamlined through the use of CurricUNET and can now be done year-round. Colleges must submit a *Program Modification* request and work with an assigned discipline consultant to ensure ongoing state and federal compliance. Modifications should be submitted at least 60 days prior to implementation.

All program approval and modification documentation is archived and accessible through CurricUNET, along with course descriptions via the Common Course Numbering database. This web-based tool has revolutionized the approval process and will continue to evolve into an efficient tool for program development and maintenance, as well as for student and college reference when searching for CTE programs.

Common Course Numbering (CCN)

With the streamlining of the approval process, the Department can process new program proposals and modifications expeditiously. However, colleges should plan well ahead of proposal submission to ensure that all courses needed for the program have been established in CurricUNET's Common Course Numbering system. This system provides a platform for colleges to add and modify courses in its dynamic database for immediate use.

Program Approval Process

When new career and technical education programs are developed, they must be approved by the Iowa Department of Education at least 30 days prior to student enrollment. The Department's program approval process is designed to ensure that the program meets state economic needs, state and regional accreditation standards, and is compliant with state and federal law. (See *New Program Approval Process Flowchart* on page 8 and *guidelines for the Intent Form and New Program Proposal* on page 9.)

New Program Notice of Intent (NOI)

The approval process begins with a college signaling its intent to offer a new CTE program by submitting an *Intent Form* at least 90 days prior to planned implementation. [NOTE: It is recommended that the originator contacts a department discipline consultant for assistance early in this process.] Upon review of the *Intent Form*, a consultant may contact the college originator to ensure the program is coded correctly and described adequately. The NOI process can be completed anytime within one year prior to the desired implementation date, with the subsequent *New Program Proposal* due at least 60 days prior to implementation.

Upon consultant approval, CurricUNET sends the *Intent Form* to the CAO at each of Iowa's 15 community colleges for a 14-day peer review. The goal of this review phase is to avoid duplication or undue proliferation of CTE programs by encouraging communication between institutions. If a college has a concern or objection, they should submit a *Notice of Concern Form* via CurricUNET. Such notices will be reviewed by the CurricUNET administrator who will likely engage the appropriate administrators at the colleges involved to reach a resolution. If no resolution is reached, even after involving higher-level administrators, the Department may still allow the college to submit a *New Program Proposal*, but close attention will be paid to the stated program need, targeted population, and content to ensure that all concerns have been addressed.

New Program Proposal

The second phase of program approval process requires extensive college planning, research, and curriculum development culminating in the submission of a *New Program Proposal* (NPP). This electronic documentation consists of:

- ◆ **Educational Program Report (AS-28)**: This report includes the program's title, CIP (*Classification of Instructional Program*) and ITSO (*Instructional, Type, Special Emphasis, Object/Purpose*) codes, unique program descriptions for each award, course numbers and titles listed by term, credit and contact hours, technical and general education course designations, footnotes, comments, etc.
- ◆ **New Program Proposal Form**: The form requests information regarding the program's content; labor market information and employment opportunities; standards and benchmarks; articulation agreements; internal program approval and evaluation processes; required licensure and certifications; and information to determine state, regional, and federal compliance.

Approval Process Timeframe

Notice of Intent Form - Submit at most one year and at least 90 days prior to program implementation.

14 Calendar Day Peer Review - Sent to CAOs after consultant approval.

New Program Proposal - Submit at least 60 calendar days prior to program implementation.

- ◆ **Assurance Form**: This form ensures compliance with regulations regarding discrimination, access, and equity.
- ◆ **Advisory Council Form**: This form provides a listing of the program's advisory council members with gender, race, and employment information to determine whether the composition is diverse and qualified to assist in program development and ongoing assessment.

Throughout the approval process, if concerns regarding program content, assessment, or compliance are identified, the consultant will provide subject-matter and technical assistance to address the concerns. Additionally, to assist colleges in identifying potential issues prior to submission, CurricUNET allows college users to review AS-28 reports for compliance by highlighting issues. The course listing and program summary will contain warning symbols to indicate areas that are out of compliance (red font) or questionable (yellow font).

New program proposals must be submitted at least 60 calendar days prior to the planned implementation date (i.e., initial student enrollment) to allow the approval process to be completed at least 30 days prior. Colleges will receive approval notification via CurricUNET and an email containing pertinent documents sent directly to the college's president.

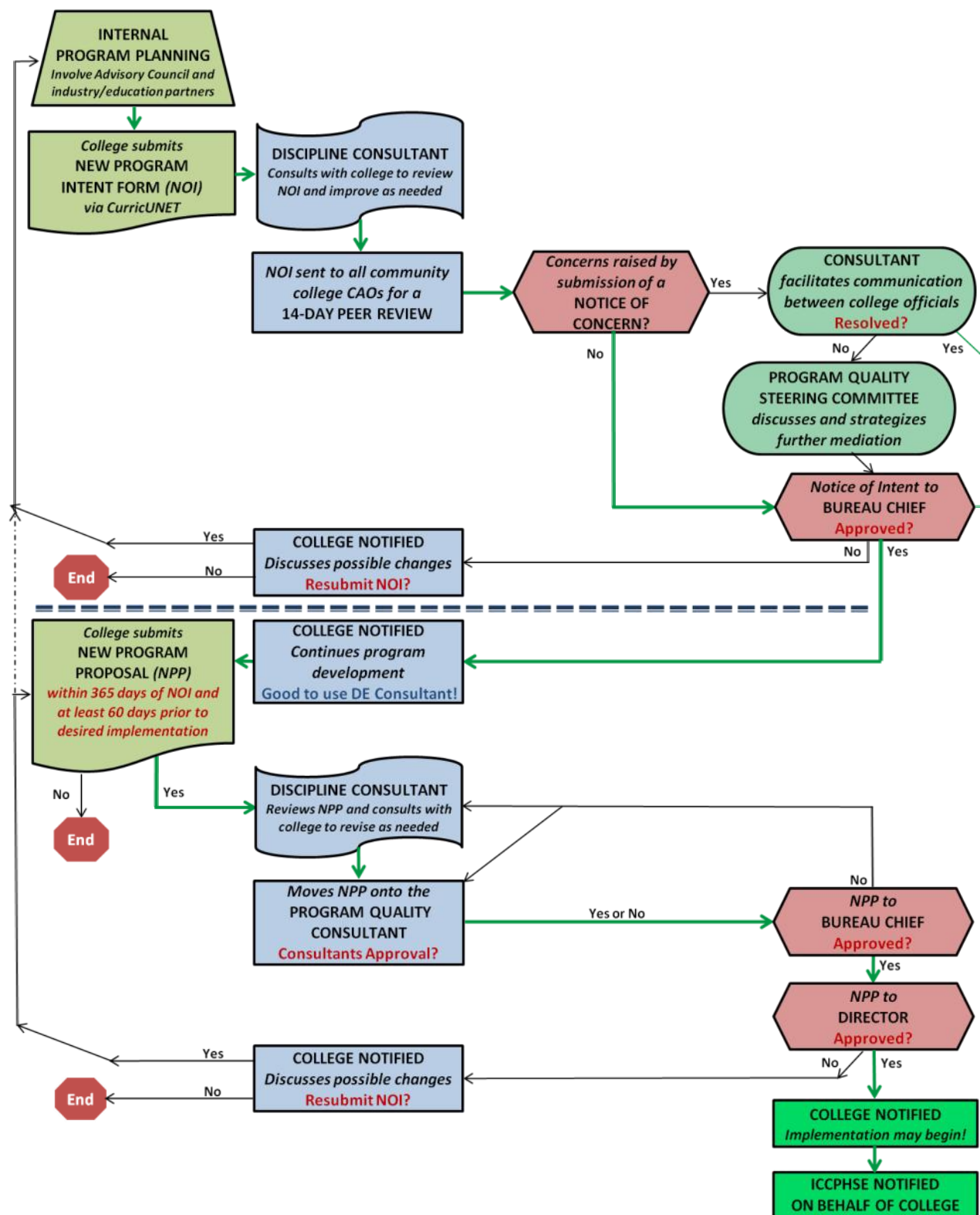
NOTE: *Department approval is necessary prior to marketing a program for recruitment purposes. Any program marketing material issued prior to official approval must state that the program is "Pending Iowa Department of Education approval."*

