

R312, Institutional Roles and Missions¹

R312-1 Purpose

1.1 To provide general principles for roles for institutions in the Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”), to establish and define institutional roles, and to provide guidelines for institutional missions.

1.2 The following principles are essential to USHE and should be reflected in institutional roles:

1.2.1 Institutional and programmatic excellence;

1.2.2 Commitment to access and opportunities for all students, including underrepresented, underserved, traditional, nontraditional, secondary, and post-secondary students, as well as students from urban and rural areas;

1.2.3 Efficiency and accountability, including avoiding unnecessary duplication of programs, resources, and effort;

1.2.4 Meeting the state’s workforce needs; and

1.2.5 Benefit to surrounding communities.

R-312-2 References

2.1 Utah Code Title 53B, Chapter 6, State System of Higher Education – Master Planning

2.2 Utah Code § 53B-1-101.5, Definitions

2.3 Utah Code § 53B-2a-106, Technical Colleges – Duties

2.4 Utah Code § 53B-2a-202, Degree-granting Institutions That Provide Technical Education – Duties – Board Evaluation

2.5 Utah Code § 53B-16-101, Establishment of Institutional Roles and General Courses of Study

2.6 Board Policy R165, Concurrent Enrollment

2.7 Board Policy R315, Designation of Service Regions

2.8 Board Policy R401, Approval of New Programs, Program Changes, Discontinued Programs, and Program Report

2.9 Board Policy R411, Cyclical Institutional Program Reviews

R312-3 Definitions

3.1 “Academic Program” means an educational program other than technical education offered by a degree-granting institution. Academic programs include academic certificates and associate, bachelor’s, graduate, and professional degrees.

3.2 “Concurrent Enrollment” is defined by Board Policy R165.

3.3 “Degree-granting Institution” means an institution described in Utah Code section 53B-1-102(1)(a).

3.4 “Flagship” means the first public higher education institution in Utah.

¹ Approved on May 30, 2003. Amended May 29, 2009, May 20, 2011, September 16, 2011; May 17, 2013; January 22, 2016; April 1, 2016; July 15, 2016; May 18, 2018; May 17, 2019, July 16, 2021, and November 18, 2022. Rescinded and reapproved XXX.

3.5 “Institutional Mission” means an institution’s general purpose and functions as informed by the Board of Higher Education’s strategic goals and the institution’s role(s) designated by section R312-5.

3.6 “Lower Division” means 1000 and 2000-level coursework generally completed in a student’s freshman and sophomore years.

3.7 “Open Admission” means a nonselective admissions process in which all students with a high school diploma or its equivalent are accepted for admission, regardless of their level of academic preparation for lower division course work.

3.8 “Polytechnic” means instruction in the industrial arts, applied sciences, or technical subjects.

3.9 “Service Regions” are designated by Board Policy R315.

3.10 “Technical Education Program” mean an educational program designed to meet industry needs, lead to a technical education certificate, or that is short-term occupational training. Utah Code § 53B-1-101.5(8).

R312-4 Priorities: The Board of Higher Education (“Board”) prioritizes the value and quality of program offerings and the ability of each institution to fulfill its primary role. The Board should regularly assess whether each institution is fulfilling its role and whether its role is still relevant and effective.

R312-5 Institutional Roles: Each institution shall stay within its institutional role(s) as designated by this policy and, absent Board approval, shall not operate outside its institutional role(s). The Board’s approval of a program or course outside an institution’s role shall not constitute a shift in the institution’s role(s).

