



UTAH SYSTEM OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION

# MEMORANDUM

January 13, 2023

## Program Alignment

The Utah Board of Higher Education (UBHE) Strategic Plan includes a tactic to facilitate coordination among technical education programs to align program structure and course content to support transfer. This initiative is represented in a strategy to facilitate completion through the development of stackable credentials to support student transfer among institutions.

### Information

Technical education programs have general broad alignment across technical education institutions, particularly those regulated through licensure or programmatic accreditations, which make up about half of the programs offered. Currently, program and course names, lengths, and objectives in the same occupational areas including regulated programs differ between institutions. These differences are confusing to stakeholders seeking to identify and compare program requirements, associated costs, and time to completion. Further, these differences add burden to degree granting institutions desiring to develop and maintain articulation agreements between technical education institutions.

### Expectations

- The Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) Commissioner's office coordinates and provides guidance and assistance on the alignment initiative.
- Institutions must implement aligned programs within two years unless reasonable exceptions are granted by the Board of Higher Education Technical Education Committee.
- The alignment initiative will follow program and course guidelines, including:
  - required participation of USHE institutions that offer technical education programs
  - alignment of program title, length in clock-hours and credit-hours, description, and objectives
  - alignment of course numbers, titles, length in clock-hours and credit-hours, descriptions, and objectives
  - a core of required courses representing foundational knowledge and skills comprised of at least 70% of the total program length
  - potential broad selection of prescribed or elective non-aligned courses representing regional employment needs comprised of no more than 30% of the total program length
- Programs offered by single institutions are submitted to the Office of the Commissioner to be included in the program inventory

- Non-aligned electives can be added to the program at any time during the year and should be reported to the committee and Office of the Commissioner annually. Program committees consider whether to include electives in aligned program requirements.

### **Participation and Review Process**

- Faculty program committees propose program title, length, description, and objectives, as well as course titles, lengths, descriptions, and objectives. Faculty members are encouraged to engage with occupational advisory committees, degree-granting partner institutions, and other interested institutional personnel in the development of these proposals.
- Instructional designers from participating institutions review program and course descriptions and objectives. Recommended changes are reviewed and accepted by faculty.
- The Office of the Commissioner compiles and submits program committee proposals and modifications of proposals to instructional officers for review and recommendations.
- The UBHE Technical Education Committee verifies proposals meet the intent of the initiative.
- Institutions may request the USHE Curriculum Committee and UBHE Technical Education Committee grant a waiver of alignment requirements with justification. The committee may approve variations of alignment.
- Proposals are submitted to the UBHE as an information item on the consent calendar.
- Program approval and modification requirements will be defined in USHE policy.

### **Commissioner's Recommendation**

The Commissioner recommends the acceptance of the program documentation as meeting the directives of the initiative.