ICCPHSE Intent Process

Once a program is approved, CurricUNET generates a *Notice of Intent to Offer a New Program* form that the Department submits to the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education (ICCPHSE) on the college's behalf. The council's primary function is to provide an effective means of coordination among the various institutions responsible for post-high school education in Iowa. While the council has no legal authority, it serves a critical statewide role by reviewing new academic programs and providing a forum for addressing concerns regarding duplication or undue proliferation of funds.

If concerns are identified by other institutions or requests for clarification are made through the ICCPHSE review process, the council will notify the proposing college. For information about the ICCPHSE Intent Process, see the organization's bylaws at: <http://www.regents.iowa.gov/ICCPHSE/ICCPHSEBYLAWS0505.pdf>

Program Approval Process Flowchart



Guidelines for the New Program Notice of Intent Form

Before submitting a *New Program Intent Form* to propose a CTE program, faculty and administrators within the program's discipline should establish an advisory council of practitioners in the field and utilize a DACUM (*Developing A Curriculum*) process to:

- ◆ identify industry standards and benchmarks;
- ◆ plan the program, develop curriculum, and identify resources;
- ◆ assess training needs, materials, and methodologies (labs, clinics, etc.);
- ◆ identify required certifications/licensures and test preparation; and
- ◆ analyze labor market information and discuss employment opportunities for successful graduates.

Early in the planning process, the college should contact a consultant to:

- ◆ determine the most appropriate program CIP and ITSO codes;
- ◆ identify similar programs offered at other Iowa colleges so to:
 - ⇒ avoid duplication and undue proliferation of resources;
 - ⇒ learn about their challenges and potential threats; and
 - ⇒ possibly establish partnerships.

Additional, the college should identify new or strengthen existing articulations and linkages with:

- ◆ area high school(s) through career academies or agreements;
- ◆ other community colleges or agencies/businesses to provide skills training, clinical/work experience, or apprenticeships; and
- ◆ four-year institutions regarding transfer into baccalaureate programs.

Program Approval Consultants Contact Information:

For questions about the Program Approval Process, Common Course Numbering, or CurricUNET:

Program Quality Consultant

[Barbara Burrows](#), (515)725-2247
barbara.burrows@iowa.gov

For program-specific questions by discipline: Discipline Consultants by Subject Area

[Kelli Diemer](#), Business, Computers, Marketing
(515)281-3615; kelli.diemer@iowa.gov

[Dale Gruis](#), Agriculture
(515)419-4006; dale.gruis@iowa.gov

[Del Hoover](#), Family and Consumer Sciences,
Education, Culinary Arts
(515)242-5032; del.hoover@iowa.gov

[Pat Thieben](#), Health Occupations
(515)281-4707; pat.thieben@iowa.gov

[Andrew Vermes](#), Industrial Technology
(515)281-8353; andrew.vermes@iowa.gov

Guidelines for the New Program Proposal Form

CurricUNET's *New Program Proposal Form* (NPP) is basically an electronic version of the state's prior paper version. As the Department creates better resources for CurricUNET users, this form will become more user-friendly in regards to its questions, fields, and instructions. These resources will be presented to CAOs, deans, directors, and statewide CurricUNET Super User's Group before implementation.

The NPP requests the same program information as the NOI, including the program title, CIP and ITSO codes, description, enrollment and completion projections, and college contact information. Other sections of the form include:

- A. **Program Need:** Labor Market Information (LMI) to demonstrate economic need for the program including, but not limited to, projections of job openings, economic studies, and/or employer surveys. The LMI can be local, regional, state, or national, depending on the field's career mobility. (See *LMI resources on page 15*.)

Subsections include: *Employment Opportunities for Program Completers, Geographic Scope of Data, Source of LMI Provided, and Description of Need.*

- B. **Program Duplication:** To assess the degree of program duplication and possible proliferation of state and college resources, the Department requests the following:

- ◆ *Public and Private Institutions with Similar Offerings* - List postsecondary institutions offering similar programs.
- ◆ *Collaboration with Other Postsecondary Institutions* - List collaborative efforts with supporting documentation.

- ◆ *State or Regional Priority* - Describe any special need(s) for this program in the college's district or the state.
- ◆ *Additional Comments* - Discuss program's uniqueness, possible duplication, and/or harmful competition.

- C. **Institutional Approval:** Information regarding the college governing board and internal approval process.
- D. **Program Articulations & Linkages with Other Institutions:** Iowa Code establishes an expectation for CTE programs to provide smooth transitions for students as they move from secondary to postsecondary institutions. To demonstrate compliance, colleges should describe existing linkages and efforts to establish new linkages or articulation agreements.
- E. **Program Standards and Benchmarks:** There are numerous sources of occupational/industry standards and benchmarks available on the Internet and in industry publications. These type of programmatic standards and benchmarks should be established by the faculty and advisory council, through the DACUM process discussed above, prior to the selection or development of courses.
- F. **Program Content:** This includes the *Education Plan* (AS-28); a listing of specialized/professional accreditation, licensure and certification; assessment methods; program equity, including strategies to recruit the non-traditional gender; and details about jointly-offered program(s) [i.e., programs offered with courses from more than one college/agency].
- G. **Advisory Committee:** List the names, contact numbers, occupations, and racial or ethnic backgrounds of members.

