

8.011 Authorization of New Academic Degree Programs and Other Curricular Offerings.

(1) New Academic Degree Program Authorization – To ensure that new academic programs implemented by a state university are of the highest quality and are aligned with the Board of Governors and university strategic plans, the following criteria and administrative processes for new academic program authorization are established.

(2) Definitions – Within the context of this regulation, academic degree programs are defined as follows:

- (a) Degree Program: An organized curriculum leading to a degree in an area of study recognized as an academic discipline by the higher education community, as demonstrated by the assignment of a Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code by the National Center for Educational Statistics or as demonstrated by the existence of similar degree programs at other colleges and universities. An argument may also be made for a truly unique degree program based upon emerging research trends or occupational demand. Each degree program shall have designated faculty effort and instructional resources and shall be assigned a CIP code and included in the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory. Each degree program shall include at least one program major as defined in paragraph (2)(b) but may have multiple majors.
- (b) Program Major: An organized curriculum offered as part or all of an existing or proposed degree program. If the term “program major” is not used by the university, the university must identify the equivalent term in its corresponding institutional policies or regulations. A program major, or its equivalent, shall be reasonably associated with the degree program under which it is offered and shall share core courses with all other majors within the same degree program. Core courses, for the purpose of this regulation, shall not include common prerequisites as defined in section 1007.25, Florida Statutes. Although in some cases the major and the degree program names are identical, only the degree program shall be assigned a CIP code and included in the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory as a stand-alone program. The number of credit hours for a program major for each degree level shall be established by the university within the parameters of paragraph (3)(a)6c.

(3) Criteria for New Degree Program Approval – A proposal for a new degree program shall be approved by a university board of trustees and the Board of Governors only if it meets the following criteria.

- (a) Institutional and State-Level Accountability
 1. *The program is consistent with the current State University System strategic plan, university mission, the current university strategic plan, and the annual university accountability plan.* The proposal shall demonstrate that the goals of the program are consistent with current State University System

strategic planning goals by identifying which of the goals the program will directly advance. Additionally, the proposal shall demonstrate that the program goals are aligned with the university's mission and strategic planning goals and relate to specific institutional strengths, and that the program is consistent with the program list provided in the annual university accountability plan required by Board of Governors Regulation 2.002.

2. *There is a demonstrated need for program graduates, research, and/or service.* The proposal shall demonstrate a need for more individuals to be educated in the program at the level proposed, provide an estimate of the headcount and full-time equivalent 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 need, then specific supporting information shall be provided. In analyzing the need for the proposed program, the university shall consider whether similar programs are offered at other postsecondary institutions in Florida and what impact, if any, such programs may have on the proposed program, and shall include this analysis in the proposal to substantiate the need for the program.
3. *The program does not unnecessarily duplicate existing degree programs in the state of Florida.* If the program duplicates another degree program at a private or public state university in Florida with a substantially similar curriculum, evidence shall be provided that the university has investigated the potential impact on that program, has discussed opportunities for collaboration with the affected university, and can substantiate a need for duplication. If the proposed program curriculum substantially duplicates an existing program at a historically black university in the State University System, an analysis shall be conducted to determine whether the proposed program may adversely affect that university's ability to achieve or maintain student diversity in its existing program.
4. *Financial planning and resources are sufficient for implementation.* The proposal shall include a complete budget for the program that is comparable in cost to similar existing programs, reflects the purpose of the proposal, and 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 programs.
5. *There is a sufficient projected benefit of the program to the university, local community, and the state of Florida.* The proposal shall describe the projected benefit to the university, local community, and the state of Florida if the program is implemented. The proposal should demonstrate efficient use of resources and justification for the investment. The projected benefit may be both quantitative and qualitative in nature.
6. *Access and articulation are maintained for all programs.*
 - a. In a proposal for a baccalaureate program, all prerequisite courses shall

be consistent with common prerequisites for similar degree programs within the State University System and the Florida College System, or an exception shall be sought through the Articulation Coordinating Committee in accordance with Board Regulation 8.010.

- b. In a proposal for a baccalaureate program, if specialized admissions status is sought in accordance with Board Regulation 8.013, adequate justification shall exist for such a designation, and evidence shall be provided that diversity, articulation, and workforce issues are appropriately addressed.
- c. In a proposal for a baccalaureate program, the total number of credit hours shall not exceed 120. If the proposed program requires more than 120 credit hours, the requirements outlined in Board Regulation 8.014 must be met.
- d. A proposal for any degree level shall include a plan to achieve a diverse student body in the program.

