



R401, Approval and Modification of New Instructional Programs, Program Changes, Discontinued Programs, and Program Reports and Administrative Units within Institutional Role, Mission, and Designated Service Region¹

R401-1 Purpose: This policy establishes processes for approval and modification of criteria and procedures for new programs of instruction that ensure rigorous scrutiny—beginning at the institutional level and then by an institution’s peers—and encourage a range of sustainable degrees and other credentials and administrative units within each a Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”) institution’s role, mission, and that meet or exceed national standards. This policy also creates procedures for approving or discontinuing programs and notifying the Board of Higher Education of changes to academic program and administrative units designated service region.

R401-2 References-

- 2.1** Utah Code § 53B-16-102, Changes in Curriculum
- 2.2** Utah Code § 53B-16-105, Common Course Numbering
- 2.3** Board Policy R220, Delegation of Responsibilities to the President and Board of Trustees
- 2.4** Board Policy R312, Configuration of the Utah System of Higher Education and Institutional Missions and Roles Institutional Roles and Missions and Approval of Out-of-Role Instructional Programs
- 2.5** Board Policy R315, Service Area Designations and Coordination of Off-Campus Courses and Programs Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers
- 2.6** Board Policy R402, Certificate and Degree Award Structures
- 2.7** Board Policy R411, Cyclical Institutional Program Reviews
- 2.8** Board Policy R470, General Education, Common Course Numbering, Lower-Division Pre-Major Requirements, Transfer of Credits, and Credit by Examination
- 2.9** Board Policy R510, Tuition
- 2.10** Board Policy R517, Course and Program Fees

Commented [AA1]: We will add hyperlink to this policy throughout once Board approves it.

¹ Approved November 7, 1972; amended September 25, 1973, February 21, 1984, April 27, 1990 and revised and combined with R402 October 27, 2000. [R402 was approved September 10, 1971, amended November 18, 1980, July 19, 1983, March 20, 1984, September 12, 1986, August 7, 1987, October 26, 1990, April 16, 1993, January 21, 1994, May 1, 1997, May 29, 1998, and revised and combined with R401 October 27, 2000.] R401 amended June 1, 2001, November 8, 2002, May 30, 2003, October 19, 2004, December 14, 2007, April 1, 2010, November 18, 2011, November 16, 2012, July 19, 2013, September 18, 2015, July 21, 2017, September 21, 2018, May 18, 2023, and March 21, 2024, and June 6, 2024.

2.11 Board Policy R701, Capital Facilities

R401-3 Definitions-

3.1 “Administrative Unit” means an academic department, college, professional school, or bureau. Centers, institutes, and bureaus are administrative units that primarily perform research, instruction, and technology transfer functions or provide services to students, the community, businesses, or other external audiences to obtain external funds. For purposes of this policy, an administrative unit does not include branch campuses, extension centers, or instructional service centers, which are covered under Board Policy R315, *Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers*. However, such a campus or center may be home to one or more administrative units.

~~**Academic Awards-**~~ Academic awards range from certificates to doctoral degrees. The following definitions describe common characteristics of each award. In compliance with accreditation, institutions may establish additional requirements and course work.

~~**3.1.1 Certificate of Proficiency-**~~ A program of study that prepares students for an occupation. It does not require, but may include, general education courses. The certificate requires 16 to 29 semester credit hours or 600 to 899 clock hours. It consists entirely of undergraduate courses but does not require prerequisite courses, conditions, or degrees for admission to the program.

~~**3.1.1.1 CTE Certificate of Proficiency-**~~ A certificate of proficiency that prepares students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation, meets Perkins eligibility requirements and federal financial aid requirements, and consists entirely of lower division courses.

~~**NOTE-**~~ Institutional certificates of proficiency require less than 30 semester credit hours, or 900 clock hours) and are not eligible for federal financial aid. Institutions may establish institutional certificates without notifying the Board. Institutions may use these certificates to address varying needs, including workforce preparation, bridging student pathways from high school, avocational interests, or development of specialized skills.

~~**3.1.2 Certificate of Completion-**~~ A program of study that prepares students for an occupation. It requires a recognizable general education core in communication, computation, and human relations. The general education core may be embedded within program courses. The certificate requires a minimum of 30 semester credit hours or 900 clock hours and typically does not exceed 33 semester credit hours or 990 clock hours. It consists entirely of undergraduate courses and has no prerequisite courses, conditions, or degrees required for admission to the program. Institutions should demonstrate how certificates requiring more than 36 semester credit hours or more than 1,080 clock hours can lead to an associate's and/or

bachelor's degree within the normal credit hour requirements for that degree. When appropriate, institutions should include transfer agreements in the program proposal.