Award Types and Requirements

Iowa community colleges are authorized to offer AA, AS, AGS, AAS, AAA and APS degrees, as well as diplomas and certificates. Requirements for awards are detailed in Iowa Administrative Code 281, Chapter 21.2(9), and outlined below and in CurricUNET under *Reports > Compliance Report*.

Associate of Arts (AA) Degree:

Awarded upon the completion of a college parallel (transfer) course of study that provides a strong general education component to satisfy the lower-division liberal arts and science requirements for a bachelor's degree. It shall consist of between 60 and 64 semester (90-96 quarter) credit hours. See specific requirements on page 5 of "[The Public Connection](#)".

Associate of Science (AS) Degree:

Awarded upon the completion of an arts and science course of study with a strong emphasis on mathematics or science. The degree is intended to prepare students to transfer into related upper-division baccalaureate programs. It shall consist of between 60 and 64 semester (90-96 quarter) credit hours, 20 of which must be in mathematics or science. See specific requirements on page 7 of "[The Public Connection](#)".

Associate of General Studies (AGS) Degree:

Awarded upon the completion of an individualized course of study designed for the acquisition of a broad educational background rather than the pursuit of a specific college major or technical program. This degree is intended to be flexible and may include between 60 and 64 semester (90-96 quarter) credit hours of lower-division transfer*, occupational, or professional/technical coursework. *No developmental courses.

Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degree:

Awarded upon the completion of a state-approved CTE program intended to prepare students for entry-level technical occupations. It shall consist of between 60 and 86 semester (90-129 quarter) credit hours. Of those, a minimum of 12 semester (18 quarter) credit hours must be general education to include at least one course from each of the following areas: communications, social science or humanities, and science or mathematics. The technical core component shall constitute at least 50% of the program's credits.

Associate of Applied Arts (AAA) Degree:

Awarded upon the completion of a state-approved CTE program intended to provide students with skills for employment in a specific field such as art, humanities, or graphics design. This degree consists of between 60 and 86 semester (90-129 quarter) credit hours. Of those, a minimum of 12 semester (18 quarter) credit hours must be general education to include at least one course from each of the following areas: communications, social science or humanities, and science or mathematics. The technical core component shall constitute at least 50% of the program's credits.

Associate of Professional Studies (APS) Degree:

Awarded upon the completion of a state-approved program of study intended to prepare students for transfer into aligned baccalaureate programs or immediate related employment.

The APS pilot degree was written into Iowa Administrative Code in 2013, primarily as an alternative to the AS-CO degree being phased out by the end of Academic Year 2015-2016. A limited number of APS pilot programs shall be approved from colleges demonstrating that other award types cannot meet their needs. The Department will study the effectiveness of APS programs with regards to transfer and employment success after five years and make recommendations to the State Board of Education about parameters and continuation.

The APS degree shall consist of between 62 and 68 semester (93-102 quarter) credit hours. Of those, a minimum of 30 semester (45 quarter) credit hours must be general education to include 3 semester (4.5 quarter) credit hours from each of the following areas: speech, mathematics, humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and science; 6 semester (9 quarter) credit hours of writing; and an additional 9 semester (13.5 quarter) credit hours distributed among mathematics, social and behavioral sciences, humanities, and science.

The technical component shall consist of a minimum of 16 semester (24 quarter) credit hours of coursework accepted by a receiving baccalaureate degree-granting institution as credit toward a specific major or program. This technical component shall consist of a minimum of 16 additional semester (24 quarter) credit hours of CTE coursework accepted by the receiving institution as electives.

In addition, the APS degree program shall have a minimum of three program-to-program articulation agreements with baccalaureate degree-granting institutions, at least one of which must be with a public institution. Among these, at least one agreement must be effective prior to the APS program implementation, providing all three are effective within the program's first year of student enrollment. The agreements shall provide for the application of no fewer than 60 semester (90 quarter) credit hours toward the graduation requirements of each articulated baccalaureate degree program.

Diploma:

Awarded upon the completion of a state-approved CTE program that is a coherent sequence of courses consisting of 15 to 48 semester (22.5-72 quarter) credit hours, including at least three semester (4.5 quarter) credit hours of general education from any of the following areas: communications, social science or humanities, science or mathematics. A diploma may be a component (option) of, and apply toward, subsequent completion of an AAS or AAA degree.

Certificate:

Awarded upon the completion of a state-approved CTE program designed to prepare students for entry-level employment. It shall consist of a maximum of 48 semester (72 quarter) credit hours and may be a component of, and apply toward, subsequent completion of a diploma, AAS, or AAA degree. Certificates are often developed in rapid response to business and industry needs. They may consist of only CTE courses, as there is no general education requirement.

NOTE: Diploma and Certificate programs should not exceed one academic year of full-time study.

CTE Program Length Requirements

Iowa Administrative Code 281, Chapter 21.2(13), sets requirements for the length of CTE programs and provides a waiver process for program-length (credit hours) extension that can be granted by the Department through a *Program Modification with Waiver* proposal via CurricUNET. These requirements are outlined below and in CurricUNET's *Compliance Report*.

AAS, AAA, and APS Programs

Full-time program length for associate degrees shall not exceed two academic years (108 weeks).

All required courses are to be offered within four regular and two summer terms (summer terms may have two sessions). In addition, these programs shall not exceed an average of 19 credit hours per regular term, and AAS and AAA degrees cannot exceed 86 credit (129 quarter) hours. *APS cannot exceed 68 credits.*

AAS and AAA degree programs that receive accreditation from nationally-recognized accrediting bodies may appeal the maximum credit-hour requirement to the Department by request for a waiver.

APS degree programs are not eligible for this waiver.

Diploma and Certificate Programs

Credit diploma and certificate programs shall not exceed 48 semester (72 quarter) credit hours unless the Department grants a waiver. Full-time programs should typically not exceed 52 weeks (one year) in length.

Program and Prerequisite Courses

All credit-bearing courses required for program admittance or graduation shall be included in the award's credit-hour maximum, with the exception of developmental course credits. Prerequisites that provide an option to students for either credit or noncredit shall be counted toward the credit-hour maximum; however, prerequisite options offered only for noncredit shall not be counted.

A high school level course (i.e., not concurrent enrollment course) prerequisite is permissible, provided it is deemed reasonable, but shall not count toward a CTE's program credit-hour maximum. Such a course is "reasonable" if the college demonstrates that students entering the program, having taken the course, meet the prerequisite without prior college coursework.

CTE Course Length

Each CTE course offered in a program shall be taught in the shortest practical period of time, at a standard consistent with the quality and quantity of work needed to prepare students for successful employment in the related occupation.

To gauge course length, a full-time CTE student shall be enrolled in at least 12 semester (18 quarter) credit hours. Curricula in these full-time programs shall ordinarily be offered on the basis of a student workload of 20 to 30 contact hours per week.

