



Illinois Department of Corrections

Administrative Directive

Number: 04.10.104	Title: Postsecondary Education for Credit Bearing Programs	Effective: 10/1/2022
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Authorized by:	<i>[Original Authorized Copy on File]</i>	Rob Jeffreys Director
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Authority: 730 ILCS 5/3-2-2, 3-6-2 and 3-12-3 20 IAC 405	Related ACA Standards: 5-ACI-1A-07, 5-ACI-7B-01, 04, 05, 9 – 12, 14
Referenced Policies: 01.02.104, 01.02.107, 04.01.122, 04.23.130, 05.06.112, 05.15.100	Referenced Forms: DOC 0717 – New Provider Request to Add New Program/Course DOC 0718 – Existing Provider Request to Add New Program/Course DOC 0719 – Postsecondary Education Complaint Form

I. POLICY

The Department shall coordinate with postsecondary institutions to provide or support the provision of consistent, predictable and high-quality postsecondary education opportunities across custody levels and throughout the state, and shall aim to ensure that all students have access to an education comparable to what is available in the community.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish a written procedure defining the responsibilities involved in the administration and support of credit-bearing postsecondary education programs as the Department seeks to establish consistent, predictable and high-quality postsecondary education across custody levels and throughout the state.

B. Applicability

This directive is applicable to the Office of Adult Education and Vocational Services (OAEVS) and to all correctional facilities within the Department that provide academic, vocational or contractual programs through OAEVS.

C. Facility Reviews

A facility review of this directive shall be conducted at least annually.

D. Designees

Individuals specified in this directive may delegate stated responsibilities to another person or persons unless otherwise directed.

E. Definitions

Accredited Program – a university or college accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and offering Postsecondary Education.

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Course -- a standalone class or series of instructional modules within a broader program of study.

Nationally Recognized Accrediting Agency – an agency the Secretary of the United States Department of Education determines to be a reliable authority as to the quality of education or training provided by the facilities of higher education and the higher education programs accredited by the agency. This includes public postsecondary vocational education and nurse education.

Postsecondary Education – for the purposes of this directive, any education received after secondary school (i.e., high school or high school degree equivalence) through an accredited institution of higher education or higher education program that yields credit to enrolled students who successfully complete course requirements.

Postsecondary Provider – a college or university that is authorized by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and/or the Illinois Community College Board and that offers programs of study authorized by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and/or the Illinois Community College Board.

Program – a series of multiple courses that culminates in the conferral of a certificate, degree, or a widely recognized stackable credential.

F. General Provision

1. Facilities may offer individuals in custody the opportunity to participate in postsecondary education through accredited non-profit colleges and universities. These opportunities may include either academic (associate’s, bachelor’s or master’s degree) or career and technical education courses and programs, including industry-recognized certificates and licensures.

NOTE: Courses offered by postsecondary institutions or individuals associated with postsecondary institutions that do not lead to the conferral of college credit shall not qualify as postsecondary education opportunities as outlined in this directive. Such opportunities shall be covered under volunteer services in accordance with Administrative Directive 04.01.122.

2. The Department shall establish contracts for paid services, or MOUs using the Department’s Higher Education MOU template or other legally binding document with all accredited programs seeking to work inside a Department facility. A completed contract, MOU or equivalent will be required before offering courses inside a Department facility.
3. Providers must complete and countersign MOUs or contracts 90 days prior to the proposed start date of the program. All MOUs shall be reviewed and approved by IDOC Legal staff.
4. IDOC Legal staff shall review all proposed MOUs to ensure they address, at a minimum, the following topics:
 - a. Target population, program requirements, and rationale for serving the identified target population.
 - b. Program description and meeting frequency.
 - c. Description and explanation of the desired application process for program admittance.
 - d. Transferability and transfer process for students with existing college credits.
 - e. Any plans for the inclusion of additional volunteers or other outside involvement in course delivery, including the number of proposed volunteers in the classroom at a given point in time.