3.1.2.1 CTE Certificate of Completion. A certificate of completion that prepares students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation, meets Perkins eligibility requirements and federal financial aid requirements, and consists entirely of lower division courses.

3.1.3 Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degrees. Programs of study that include limited general education, course work in a subject, and are intended to prepare students for entry-level careers. These degrees require a minimum of 63 and a maximum of 69 semester credit hours. General education requirements are typically less extensive than in AA or AS degrees, and include composition, computation, and human relations. General education learning outcomes may be embedded in discipline courses, and the institution documents how and where the learning outcomes are embedded. Institutions structure AAS degrees to enable students to complete requirements and electives without upper-division coursework.

3.1.4 Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) Degrees. Programs of study primarily intended to encourage exploration of academic options that provide a strong general education component and prepare students for upper-division work in baccalaureate programs or for employment and responsible citizenship. The degree requires a minimum of 60 and a maximum of 63 semester credit hours, which include 30 to 39 semester credit hours of general education course work. Institutions structure associate degrees to enable students to complete requirements and electives without upper-division coursework.

3.1.4.1 Specialized Associate's Degrees. Associate's degrees that include extensive specialized course work—such as the Associate of Pre-Engineering—and are intended to prepare students to initiate upper-division work in a particular baccalaureate program. These degrees require a minimum of 68 and a maximum of 85 semester credit hours, which include a minimum of 28 semester credit hours of preparatory, specialized course work, and general education requirements that may be less extensive than in AA or AS degrees. Because students may not fully complete an institution's general education requirements while completing a specialized associate's degree, they are expected to satisfy remaining general education requirements in addition to upper-division baccalaureate requirements at the receiving institution. Specialized associate's degree programs have formal, written, articulation agreements for the courses transferring. In some cases, articulation may be system-wide.

3.1.4.2 Pre-Major. Associate's degrees that include a set of courses designed to prepare students for upper-division work in a specific major. Pre-major courses in an AA or AS degree should be the same or similar to courses offered at four-year institutions as determined by the USHE major committees. Pre-majors must follow statewide articulation agreements where such

agreements have been formulated. When a pre-major affects students transferring from two-year institutions, sponsoring institutions should pursue formal articulation agreements and students should be clearly informed of the transferability of the courses taken in the pre-major at the two-year institution. Upon transfer, students should generally be able to complete the baccalaureate degree in two additional years of full-time study.

3.1.5 Baccalaureate Degrees: Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BS), and Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS). Programs of study that include general education and major course work, and that prepare students for employment in a career field and responsible citizenship. Students can typically complete these degrees in four years of full-time study. Baccalaureate degrees generally require a minimum of 120 and maximum of 126 semester credit hours.

3.1.5.1 Professional Bachelor's Degrees. A professional degree that prepares students for a particular profession by emphasizing skills and practical analysis built upon theory and research and, most often, has specialized accreditation that sets acceptable practice standards. It may exceed the maximum of 126 credit hours to meet accreditation requirements. Professional degrees often lead to third-party licensure.

3.1.5.2 Baccalaureate Pre-Major. At four-year institutions not offering an AA or AS degree, the term "pre-major" applies to preparatory, lower-division courses required for acceptance into a major. Pre-major course work is not sufficient to admit the student to the major in cases where the institution has admission requirements for the major and a limit on the number of students who may pursue the major. Courses in a baccalaureate pre-major should be the same or similar to those offered by the two-year programs as determined by the USHE major committees.

3.1.5.3 General Studies Bachelor's Degrees. See *General Studies Bachelor's Degrees Guidelines, Appendix A*, for conditions that should be met in the design of general studies degrees.

3.1.5.4 Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) Degrees. Programs of study typically designed as completion programs that build upon a prerequisite core of learning acquired from previous educational attainment that may have occurred through a variety of programs, higher education institutions, or applied learning contexts. The degree focuses on workforce or other specific applied preparation, and links to industry or organizations where opportunities for applied learning are available to students and are integrated into program requirements. When a BAS program is designed to receive an AAS program as a stackable credential, students can typically complete the BAS within two years of full-time study beyond the AAS degree.

3.1.5.5 Bachelor of Applied Studies Degrees (BAP): Programs of study for which the major requirements plus the General Education and institutional requirements are fewer than 120 credits. Bachelor of Applied Science degrees must have a minimum of 90 credits and must measurably demonstrate disciplinary competencies, mastery of subject matter, and student learning outcomes comparable to and mapped to those of 120-credit degree programs in the same subject, with the elimination only of unstructured, non-essential electives from outside the major resulting in fewer credits.

3.1.5.6 Minor: A grouping of related courses that are deemed to be a student's secondary field of academic concentration or specialization during undergraduate studies.

