



UTAH SYSTEM OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION

# MEMORANDUM

October 21, 2022

## Program and Short-Term Training Characteristics

The Utah Board of Higher Education's (UBHE) strategic plan includes an initiative to review policy governing award types and an initiative to align technical education program structure and course content to broaden student transfer opportunities.

During the review of aligned program proposals in the August 2022 UBHE Technical Education Committee meeting, Committee members requested a more in-depth discussion regarding the characteristics of a program and short-term training. The Committee will consider program length, regulated programs, training for particular employers or employer groups, and stackable programs that may have prerequisite requirements.

This discussion item will be used to inform policy governing technical education award types and characteristics, which in turn guides program and short-term training and the alignment effort.

The eight technical colleges in Utah are accredited by the Council on Occupational Education (COE). The COE defines a program as, "A combination of courses and related activities that lead to a credential and are offered by an institution to develop competencies required for a specific occupation." While COE does not regulate program length, they recognize limitations that may be imposed by a regulatory agency, such as UBHE.

The three degree-granting technical education institutions are accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). NWCCU defines a program as, "a systematic, usually sequential, grouping of courses, forming a considerable part, or all, of the requirements for a degree or a credential." It appears as if the COE definition encapsulates the intent of the NWCCU definition, and as such, it is recommended the UBHE defines a technical education program similar to the COE definition of a program.

Technical education programs include substantive mission-related training in broad occupational areas that lead to a certificate and can result in sustainable wages, industry-required licensure or credential, and/or pathways that contribute to professional growth and potential wage increases.

Short-term training includes mission-related training that does not lead to a credential and is designed to assist in the development of knowledge and skills needed for current employment. Students enrolled in short-term training are assumed to have previously attained a basic level of education, training, or experience in the occupational area in which they are enrolling.

The following topics will be discussed in the Committee meeting:

- Stackable programs and prerequisite programs or courses
- Program length
- Regulated programs
- Training for a particular employer or employer group

### **Commissioner's Recommendations**

This is a discussion item only; no action required.