

R315, Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers¹

R315-1 Purpose: This policy establishes guidelines for defining geographic service regions for institutions in the Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”), aiming to promote accessibility, completion, quality, and efficiency while allowing for limited exceptions. This policy also establishes a process for an institution to seek Utah Board of Higher Education (“Board”) approval to operate an instructional program outside the designated service region.

R-315-2 References

- 2.1** Board Policy R165, Concurrent Enrollment
- 2.2** Board Policy R312, Institutional Roles and Missions and Approval of Out-of-Role Instructional Programs
- 2.3** Board Policy R401, Approval and Modification of Instructional Programs and Administrative Units within Role, Mission, and Designated Service Region
- 2.4** Utah Code § 53B-2a-105, Technical Colleges
- 2.5** Utah Code § 53B-2a-106, Technical Colleges – Duties
- 2.6** Utah Code § 53B-2a-112, Technical Colleges – Relationships with Other Public and Higher Education Institutions
- 2.7** Utah Code § 53B-2a-201, Geographic Service Areas for Degree-granting Institutions
- 2.8** Utah Code § 53B-16-101, Establishment of Institutional Roles and General Courses of Study

R315-3 Definitions

- 3.1 “Basic Instruction”** provided by technical colleges, means pre-college-level instruction offered in areas such as reading, language arts, and mathematics, which is necessary for student success in a technical education program. Basic instruction does not include general education courses but may parallel developmental education offered by degree-granting institutions.

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

¹ *Approved September 23, 1994; amended January 21, 2000, April 15, 2009, September 13, 2013, November 18, 2016, March 31, 2017, and November 18, 2022; rescinded and approved May 18, 2023. Amended June 6, 2024.*

3.3 “Developmental Education” means instruction designed to address knowledge and skills gaps necessary for college-level coursework. Developmental education does not grant college credit and is generally numbered below 1000 in the USHE common course numbering system. Developmental education may be eligible for credit and designated at the 1000-level when integrated into or supplementing a college-level course through co-requisite remediation models.

3.4 “Institutional Roles” are defined by Board Policy R312, *Institutional Roles and Missions and the Board Approval Process for Out-of-Role Instructional Programs* and include technical college, community college, regional university, and research university.

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

3.6 “Online Instruction” means a form of synchronous or asynchronous distance education where all instruction is delivered online to students physically separated from the instructor, with regular and substantive interaction between the students and the institutional instructor.

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

3.7.1 Sufficient labor market demand to justify offering the program within the institution's service region, even if other programs exist in the state; and

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

3.8 “Service Region” means the Utah county/counties for which an institution is authorized to provide services within its institutional role under Board Policy R312, *Institutional Roles and Missions and Board Approval of Out-of-Role Instructional Programs* and within which an institution may establish physical facilities as outlined in *Board Policy R703, Acquisition of Real Property*.

R315-4 Service Region Guidelines

4.1 The Board designates service regions for USHE institutions in accordance with Utah law and in consultation with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (“OCHE”) and presidents based on the following guidelines:

4.1.1 Accessibility: Service regions should be designed to promote accessibility to post-secondary educational opportunities throughout the state, with a focus on serving traditionally underserved populations and areas;

4.1.2 Quality: Service regions should prioritize the delivery of high-quality educational experiences that meet the needs of students, employers, and communities;

4.1.3 Responsiveness: Service regions should support the ability of institutions to be responsive to local and statewide needs, with a focus on meeting the evolving demands of the economy, society, and the education landscape; and

4.1.4 Efficiency: Service regions should be designed to promote the efficient and effective use of state resources, focusing on maximizing student choice and flexibility while minimizing the duplication of efforts and prioritizing collaboration between institutions.

R315-5 Designated Service Region

5.1 In their role as research universities, the University of Utah and Utah State University are designated to serve the entire state. However, neither shall duplicate face-to-face programming nor establish physical campuses within another institution’s service region without Board approval.

5.2 Table 1 reflects currently designated instructional service regions and physical campus locations for technical colleges, community colleges, regional universities, and research universities. Absent an exception under section R315-7, an institution may not operate its institutional role(s) outside its service region(s).