3.1.5.7 K-12 Teaching Endorsement: A collection of courses, built upon an approved teacher education program that prepares K-12 teachers or teacher candidates to meet specific area certification as established by the Utah State Board of Education.

3.1.6 Post-baccalaureate Certificate: A program of study requiring less than 30 semester credit hours and composed of undergraduate and/or graduate courses. The program requires a bachelor's degree for admission.

3.1.7 Post-master's Certificate: A program of study less than 30 semester credit hours and composed entirely of graduate-level courses. The program requires a master's degree for admission.

3.1.8 Master of Arts (MA) and Master of Science (MS) Degrees: Graduate-level programs of study beyond the bachelor's degree. A master's degree requires a minimum of 30 and maximum of 36 semester credit hours of course work.

3.1.8.1 Professional Master's Degrees: Professional master's degrees, such as the Master of Business Administration or Master of Social Work, may require additional course work or projects. May exceed the maximum of 36 semester credit hours to meet accreditation requirements. Professional degrees often lead to third-party licensure.

3.1.9 Doctoral Degrees: Graduate-level programs beyond the master's degree in an advanced, specialized field of study requiring competence in independent research and an understanding of related subjects. Doctoral degrees generally require three to six years of study, preparation and defense of a dissertation based on original research, or planning or execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement.

3.1.9.1 Professional Practice Doctoral Degrees: Provide knowledge and skills for credentials or licenses required for professional practice. Pre-professional and professional

preparation for degrees such as the juris doctorate and medical doctorate requires at least six years of full-time study.

3.2 Articulation Agreement. A formal agreement between two or more institutions documenting the transfer policies for a specific academic program or degree. Agreements may cover any course of study, including certificates and/or degree programs. Institutions shall address transfer and articulation agreements between lower and upper division programs at the annual USHE major committee meetings. Institutions may enter into additional transfer and articulation agreements, such as those in Career and Technical Education (CTE). If the CTE agreements affect general education transfer and articulation, the sponsoring institution shall inform other USHE institutions through the USHE majors committee.

3.23 “Branch Campus”/Extension Center. For the purposes of this policy, a location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus and is permanent in nature means a site subordinate to an institution's main campus that operates under the same governance and provides a full range of student services.

3.4 Career and Technical Education (CTE). Designation given to certain programs consistent with state and national career and technical education definitions.

3.5 Centers, Institutes, or Bureaus. Administrative entities that primarily perform research, instructional, or technology transfer functions and are intended to provide services to students, the community, businesses, or other external audiences, or to obtain external funds.

3.6 Chief Academic Officer (CAO). The institution's chief academic officer responsible for the institution's academic affairs.

3.27 “Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code”. Means the code associated with a particular program of instruction study as specified by the USHE institution and informed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) taxonomy of programs. This code is critical for data requests, reporting, tracking, and performance funding.

3.8 College or Professional School. An academic unit within a Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) institution that is headed by an academic dean.

3.9 Council of Chief Academic Officers. The CAOs of all USHE institutions.

3.10 Emphasis. A collection of courses within an associate of applied science, baccalaureate, or graduate degree that gives students a specific focus in a particular sub-area related to the identifiable core of

courses required for the degree. Emphases must be clearly within the major field of study specified for the degree.

3.11 Institution of higher education/Institution. An institution that is part of the Utah System of Higher Education described in Utah Code 53B-1-102(1)(a)-(i).

3.12 Major. The discipline in which the degree resides.

3.13 Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). The Utah Commissioner of Higher Education and his/her staff.

3.4 “Extension Center” means a research, continuing education, or technical education facility that is permanent and geographically separate from the institution's main campus but is under the same governance.

3.5 “General Education” means a set of essential learning outcomes, the foundational subject areas outlined in Board Policy R470, *General Education*, and the individual courses and the disciplines that comprise those subject areas. The foundational subject areas include written communications, quantitative literacy or mathematics, American Institutions, Humanities, fine arts, social sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences.

3.6 “Instructional Service Center” means a temporary or permanent site that is a joint venture between the institution and an employer or educational agency.

3.7 “Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System” (“IPEDS”) means a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the National Center for Education Statistics (“NCES”), the primary statistical agency of the United States Department of Education, responsible for collecting, analyzing, and publishing information on the condition of American education. IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical institution participating in federal student financial aid programs.

3.8~~14~~ “Peer Review Committee/Council”, means a council comprised of staff in the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (“OCHE”), Chief Academic Officers (“CAOs”) or Chief Instructional Officers (“CIOs”) of USHE institutions, and institutional faculty and staff with the expertise to evaluate a proposed program. The Council of Chief Academic Officers or designees who review programs of instruction, new colleges or schools.

