



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

November 21, 2024

Program Alignment – New Aligned Program Proposals and Substantive Changes to Existing Aligned Technical Education Programs

The Utah Board of Higher Education’s 2024-27 Strategic Plan includes a tactic to facilitate coordination among technical education programs to align program structure and course content for consistent programming in broad occupational areas. This initiative also supports another strategy to develop stackable credentials that streamline student transfer among institutions, reducing the duplication of coursework already completed, expediting time to completion, and reducing tuition costs.

Information

Technical education programs have a general broad alignment across technical education institutions, particularly those regulated through licensure or programmatic accreditations, which make up about half of the programs offered. Currently, program and course names, lengths, and objectives in the same occupational areas, including regulated programs, differ between institutions. These differences confuse stakeholders seeking to identify and compare program requirements, associated costs, and time to completion. Further, these differences burden degree-granting institutions desiring to develop and maintain articulation agreements with technical education.

Expectations

- The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education coordinates and provides guidance and assistance on the alignment initiative.
- Institutions are expected to implement aligned programs within two years unless reasonable exceptions are granted by the Board.
- The alignment initiative follows program and course guidelines, including:
 - required participation of USHE institutions that offer technical education programs;
 - alignment of program title, CIP code, description, and objectives;
 - alignment of course numbers, titles, length in clock hours and credit hours, descriptions, and objectives;
 - a core of required courses representing foundational knowledge and skills; and
 - potential broad selection of prescribed or elective non-aligned courses representing regional employment needs.

- Programs offered by single institutions are submitted to the Office of the Commissioner for inclusion in the program inventory.
- Non-aligned courses can be added to or modified within the program at any time during the year and should be reported to the Office of the Commissioner annually. Program committees consider whether to include electives in aligned program requirements.

Participation and Review Process

- Every program area has a Faculty Program Committee comprising one faculty member from each institution that offers the program.
- Faculty Program Committees propose a program title, length, description, objectives, and course titles, lengths, descriptions, and objectives. Faculty members are encouraged to engage with occupational advisory committees, degree-granting partner institutions, and other interested institutional personnel in developing these proposals.
- Instructional designers from participating institutions review program and course descriptions and objectives. Recommended changes are reviewed and accepted by the faculty.
- The Office of the Commissioner compiles and submits Program Committee proposals and modifications of proposals to Instructional Officers for review and recommendations. Recommended changes are reviewed and accepted by the faculty.
- The USHE Curriculum Review Committee, consisting of the Commissioner of Higher Education, Commissioner’s office staff, including the chief economist, the associate commissioner of technical education, the assistant commissioner of technical education, and a representation of technical education institution presidents and instructional officers, review each proposal to verify they meet the intent of the initiative.
- Proposals are submitted to the Board as an action item on the consent calendar. Approval of this item signifies the Board accepts the documentation as meeting the directives and intent of the initiative.
- USHE policy defined program approval and modification requirements.

Committee Recommendation

The USHE Curriculum Review Committee has reviewed and recommends that the Board accepts the proposals as meeting the directives and intent of the program initiative as outlined above.

Commissioner’s Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends the Board accept the proposals as meeting the directives and intent of the program alignment initiative as outlined above.

Attachment

Attachment 1 – New and Substantive Change Proposals