(b) Institutional Readiness

1. *The institution demonstrates an ability to implement a high-quality program.* The proposal shall provide evidence that the institution has the resources in place or will make the necessary investments to ensure that the proposed program will be of high quality. If appropriate, the proposal shall provide evidence that the proposed program will specifically relate to existing institutional strengths such as other academic programs that have achieved national recognition or related institutes and centers. If program reviews or accreditation activities in the discipline pertinent to the proposed program or in related disciplines have included recommendations affecting the proposed program, the proposal shall provide evidence that progress has been made in implementing those recommendations.
2. *The curriculum is appropriate for the discipline and program level.* The proposal shall describe a sequenced course of study with expected student learning outcomes, including any appropriate industry-driven competencies, as well as a strategy for assessing student learning and reviewing academic-workforce alignment to make curricular adjustments as needed. Admissions and graduation criteria shall be clearly specified and appropriate. The course of study and credit hours required should include a timeframe consistent with similar programs. In cases in which specialized accreditation is available, evidence shall be provided that the program will seek accreditation, or a rationale shall be provided as to why the program will not seek specialized accreditation as required by Regulation 3.006.
3. *Sufficient qualified faculty is available.* The proposal shall demonstrate that sufficient qualified faculty is available to initiate the program based on estimated enrollments and that, if appropriate, there is a commitment to hiring additional faculty in later years. The proposal shall demonstrate that the academic unit or units associated with this new degree have been productive in teaching, research, and service. For a research or

professional doctoral program, evidence shall be provided that the faculty in the aggregate has the necessary instructional experience, as well as research and grant activity, to sustain a doctoral program.

4. *Sufficient institutional resources are available.* – The proposal shall demonstrate that the necessary library volumes and serials; classrooms, teaching laboratories, research laboratories, offices, and any other types of physical spaces; equipment; and appropriate clinical and internship sites shall be available to implement the program. The proposal shall also indicate whether appropriate fellowships, scholarships, and assistantships are in place or if the university has made sufficient plans for their existence when student support is the norm for similar programs in the discipline.

(4) New Degree Program Approval Authority and Process

- (a) *All degree programs:* Each university shall submit a new academic degree program pre-proposal for review by the academic program coordination workgroup established by the Council of Academic Vice Presidents pursuant to Regulation 8.004 in order to facilitate collaboration, articulation, and coordination of new academic degree programs across the State University System. This action should be taken prior to a new degree program under consideration being moved into the one-year category on the annual university accountability plan.
- (b) *Professional and research doctoral degree programs:* Each university board of trustees shall approve new research and professional doctoral degree programs for submission to the Board of Governors for authorization, in accordance with the criteria outlined in section (3) of this regulation. In approving a new doctoral degree program, the Board of Governors shall consider the sufficiency of the university proposal evaluation process, the distinctive mission of the university, alignment with the State University System and university strategic plans, and the extent to which the program will contribute to the economic development of the local community and the state of Florida as demonstrated by its alignment with the Programs of Strategic Emphasis adopted as part of the current State University System strategic plan.
 1. A proposal that is complete and has been determined by Board staff to meet all criteria for new program authorization shall be considered by the Board of Governors for approval and, subsequent to a program's approval, an institution may offer the new program at a date no sooner than that specified in the proposal.
 2. If a university contemplates implementing a master's or specialist program and a doctoral program in the same discipline simultaneously, a single proposal for both degree levels should be developed, differentiating elements within the proposal as necessary. Both degree levels shall be approved by the university board of trustees prior to submitting the doctoral program proposal to the Board of Governors for consideration.
 3. New doctoral programs shall 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 shall establish deadlines for university submission of new degree proposals for consideration.