3.9 “Program Awards and Credentials” (“Awards”) means awards and credentials offered at USHE institutions ranging from certificates to doctoral degrees that certify a student has

completed an approved program. Utah Board of Higher Education (“Board”) Policy R402, Certificate and Degree Award Structures, defines awards, credentials, and criteria that allow for in-role program approval by Boards of Trustees (“Trustees”).

3.10 “Program of Instruction” (“Program”) means a for-credit structured curriculum that leads to the knowledge and skills required for a certificate or degree and meets parameters established by institutional accreditation agencies.

3.10.1 “Academic Program” means an educational program offered by a degree-granting institution. An academic program comprises discipline-specific or interdisciplinary courses leading to an intellectual specialty, skills, and experiences necessary for meaningful employment. Academic programs lead to academic certificates or associate, bachelor’s, graduate, and professional degrees as defined in Board Policy R402, Certificate and Degree Award Structures. Academic programs are only offered at USHE degree-granting institutions.

3.10.2 “Technical Education Program” means an undergraduate program that prepares students for employment in occupations that do not require a degree and meets the needs of Utah’s employers for technically skilled workers. Technical education programs are only offered at USHE institutions that have a technical education role.

3.10.3 Within USHE, “technical education programs” and “academic programs” are also defined based on CIP-Code tables maintained by OCHE.

3.11 “Program Proposal” means a document submitted by an institution using a template maintained by OCHE that includes all statutory requirements and other criteria determined by the Utah Board of Higher Education (“Board”) for approval of a new academic or technical program.

3.12 “Regional Demand” means a combination of the following:

3.12.1 Sufficient labor market demand to justify offering the program within the institution’s service region, even if other programs exist in the state; or

3.12.2 Modalities that promote program affordability and student access and completion, such as face-to-face and hybrid instruction aimed at local demand.

3.13 “Unnecessary Duplication” exists where there is:

3.13.1 Undergraduate Program: An undergraduate program that substantially duplicates the curricular content of a program defined as outside the institution's assigned role; or

3.13.2 Graduate Program

3.13.2.1 A high-cost graduate research program or specialty already existing at another institution and for which existing programs adequately meet present and projected industry demand; or

3.13.2.2 A master's degree program at a regional university for which there is no regional demand.

~~**3.15 Program:** A program of curriculum that leads to the completion of a degree, certificate, or other credential.~~

R401-4 Program and Administrative Unit Approval Authority for Program Approval and Mission Alignment

4.1 Program Approval Delegation to Trustees: Based on criteria established by the Board, ~~An institution's Trustees may, with the approval of its Board of Trustees, establish approve a~~ new program or a change to an existing program under the process outlined in subsections 4.2 through 4.4 and sections R401-5 and R401-6 of this policy if the program: ~~of instruction that is within the institution's primary role as established in and (4)(b):~~

4.1.1 Is appropriate to the awards authorized within the requesting institution's mission, role, and scope of programs as outlined in Board policies *R312, Institutional Roles and Missions and Approval of Out-of-Role Instructional Programs*, and *R402, Certificate and Degree Award Structures*;

4.1.2 Is within the institution's assigned geographic service region as defined in Board Policy *R315, Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers*;

4.1.3 Meets identified workforce, community, and student needs that are not adequately met by existing programs;

4.1.4 Maximizes collaboration with other institutions of higher education to provide for efficiency in offering the program of instruction to ensure transferability and stackability of credentials;

4.1.5 Does not unnecessarily duplicate programs offered at other USHE institutions; and

4.1.6 Conforms to law and other Board policy, including Board Policy R470, *General Education*, common course numbering under Utah Code section 53B-16-105 and Board Policy R475, *Common Course Numbering*, technical education program alignment requirements, and transfer and lower-division major requirements under Board Policy R471, *Lower Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits*.

4.2 Board Approval Required: ~~An institution may not establish the following without~~ must receive Board of Higher Education approval for all programs that do not meet the criteria of subsection 4.1, including:

4.2.1 A new program of instruction that is outside of the institution's primary role or changes to an existing program that would bring it outside the role under Board Policy R312, *Institutional Roles and Missions and Approval of Out-of-Role Instructional Programs*;

4.2.2 Any program proposed for delivery outside of the institution's designated service area under Board Policy R315, *Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers*;

4.2.3 A new program that deviates from the award characteristics and criteria under Board Policy R402, *Certificate and Degree Award Structures*; and

4.2.4 A program that OCHE has deemed to be unnecessarily duplicative of other programs.

~~4.2.1 A branch, extension center, college, or professional school;~~

~~4.2.2 A new program of instruction that is outside of the institution's primary role.~~

4.3 Trustee Approval of Administrative Units: Trustees may approve a new administrative unit or changes to an existing one under subsection 4.1. Institutions shall use the notification template provided by OCHE to notify the Board that Trustees have approved a new unit or change to an existing unit.

