

6C-8.011 New Academic Program Authorization

(1) In order to ensure that new academic programs implemented by a state university are of the highest quality, are aligned with the goals of the university and the Board of Governors, and meet the needs of the citizens of Florida, the following criteria and guidelines for new academic program authorization are established.

(2) **Definitions** - Within the context of these regulations academic programs are defined as follows:

(a) **Degree Program** - An organized curriculum leading to a college degree in an area of study recognized as an academic discipline by the higher education community, as demonstrated by assignment of a Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code by the National Center for Educational Statistics, or as demonstrated by similar programs existing at other colleges and universities, and having designated faculty and instructional resources. Each degree program will be assigned a CIP code and included in the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory.

(b) **Program Major** - An organized curriculum offered as a major area of study that is part of an existing or proposed degree program and does not constitute sufficient distinct coursework, faculty, and instructional resources to be considered a separate degree program. A Program Major must be reasonably associated with the degree program under which it is offered and share common core or prerequisite courses with other majors within the same degree program. A Program Major will not be assigned a CIP Code, will not be included in the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory, and will not be recognized as a stand alone degree program at the university. The number of credit hours for a Program Major will be established by the university for each degree level.

(c) **Program Minors, Concentrations, Areas of Emphasis, Tracks, Etc.** - Any organized curriculum that is offered as part of an individual student's degree plan and which enhances or complements the degree to be awarded in a manner that leads to specific educational or occupational goals shall be defined by the individual University Board of Trustees, with the credit hour length set in accordance with university policy, except that the number of credit hours must not equal or exceed the number of credit hours established for a Program Major at the same degree level. Such curricula offerings will not be assigned a CIP Code and will not be included in the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory as a stand alone academic program at the university.

(d) **College Credit Certificate Program** - An organized curriculum of college credit courses offered as a distinct area of study that leads to specific educational or occupational goals, and for which the university awards a certificate or diploma upon completion. College Credit Certificate programs may consist of courses that are part of a degree program or distinct courses that are created outside of any degree program. The number of credit hours for College Credit Certificate Programs will be set by the individual University Board of Trustees within guidelines established by Board of Governors Regulation. Such curricula offerings will not be assigned a CIP Code and

will not be included in the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory as a stand alone academic program at the university.

(e) Non-College-Credit Certificate - An organized curriculum of study of any length that is offered as non-college-credit (clock hours, continuing education credits, competency exams, etc.) that leads to specific educational or occupational goals and for which the university awards a certificate or diploma upon completion. The length of Non-College-Credit Certificate Programs will be set by the university. Such curricula offerings will not be assigned a CIP Code and will not be included in the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory as a stand alone academic program at the university.

(3) **Criteria for New Degree Program Approval** - Proposals for new degree programs shall be authorized by a university board of trustees only if they have been found to meet the following criteria.

(a) Institutional and State Level Accountability

1. **THE PROGRAM IS CONSISTENT WITH INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND BOG STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLAN** - The proposal must demonstrate that the goals of the program are aligned with the university's mission and relate to specific institutional strengths, and that the program is consistent with the current State University System Strategic Planning Goals as demonstrated by an explanation of the goals which the program will directly advance.

2. **DEMONSTRATE NEED FOR PROGRAM GRADUATES, RESEARCH OR SERVICE** - The proposal must demonstrate a need for more individuals to be educated in this program at the level proposed, and contain an estimate of the headcount and FTE for students who will major in the program and indicate steps to be taken to achieve a diverse student body. If an argument is made for the program based upon research or service, then specific information supporting the argument must be provided. If the program duplicates other degree programs in Florida, evidence must be provided that the university has investigated the potential impact on those programs, discussed opportunities for collaboration, and can substantiate a need for duplication.

3. **FINANCIAL PLANNING AND RESOURCES ARE SUFFICIENT FOR IMPLEMENTATION** - The proposal must provide a complete budget for the program which reflects the text of the proposal, that is comparable in cost to similar existing programs, and that provides evidence that, in the event resources within the institution are redirected to support the new program, such a redirection will not have an unjustified negative impact on other needed programs.