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- f. Explanation of existing articulation agreements with other postsecondary institutions.
 - g. Credentialing and professional requirements for instructional staff hired by accredited programs, to include discussion of any deviations from normal hiring requirements that exist for on-campus programs.
 - h. Clearly identify a plan for enrolling, and whether the institutions will place any special restrictions on, formerly incarcerated students. If providers do not plan to allow released individuals to enroll in courses on-campus following release, that must be stated clearly.
 - i. Attestation to comply with the Department's publication review process.
 - j. Formally agree to the release of grades and transcripts to the Department on the behalf of students for record keeping purposes.
 - k. Detail whether specific programs or courses will be offered such that they will preclude students from enrolling in other courses or programs.
5. The Department shall use reasonable best efforts to ensure that MOUs entered into with any postsecondary institution provide that:
- a. The postsecondary institution cannot prohibit any student who was formerly incarcerated from attending the institution in-person upon release; and
 - b. Formerly incarcerated students are permitted to live in college housing and have access to all college facilities.
6. Facilities offering postsecondary education shall establish procedures for individuals in custody to enroll, participate, and complete postsecondary education in accordance with this directive and as outlined in the MOUs with the provider.
7. In accordance with Administrative Directive 04.23.130:
- a. All students shall have a goal statement completed within the stated timeframe.
 - b. Individuals enrolled in postsecondary courses shall earn Earned Program Sentence Credit (EPSC).
8. All postsecondary providers' staff shall be issued either yellow or light blue contractual employee badges depending on the frequency of their visits in accordance with Administrative Directive 01.02.104, contingent on the passage of a background check in accordance with Administrative Directive 01.02.107.
9. The Department shall make reasonable accommodations to facilitate the delivery of financial aid seminars at least on a biannual basis to interested students and individuals preparing for reentry.
- NOTE:** Postsecondary providers and their administrative staff will be responsible for delivering financial aid seminars and instruction in the facility or facilities in which they instruct, in conjunction with other postsecondary providers.

G. Requirements

- 1. The Director shall hold a biannual call or meeting with postsecondary providers to address concerns and receive program updates.

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2. The OAEVS Manager shall develop policies and procedures for the operation of postsecondary courses. This shall include, but shall not be limited to:
 - a. Reviewing the curricula of accredited programs to ensure that they are consistent with existing departmental postsecondary education needs and adhere to the Department's applicable legal standards. The OAEVS Manager shall seek to ensure a variety of topical offerings and an even distribution of postsecondary opportunities across the state and across custody levels.
 - b. Making recommendations on the signature of MOUs or contracts with postsecondary providers to the Chief of Programs.
 - c. Assisting facility-level staff in navigating questions or unforeseen challenges that emerge from postsecondary providers.
 - d. Addressing concerns from postsecondary providers that facility-level staff are unable to address.
 - e. Maintaining a publicly available listing of all postsecondary courses offered across the Department, to include the Department facility and the postsecondary provider.

3. The facility Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and Assistant Warden of Programs (AWP) shall meet quarterly with representatives from postsecondary education providers to understand current course offerings and help to address any issues that providers have identified during the preceding quarter.

4. The AWP shall:
 - a. Provide general support to the Education Facility Administrator (EFA) in their coordination of postsecondary programs and support the EFA in ensuring that all providers are notified as expeditiously as possible of any changes or events (such as lockdowns) that may impede course delivery.
 - b. Ensure the facility has an updated Education Building Volunteer Orientation Manual that provides specific instruction to volunteers planning to work inside the education building.

5. The EFA shall:
 - a. Serve as the primary liaison with postsecondary providers and assist in scheduling and coordinating the delivery of postsecondary opportunities inside the facility.
 - b. Provide an Education Building Orientation to all Postsecondary Administrators and Faculty working in a given facility.
 - c. Enter student assignments of individuals in custody enrolled in postsecondary education into Offender 360 (O360).
 - d. In accordance with Administrative Directive 04.23.130, maintain EPSC contracts for postsecondary education courses as well as calendars for postsecondary courses.
 - e. Close out EPSC contracts at the end of the goal period, both on paper and in the tracking system of record, sending recommendations to the Records Office.