4.3.1 Branch Campuses, Extensions, and Instructional Service Centers require Board approval as outlined in Board Policy R315, *Designation of Service Regions and Approval*

of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers.

This ~~chart~~ shows the program levels for which institutions are authorized to offer programs without Board of Higher Education approval.

~~4.3.1~~ Institutions unsure whether a proposed program is within their mission may consult the Office of the Commissioner for a determination from the Board.

~~4.3.2~~ Programs determined to be outside an institution's mission may be approved under the process described in R401-5.

4.4 Budget Requests Requiring Board Approval: Neither Trustee nor Board approval of a program or an administrative unit constitutes Board approval of a special budget request necessary to fund the program, such as differential tuition or building appropriations. Special budget requests that require Board approval shall be submitted under relevant Board policies, including R510, Tuition, R517, Course and Program Fees, and R701, Capital Facilities.

R401-5 ~~Notification of New Program Approval Process, Credentials, Reviews and Other Changes.~~

5.1 Program Proposal: An institution seeking approval of a new certificate or degree program shall submit a new program proposal to OCHE. OCHE shall determine whether the program is eligible for Trustee approval under subsection 4.1. If the program is not appropriate for Trustee approval, an institution may seek approval under one of the following Board policies:

5.1.1 Board Policy R312, Institutional Roles and Missions and Approval of Out-of-Role Instructional Programs;

5.1.2 Board Policy R315, Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers; or

5.1.3 Board Policy R402, Certificate and Degree Award Structures.

Institutions shall notify OCHE for the following new programs, credentials or changes:

~~5.1.1~~ All programs considered for peer review under section 6.1.

~~5.1.2~~ New Certificates of Proficiency (except Institutional Certificates of Proficiency);

5.1.3 New Certificates of Completion;

5.1.4 New Post-baccalaureate and Post-masters Certificates;

5.1.5 New Minors;

5.1.6 New Emphases within an approved degree;

5.1.7 New K-12 Endorsements;

5.1.8 Existing Program Changes including:

5.1.8.1 Program Transfer;

5.1.8.2 Program Restructure;

5.1.8.3 Program Consolidation;

5.1.8.4 Program Suspension;

5.1.8.5 Program Discontinuation;

5.1.8.6 Program Name Change;

5.1.8.7 Out-of-Service Area Delivery of a Program; and

5.1.8.8 Reinstatement of a Previously Suspended Program.

5.1.9 Program Reports including:

5.1.9.1 Three-Year Follow Up Reports; and

5.1.9.2 Cyclical Institution Program Reviews (R411).

5.1.10 Administrative Unit Changes including:

5.1.10.1 New Administrative Units;

5.1.10.2 Administrative Unit Transfer;

5.1.10.3 Administrative Unit Restructure;

5.1.10.4 Administrative Unit Consolidation; and

5.1.10.5 Reinstatement of Previously Suspended Administrative Units.

5.1.11 Creation of Non-Administrative Units including:

5.1.11.1 New Centers;

5.1.11.2 New Institutes;

5.1.11.3 New Bureaus.

5.2 Peer Review: OCHE staff will coordinate the peer review process for new certificates and degrees. OCHE will schedule a Peer Review Council ("Council") and provide the Council with the proposal and supporting materials to review. Both degree-granting and technical college peers may review programs as needed to evaluate transfer and program alignment considerations.

5.2.1 Peer Review Process: For academic or technical education programs, CAOs or CIOs or their staff will review the proposal and solicit feedback from appropriate departments at their institutions. Each CAO/CIO shall consolidate feedback from their institution and submit written comments or questions for a response from the proposing department in the platform provided by OCHE. Either the CAOs/CIOs or their designees shall attend a peer review meeting to ask questions of the proposing institution and to provide oral feedback, which OCHE shall summarize in writing.

5.2.2 Special Funding Support: Specialized groups will review programs for approval of special funding support, such as workforce development grants or Perkins eligibility for Career and Technical Education ("CTE") programs. Approval for special funding does not constitute approval of a program of instruction.

Institutions shall follow R401-7, *Proposal and Notification Submission Procedures*, and appropriate template instructions. Notification items will be posted to the OCHE database and will appear as an information item on the Board of Higher Education agenda. Notification items do not require Board approval but may be examined to ensure they are congruent with the institution's mission under R401-4.

5.3 OCHE Assessment: OCHE shall provide an assessment for Trustees to use when determining whether to approve new programs or changes to existing programs.