4. **PROJECTED BENEFIT OF THE PROGRAM TO THE UNIVERSITY, LOCAL COMMUNITY, AND STATE** - The proposal must provide a statement that describes the projected benefit to the university, local community, and the State if the program is implemented. The statement should demonstrate efficient use of resources and justification for the investment. The projected benefit can be both quantitative (data

driven) and qualitative in nature, but there should be a clear distinction between the two in the proposal.

5. ACCESS AND ARTICULATION ARE MAINTAINED FOR ALL PROGRAMS

- The proposal must demonstrate that:

a. All prerequisites for a baccalaureate program are consistent with standardized prerequisites for similar degree programs within the SUS, or that an exception will be sought through the Oversight Committee of the Articulation Coordinating Committee;

b. If limited access status is sought for a baccalaureate program, adequate justification exists for such designation and evidence must be provided that diversity, articulation, and workforce issues are appropriately addressed when seeking approval from the Board of Governors; and

c. The total number of credit hours for a baccalaureate program does not exceed 120, or that an exception will be sought from the Board of Governors; and

d. The proposal for all degree levels must include a plan to achieve a diverse student body in the program.

(b) Institutional Readiness

1. INDICATION OF ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT A HIGH QUALITY PROGRAM

- The proposed program must specifically relate to existing institutional strengths such as programs of emphasis, other academic programs and/or institutes and centers. If program reviews or accreditation activities in the discipline pertinent to the proposed program or in related disciplines have been undertaken, the proposal must provide evidence that progress has been made in implementing the recommendations from those reviews, as appropriate.

2. CURRICULUM IS APPROPRIATE FOR THE DISCIPLINE AND PROGRAM LEVEL

- The proposal must describe a sequenced course of study, including expected student learning outcomes, an assessment strategy for student learning, and, in the case of advanced technology and related disciplines, industry-driven competencies. Admissions and graduation criteria must be clearly specified and appropriate. The course of study and credit hours required may be satisfied within a timeframe consistent with similar programs. In cases where accreditation is available for existing bachelor's or master's level programs, evidence must be provided that the program will seek accreditation, or a rationale as to why accreditation may not be beneficial.

3. SUFFICIENT QUALIFIED FACULTY ARE AVAILABLE - The proposal must demonstrate that sufficient qualified faculty are available to initiate the program based on estimated enrollments, and that, if appropriate, there is a commitment to hire additional faculty in later years. The proposal must demonstrate that the academic unit(s) associated with this new degree has been productive in teaching, research, and service. For Professional and Doctorate Programs ONLY - evidence must be provided that the faculty in the aggregate has the necessary experience and research activity to sustain Ph.D programs and other professional or doctoral programs for which research and grant funding is an expectation of the discipline.

4. SUFFICIENT INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE – The proposal must demonstrate that the necessary library volumes and serials; classroom, teaching laboratory, research laboratory, office, and any other type of physical space; equipment; and appropriate clinical and internship sites will be available to implement the program. For all Graduate Level Programs, the proposal must indicate whether appropriate fellowships, scholarships, and graduate assistantships are in place, or if the university has made sufficient plans for their existence where student support is the norm in similar programs in the discipline.

(4) New Degree Program Approval –

(a) *Professional and Research Doctoral Degree Programs* - Each university board of trustees must approve new professional and research doctoral degree programs for submission to the Board of Governors for authorization, in accordance with the criteria outlined in BOG Regulation 6C-8011(3). In approving new doctoral degree programs for implementation authorization, the Board of Governors will consider the sufficiency of the university proposal evaluation process, the distinctive mission of the university, alignment with the State University System Strategic Plan, and the extent to which the programs will contribute to the economic development of the local community and the state.

1. Proposals that are complete and have been determined to meet all criteria for new program authorization will be considered by the Board of Governors for approval and, subsequent to approval, institutions may offer the new program at a date no sooner than that specified in the proposal. Proposals that do not meet the criteria for new program authorization or that are missing key data elements will not be considered by the Board of Governors for approval.

2. If a university contemplates implementing a master's and a doctoral program in the same field simultaneously, a single proposal for both degree levels should be developed, differentiating elements within the proposal as necessary. Both degree levels should be approved by the university board of trustees prior to submitting the doctoral program for approval by the Board of Governors.

3. New doctoral programs will be considered by the Board of Governors only at the June and November meetings, unless extenuating circumstances justify the need for Board consideration during a different timeframe. The Chancellor will establish deadlines for submission of new degree proposals for consideration at each meeting and notify the university presidents.

