RHFAC Certification Readiness: Preparing Projects for Review

Preparing a building project for an accessibility certification process requires more than completing design drawings and assuming that all requirements have been addressed. Teams need to understand the applicable criteria, review important accessibility provisions and organise the information that may be required during a formal assessment. A RHFAC certification readiness review can help identify potential gaps before submission and give project stakeholders a clearer picture of their preparation.

Establish the Requirements Before Submission

The first step in preparation is understanding which certification framework, authority requirements or project-specific standards apply. Requirements should not be assumed to be identical across every building or location. The project type, jurisdiction and intended approval process all influence what needs to be considered.

Once the relevant criteria are identified, the project team can compare them with the available design information and accessibility provisions. This creates a structured basis for checking whether important areas have been addressed and whether further information may be needed.

A universal design consultant can contribute an inclusive perspective to these discussions by helping teams consider how different people may use the building. This broader view is useful alongside the technical review of applicable requirements because it keeps attention on the practical experience of the environment.

Check Drawings and Supporting Information

Project documentation plays an important role in certification preparation. Drawings, checklists and supporting documents help reviewers understand the design and the accessibility provisions being considered. If information is missing, unclear or inconsistent, it may become harder to demonstrate how particular requirements have been addressed.

A desktop review can help examine the information available before formal submission. It can identify missing evidence, unclear details and areas where additional clarification may be necessary. This gives project teams an opportunity to organise their records while there is still time to address outstanding matters.

The review may consider information related to:

- Accessible routes and connections between key spaces.
- Entrances and accessible parking arrangements.
- Toilets and other relevant facilities.

- Vertical circulation between building levels.
- Signage and wayfinding provisions.
- Service areas and emergency provisions.
- Drawings, checklists and supporting compliance records.

The purpose is not simply to collect documents. The information should help explain the accessibility provisions and demonstrate how relevant requirements have been considered.

A design consultant can help stakeholders keep inclusive use in view while documentation is being reviewed. This can be particularly valuable when several professionals are responsible for different parts of the design or project records.

Identify Gaps Before Formal Review

A readiness exercise is valuable because it can reveal potential issues before a formal submission or inspection. These may include non-compliances, approval risks, missing evidence or accessibility provisions that need further attention.

Finding these matters early gives project teams more time to consider practical responses. Depending on the issue, the next step may involve clarifying documentation, reviewing a design detail, investigating a site condition or coordinating with the relevant project professionals.

This process can also help reduce late-stage redesign. If a concern is identified only when a project is close to submission, changes may be more disruptive and may affect other decisions. Early identification allows teams to consider the issue while planning and coordination are still possible.

RHFAC certification readiness should therefore be approached as a preparation activity rather than a guarantee of a particular certification result. A readiness review can help clients understand their position and organise their next steps, but the formal certification outcome belongs to the relevant certification process.

Coordinate the Team and Prepare the Evidence

Certification preparation often involves several stakeholders, including owners, designers and other project professionals. Each may hold different information about the building. Without coordination, important records can remain incomplete or separate from the decisions they are intended to support.

A structured process can help clarify which documents are available, what evidence is still needed and which issues require action. It can also support communication about responsibilities and outstanding tasks before formal submission or inspection.

The role of a universal design consultant in this wider process is to keep accessibility considerations connected to the project's overall objectives. The aim is to support practical decisions that reflect both applicable requirements and the needs of people using the building.

Organising drawings, evidence and compliance records can improve submission quality and make the preparation process more manageable. It also gives stakeholders a clearer reference point when reviewing outstanding issues.

Conclusion

Good preparation depends on understanding the applicable criteria, checking design information, identifying potential gaps and coordinating evidence before formal review. A structured universal design consultant perspective can help keep inclusive use connected to these technical and administrative steps. By addressing missing information and potential risks early, project teams can strengthen their preparation and approach the relevant certification process with greater clarity.

FAQ

1. What is the purpose of a readiness review?

It helps determine whether a design, completed development or existing facility is prepared for an accessibility certification, authority review or project-specific approval. It can identify potential gaps before formal submission or inspection.

2. What documents may be reviewed?

Depending on the project, the review may include drawings, checklists, supporting documents and compliance records. The information needed depends on the applicable framework and project scope.

3. Can a readiness review identify missing evidence?

Yes. Identifying missing information or evidence is one of the purposes of the preparation process. This gives stakeholders an opportunity to organise supporting records before formal review.

4. Does readiness preparation guarantee certification?

No. A readiness review identifies potential gaps and helps improve preparation. It does not replace the formal assessment or guarantee its outcome.

5. When should a project begin preparing?

Preparation is useful before formal submission or inspection. Reviewing requirements and available information early can give project teams more time to address issues and coordinate documentation.