5.3.1 The assessment:

5.3.1.1 Shall evaluate the proposed program structure under Board Policy R402, *Certificate and Degree Award Structures*;

5.3.1.2 May recommend a particular CIP code for a program to ensure program alignment or transferability, where appropriate; and

5.3.1.3 May assess whether the proposed program unnecessarily duplicates another program, as well as the program's potential impact on other institutions.

5.3.2 OCHE shall issue a report of its assessment to the Trustees, including the completed program proposal with supporting materials, written and oral comments from the peer review process, external reviews if applicable, and any additional information for Trustees to consider when determining whether to approve the proposed program.

Notification Guidelines.

5.3.1 Out-of-Service Area Delivery of Programs. Institutions that offer programs outside their designated service area must seek approval (see R315, *Geographic Service Regions*; R312, *Institutional Mission and Roles*).

5.3.2 Discontinuing or Suspending Programs. An institution discontinues a program when it removes the program from the institution's and the Board's list of approved programs, but only after current students have an opportunity to complete. An institution suspends a program when it temporarily prohibits students from enrolling in the program. The program remains on the Board's list of approved programs and may, at the institution's discretion, remain in the online and/or printed catalog until fully discontinued.

5.3.2.1 Student Completion in Discontinued or Suspended Programs. Students currently admitted to the program must be provided a path to complete the program in a reasonable period of time compatible with accreditation standards. This may require: (1) enrolling students at other institutions of higher education; or (2) offering courses for a maximum of two years after discontinuing the program or until there are no other admitted students who are entitled to complete the program, whichever comes first.

5.3.2.2 System Coordination. Institutions should consider the statewide impact of discontinuing the program and identify opportunities for establishing

the program at another USHE institution. Institutions should consider discontinuing unnecessary duplicative programs within the USHE, particularly programs that may be high cost and/or low producing.

5.3.3 Reinstatement of Previously Suspended Program or Administrative Unit. If circumstances change and an institution plans to restart a suspended program or an administrative unit, the institution shall notify the Board of Higher Education using the notification template. Notice should include a statement verifying the program name, administrative unit structure and/or the curricular content that are identical to the original program. If either the name or curricular content of the program have changed, the institution will submit the program as a new program and discontinue the suspended program.

R401-6 Trustee Consideration: To ensure that approval of a proposed program or administrative unit supports USHE and state needs, Trustees will consider the system-level impact of new instructional programs and refer to the assessments and information provided by OCHE when making their approval determinations.

Peer Review for New Proposed Programs.

6.1 The following Programs Require Peer Review before being approved by either the Board of Trustees or the Board of Higher Education:

6.1.1 Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degrees.

6.1.2 Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) Degrees.

6.1.3 Baccalaureate Degrees.

6.1.4 Master's Degrees.

6.1.5 Doctoral Degrees.

6.1.6 New colleges or professional schools.

6.2 Peer Review Process. The Commissioner's staff will coordinate the peer review process.

6.2.1 Review by the Commissioner's Staff. Institutions shall submit full program proposals, including financial and budget analyses, to the Commissioner's staff for review and comment.

6.2.2 Peer Review by Council of Chief Academic Officers. After the Commissioner's staff has determined the proposal is ready for peer review, they will forward the proposal to the CAOs. The CAOs will review the proposal and may submit comments or questions for response from the other CAOs. The Peer Review Committee will meet with the Commissioner's staff to discuss the proposal, the peer institutions' comments or questions, external reviews (if applicable), and the Commissioner's staff's evaluation. Feedback from the CAOs may be included in the Peer Review Report.

6.2.3 Report on Peer Review. The Commissioner's staff shall issue a report with the results of the peer review to the board of trustees for its consideration when determining whether to approve the proposed program. The Commissioner will convey the final report to the Board of Higher Education. If the proposed program is within the institution's mission, the report will be an information item for the Board of Higher Education. If the proposed program is outside of the institution's mission, the institution and its board of trustees shall determine whether they wish pursue the program by seeking Board of Higher Education approval as outlined in section 7.1.

6.2.3.1 Budgetary Considerations Separate From Approval. Program approval by the Board consists only of authorization to offer a program. Budget requests necessary to fund the program, such as differential tuition or building appropriations, shall be submitted separately through the regular budget procedure.

6.3 Review by Specialized Groups. Review by specialized groups may be conducted concurrently with peer review. The following types of programs require specialized review as noted.—

6.3.1 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs. CTE programs shall go through the regional career and technical education planning process, as implemented in the proposing institution's region, which has the primary purposes of: (1) planning CTE certificate and associate's degree programs that are responsive to the needs of business/industry and the citizens of the region, and providing a transition for secondary students into postsecondary programs; and (2) avoiding unnecessary duplication of CTE certificate and degree programs among higher education institutions in a region. Results of the review process shall be provided to the Board when a CTE program proposal is submitted for notification.