Table 1 – Designated Service Regions			
Counties	Technical College	Community College	Bachelor and Graduate Degrees Appropriate to Institutional Role
Beaver	Southwest Technical College	Southern Utah University	Southern Utah University
Box Elder	Bridgerland Technical College	Utah State University Statewide Campuses	Utah State University Statewide Campuses
Cache	Bridgerland Technical College	Utah State University	Utah State University
Carbon	Utah State University (Eastern)	Utah State University (Eastern)	Utah State University (Eastern)
Daggett	Uintah Basin Technical College	Utah State University Statewide Campuses	Utah State University Statewide Campuses
Davis	Davis Technical College	Weber State University	Weber State University
Duchesne	Uintah Basin Technical College	Utah State University Statewide Campuses	Utah State University Statewide Campuses
Emery	Utah State University (Eastern)	Utah State University (Eastern)	Utah State University (Eastern)
Garfield	Southwest Technical College	Southern Utah University	Southern Utah University
Grand	Utah State University (Moab)	Utah State University (Moab)	Utah State University (Moab)
Iron	Southwest Technical College	Southern Utah University	Southern Utah University
Juab	Snow College	Snow College	
Kane	Southwest Technical College	Utah Tech University	Utah Tech University
Millard	Snow College	Snow College	
Morgan	Davis Technical College	Weber State University	Weber State University
Piute	Snow College	Snow College	
Rich	Bridgerland Technical College	Utah State University Statewide Campuses	Utah State University Statewide Campuses

Salt Lake²	Salt Lake Community College	Salt Lake Community College	University of Utah
San Juan	Utah State University (Blanding)	Utah State University (Blanding)	Utah State University (Blanding)
Sanpete	Snow College	Snow College	
Sevier	Snow College	Snow College	
Summit	Mountainland Technical College	Utah Valley University	Utah Valley University
Tooele	Tooele Technical College	Utah State University Statewide Campuses	Utah State University Statewide Campuses
Uintah	Uintah Basin Technical College	Utah State University Statewide Campuses	Utah State University Statewide Campuses
Utah	Mountainland Technical College	Utah Valley University	Utah Valley University
Wasatch	Mountainland Technical College	Utah Valley University	Utah Valley University
Washington	Dixie Technical College	Utah Tech University	Utah Tech University
Wayne	Snow College	Snow College	
Weber	Ogden-Weber Technical College	Weber State University	Weber State University

R315-6 Evaluation of Service Regions: At least every five years, the Board will evaluate service regions to ensure they continue to meet the guidelines in section R315-4 of this policy and to address any emerging needs or challenges.

R315-7 Exceptions to Service Regions: When an institution cannot provide a program to meet community or employer demand within its designated service region, it should work to identify another USHE institution that can meet the need.

7.1 Requests to Offer Programming outside of Service Region: Requests to offer programming outside of an institution’s service region shall be subject to Board approval.

7.1.1 Preference for Adherence to Institutional Role: If the institution designated to serve that region is not authorized to offer the credential type needed, the Board will prioritize authorizing an institution with an appropriate role to deliver the programming outside its service region to meet local demand rather than to approve out-of-role programming for the local institution.

7.1.1.1 An institution may submit a request to deliver a program or course other than concurrent enrollment outside its service region based on a written Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) between institutions outlined in section R315-8 and forwarded to the Board for approval. The request for Board approval shall:

7.1.1.1.1 Identify the name of the program or course, the institution with primary responsibility and the responsible administrator, the institution providing the program or course, the location in which the program or course will be offered, and the delivery method, e.g., in-person, online, or hybrid;

² In Salt Lake County, Salt Lake Community College has primary responsibility and right of first refusal for concurrent enrollment.

7.1.1.1.2 Explain the reason the designated institution cannot provide the requested program or course and the expertise of the institution that is able to provide the program or course; and

7.1.1.1.3 Describe the impact on each institution, including but not limited to, facility-sharing, budget impacts, and the number of students served.

7.1.1.2 Such agreements shall be limited to five years or less but may be renewed upon the Board's approval with both institutions' consent.

7.2 Exceptions for Technical Colleges Industry Training Partnerships

7.2.1 In accordance with Utah Code section 53B-2a-106(5)(a), a technical college may offer technical education or basic instruction outside its service region if:

7.2.1.1 The technical education or basic instruction is requested by either an employer or a craft, trade, or apprenticeship program;

7.2.1.2 The technical college notifies OCHE and the technical college designated to serve that region about the request using the template provided; and

7.2.1.3 The institution designated to serve that region has had one week to explore partnering with the employer and notifies OCHE and the outside technical college that it has declined to offer the programming.

7.2.2 Subsection 7.3.1.3 does not apply if the requesting employer or program and the technical college to which the requesting employer or program makes its request have a prior training relationship.

