

# Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education Academic Programming Approval Policy

## Policy Statement

### Purpose

Connecticut State Statutes empower the Connecticut Board of Regents (BOR) to grant the state's accreditation of the institutions of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) System and their academic programs, therein authorizing them to operate and confer higher education credentials. Additionally, the BOR is charged with authorizing approval for the establishment of new academic programming and of changes therein.

The primary goal of this **Academic Programming Approval Policy** and its procedural guidelines is to expedite the various layers of the review process while assuring that programming quality, need, demand, and requisite resources and capacities are demonstrated and can be subjected to periodic accountability. It is also essential that academic programming is aligned with the mission of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) System and simultaneously with the mission of the applicable CSCU institution.

### Domain

It is the Policy of the BOR that its prior approval is required for the following institutional actions regarding academic programming:

- Above Threshold Establishment of a New Academic Program
- Reinstatement of a Discontinued or Suspended Program
- Continued Licensure and Accreditation of an Academic Program
- Replication of a College of Technology Program
- Establishment of a CSCU Center/Institute
- Above Threshold Modification of an Academic Program
- Suspension of an Academic Program
- Discontinuation of an Academic Program

The operating principles for the approval process are:

*Nimbleness* – streamlining the approval process while ensuring reverence for the significance of each layered step

*Responsiveness* – paying close attention to the needs of students, the state and the individual institutions

*Effectiveness* – advancing institutional distinctiveness and their productive use of resources, while promoting opportunities for academic innovation, economic growth and development, and (inter-institutional and inter-disciplinary) collaboration

The CSCU Office of the System's Provost and Senior Vice-President for Academic and Student Affairs is charged with developing and revising as necessary forms to expedite the application

process for those actions requiring BOR approval. The downloadable application forms are to be readily available to institutional officials, faculty and staff on the System's website: <https://www.ct.edu/academics/approval>.

## Procedural Guidelines

### I. New Academic Programming / Reinstatement of a Discontinued or Suspended Program

#### A. Concept Paper for New Academic Program -- Optional

1. At its option, institutions planning to submit an application for a new program may submit a **Concept Paper for New Academic Program** to Academic Council (AC) in order to solicit early feedback for a program proposal. If the institution chooses to submit a *Concept Paper*, it should be submitted no later than the meeting prior to submission of the *Application* form for **New Program Approval** and follow steps 2-4 below.
2. Per the institution's established procedures, a **Concept Paper for New Academic Program** is developed and approved internally. With the endorsement of the Chief Academic Officer (CAO), the *Concept Paper* is submitted by initiator(s) and/or CAO to the System Office of the Provost.
3. After verifying the *Concept Paper* is in order, the designated Academic Affairs staff member in the Office of the Provost arranges via the Administrative Assistant for the *Concept Paper* to be placed on the agenda and within the agenda package for the next meeting of the CSU Academic Council (AC), for its consideration.
4. The *Concept Paper* is presented to the AC at its meeting by the CAO and/or initiator(s) and the AC responds with questions and its feedback having read the *Concept Paper* prior to the meeting. The AC advises the initiator(s) and CAO as to whether it is advisable that a full proposal be developed and what clarifications and/or improvements are suggested, if any. No action vote is taken by the AC.

#### B. Application for New Program Approval / Reinstatement of a Discontinued or Suspended Program

1. Per the institution's established procedures and incorporating the AC's feedback to the *Concept Paper* if one has been submitted,<sup>1</sup> the *Application* form for **New Program Approval** or the *Application* form for **Reinstatement of a Discontinued or Suspended Program** is completed and approved internally. With the endorsement of the CAO, the *Application* is submitted by initiator or CAO to the Office of the Provost.
2. After verifying the *Application* is in order, the Academic Affairs staff arranges for the *Application* to be placed on the agenda and within the agenda package for the next meeting of the AC, for its consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> The option of a concept paper applies only to new academic program proposals and not to Reinstatement of a Discontinued or Suspended Program

3. The *Application* is presented to the AC at its meeting by the CAO and/or initiator(s) and the AC responds with questions and its feedback having read the *Application* prior to the meeting. After the deliberations, the AC takes an action vote to:
  - a. reject the application, or
  - b. ask for specified clarifications and/or improvements to be made in the *Application* and its re-submission to the AC, or
  - c. ask for specified clarifications and/or improvements to be made in the *Application* and its submission to the Academic and Student Affairs (ASA) Committee, for its consideration with the AC's recommendation for approval, or
  - d. recommend that the ASA approve the *Application*
4. Staffers in the Office of the System Provost will prepare a Staff Report to introduce the *Application* to the ASA – the components of an academic approval Staff Report will include the AC endorsement and the recommendation of the System Provost as well as a Board Resolution.
5. The *Application* is presented to the ASA at its meeting by the CAO and/or initiator(s) and the ASA responds with questions having read the *Application* prior to the meeting. After clarifications by the initiator(s) and/or CAO and any further discussion, the ASA votes on whether or not to approve the establishment of the proposed new program, or to request that specified clarifications and/or improvement be made in the application prior to it being re-submitted to the ASA for re-consideration. An affirmative vote generally triggers the *Application's* Staff Report and Board Resolution being placed on the Consent Agenda of the full Board at its next meeting.