R401-7 Board's Notification and Review, Approval, or Elimination of Programs.

7.1 Notification of Trustee Approval: When Trustees approve a new program, administrative unit, or changes to an existing program, the institution shall notify OCHE in writing.

7.2 Board Review of Trustee Approval

7.2.1 OCHE shall add Trustee approval of the new program, administrative unit, or program change to the next Board meeting agenda as a consent calendar item.

7.2.2 The Board will review Trustee approval and may:

7.2.2.1 Require an interim review of the new program or administrative unit or a change of programs outside of the normal cyclical review process under Board Policy R411, *Cyclical Institutional Program Reviews*; or

7.2.2.2 Override the Trustees approval if the approval is for a program that is not in compliance with Board policy.

7.2.3 If the Board overrides Trustee approval under subsection 7.2.2.2, OCHE shall notify the institution's president and Trustee Chair in writing of the Board's decision, including the reasons.

7.2.3.1 The institution may address the reasons for overriding and resubmit the program, unit, or changes for approval by following the process in sections R401-5 through R401-7 of this policy.

Proposed New Programs Outside an Institution's Mission. An institution may submit a program determined to be outside of its mission to the Board of Higher Education for consideration as follows:

7.1.1 Institutions shall first submit their proposal in accordance with the *Proposal and Notification Submission Procedures* established in section 9.

7.1.2 The institution's CAO will forward full program proposals to the Commissioner's Office for review and comment.

7.1.3 The Commissioner's Office will conduct a detailed review and analysis of the proposed program to assess labor market demand, the feasibility of partnerships with other USHE institutions with similar programs, regional need, and whether there is an adequate level of support for the new program.

7.1.4 As part of its review, the Commissioner's Office will also analyze:

7.1.4.1 How well the institution proposing the new program is performing in its primary institutional role as measured by: accreditation reviews, the financial

feasibility of both the institution and the proposed program, USHE's performance metrics, and other metrics determined by the Board;

~~7.1.4.2~~ Whether the institution has an existing, well-performing program at a lower award level that can be built upon for the out-of-mission award;

~~7.1.4.3~~ Whether the newly proposed program involves transforming a well-performing program that has experienced a shift in the occupational or licensure demands for a higher-level credential requiring the existing program to be scaled up to remain relevant;

~~7.1.4.4~~ Whether existing programs at other USHE institutions can be made available online to students within the requesting institution's service region and/or whether additional seats are needed in existing programs to meet state needs; and

~~7.1.4.5~~ Whether the requesting institution has thoroughly explored partnership with a USHE institution authorized to provide the program and a partnership has been determined to be infeasible.

~~7.1.5~~ Once they have reviewed the proposed program, the Commissioner's Office will submit the full program proposal and all attendant issues to the Board for review. The Board will review the program proposal and request additional information or consultation as appropriate.

~~7.1.5.1~~ The Board may request more information or consultation.

~~7.1.5.2~~ When determining whether to approve a proposed program, the Board shall consider:

~~7.1.5.2.1~~ Whether such a program is the best use of state resources;

~~7.1.5.2.2~~ Whether the program would duplicate existing program(s);
and

~~7.1.5.2.3~~ Whether all possibilities of partnership have been exhausted.

~~7.1.5.3~~ It is within the Board's discretion to ask another institution with the appropriate mission to develop a new program in partnership with the requesting institution instead of approving a new out-of-mission program.

7.2 Board Review and Termination of a Program Outside an Institution's Mission.

~~7.2.1~~ If the Board of Higher Education determines a Board of Trustees has approved a program that is outside the institution's mission, the Board of Higher Education may call for review of that program.

~~7.2.2~~ The Commissioner shall notify the institution's President and Board of Trustees Chair in writing that the Board will review the program.

~~7.2.3~~ Within 30 days of notification, the institution shall submit to the Commissioner's Office the materials the Board of Trustees reviewed in approving the program.

~~7.2.4~~ The Commissioner's Office will review the materials, request additional information or documentation as necessary, conduct a hearing in which the institution may participate, and make a recommendation to the Board of Higher Education for final action.

R401-8 Approvals and Changes Requiring Notification to Board

8.1 Program and Administrative Unit Changes: The following require notification to the Board following Trustee approval. OCHE will evaluate the changes to ensure they meet Board policy requirements, record program modifications to the OCHE programs database, and list the following changes to a program or administrative unit as information items on the Board's agenda:

8.1.1 Changes to programs, including name change, discontinuance and teach-out, change in delivery methods, change in CIP code, academic program restructure, academic consolidation, suspension of an academic program, reinstatement of a previously suspended academic program; and changes to transfer articulations at degree-granting institutions;

8.1.2 New administrative units, including institutes, bureaus, centers, and departments; and

8.1.3 Changes to administrative units, including name change, transfer, restructure, consolidation, suspension, reinstatement of a previously suspended administrative unit; and discontinuance.