5.1 Technical College

5.1.1 A technical college’s role is to:

5.1.1.1 Offer technical education programs that either lead to technical education certificates or provide short-term occupational training;

5.1.1.2 Generally admit students year-round, with opportunities to begin most programs at any time on a flexible schedule and advance as they attain competency;

5.1.1.3 Provide concurrent enrollment in partnership with secondary schools;

5.1.1.4 Provide developmental education when needed;

5.1.1.5 Meet the needs of Utah’s economy and employers by providing market-driven technical education to secondary and post-secondary students;

5.1.1.6 Prepare students to enter or advance in the workforce; and

5.1.1.7 Contribute to the quality of life and economic development of the community and region.

5.1.2 Bridgerland Technical College, Davis Technical College, Dixie Technical College, Mountainland Technical College, Ogden-Weber Technical College, Southwest Technical College, Tooele Technical College, and Uintah Basin Technical College are technical colleges. Snow College, Salt Lake Community College, and Utah State University (Eastern, Moab, and Blanding) also fill a technical college role in designated service regions.

5.2 Community College

5.2.1 A community college's role is to:

5.2.1.1 Offer academic certificates and associate degrees, focused on lower division teaching and training, that either lead directly to the workforce or prepare students to transfer to baccalaureate programs;

5.2.1.2 Provide open admission for students;

5.2.1.3 Provide concurrent enrollment in partnership with secondary schools;

5.2.1.4 Provide developmental education when needed;

5.2.1.5 Provide community outreach and continuing education; and

5.2.1.6 Contribute to the quality of life and economic development of the community and the region.

5.2.2 Salt Lake Community College and Snow College are community colleges.

5.2.3 Southern Utah University, Utah Tech University, Utah Valley University, and Weber State University all have a significant community college role. Utah State University's statewide campuses also fill a community college role in its service regions.

5.3 Regional University

5.3.1 A regional university's role is to:

5.3.1.1 Offer academic certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and select master's degrees to meet regional demand;

5.3.1.2 Offer degrees that build upon technical education certificates earned at technical colleges;

5.3.1.3 Provide scholarly and creative activity to supplement its teaching role and contribute to the intellectual and cultural life of the region;

5.3.1.4 Engage in discipline-based scholarly activity;

5.3.1.5 Provide concurrent enrollment in partnership with secondary schools;

5.3.1.6 Provide community outreach and continuing education;

5.3.1.7 Contribute to the quality of life and economic development of the community, the region, and Utah; and

5.3.1.8 Through its community college role in its service region, offer open admission for students and provide developmental education when needed.

5.3.2 A regional university shall not duplicate the technical college role.

5.3.3 Southern Utah University, Utah Valley University, and Weber State University are regional universities with a broad focus. Utah Tech University is a regional university with a polytechnic focus. Utah State University's statewide campuses also fill a regional university role in its service regions.

5.4 Research University

5.4.1 A research university's primary role is to advance knowledge, drive innovation, discover, create, and impart knowledge through research, teaching, and service. Additionally, a research university shall:

5.4.1.1 Provide academic programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels, and a strong emphasis on research;

5.4.1.2 Provide community outreach and continuing education;

5.4.1.3 Contribute to the quality of life and social, cultural, and economic development of Utah, the nation, and the world; and

5.4.1.4 Foster interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships with other research universities, industries, government agencies, and other organizations to address complex challenges and societal problems.

5.4.2 Utah State University and the University of Utah, the only two research universities designated by statute, serve as research universities for the entire state. University of Utah is the state's flagship university and exercises selective admissions. Utah State University is the state's land grant university and exercises selective admissions at its Logan campus.

R312-6 Accreditation: All institutions shall maintain accreditation by an appropriate accreditor recognized by the United States Department of Education. Institutions shall also maintain programmatic accreditation for programs where appropriate.

R312-7 Community Outreach: All institutions engage and enhance their surrounding communities through outreach activities, such as cultural, social, artistic, economic, personal, and professional development, appropriate to their designated roles.

R312-8 Institutional Mission Statements: In consultation with its Board of Trustees, each institution shall develop a statement outlining its institutional mission. Each institution must seek the Board of Higher Education's approval of its institutional mission statement, including any updates, to ensure alignment with the institution's institutional role(s) and the state's goals and priorities for higher education.