



UTAH SYSTEM OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION

# MEMORANDUM

January 9, 2025

## Technical Education Program Alignment – New Aligned Program Proposals and Substantive Changes

### Purpose

This item seeks Utah Board of Higher Education approval for newly aligned technical education program proposals and substantive changes to existing approved aligned programs under [Board Policy R404, Technical Education Program Alignment](#). The policy applies exclusively to Utah System of Higher Education institutions with a technical education role. It establishes expectations for consistent technical education programming, ensuring clarity, quality, and relevance to workforce needs across these institutions.

### Background

Board Policy R404 aligns with the Utah Code, which mandates technical education programs at USHE technical education institutions have common names, CIP codes, descriptions, lengths, and objectives. This alignment ensures that students, employers, and educators benefit from consistent program outcomes while allowing flexibility for regional industry needs through supplemental courses.

The program alignment initiative supports the Board of Higher Education’s strategic plan goal to “align programs across institutions.” By standardizing technical education programs, the initiative reduces duplication, streamlines educational pathways, and ensures graduates possess the broad occupational skills needed for sustainable employment.

### Objectives and Benefits

Aligned programs are designed to:

1. **Ensure Workforce-Ready Graduates:** Graduates acquire consistent skills to meet statewide industry needs, regardless of the institution they attend.
2. **Simplify Educational Pathways:** Reducing fragmented program variations clarifies the knowledge and skills of graduates, ensuring there is no confusion about their aptitudes while increasing the value of credentials and creating clearer pathways for students.
3. **Support Articulation:** Expanded articulation opportunities minimize duplicated coursework, reduce tuition costs, and time to completion for students transferring between institutions.

4. **Adapt to Regional Needs:** Institutions can incorporate supplemental courses to address unique regional workforce demands without disrupting alignment.

### **Approval Process**

The alignment process is a collaborative effort involving multiple stakeholders to ensure programs remain relevant, consistent, and aligned with workforce needs. Proposals for new programs or substantive changes progress through the following steps:

1. **Faculty Committees:** Faculty from each technical college offering the program collaborate to develop and refine proposals, ensuring alignment with industry standards. Occupational Advisory Committees (OACs), comprising over 3,500 statewide industry professionals, provide critical input to guide program design and ensure responsiveness to workforce demands.
2. **Chief Instructional Officers (CIOs):** CIOs review and vote on proposals, representing their institutions' and stakeholders' interests. Their oversight ensures proposals address institutional and industry needs.
3. **Commissioner's Office:** Through the USHE Review Committee, the Commissioner's office evaluates proposals for compliance with statutory and policy requirements and alignment with institutional roles and workforce relevance. This process includes:
  - a. **Chief Economist Review:** Ensuring proposals represent broadly defined occupational areas and align with employment requiring more than a high school diploma but less than a degree.
  - b. **Policy Compliance:** Verifying proposals comply with statute and policy, align with the technical education role and mission, and are appropriately classified as certificate programs rather than short-term training.
4. **Board Review:** The Board reviews new alignment proposals and substantive changes, deciding whether to approve, reject, or request additional information.

### **Commissioner's Recommendation**

The Commissioner recommends that the Board approve the newly aligned programs and substantive changes, recognizing their alignment with statutory and policy requirements and the Board's strategic objectives.

### **Attachment**

Attachment 1 – New and Substantive Change Proposals