- (c) *Bachelor's, master's, and specialist programs:* Each university board of trustees shall approve for implementation new degree programs at the bachelor's, master's, and specialist levels in accordance with sections (3) and (5) of this regulation. New master's programs from the New College of Florida shall be considered for approval by the Board of Governors at one of its regularly scheduled meetings.
- (d) *University policies for new degree program authorization:* Each university board of trustees shall ensure that university policies for new degree program planning and approval are consistent with this regulation and provide a copy of the policies to the Board of Governors' office. The university policies shall 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 the annual university accountability 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 doctoral program proposals by a qualified external academic consultant prior to consideration of the proposal by the board of trustees. Alternatively, institutions may utilize a cross-section of visiting experts who contribute to the proposal development process. Their contribution to the process must be documented and described in the proposal.
 - 4. A process for final consideration by the board of trustees that includes a review of the proposed program by the full board or a designated committee with regard to Board of Governors' approval criteria and implementation costs.
 - 5. Adoption of a common State University System new degree proposal format developed by Board staff in collaboration with university academic affairs officers.
- (e) *State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory:*
 - 1. The Board Office shall maintain a State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory that will identify the approved degree programs for each university and that 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, specialist, or advanced master's degree by the university board of trustees, a university shall notify the Board of Governors' O office in writing and provide an electronic copy of the proposal for each program, along with related board of trustees' approval documents. For baccalaureate programs, the notification shall include any request for approval of specialized admissions status, exceptions to the 120 credit hours to degree, and exceptions to the established statewide common prerequisite courses. A CIP code for each program shall be assigned by the Board of Governors'

office in consultation with the university.

2. Upon resolution of any outstanding issues regarding the program, it shall be added to the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory, and a letter of notification shall be provided to the university.
3. The Board of Governors recognizes that academic disciplines and degree program curricula evolve over time to align with emerging knowledge in the field or changing workforce requirements. Existing programs' curricula may also evolve over time in response to faculty research interests and student demand. On occasion, a new CIP code is created by the National Center for Educational Statistics, which is a better fit for an existing program than the one assigned when it was approved. Accordingly, the Chancellor, or designee, is authorized to approve CIP code changes requested by a university for an existing degree program in the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory and to establish a process for university and state-level review to ensure the program is properly coded. A CIP code change cannot have the net effect of adding a new degree program to the academic program inventory by changing the code for a major offered under a currently approved program. The new CIP code will be used for state-level accountability calculations starting with the effective term.

(5) Independent Degree Programs at Branch Campuses and Off-Campus Sites – Complete degree programs, or substantially complete degree programs, having designated faculty lines with independent curricular decision-making authority, designated facilities and instructional resources, and a designated student body, shall not be implemented at a branch campus or other off-campus instructional location unless approved by the university board of trustees, even if the university already has authority to offer the degree program at another location. Each such program shall meet the Board of Governors' new degree program approval criteria and follow the same approval process as other new program offerings at the university. This requirement does not apply to programs currently approved for one location that share faculty and students between or among instructional locations.

(6) Each university shall establish policies for academic degree program offerings away from the main campus in compliance with Board of Governors Regulations 8.002 Continuing Education, 8.004 Academic Program Coordination, and 8.009 Educational Sites.

(7) Authorization of Other Academic Curricular Offerings – Each university board of trustees shall ensure that the university has policies consistent with this regulation and applicable accreditation standards for the approval, implementation, and review of other types of academic curricular offerings as defined in sections (7)(a)-(d) of this regulation. Copies of each university's policies or regulations for approving other academic curricular offerings shall be provided to the Board of Governors' office.

- (a) Program Concentration, Area of Emphasis, Track, or a similar curricular offering: Any organized curriculum that is offered as part of a degree program

major, as defined in (2)(b), and enhances or complements the degree program in a manner that leads to specific educational or occupational goals. Such a curricular offering shall be as defined by the university within the credit-hour length set in accordance with this regulation and other applicable institutional policies or regulations, except that the number of credit hours shall not equal or exceed the number of credit hours established for a program major at the same degree level.

- (b) Program Minor: Any organized undergraduate curriculum, independent of the program major, which leads to the completion of specific educational or occupational goals. The length of the program minor shall be as defined by the university in its corresponding institutional policies or regulations. Program minors are typically optional and may or may not appear on the student's transcript or credential.
- (c) 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, diploma, or similar form of recognition 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 a college credit certificate program shall be set by the university within guidelines established by this regulation.
- (d) Non-College-Credit Certificate: An organized curriculum of study of any length that is offered for non-college credit (as measured through clock hours, continuing education units, 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 a non-college-credit certificate program shall be set by the university.

Authority: Section 7(d), Art. IX, Fla. Const.; History: — New 3-27-07, Amended 3-24-11, 9-22-16, 6-30-22.