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- f. Update student transcript information at the end of each academic quarter or semester as available, providing a copy of the transcript to the Records Office for inclusion in the master file, placing a copy in the student's education file, and ensuring the student has a copy themselves.
 - g. Work with providers to troubleshoot and find solutions to day-to-day issues that may arise during course delivery.
 - h. Review course materials in a timely manner and clearly communicate concerns and request any changes.
 - i. Provide a roster of potentially eligible students to relevant postsecondary providers using data available in the Department's tracking system of record based on the qualifications set forth by the postsecondary provider and agreed to by the Department.
 - j. Provide a class roster to postsecondary faculty for attendance purposes.
 - k. Work with relevant facility staff to support and expedite when appropriate the review and clearance of college faculty.
 - l. Coordinate with the agency Volunteer Coordinator to schedule trainings with college faculty per the volunteer policy at the nearest possible Department facility.
6. The Department shall provide postsecondary institutions a formal complaint process to address issues with service delivery, which may include but shall not be limited to: timely review of course materials; unreasonable rejection of course material; or erroneous removal of a student from a course.
- a. When such events arise, postsecondary providers may file a formal complaint and request for remedy by completing and submitting a Postsecondary Education Complaint Form, DOC 0719, to the AWP.
- NOTE:** If a facility lacks an AWP, the provider may submit the DOC 0719 to the OAEVS Manager.
- b. Upon receipt of a DOC 0719, the AWP shall make all possible efforts to address the issue, complete the "explanation of remedy" section, sign the form and submit a copy to the postsecondary provider, the CAO and to the OAEVS Manager.
 - c. As needed, upon receipt of a completed DOC 0719, the OAEVS Manager shall contact the relevant AWP, EFA or postsecondary provider for further mediation of disputes.
7. Individuals in custody shall follow existing policy for submitting grievances in accordance with Administrative Directive 04.01.114.

H. Postsecondary Education Requirements

Upon entering into agreements to offer postsecondary education through accredited colleges and universities:

- 1. The AWP or EFA shall work with the facility Records Office to update the master file with the individual in custody's most recent transcript(s) as they become available.

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2. Department facilities shall submit a request to the Information Services Unit to create an assignment code for each course and section, consistent with the Department's assignment code naming convention.
3. To the extent possible, correctional facilities shall house individuals in custody who are enrolled in postsecondary programs together, to create a physical community of postsecondary students unless otherwise requested by a postsecondary provider.
4. Requirements for Individuals in Custody
 - a. To be eligible for postsecondary education courses, individuals in custody must have:
 - (1) A GED or HSE certificate with transcripts, or High School diploma with transcripts;
 - (2) A TABE score of 8.0 or higher; and
 - (3) Sufficient time remaining on their sentence, when accounting for EPSC and Earned Discretionary Sentence Credit (EDSC), such that they will substantially benefit or complete postsecondary programs.

NOTE: Per statute, individuals in custody who are mandated to enroll in Adult Basic Education are not eligible for postsecondary education regardless of their GED/HSE status.
 - b. Individuals in custody shall meet all additional accredited program eligibility requirements as agreed upon in the relevant MOU and consistent with Department policy.
 - c. Individuals in custody may only enroll in a single postsecondary program at any given time, to provide the maximum number of students an opportunity to pursue a postsecondary education.

NOTE: While individuals in custody may not pursue multiple programs simultaneously, they may pursue multiple postsecondary courses, or courses in addition to a separate program concurrently. Individuals in custody shall be expected to focus efforts toward a single degree at a given point in time.
 - d. Individuals in custody shall:
 - (1) Complete programs they are actively enrolled in before enrolling in postsecondary courses that would conflict or interrupt ongoing programs.
 - (2) Prioritize available programs and courses identified in their individualized risk and needs assessment or required by statute before enrolling in postsecondary courses.
 - e. When enrolling into postsecondary education, the following may be considered if the relevant MOU does not identify different specific criteria:
 - (1) Ability to complete the program or course prior to an individual in custody's projected mandatory supervised release (MSR) date when accounting for the award of EPSC and EDSC.
 - (2) Identified treatment needs including current or pending enrollment.

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- (3) Previous program termination for fault within the preceding two-year period.
 - (4) Conduct during the previous one-year period.
5. In the event a facility has inadequate space and resources to offer additional postsecondary opportunities and reasonable measures have been taken to address these limitations, it may be incumbent on the Department to select which postsecondary courses it can offer.
- a. This decision shall be made by the OAEVS Manager in collaboration with the relevant EFA and AWP.
 - b. In prioritizing postsecondary offerings, the Department may consider:
 - (1) Total course length, with preference given to courses that can offer credits in a shorter period of time and thus provide access to more students.
 - (2) The number of students a single course can accommodate.
 - (3) Course accessibility, with preference given to courses that are accessible to more individuals in custody (i.e., Associate's Degree course over a Master's Degree course).
 - (4) Course diversity, a broad but logical set of offerings that fit the average sentence length and education level of individuals in custody at the relevant institution.
 - (5) Complete programs of study ahead of standalone courses.
 - (6) Education pathways, the way in which a course logically leads to the completion of a degree with preference given to courses that logically build on each other over courses that are not part of a broader pathway.
 - (7) Transferability, with preference given to institutions whose credits are accepted by the widest range of higher education institutions in Illinois.

