



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

April 13, 2023

R401, Approval of New Programs, Program Changes, Discontinued Programs, and Program Reports

Board [Policy R401, Approval of New Programs, Program Changes, Discontinued Programs, and Program Reports](#) needs to be updated to clarify the distinction in credentials offered by academic and technical education institutions. The policy includes credential characteristics and approval, and reporting requirements. Additionally, the policy defines other training types including short-term, basic instruction, and community education.

Credentials in Statute

In accordance with [Utah Code § 53B-16-101](#), the Utah Board of Higher Education (Board) is responsible for prescribing the general course of study to be offered at each institution of higher education, including research universities, regional universities, comprehensive community colleges, and technical colleges.

While Statute generally defines credential types by institution, the Board may further clarify the primary credentials that each institution offers. Additionally, the Board is responsible for determining the extent to which institutions of higher education provide career and technical education, which is a primary role for all institutions except for the University of Utah. ([53B-16-101\(2\)](#))

Program Approval in Statute

Reference: [Utah Code § 53B-16-102](#)

Definition

"Program of instruction" means a program of curriculum that leads to the completion of a degree, diploma, certificate, or other credential.

Program Approval

An institution must notify the Board of a proposed new program of instruction, including how the program meets the criteria defined by the Board.

The institutional board of trustees may approve new programs that meet criteria defined by the Board to include identification of workforce needs, being within the institution's role and mission, and meeting other criteria determined by the Board.

The Board must establish procedures and guidelines for institutional boards of trustees to consider a proposed new program.

Proposed Approval Process

Policy R401 also outlines program approval processes; the process for degrees is explained in the attached infographic. The Committee has requested that the process for out-of-role program requests be strengthened, particularly around determinations of workforce development and the economic need for a program and assessments of the quality with which the institution is already fulfilling its primary role before receiving permission for any programs that would be out-of-role.

Program Review in Utah Statute

Reference: [Utah Code § 53B-16-102](#)

The Board is responsible for reviewing all new programs of instruction at an institution of higher education including those funded by gifts, grants, and contracts, no later than two years after the first cohort to begin the program of instruction completes the program of instruction.

The Board may review any program of instruction at an institution of higher education, including a program of instruction funded by a gift, grant, or contract.

The Board may recommend that an institution of higher education modify or terminate the program of instruction, with an adequate opportunity for a hearing before the Board.

Policy R401 references the review process, but the process itself is outlined in Policy R411, which is also in the process of being updated based on changes to state code passes by the legislature this year. That policy will come to the committee at a later date.

Commissioner's Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends that the Academic Education Committee provide feedback on policy concepts relating to credential types, program approval, and to the conditions necessary to lift the moratorium on out-of-role program proposals.

Attachment

Program Approval Infographic