(b) *Bachelor's, Master's, Advanced Master's, and Specialist Degree Programs* - Each university board of trustees has the responsibility and authority to approve for implementation new degree programs at the bachelor's, master's, advanced master's, and specialist level in accordance with BOG Regulation 6C-8.011(3) and (6).

(c) *University Policies for New Degree Program Authorization* - Each university board of trustees must adopt policies for new degree program planning and approval

consistent with Board of Governors Regulation, with copies provided to the Board of Governors, Office of Academic and Student Affairs. The policies must include at a minimum:

1. A formal process for determining degree programs that the university will explore for implementation over the period covered by the university strategic plan and Board of Governors' State University System Strategic Plan;
2. A formal process for review and approval of proposed programs by the appropriate curriculum, financial, and administrative entities of the university;
3. A formal written review of all professional and doctoral level program proposals by a qualified external consultant prior to consideration of the proposal by the Board of Trustees;
4. A process for final consideration by the Board of Trustees that includes review of the proposed program by the full board or a designated committee with regard to BOG approval criteria and implementation costs; and
5. Adoption of a common state university system new degree proposal format developed by BOG staff in collaboration with university academic affairs officers, which is available from the Chancellor.

(d) *State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory* - The Chancellor will maintain a State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory which will identify the approved degree programs for each university and which will be used by the universities for reporting enrollments, degree completions, and other information related to instructional delivery. Within four weeks of approval of a bachelor's, master's, specialists, or advanced master's degree by the University Board of Trustees, a university must notify the Board of Governors, Office of Academic and Student Affairs, in writing and provide an electronic copy of the proposal for each program. The notification should include any request for approval of limited access status, exceptions to the 120 credit hours to degree for baccalaureate programs, and exceptions to the established statewide common prerequisite courses for baccalaureate programs. A Classification of Instructional Programs code for each program will be assigned by the Office of Academic and Student Affairs in consultation with the university. Upon resolution of any outstanding issues regarding the program, it will be added to the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory and a letter of notification will be provided to the university.

(5) **Other Academic Program Approval** - Each university board of trustees has the responsibility and authority to approve for implementation other types of academic programs as defined in BOG Regulation 6C-8.011(2) and as described in the following subsections.

(a) Each university board of trustees must adopt policies for implementing new Program Majors, Program Minors, Concentrations, Areas of Emphasis, Tracks and College Credit Certificates within an existing bachelor's, master's, advanced master's, specialist, and doctoral degree program.

(b) Each university board of trustees must adopt policies for implementation of College Credit Certificate programs when more than half of the courses are not part of the curriculum of an existing degree program.

(c) Each university board of trustees must adopt policies for implementation and for annual review of off-campus degree program offerings outside of its assigned service area, to include: programs offered through continuing education, degree programs offered under contract as sponsored credit for an external public or private entity, and degree programs offered in foreign countries.

(d) Each university board of trustees must adopt policies and procedures for implementing non-college credit programs through continuing education that lead to a certificate or diploma recognized as a credential for employment.

(e) Copies of each university board of trustees' policies and procedures for Other Academic Program Approval must be provided to the Board of Governors, Office of Academic and Student Affairs.

(6) Independent Degree Programs at Branch Campuses and Off-Campus Sites -

Complete degree programs, or substantially complete degree programs, having designated faculty lines with independent curricula decision making authority, designated facilities and instructional resources, and a designated student body may not be implemented at a branch campus or other subsidiary instructional location unless approved by the university board of trustees; regardless as to whether the university already has authority to offer the degree program. Each such program must meet the BOG new degree program approval criteria and follow the same approval process as other new program offerings at the university. This regulation does not apply to programs that share faculty and students between instructional locations.

(7) Legislative Approval - In accordance with Section 1004.03, F.S., any request for authorization to plan a new college, school, or functional equivalent of a program leading to a degree offered as a credential for a specific license granted under the Florida Statutes or the State Constitution must be approved by the Legislature before final implementation of the program. The BOG Office of Academic and Student Affairs will assist the university in determining if such approval is needed and it is expected that the university will seek approval during the legislative session following final approval by all appropriate state university system boards.