I. Transfer Holds

In accordance with Administrative Directive 05.06.112, students enrolled in a credit-bearing postsecondary course shall receive an educational hold for as long as they maintain enrollment in a postsecondary program and continue to make regular progress toward completion of their program without substantial interruption due to behavior or poor academic performance.

NOTE: The Department reserves the right to make transfers, as needed, for operational reasons but shall endeavor to avoid educational interruptions.

J. Removal from Postsecondary Education

- 1. Individuals found guilty of disciplinary infractions that occur outside of the classroom, do not affect education delivery, and do not necessitate placement into Restrictive Housing in accordance with Administrative Directive 05.15.100 shall not be removed from postsecondary courses unless they are found guilty of four (4) or more such infractions in a 90-day period.
- 2. In the event a student regularly and persistently disrupts the delivery of postsecondary education, the student may be removed following at least three (3) such instances of disruption during the

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same 30-day period. The first removal shall last no more than 5 days. At the discretion of the instructor, students may be removed from courses or program for fewer infractions.

3. Individuals found guilty of an infraction that are then placed in Restrictive Housing shall miss the remainder of the current relevant academic unit of course delivery (quarter, semester, trimester, etc.)

K. Process for Adding New Postsecondary Opportunities

1. The Department shall have a formal process through which postsecondary providers:
 - a. Not under contract with the Department can propose offering additional programs and courses at Department facilities.
 - (1) The Department shall consider proposals from any accredited postsecondary institution that demonstrates a willingness to work collaboratively with the Department to modify course delivery to suit a correctional setting and is able and willing to complete an approved MOU.
 - (2) The Department shall clearly lay out and provide any required documentation to complete this process on its website.
 - b. Currently working with the Department can propose offering additional programs and courses at Department facilities.

NOTE: For those secondary providers not working under a paid IDOC contract, the Department shall entertain any proposals for expansion of postsecondary opportunities.
2. For a postsecondary provider, not under contract with the Department who is proposing to add a new postsecondary program or course at the Department, providers shall be directed to complete and submit a New Provider Request to Add New Program/Course, DOC 0717, to the Chief of Programs.
 - a. The Chief of Programs shall review the DOC 0717, approve or deny the request, and then forward to the relevant AWP's and the OAEVS Manager.
 - b. The OAEVS Manager and facility staff, in consultation with IDOC Legal staff, shall work with the postsecondary provider to negotiate an MOU based on the Higher Education MOU Template.
3. For any existing postsecondary provider looking to expand postsecondary educational opportunities:
 - a. Facility-level staff shall work in coordination with the OAEVS Manager to support the postsecondary provider(s) in the completion of an Existing Provider Request to Add New Program/Course, DOC 0718, identifying:
 - (1) The additional program(s) or course(s);
 - (2) How the proposed addition(s) fit into or enhance a facility's existing postsecondary offerings; and
 - (3) How the provider plans to deliver those program(s) or course(s).

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- b. Upon review of the DOC 0718, the relevant EFA and AWP shall consult and make a formal recommendation, complete with a justification, as to whether to move forward with the proposed addition. This recommendation shall take into consideration the importance of expanded program opportunities for rehabilitation while also identifying barriers to implementation specific to the facility. This formal recommendation shall be sent to the OAEVS Manager.
 - c. The OAEVS Manager shall formally approve or deny the program expansion and provide a justification should that conclusion differ from the recommendation made by staff.
 - d. Upon approval by the OAEVS Manager, the Department, in close consultation with IDOC Legal staff, shall work with the postsecondary provider to modify the existing MOU to reflect new additions.
- 4. The Department shall provide a rationale for any rejected proposal. The postsecondary provider may submit a revised proposal, to include specific solutions that address the rationale for rejection from the Department.
 - 5. The Department shall review proposed additions in January and June of each calendar year, and respond to prospective partners in writing within 45 days of receipt of an application.

NOTE: Proposed additions may be reviewed more frequently than twice per year, based on approval by the Chief of Programs.

L. Communication Outside of the Classroom

- 1. Postsecondary instructors and relevant administrative staff may communicate with current or former students, during incarceration or following release for the purposes of education, higher education counseling, and career counseling as needed. The Department shall make reasonable accommodations to facilitate this communication during incarceration.

NOTE: Department staff shall coordinate with postsecondary providers and their administrative staff to facilitate the delivery of academic advising. Advising session(s) may occur in-person or by phone on a quarterly basis.
 - 2. Individuals or institutions that choose to provide ongoing services to their formerly incarcerated students shall not be considered representatives of the Department in any way.
-