Program Length Waiver Process

Iowa Administrative Code 281, Chapter 21.2(13i), provides a waiver process for CTE program length requirements. A college may petition for a waiver if an AAS, AAA, diploma, or certificate program exceeds the maximum credit hours stated above due to requirements of a nationally-recognized accrediting body, or state or federal laws related to preparation for a specific occupation.

Iowa Administrative Code Waiver Process

In accordance with Iowa Code, a college may petition to suspend in whole or in part a program-length requirement for a CTE program on the basis of particular circumstances, in accordance with the following stipulations:

- 1) Waivers shall be narrowly tailored and granted for a period no longer than two academic years, after which reapplication is required. A waiver may be granted on a long-term basis, not to exceed 10 years, if issuing a shorter period is not practical.
- 2) Waiver requests should be submitted via CurricUNET's *Program Modification with Waiver* proposal type at least 90 days before program implementation. Requests shall include information regarding scope and duration, justification for a waiver, details of the impact on student achievement, and any relevant information about past treatment of such requests.
- 3) Within 30 calendar days of the request, the Department will notify the statewide CAO group of the request for peer review. A consultant will share any feedback received with the requesting college and work with them to address any issues.
- 4) The Department is allowed 90 calendar days after receiving the feedback/recommendation from the CAO group to issue a ruling. However, it is the Department's intent to finalize its ruling within 30 days of the original request. Failure to grant or deny a waiver request within the required time period shall be deemed a denial of the request. If a waiver is approved by the consultant and the appropriate bureau chief, the Department shall provide a description of the precise scope and operative period to all interested parties.

Waiver Needed When...

...AAS or AAA program exceeds 86 credits; or

...Diploma/Certificate exceeds 48 credits

Credit Hour Requirements

Iowa Administrative Code 281, Chapter 21.2(12), sets requirements for determining credit hours based on the amount of instructional contact time and delivery method.

When determining course credit, colleges must follow some basic rules as stated in code, starting with the requirement that each course must be assigned a minimum length of one credit hour. A fractional unit of credit may be awarded provided the course exceeds the minimum length of one credit hour. Each credit hour shall consist of a minimum number of contact hours, based on its delivery method (see the chart on right).

NOTE: One Contact Hour = 50 Clock Minutes
Every course must be at least ONE credit

Conventional instruction is subdivided into four instructional methods with the minimum number of required contact hours as provided below.

1. **Classroom Work:** Lecture and formalized classroom instruction under the supervision of an instructor.
 - a) One Semester Credit Hour = Minimum of 800 minutes or 16 contact hours of scheduled instruction.
 - b) One Quarter Credit Hour = Minimum of 533 minutes or 10.7 contact hours of scheduled instruction.
2. **Laboratory Work:** Experimentation and practice by students under the supervision of an instructor.
 - a) One Semester Credit Hour = Minimum of 1,600 minutes or 32 contact hours of scheduled laboratory work.
 - b) One Quarter Credit Hour = Minimum of 1,066 minutes or 21.3 contact hours of scheduled laboratory work.
3. **Clinical Practice:** Applied learning experience in a health agency or office under instructor supervision.
 - a) One Semester Credit Hour = Minimum of 2,400 minutes or 48 contact hours of scheduled clinical practice.
 - b) One Quarter Credit Hour = Minimum of 1,599 minutes or 32 contact hours of scheduled clinical practice.
4. **Work Experience:** Employment-related experience (on-the-job training) coordinated by a college representative and an employer, with control and supervision of the student on the job being the employer's responsibility.
 - a) One Semester Credit Hour = Minimum of 3,200 minutes or 64 contact hours of scheduled work experience.
 - b) One Quarter Credit Hour = Minimum of 2,132 minutes or 42.6 contact hours of scheduled work experience.

A Few Additional Guidelines:

- ◆ No registration or orientation hours may be included when determining credit hours.
- ◆ Only minutes for students officially registered for courses or programs, including audit registration, may be included when determining credit hours.

Institutions shall take into account the soundness of the learning environment created by the scheduling sequence and the length of classroom, laboratory, clinical, and work experience sessions. Final decision on these matters are left to the college administration as long as minimal standards are met.

Crazy Math!?!
(a.k.a., The Importance of Words in Math)

1 = 16
1 = 32
1 = 48
1 = 64

Translation (in semesters)...

1 credit hour = 16 **CLASSROOM** contact hours
1 credit hour = 32 **LABORATORY** contact hours
1 credit hour = 48 **CLINICAL** contact hours
1 credit hour = 64 **WORK (OJT)** contact hours

Alternative Instructional Formats

Colleges are held accountable for assessing and maintaining quality programs; however, their program review processes are subject to Department evaluation. When instruction varies from the conventional methods, each college is required to have a policy that defines its method of assigning credit hours to the alternative instruction. They must also document the process for evaluating the effectiveness of the alternative instruction to meet the expected student outcomes as if the course were taught utilizing conventional methods. Students are expected to meet all approved course requirements and demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge and competencies at the same level as those in traditional classroom settings, and within established time frames. Alternative courses or formats must be approved by the college's review processes, including faculty review and input, and listed in the college catalog.

Instructional formats for which alternative methods for determining credit hours are applicable include the following:

- A. Accelerated Courses/Study/Programs:** Tailored to involve more student participation and self-directed study in order for students to complete at a faster pace.
- B. Distance Education:** As defined in Iowa Code, distance education includes online, hybrid, ICN, correspondence, television, and video conference courses. Aside from hybrids, these courses may or may not be interactive with direct communication between teacher and students.
- C. Self-Paced Instruction:** Flexible start and end dates used to determine contact and subsequent credit hours.
- D. Arranged Study:** Instruction offered at times other than stated or scheduled class time.
- E. Multi-Format Nontraditional Instruction:** Combination of above formats that do not follow standard classroom work guidelines.

Individualized learning experiences (*independent study courses for which an equivalent course is not offered by the college or listed in the college catalog*) shall have the program length computed from records of attendance using procedures such as a time clock or sign-in records. These experiences permit in-depth, focused learning on special topics of interest to the student.

CTE Program Requirements

Career and technical education is intended to meet the economic needs of Iowa through competency-based education grounded in knowledge and skills identified as essential in the workplace. For most CTE programs, these essential skills have been established in nationally-recognized *Industry Standards* or state, regional, or national certification or licensure requirements. These essential skills are referred to as “competencies” in Iowa Code and should be detailed in the *Standards and Benchmarks* section of CurricUNET’s New Program Proposal (NPP).

Program Content

The Department’s website offers numerous resources to assist with new program development, including model sets of minimum standards and benchmarks utilized predominantly by secondary CTE programs of study (see text box on right for links). These state-developed standards and benchmarks have been formulated around the six service areas defined in state law or the 16 nationally-recognized career clusters provided in the website’s resources. If CTE program developers choose not to incorporate these specific standards, they must provide evidence that a process for establishing local standards was followed, as per IAC 281, Chapter 46.7(1, 2).

