

Postsecondary Education Program Application Review Rubric

The Postsecondary Education Program Rubric is a document designed to support the review committee in reading the Postsecondary Education Program Application for the Colorado Department of Corrections. This document is a guide that provides considerations of what type of answers applicants may provide in each section of the application form. By no means is this guide the sole evaluation of Postsecondary Education Programs. Rather, committee members should use this guide in conjunction with their collective expertise, experiences, and understanding of what a program should include. Furthermore, in assessing applicants, committee members will review each aspect of the application in five categories: Excelling, Achieving, Implementing, Planning, Unknown. The point of these categories is to help assess each aspect of the program application from a holistic perspective rather than offer a singular assessment of the application as a whole. It is the expectation of the Steering Committee that programs will vary in this progress in each area of the application. It is the intention of the CDOC (and Steering Committee) to use this review approach as a way to offer feedback to programs and then to work together to support programs in their continued development. Over the two-year review period that the CDOC and the Stakeholder Committee have to make a “best interest” determination, it is the goal to support programs through planning and implementation and into achieving status. When making the “best interest” determination, the Stakeholder Committee and the Colorado Department of Corrections will take into consideration a program’s development over time and understand that some of the planning and implementation requested in the application will emerge with the growth of the program.

Scale: Excelling, Achieving, Implementing, Planning, Unknown

1. Program Purpose

- a. The mission and purpose statements combine to express that the program centers student agency, human thriving, access to quality education, specifically for students who have been marginalized by higher education, and that the programs centers equity in their work.

2. Program and Curriculum: Accreditation

- a. Program is pursuing the correct channels to ensure the prison education program (and curriculum) will be part of the college/university accreditation.

3. Program and Curriculum: Program of Study and Instructors

- a. The program offers a credential (certificate, licensure, and/or degree).
- b. Students completing the credential(s) have a pathway to employment (i.e., legal employment barriers do not exist).
- c. The mode of engagement is suited for the curriculum and includes adequate opportunities for in-person, face-to-face engagement.
- d. High impact learning opportunities are part of the curriculum (and across the curriculum).
- e. The program has a recruitment, hiring and training plan for faculty to teach within their area of expertise/study (of their highest degree attained).

4. Communication

- a. The program’s communication plan provides relevant information for students (i.e., admission process, financial aid literacy, program overview) and allows students to ask questions (i.e., during webinars, in-person sessions, webportal) and take information with them (i.e., flyers, handouts, handbooks).
- b. Program orientation is conducted at least once per year.

5. Admissions and Enrollment

- a. The program has a diversified admission process that incorporates holistic protocols with standardized/required protocols (i.e., interview, personal essay, other written reflection, letters of recommendation).
- b. The program centers equity in the admissions process and enrollment process.
- c. Students are admitted to the college/university as matriculated (i.e., registered in a major and credit stack into a credential).
- d. The college/university does not have barriers to admission for students post-release (i.e., bans or barriers to enrollment for people who are formerly incarcerated).

6. Equity, Student Support and Reentry Services

- a. The services that are offered support student success (i.e., access to technology, library resources, math and writing tutors, study halls).
- b. The program integrates a variety of reentry services for students, either through the program, college/university and/or community partnership (i.e., job placement, housing, basic needs supplies, legal support, health and wellness support).
- c. The program integrates leadership and/or professional development opportunities for students (i.e., advisory board, apprenticeships, internships, or other employment training).

7. Pell Grants, Tuition and Financial Aid

- a. Students are provided support to complete the FAFSA from college/university financial aid staff.
- b. Robust financial aid, FAFSA and Pell Grant (if applicable) educational information for students is provided (i.e., reading materials, presentations, access to financial aid advisors, financial literacy workshops).
- c. Students are provided with tuition bills in order to track the cost of attendance and they have the opportunity to ask questions or a financial aid professional.
- d. The program's plan to support student tuition/costs is sustainable.

8. Evaluation

- a. The program's definition of student success is holistic and takes into account many different factors (i.e., does not rely solely on academics, attentive to collaboration and curiosity; centers knowledge creation and acquisition).
- b. The program is collecting both qualitative and quantitative data to measure student success (i.e., persistence, retention, completion, student self-reported feedback, other measures of student achievement and/or engagement).
- c. The program's definition of program success is holistic and takes into account many different factors (i.e., focused on improving the program, equity in student engagement, centered on various measures of student success).
- d. The program is collecting both qualitative and quantitative data to measure program success (i.e., student feedback, faculty feedback, self-assessment from program leadership and staff, clearly defined relationship to program purpose).