Reports. Within three years of implementation, institutions shall submit a report on all programs that require a peer review under R401. Institutions shall submit reports using the appropriate USHE report template

8.1 Cyclical Institutional Program Reviews. Institutions submit five- and seven-year reviews of programs approved under R401 (See Board Policy R411, *Cyclical Program Reviews*).

8.1.1 List of Scheduled Program Reviews. The annual list of scheduled reviews as defined in R411, *Review of Existing Programs*, including date of review, is due at the beginning of each September.

R401-99 Suspended, Discontinued, or Reinstated Programs

9.1 Suspended Academic Programs: A suspended academic program remains on the Board's list of approved programs and may remain in the online and printed catalog at the institution's discretion until entirely discontinued.

9.2 Discontinued Programs: An institution may discontinue a program only after current students can complete the program (i.e., through a "teach out"). When an institution discontinues a program, OCHE shall remove the program from the Board's list of approved programs, and the institution shall remove the program from catalogs.

9.2.1 Institution Considerations: The institution shall consider the statewide impact of discontinuing the program and, where there is sufficient demand, identify whether the program may be viable at another USHE institution.

9.2.2 Board Discontinuance of Unnecessarily Duplicative Programs: The Board may require USHE institutions to discontinue programs that are unnecessarily duplicative of programs already offered, based on reviews conducted under Board Policy R411, *Cyclical Institutional Program Reviews*.

9.3 Student Completion in Discontinued or Suspended Programs: When a program is discontinued or suspended, an institution must provide a path for enrolled students to complete the program in a period compatible with accreditation standards. Such a path may require enrolling the students at other institutions of higher education or providing a teach-out by offering courses until no other admitted students may complete the program or for a maximum of two years after discontinuing an academic program or a maximum of six months after discontinuance of a technical education program, whichever comes first.

9.4 Reinstatement of a Previously Suspended Academic Program or Administrative Unit: If an institution plans to restart a suspended program or administrative unit, its notification to OCHE shall include a statement with the program name, either the administrative unit structure or the curricular content that is identical to the original program, and a justification for reinstating the program. If the program's name, curricular content, or structure has changed, the institution shall submit the request as a new program or administrative unit proposal and discontinue the suspended program or administrative unit.

R401-10 Program Planning: Institutions should send OCHE a list of programs they anticipate proposing in an academic year by September 30 that academic year.

Proposal and Notification Procedures:

9.1 Proposal Templates: Proposals for new programs, administrative units, changes to existing programs and administrative units, out-of-service area delivery, or program reports are submitted to the Commissioner's office using the designated USHE Full Template, Abbreviated Template, or Notification Template (see R401-7 and R401-8). Current versions of all proposal and report templates are available online. Institutions must follow the template's instructions.

9.1.1 Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Codes: When preparing the Full, Abbreviated, or Notification Template, the institution must choose an appropriate CIP code. For CIP code classifications, see nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/. The CIP code is a critical data element and will be recorded by the OCHE and used for data requests, reporting, and tracking.

9.1.2 Transmission of Proposals: The Chief Academic Officer will submit proposals to the Academic and Student Affairs Staff (academicaffairs@ushe.edu).

9.1.3 Records: The institution is responsible for maintaining a record of proposal. OCHE is not responsible for storing electronic copies of submitted proposals.

R401, Appendices

Appendix A: General Studies Bachelor's Degree Guidelines

A General Studies Bachelor's Degree proposal must:

1. Define the purpose of the degree and the institution's rationale for offering the program. Explain how the proposed degree differs from other multidisciplinary degrees (such as university studies, integrated studies, etc.) that may be offered by the institution. Compare the General Studies degree proposal to others around the country.
2. Define the audiences for this degree including types and needs of students.
3. Discuss the value of the degree to graduates of this program.
4. Set admission requirements for entry into the degree program and require students to petition for admission by explaining why they want the degree and what they intend to study. (Discussion of appropriate GPA and accumulated credits at entry in a concentration is ongoing.)

5. Provide evidence that intentionality of student learning is expected and built into the course of study.
6. Show how the proposed degree will require and evaluate curricular coherence.
7. Show how the degree program will require and facilitate student intellectual engagement with relevant academic content.
8. State the institution's procedure for incorporating learning goals with demonstrable learning outcomes.
9. Show how students will demonstrate integration of content and learning experiences through reflective activities, such as capstones, research projects, responding to critical questions, and/or portfolios, during their programs.
10. Require a curricular concentration.
11. Clarify how academic oversight will be provided by faculty.
12. State graduation standards.