These standards shall be developed through a structured group interview process, which involves the use of advisory councils of incumbent workers within an occupational cluster of a service area. The group’s primary goal is to analyze a researched list of competencies to include new and emerging technologies, job seeking, leadership, entrepreneurial, and occupational standards and benchmarks. This analysis should lead to the identification and development of program competencies to ensure that participating students have access to instruction leading to employment and/or further training.

All competency lists should be analyzed for reinforcement of academic skills. An initial academic skills analysis shall be performed by Department consultants with verification by committees of academic and vocational instructional staff. Regardless of the analysis process utilized, the subsequent list of locally-adopted standards for CTE programs is expected to heavily draw from national and industry standards to ensure the portability of skills attained from high school to college and on to further study or employment.

Program content shall contribute to a student’s higher order reasoning and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, general employability skills, and the occupation-specific skills necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society. Additionally, the curriculum shall recognize the contributions of individuals with disabilities, men and women in nontraditional roles, and minorities.

Program content, including standards and benchmarks, shall be revalidated at least every three years to ensure currency and relevance per IAC 281- 46.7(1).

Valuable Resources for Your NPP Iowa Code, Articulation, and Standards & Benchmarks

State-developed models, with contact information for Program Approval Consultants can be found at: www.educateiowa.gov

- > [Adult, Career, and Community College](#) tab
- > (dropdown) [Career & Technical Education](#)
- > (links on left) > [Service Areas](#)
- > See five career clusters with links to related Iowa Code, professional organizations, state articulation agreements, and standards & benchmarks.

Six CTE Service Areas:

- ⇒ Agriculture ([Dale Gruis](#))
- ⇒ Business or Office Occupations ([Kelli Diemer](#))
- ⇒ Health Occupations ([Pat Thieben](#))
- ⇒ Family and Consumer Sciences ([Del Hoover](#))
- ⇒ Industrial Technology ([Andy Vermes](#))

General Education

Career and technical education programs, except certificate programs, must have a general education component. This general education component shall address the ability of students to reason, think, compute, communicate, and adapt to change. Iowa Code further encourages the inclusion of human development in civic, consumer, environmental, and social responsibilities in the general education components.

Each community college shall determine applicable coursework to fulfill this CTE general education requirement (see Award Requirements, page 10); however, it is important to maintain the philosophy that general education represents more than the accumulation of credits. Should program developers believe that additional general education courses would benefit the students in a particular program, colleges are encouraged to exceed the minimal credit requirements.

College parallel (transfer) programs leading to associate degrees (AA, AS) have strong general education components because they are intended to satisfy lower-division, liberal arts and science general education requirements for bachelor degrees. Furthermore, AS degree programs shall meet the requirements of the Regents statewide articulation agreement, or those specified in articulation agreements with public or private university programs. Of course, CTE programs designed to transfer shall also meet general education requirements, as specified in articulation agreements or as stated for APS pilot programs on [page 10](#).

Programmatic Accreditation

While not always mandatory, programmatic accreditation is applicable to many CTE programs. Specialized accrediting bodies often set content requirements that new programs should refer to in the Standards and Benchmark section of the *New Program Proposal Form*. These requirements do not need to be detailed, but should be linked for Department reference. When applicable, colleges shall obtain and maintain program accreditation or notify the Department of any departure from standards established by the accrediting body.

Licensure and Certification

Some occupations require a license to practice, while others require state, regional, or national certification for attainment of related employment. For occupations that require licensure or certifications, programs shall prepare completers for tests to attain these standardized credentials. In many cases, there are established industry-recognized standards associated with these requirements that can guide colleges in its new program development.

Program Articulation Requirements

To facilitate the smooth transition of students from secondary to post-secondary education at community colleges and/or four-year institutions, articulation agreements are essential.

Articulation is the process by which an institution aligns with, and accepts credit for, program content earned at another institution. The intent of these agreements is to establish program conditions, content, and requirements to avoid duplication and ensure that students will not need to repeat courses or activities when moving from one institution to another. Agreements provide students with a career ladder to advance in their chosen career or technical area of interest.

Linkages with Secondary Programs

Iowa Administrative Code 281, Chapter 46.7(3), states:

Teachers and administrators from both secondary and postsecondary instructional levels shall (when applicable) meet to identify competencies required at each level, and to jointly prepare agreements of articulation for specific occupational areas.

In addition to monitoring compliance with this articulation requirement placed on CTE programs, the Department's *New Program Proposal Form* requests information about linkages the college has established with secondary and post-secondary institutions (see page 13, *Board of Directors/Trustees Approval for related Iowa Code*). Such linkages may include concurrent enrollment offerings, career academy agreements, or articulation agreements (see box). If nothing formal exists or can be established, the college is asked to document their

efforts at establishing such linkages and encouraged to involve educational partners with similar programs in program or curriculum development.

Information related to the development of CTE programs of study, including guidance and templates, can be found on the *Perkins Grants* section of the Department's website.

Concurrent enrollment program requirements can be found in the guide on the [Senior Year Plus](#) section of the website.

APS Pilot Programs Links

Primarily, CTE programs prepare students for immediate or upgraded employment upon completion, while arts and science programs prepare for continued study at four-year institutions. A cross-over program type was the Associate of Science Career Option (AS-CO), which was intended to be a transferable CTE program. After much consideration by college faculty, administration, and Department administrators, this degree option is being phased out and the Associate of Professional Studies (APS) degree program is being piloted.

As a transfer-oriented CTE degree option, APS program curricula shall satisfy the lower-division requirements of the corresponding baccalaureate major (see page 10 for details).

In addition, the state-approved APS program shall have a minimum of three program-to-program articulation agreements with baccalaureate degree-granting institutions, at least one of which must be with a public institution. Among these, at least one agreement must be in effect prior to program implementation, with all three effective within the program's first year of student enrollment. These agreements shall provide for the application of at least 60 semester credit hours toward the articulated baccalaureate degree graduation requirements.

Types of Linkages to be Reported on the Notice of Intent and the Program Proposal Form

- ◆ Career Academy Agreements with Secondary District or High School
- ◆ Articulation Agreements with Secondary District or High School
- ◆ Articulation Agreements with Four-Year Institutions
- ◆ Articulation Agreements with Apprenticeship Programs

AAS/AAA Programs Links

While the primary purpose of AAS and AAA programs is immediate entry into the workforce, transferability to baccalaureate degree-granting institutions is often an appropriate secondary intent. Iowa Code 262.9(33(h)) mandates community colleges and public universities to develop a process for examining a minimum of eight AAS degree programs annually for which articulation agreements would serve students' continued academic success in those degree programs. This mandate expands on the requirements of the seamless transfer of credits earned for college parallel (AA/AS programs) coursework. Consequently, regardless of the two-year degree option, colleges are either mandated or encouraged to engage in cooperative development of two-year program to four-year program articulation agreements, when appropriate.