7.3 Exceptions for Concurrent Enrollment: Institutions receiving requests to offer concurrent enrollment courses outside their designated service region should follow the Right of First Refusal process outlined in Board Policy R165, *Concurrent Enrollment*.

7.4 Exceptions for Distance Education

7.4.1 Academic programs or courses offered online are exempt from service region requirements for degree-granting institutions, except in cases of unnecessary program duplication. Each institution shall annually submit a comprehensive list of these

programs and courses to OCHE for evaluation. Other forms of distance education, like satellite and audio-video conferencing, must comply with service region regulations.

7.4.2 Technical college programs delivered fully online through distance education are subject to geographic service region limitations, with exceptions requiring approval from the Board.

R315-8 Memorandum of Understanding for Board Approval: An institution must seek and receive Board approval to operate a program outside its designated service region as outlined in subsection 7.1 by submitting a signed MOU between institutions.

8.1 MOU: The MOU must include:

8.1.1 Regional need for the program;

8.1.2 Fit with institutional role;

8.1.3 An explanation of why the institution designated to serve the region cannot provide the requested program or course and an explanation of the proposing institution's expertise in delivering the program, including a description of how it will provide necessary student services;

8.1.4 A description of the program's impact on each institution, including but not limited to facility-sharing, budgets, and the number of students served;

8.1.5 If the proposed program is new to the offering institution, documentation that it has been approved by the Board of Trustees following the process outlined in Board Policy R401, *Approval and Modification of Instructional Programs and Administrative Units within Role, Mission, and Designated Service Region*; and

8.1.6 How well the requesting institution serves students in its service region as measured by USHE's performance metrics and other metrics determined by the Board.

8.2 More Information: When determining whether to approve or deny an out-of-service region program, the Board will review the MOU between institutions and the OCHE analysis and may request more information or consultation.

8.3 Board Discretion: The Board may direct an institution within the appropriate service region and/or with the proper institutional role to explore developing a new program or one in partnership with the requesting institution instead of approving a new out-of-service region

program. The exploring institution shall report to the Board whether developing a new program is feasible and shall include support for its position.

R315-9 List of Instruction Delivered outside Designated Service Regions: OCHE shall maintain a list of all current programs and courses approved as exceptions under section R315-7 of this policy. The list shall include the name of the program or course, the institution with primary responsibility and the responsible administrator, the institution providing the program or course, the location in which the program or course will be offered, the implementation date, and the delivery method, e.g., in-person, online, or hybrid. OCHE shall provide this list to the Board no less than every three years.

R315-10 Board Approval of Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers: An institution must seek and receive Board approval to operate a branch campus, instructional service center, or extension center.

10.1 Absent very compelling circumstances, e.g., partnership with another institution within the service region, the Board will generally not approve an institution to operate a branch campus, instructional service center, or extension center outside an institution's service region.

10.2 Upon an institution's request to operate a branch campus, instructional service center, or extension center, OCHE will conduct an extensive review and analysis of the proposed campus or center to assess:

10.2.1 Regional need for the campus or center;

10.2.2 Whether there is an adequate level of support for the campus or center, including administration, faculty, and staff;

10.2.3 How well the requesting institution is currently serving students in its service region at other locations as measured by USHE's performance metrics and other metrics determined by the Board;

10.2.4 An explanation of the programs and services the campus or center will provide and why the current location(s) are insufficient to provide such services;

10.2.5 Data and information supporting the need for the campus or center, including but not limited to budgets and the number of students served; and

10.2.6 Whether the proposed campus or center has first been approved by the Board of Trustees under the same criteria listed in subsections 10.2.1 through 10.2.5.

10.3 Board Approval Considerations: OCHE will provide its assessment to the Board, and the Board will determine whether to approve a proposed campus or center.

10.3.1 When making its determination, the Board shall consider whether the:

10.3.1.1 Campus or center meets regional demand that the institution cannot provide with existing locations or duplicates existing program(s) within the service region; and

10.3.1.2 Institutions with Board designation for the service region agree that the program will not interfere with existing programs.

10.3.2 Additional Information: When determining whether to approve or deny a campus or center, the Board will review the OCHE assessment and may request more information or consultation.

10.4 Program Approval: Although an institution may receive Board approval under this policy to operate a campus or center, the institution must also follow the program approval process under Board Policy R401, *Approval and Modification of Instructional Programs and Academic Administrative Units within Role, Mission, and Designated Service Region*.

10.5 Special Budget Requests: 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*.