

## R404, Technical Education Program Alignment<sup>1</sup>

**R404-1 Purpose:** This policy establishes expectations for aligning technical education programs across Utah System of Higher Education institutions with a technical college role, ensuring consistent program offerings, clear outcomes, and standardized skills for students while providing employers and other stakeholders with an understanding of program alignment requirements for USHE institutions.

### R404-2 References

- 2.1 Utah Code 53B-16-105(5), Common Course Number, Transferability of Credits, Agreement with Competency-based General Education Provider
- 2.2 Board Policy R401, Approval and Modification of Instructional Programs and Administrative Units within Institutional Role, Mission, and Designated Service Regions
- 2.3 Board Policy R402, Certificate and Degree Award Structures
- 2.4 Board Policy R475, Common Course Numbering

### R404-3 Definitions

**3.1 "Aligned Program"** means a technical education program with a common name, CIP code, description, and objectives. The technical education program consists of foundational courses with common course prefixes, numbers, names, lengths, descriptions, and objectives.

**3.2 "Classification of Instructional Programs ("CIP") Code"** means the code associated with a particular program of instruction as specified by the National Center for Education Statistics ("NCES") taxonomy of programs. This code is critical for data requests, reporting, tracking, and performance funding.

**3.3 "Foundational Course(s)"** refers to a course or group of courses representing the minimum educational requirements for employment or as defined by a regulatory body. These courses are mandatory at all technical colleges offering the program.

**3.4 "Non-Required Elective Course"** refers to a course offered by a technical college that does not apply to program graduation requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted XXX.

**3.5 "Program of Instruction" ("Program")** means a for-credit structured curriculum that leads to the knowledge and skills required for a certificate and meets parameters established by technical colleges' accrediting agencies.

**3.6 "Regulated Program"** means a technical education program regulated by an accreditation, state, or federal body that defines specific program competencies, objectives, or length necessary for employment or licensure.

**3.7 "Substantive Change"** refers to the modification in an aligned program's title, CIP code, scope as defined in description and objectives or a 25% increase or decrease in length. This includes changes to criteria set by the institution's accreditor.

**3.8 "Supplemental Course(s)"** means courses a technical college adds to an aligned program to address unique regional industry needs. These courses may be required or elective but must count toward the program's graduation requirements.

**3.9 "Technical College" or "Institutions with a Technical College Role"** means the same as that term defined in Utah Code section 53B-1-102, or a degree-granting institution acting in their technical education role described in Utah Code section 53B-2a-201. When technical college is used in this policy, it also refers to an institution with a technical college role.

**3.10 "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. Within the USHE, technical education programs and academic programs are also designated based on CIP-Code tables maintained by the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

#### **R404-4 Technical Education Program Alignment**

**4.1** USHE technical colleges shall align their technical education programs according to the requirements in this policy. Technical colleges shall ensure they offer the most recent Board-approved version of the aligned program. When a program is updated, institutions must adopt the changes within one year of approval.

**4.2** Program alignment shall provide uniformity across all technical colleges through common program and course titles, CIP codes, course numbers, lengths, descriptions, and objectives.

**4.3** All technical education programs, including those offered by a single technical college, must comply with this policy's standards, review, and approval processes.

**4.4** Technical education Chief Instructional Officers ("CIOs") shall represent their institutions' and its stakeholders' interests during the program alignment process.

**4.5** The Commissioner's office will coordinate and support technical colleges, CIOs, and faculty in aligning technical education programs.

#### **R404-5 Technical Education Program Alignment Standards**

**5.1** Aligned programs shall define the minimum educational requirements for graduation and employment, comply with regulatory standards, and prepare students for employment in broad occupational areas.

**5.1.1** Technical colleges may add supplemental courses to aligned programs to address unique regional industry needs, which may extend the program length.

**5.2** Foundational courses must constitute the majority of the program length for regulated technical education programs of 600 hours or more.

**5.3** Institutions may develop more than one technical education program in a given occupational area when:

**5.3.1** The coursework for each program is distinct from that of other aligned programs;

**5.3.2** The program is supported by licensure standards and/or economic data from federal or state agencies; and

**5.3.3** Each program addresses a unique occupational focus that differentiates it from other aligned programs.

**5.4** Implementation of aligned programs must adhere to the requirements outlined in Board Policy R401, *Approval and Modification of Instructional Programs and Administrative Units within Institutional Role, Mission, and Designated Service Regions*.

**5.5** The Commissioner's office shall assign program CIP codes, course prefixes, and numbers to aligned programs, courses, and supplemental courses to ensure consistency.

**5.6** CIP codes for aligned programs shall connect educational outcomes to corresponding occupational objectives.

**5.7** Technical education programs shall use a "TEXX" course number prefix. USHE institutions shall not create new "TEXX" prefixes for academic or technical education programs.

**5.8** Non-required elective courses shall be offered through continuing occupational education, shall not carry credit, and shall not apply toward graduation requirements. Institutions shall not assign these courses a "TEXX prefix."

**5.9** Technical colleges shall not offer zero-credit or variable-credit courses within technical education programs.

#### **R404-6 Technical Education Program Alignment Committees**

**6.1** Each technical education program alignment committee shall include one faculty member from each technical college that offers the program.

**6.2** Committees shall meet annually to review alignment standards, discuss industry trends, recommend program changes, and share best practices for program improvement and curriculum development.

**6.3** Committees shall submit new or modified programs and courses to the Commissioner's office. CIOs or their designees shall provide details of supplemental courses to the Commissioner's office.

#### **R404-7 Technical Education Program Alignment Review Process**

**7.1** CIOs shall review and vote on each aligned technical education program proposal.

**7.2** Once a majority of CIOs approve an aligned program proposal, the Commissioner's office shall submit it to the USHE Review Committee for review by the Commissioner of Higher Education (Commissioner) or their designee.

**7.2.1** The Commissioner may recommend the proposal for Board approval, reject it, or send it back to the technical education program alignment committee for further information or revisions.

**7.3** Non-substantive changes to Board-approved aligned programs will be approved by the CIOs and the USHE Review Committee.

**7.4** Substantive changes to Board-approved aligned programs must be approved by the CIOs and the USHE Review Committee before being submitted to the Board for final approval.

**7.8** When the USHE Review Committee forwards an aligned program proposal to the Board under subsections 7.2 or 7.4, the Board will review the proposal and decide whether to approve, reject, or send it back to the USHE Review Committee for further information or revisions.

#### **R404-8 Aligned Program Review**

**8.1** CIOs will review aligned technical education programs, considering changes in industry practices, annually to ensure their quality and relevance.

**8.2** The Commissioner's office will facilitate discussions with CIOs to outline the annual review process for aligned programs.

**R404-9 Reporting:** The Commissioner's office will evaluate the implementation status of aligned programs at each technical college and compile and submit a comprehensive report to the Board at the beginning of each fiscal year. The report will include program compliance with alignment requirements and the adoption of required program changes.