Career and technical education programs must meet a variety of additional requirements beyond content and standards. These include documentation regarding board of directors' approval, program need, duplication, and faculty qualifications in terms of credentials and experience.

Board of Directors/Trustees Approval

Iowa Code 260C.14(1) charges that "the board of directors of each community college shall...ensure that all vocational offerings are competency-based, provide any minimum competencies required by the department of education...and are articulated with local school district vocational education programs." To this end, a proposed new program should be approved through the college's curriculum approval processes and by the governing board for consideration of these requirements before submission to the Department.

Program Need

Iowa Code 260C.14(1) requires the Department to "ascertain that all courses and programs submitted for approval are needed." The primary purpose of CTE programs is to prepare students for entry into or advancement in the workforce, so legitimate employment opportunities are crucial to support program need, relevance, and sustainability. Consequently, it is important to balance the number of students trained in a field with the number of potential job opportunities.

College parallel programs often base need on the student demand for the transfer program; however, CTE programs should go beyond student interest and demonstrate that jobs are available for program completers. This measure of need can be documented on the *New Program Proposal Form* using current state or regional labor market information (LMI). LMI is vital in aligning program offerings with high skill/high wage/high demand jobs. LMI may take many forms including labor market projections from the Economic Development and Employer Planning System, Iowa Workforce Development, regional economic or laborshed studies, employer surveys, etc. (see text box below for direct links to LMI websites). If LMI is insufficient, other forms of documentation should be submitted such as advisory council minutes; letters from employers, preferably expressing a commitment to hire program completers; and local, state, or regional job postings. Discussions with local businesses and workforce development partners play a key role in identifying program need.

LMI data may be region-specific, statewide, or national, if program completers are likely to seek employment outside the state. Employment opportunities should closely align with the annual projection of program completers to ensure that students and employers are well-served by the program. Program need, along with other factors, including internal and external resources, cost-effectiveness, relevance, and quality, are key components of program approval and should be routinely reviewed via a college's program review process.

Duplication

Iowa Code (260C.14(1)) requires the Department to ascertain "that the curriculum being offered by an area school does not duplicate programs provided by existing public or private facilities in the area." Duplication is determined through consideration of "the needs of the area and whether the proposed programs are competitive as to size, quality, tuition, purposes, and area coverage with existing public and private educational or vocational institutions within the merged area."

The Department carries out this state mandate via the *Notice of Intent* process. As illustrated on page 8, prior to submission of a new program proposal, the college submits a NOI via CurricUNET that is forwarded to all 15 Iowa community colleges for a 14-day peer review. If a concern is raised, a *Notice of Concern* is submitted and the Department will work with college administrators to help resolve the issue.

Faculty Credentials and Experience

The staffing of qualified faculty to manage and teach in CTE programs is essential for program quality. The Higher Learning Commission's guidance states that "qualified faculty" consists of people who, by formal education and tested experience, know what students must learn. The establishment of faculty standards and analysis of qualifications are the responsibilities of each college and their Qualify Faculty Plan committee. Clear documentation of these college processes is necessary to comply with Iowa Code requiring that faculty teaching credit coursework must meet certain minimum standards.

NOTE: The only exception to these minimum faculty standards are developmental education instructors teaching only courses that are not intended to transfer or to complete a degree.

(continued on next page)

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION RESOURCES

Economic Development and Employer Planning System: www.edeps.org

Iowa Long Term Occupational Projections 2010-2020: <http://iwin.iwd.state.ia.us/iowa/ArticleReader?itemid=00003928>

NOTE: The Excel version is more useful than the PDF and the "Statewide" information is more comprehensive.

Iowa Hot Jobs: <http://iwin.iwd.state.ia.us/iowa/ArticleReader?itemid=00003929>

Iowa Workforce Needs Assessment: <http://www.iowaworkforce.org/lmi/labsur/vacancy.htm>

O*Net OnLine (partner of americanjobcenter network): <http://www.onetonline.org/find/career>

mySkillsmyFuture (partner of americanjobcenter network): <http://www.myskillsmyfuture.org/>

The Department currently does not require information regarding faculty credentials through the program approval process; however, this information is carefully reviewed through the state accreditation process. It is expected that the Quality Faculty Plan (QFP) committee and the academic administration have processes to ensure the hiring and ongoing development of qualified faculty. For more information about QFP requirements and minimum faculty standards, see the [Quality Faculty](#) section of the Department website.

Financial Support and Program Budget

Colleges are expected to allocate sufficient resources to start and maintain all of its programs at a high level of quality. The Department does not currently request financial information via CurricUNET to determine program viability; however, it is expected that colleges have addressed this critical component of program development and strategic planning. The college is also expected to reevaluate program cost-effectiveness and efficiency periodically through its program review process.

Jointly-Offered (i.e., Shared) Programs

Some programs are offered jointly or collaboratively with one or more postsecondary institutions or agencies to the extent that one college may offer the first part of a program and have students finish the program at another institution. The college that intends to graduate the students should submit the *Intent Form* and *New Program Proposal*, providing details regarding the entire program, including portions delivered by partnering institutions. The proposing college should provide a signed Memorandum of Understanding or articulation agreement detailing the parameters of the collaboration, including each institution's responsibilities and the awarding of credit. The entire program must meet all Department requirements for final approval and will be reviewed like all CTE programs.

Facilities and Equipment Plan

Colleges are expected to expend adequate capital for the acquisition or assignment of facilities and equipment for a proposed CTE program. The Department does not currently request information regarding the college's budget or the adequacy of facilities and equipment during the program approval process; however, this component is reviewed as a part of the state program review and accreditation processes. It is expected that instructional facility and equipment needs are evaluated periodically through the college's budget and program review processes.

Program Admissions Criteria

While Iowa's public community colleges have an open-door admissions policy and are committed to equity and social justice, colleges are encouraged to establish admission criteria for some CTE programs of study. Furthermore, they are expected to document concerted efforts toward recruiting non-traditional students, based on occupational demographics. This is particularly true when certain admission criteria are required for state or national funding.

CIP Numbers & ITSO Codes

The *Classification of Instructional Programs* (CIP) is a taxonomy of academic disciplines at higher education institutions. This coding enables accurate tracking, assessment, and reporting of academic programs. The Department classifies instructional programs using the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) six-digit CIP code, along with additional digits for state coding. For example, the Department utilizes the seventh and eighth digits of a ten-digit CIP number to identify one-year versus two-year programs.

The Department also assigns "ITSO" instructional code sets to classify programs by the following categories:

"I" = Level of Instruction

Colleges typically use "03" for Postsecondary programs;

"T" = Type of program, course, service or activity

Colleges typically use "02" for Full-Time (22 or more credits);

"03" = Short-Term programs (less than 22 credits);

"07" = Programs designed for Part-time attendance;

"12" = Advanced Standing programs that require the completion of courses or a program for admission;

"32" = Shared programs.

"S" = Special emphasis

Colleges typically use "11" for No Special Emphasis;

"O" = Object and purpose

Colleges typically use "03" for Credit.

It is imperative that a college determines the proper CIP and ITSO program codes before submitting the *Notice of Intent Form* (see page 9) or a *Program Modification* (see page 17).

If assistance is needed to determine the proper codes, the college should contact a consultant while preparing the NOI or the modification. By using the contact list on page 9 or the *Program Consultant Locator* feature in CurricUNET under the *Reports* tab, the originator can find the appropriate discipline consultant. [In the *Program Consultant Locator*, simply enter the CIP code under consideration to find the consultant's name and contact information.]

VERY IMPORTANT!! CIP/ITSO RECLASSIFICATION

In order to maintain an accurate database of academic programs, colleges are strongly discouraged from changing CIP and ITSO codes without Department approval. Through CurricUNET, these codes are established during the Notice of Intent process and cannot be changed during the Program Approval or Program Modification processes. For the rare changes that necessitate a CIP or ITSO change, CurricUNET has established the CIP/ITSO Reclassification proposal type.

CIP/ITSO Reclassification Process

Use this process to modify programs that have changed, typically due to the number of credits, and need ITSO changes. Ask the [program quality consultant](#) for help.

Program Modification Approval Process

Changes to an existing credit CTE program require Department approval. CurricUNET's database has streamlined the program modification approval process. The ability to track a modification's workflow and communication between consultants and college originators, as well as archive current and proposed programs, has greatly enhanced the integrity of the program modification process.

Program Modification Process

With CurricUNET, program modification proposals may be prepared for Department approval any time throughout the year, but must be submitted at least 60 calendar days prior to the desired implementation date. Consultants then have 30 days to review and work with the college to improve the proposal, if necessary, before final approval is granted.

With the advent of CurricUNET, the Department no longer uses AS-28 forms in MS Excel or paper format for program modifications. All modifications are now submitted through CurricUNET, where they can be viewed individually or in a side-by-side comparison with the existing program. In this view, changes are highlighted with colors, making them easy to review.

Program Options

Program modification is also used to add or modify an *option* to another program referred to as the "main" or "parent" program. These stacked programs, commonly known as "ladder" programs, allow students to earn awards that build upon one another. For example, students can earn a certificate and then continue on to a diploma or AAS degree. It is quite common for an AAS to have one or more diploma and certificate options. Colleges are encouraged to offer multiple entry and exits points, utilizing certificate and/or diploma options as flexible components of a degree program.

A program may be an option to another program if it leads to a lower-level award or they both lead to the same award type. In other words, an AAS program may have several other AAS, diploma, or certificate options; but may not have an AAA or APS program option. Or, if a college has an approved diploma program, it may add a diploma or certificate option, but it cannot add an AAS program as an option. The addition of a higher level program would require new program approval rather than just program modification. (See text box above.)

It is important to note that a program approved as an option to a main program may not be marketed independently, but rather in conjunction with the main option. In other words, if a college has an approved AAS program with a diploma option, the diploma may not be independently advertised to potential students separate from the AAS program.

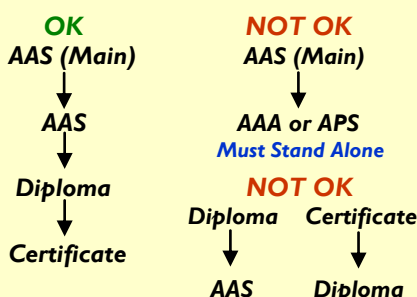
AS-CO Phase-Out (CIP/ITSO Reclassification)

Effective May 2013, Iowa Administrative Code 281, Chapter 21.2(9), mandated that "each state-approved associate of science-career option (AS-CO) program of study shall be phased out by the end of the 2015-2016 academic year." To accomplish this phase-out, colleges were given three years to deactivate or modify these programs to meet parameters of other allowable award types. It was determined that if a college wants to convert an AS-CO program to a CTE program (AAS/Diploma), it should be done via CurricUNET's **CIP/ITSO Reclassification** proposal type (page 16) because the ITSO "Type" code will have to be changed from 06 to 02. If the AS-CO is being converted to an APS, colleges should contact Governet to activate a new proposal type (**ASCO to APS**), established for this specific purpose. If the AS-CO program is to be discontinued, colleges should use the **Program Deactivation** proposal type.

Program Deactivation

A program with no enrollment is considered "inactive." If a program has no enrollment reported for three consecutive years, the Department can request that the college reviews the program to decide if it should be deactivated. If so, the college will use the **Program Deactivation** proposal type, indicating the semester that the program is to be deactivated (i.e., no new students admitted). From that semester on, the program will not be accessible on CurricUNET and will be removed from the Department's Program Master. Within three years of deactivation, the program can be reactivated without submitting a *New Program Proposal*; however, after three years, program reactivation requires going through the *New Program Approval Process*.

AS-28 Program Options/Levels Commonly used for "Laddered" programs that build upon each other



Program Compliance Evaluation

Before the advent of CurricUNET, checking compliance was tedious via Excel spreadsheets, and it was possible to propose, and even approve, a non-compliant program. However, by using CurricUNET's *Compliance Report* (linked in the "Reports" tab on the home page), colleges now have quick access to a list of program requirements by award types. Also, CurricUNET is programmed to stop non-compliant programs and helps the college correct their proposed AS-28 before submitting it by highlighting compliance issues with red font and areas that are approaching non-compliance with yellow font.

In addition, colleges can check their existing programs via the *Compliance Reports* field below the list of requirements for award types. For programs approved before CurricUNET, components that are out of compliance are shown in red font and those not in line with accepted practice are in yellow font. Colleges are encouraged to review programs and submit program modifications to correct compliance issues.

Overview of Program Review Process

Periodic program review ensures a CTE program's continued quality, fulfillment of labor market need, and cost effectiveness. To this end, the Iowa state accreditation process calls for colleges to conduct ongoing, systematic reviews of their CTE programs. The accreditation team reviews a random sample of these programs to assess the currency of curriculum; faculty qualifications; program enrollment, retention, completion, and graduate placement rates; the adequacy of equipment and facilities; student outcomes; and program cost-effectiveness.

Iowa Code Chapter 258.4 requires the Department to review at least 20 percent of approved CTE programs annually. This mandate is accomplished by directing colleges to review at least 20 percent of their CTE programs annually by utilizing institutional program review processes approved by the Department through the state accreditation process. Also, colleges should review each CTE program at least once every five years as a key component of its institutional planning and budget processes.

College academic administrators and faculty have the primary responsibility for evaluating instructional programs to make informed decisions about improvement and continuation. In addition, institutional program review processes shall ensure program compliance with state and federal laws governing career and technical education, as well as state and regional accreditation standards.

In addition to institutional program criteria, Iowa Code Chapter 258.4(7) and IAC 281 Chapter 46.7(4) require that CTE programs are reviewed to ensure they are:

- compatible with educational reform efforts;
- capable of responding to technological change and innovation; and
- meeting educational needs of students and the employment community, including students with disabilities, and both male and female students from diverse racial and ethnic groups.

Additionally, the CTE program review must include an assessment of the extent to which the program's:

- competencies are being mastered by students;
- costs are proportionate to educational benefits received;
- technical curriculum is articulated and integrated with other educational offerings required of all students;
- content permits students with [secondary] career and technical education backgrounds to pursue other educational interests in a postsecondary setting;
- support services help eliminate access barriers for both traditional and nontraditional students, men and women, persons with diverse racial and ethnic groups, and persons with disabilities to access educational and employment opportunities.

Comprehensive Program Review Suggestions

Resources are being developed for college use in preparation for Department program reviews. Until these are available, here are some suggestions for a comprehensive program review process:

Currency of Curriculum

⇒ Schedule at least two Advisory Council meetings per year to discuss the curriculum and determine if modifications are needed to maintain its quality, relevance, and marketability.

**** Document all discussion supporting modification****

⇒ Allow faculty to attend CTE conferences or visit industry experts to keep abreast of current industry standards.

Faculty Qualifications

⇒ Maintain a dynamic database of faculty credentials and relevant information that can be updated as they earn degrees, licenses, certifications, or engage in professional development activities.

Enrollment, Retention, Completion, Placement Rates

⇒ Create an efficient way to track cohorts from year-to-year and display their data in charts to clearly show the percent of those that are still in the program and those that have completed. Of the completers, show the percent that obtained jobs in the field.

Adequacy of Equipment and Facilities

⇒ Incorporate a review of program resources into the annual budget process, as well as into Advisory Council meeting agendas.

Student Outcomes and Cost-Effectiveness

⇒ Incorporate an assessment of student outcomes (standards and benchmarks) into all program and curriculum review processes.

Iowa Code 258.4(8) also mandates the establishment of a minimum set of competencies and core curriculum to ensure approved CTE programs address:

- new and emerging technologies;
- Job-seeking, job-keeping and other employment skills including self-employment and entrepreneurship skills that reflect current industry standards, and labor market needs;
- the strengthening of basic academic skills.

Furthermore, Iowa Code Chapter 258.9 requires colleges, as a condition of state approval, to appoint a local advisory council for CTE programs. These program advisory councils should be integrated into the institutional review process as they play the critical role of providing feedback to ensure program content meets industry standards. These councils shall be comprised of a diverse group of people skilled and current in fields related to the program they will help develop and assess.

During state accreditation visits, Department staff evaluate institutional program review processes, as well as individual CTE program reviews to determine compliance with state and federal requirements. This extensive review includes scrutiny of the composition and level of involvement of advisory councils. The college shall provide the team with current lists of council members' contact information, as well as council meeting notes illustrating ongoing discussion of program relevance, quality, and suggestions for improvement.

CurricUNET Checklist and Information

New Program Notice of Intent Form Checklist of Activities

Please complete the following before submission that must occur no more than one year and at least 90 days prior to the desired date of implementation (initial enrollment):

- ☐ Establish an advisory council and conduct a DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) to discuss program need and develop the framework of the program.
- ☐ Create a concise, yet informative program description, with a unique description for each award option.
- ☐ Contact a Department consultant to determine the proper CIP and ITSO for the program and its options.
- ☐ Work with the consultant to identify similar programs offered at other Iowa community colleges. Match exact CIPs and programs with similar titles.
- ☐ Discuss potential duplication or competition with other colleges, particularly those closest to your college.
- ☐ Gather Labor Market Information to determine program need and student interest to make reliable enrollment, completion, and job placement projections.
- ☐ Identify existing or potential linkages and articulations with secondary schools/districts, other community colleges, and four-year institutions.
- ☐ Identify business and industry partners to assist with equipment, internships/apprenticeships, job placement.
- ☐ Acquire Board of Directors/Trustees approval.

Program Modification Checklist of Activities

Please complete the following before submission that must occur at least 60 days prior to the desired date of implementation (enrollment in revised program):

- ☐ Conduct advisory council meeting(s) to discuss program viability, relevance, and quality to determine areas in need of modification (i.e., program structure, adding options, changing awards, revising courses, etc.).
- ☐ If an award option is to be added, consider whether it fits under the current CIP category or requires a distinct code. If distinct, the program would need to be proposed as a new program rather than an option.
- ☐ If a main program or option changes in terms of credit hours, determine whether the ITSO needs to be changed. If so, the ITSO change and modifications should be made through the "CIP/ITSO Reclassification" (see page 16).
- ☐ Provide unique "award" descriptions for each option.
- ☐ Acquire Board of Directors/Trustees approval.

New Program Proposal Form Checklist of Activities

Please complete the following before submission that must occur at least 60 days prior to the desired date of implementation (initial enrollment):

- ☐ Provide a concise, informative Program Description, with a unique description for each program award option.
- ☐ Contact a Department consultant to discuss the proper ITSO codes for all program award options.
- ☐ Work with the consultant to identify programmatic standards and benchmarks, and to obtain advice regarding the format for presenting these.
- ☐ Gather and clearly display Labor Market Information to demonstrate program need; student interest; and employer support of the program to include providing equipment, sponsoring internships/apprenticeships, providing clinical space, and hiring graduates.
- ☐ Identify possible program duplication and create a sound case for the uniqueness of your proposed program and how you will avoid harmful competition with other Iowa community colleges and other public/private institutions.
- ☐ Identify existing or future linkages and articulation agreements with secondary schools/districts, other community colleges, and four-year institutions.
- ☐ Use CurricUNET's Common Course Numbering database to choose appropriate courses for the Education Plan (AS-28), or create courses to meet program standards and benchmarks. Provide extended course descriptions, which could include syllabi, in the CurricUNET system.
- ☐ Check CurricUNET's Compliance Report to ensure the program meets the requirements of each award option.
- ☐ Acquire Board of Directors/Trustees approval.

Important Notes & Considerations

- ◆ Advisory Councils should be involved in every phase of program development, review, and modification.
- ◆ CTE programs should provide seamless transitions for students from secondary to postsecondary programs; seek to establish linkages and articulation agreements with both secondary and four-year institutions.
- ◆ Common Course Numbers and Titles are essential elements of a seamless educational system.
- ◆ "Program Modification" & "CIP/ITSO Reclassification" proposal types in CurricUNET are identical except Reclassification allows for CIP/ITSO changes.
- ◆ Department consultants are available to help colleges with program development and approval...USE THEM!!



COMMUNITY COLLEGES