**NOTES:** New academic programs are: degrees, degrees with option(s), degrees with certificate(s), and certificates (stand-alone and credit-bearing<sup>2</sup>). All applications to establish a new program will be considered for both Licensure and Accreditation by the BOR for a period of seven semesters beginning with its initiation.

### **C. Application for Continued Licensure and Accreditation**

1. If the institution elects, after the census date of the program's seventh semester, per the institution's established procedures, the *Application* form for **Continued Licensure and Accreditation** is completed and approved internally. With the endorsement of the CAO, the *Application* is submitted by initiator or CAO to the Office of the Provost.
2. After verifying the *Application* is in order, the Academic Affairs staff arranges for the *Application* to be placed on the agenda and within the agenda package for the next meeting of the AC, for its consideration.
3. The *Application* is presented to the AC at its meeting by the CAO and/or initiator(s) and the AC responds with questions and its feedback having read the *Application* prior to the meeting. After the deliberations, the AC takes an action vote.

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<sup>2</sup> Establishment or modification of undergraduate certificates of 15 or fewer credit hours, or graduate certificates of 12 or fewer semester hours are considered "Below Threshold" items and do not require AC or ASA action. See below for additional threshold guidelines and procedures.

4. Staffers in the Office of the System Provost will prepare a Staff Report to accompany the *Application* to be forwarded to the ASA – the components of an academic approval Staff Report will include the AC endorsement and the recommendation of the System Provost as well as a Board Resolution.
6. The *Application* is presented to the ASA at its meeting by the CAO and/or initiator(s) and the ASA responds with questions having read the *Application* prior to the meeting. After clarifications by the initiator(s) and/or CAO and any further discussion, the ASA votes on whether or not to approve the continued licensure and accreditation the program, or to request that specified clarifications and/or improvement be made in the application prior to it being re-submitted to the ASA for re-consideration. Alternatively, the ASA may elect to recommend licensure and accreditation of the program for an additional five semesters and the subsequent submission of an *Application* form for **Continued Licensure and Accreditation**. An affirmative vote or alternative option generally triggers the *Application's* Staff Report and Board Resolution being placed on the Consent Agenda of the full Board at its next meeting.

**NOTE:** If a program meets the definition of Low Completer at the time of submission of an *Application for Continued Licensure and Accreditation* and the institution opts to recommend Program Continuation, the requisite Improvement Plan (Section 4: of the *Application*) must incorporate the applicable elements of the Improvement Plan option for Program Continuation of the Academic Program Review/Low Completer Review Process.

#### **D. Application for Replication of a College of Technology Program**

**PREMISE:** Per BOR Policy, Community colleges may replicate a College of Technology's Engineering Science or Technology Studies academic program (Associate of Science degree, Certificate, and Program Option) or modification previously approved by the Board of Regents for another Community College, contingent upon a replication approval process wherein:

1. The replicating community college submits a **Letter of Intent** to the College of Technology (COT) Executive Director with an accompanying operational plan and budget from that institution's chief executive officer and/or chief academic officer. The Letter of Intent requires completion and internal approval of the *Application* form for **New Program Approval – Replication of a COT Program**;
2. The COT Executive Director forwards the replication request and an affirming recommendation to the replicating community college;
3. With the endorsement of the CAO, the Application is submitted by the replicating community college to the Office of the Provost.
4. After verifying the *Application* is in order, the Academic Affairs staff arranges for the *Application* to be placed on the agenda and within the agenda package for the next meeting of the AC, for its consideration.
5. The *Application* is presented to the AC at its meeting by the CAO and/or initiator(s) and the AC responds with questions and its feedback having read the *Application* prior to the meeting. After the deliberations, the AC takes an action vote to:

- a. reject the *Application*, or
  - b. ask for specified clarifications and/or improvements to be made in *Application* and its re-submission to the AC, or
  - c. ask for specified clarifications and/or improvements to be made in *Application* and its submission to the Academic and Student Affairs (ASA) Committee, for its consideration with the AC's recommendation for approval, or
  - d. recommend that the ASA approve the *Application*
6. Staffers in the Office of the System Provost will prepare a Staff Report to introduce the *Application* to the ASA – the components of an academic approval Staff Report will include the AC endorsement and the recommendation of the System Provost and a Board Resolution.
  7. The *Application* is presented to the ASA at its meeting by the CAO and/or initiator(s) and the ASA responds with questions having read the *Application* prior to the meeting. After clarifications by the initiator(s) and/or CAO and any further discussion, the ASA votes on whether or not to approve the establishment of the proposed new program, or to request that specified clarifications and/or improvement be made in the application prior to it being re-submitted to the ASA for re-consideration. An affirmative vote generally triggers the *Application's* Staff Report and Board Resolution being placed on the Consent Agenda of the full Board at its next meeting.

#### E. New CSCU Center or Institute

1. A **Proposal to Establish a CSCU Center/Institute** is completed and approved internally. With the endorsement of the CAO, the *Proposal* is submitted by initiator or CAO to the Office of the System Provost.
2. After the system Provost verifies that the *Proposal* is in order, staffers in the Office of the System Provost will prepare a Staff Report to accompany the *Proposal* to be forwarded to the ASA – the components of an academic approval Staff Report will include the recommendation of the System Provost and a Board Resolution.
3. The *Proposal* is presented to the ASA at its meeting by the CAO and/or initiator(s) and the ASA responds with questions having read the *Proposal* prior to the meeting. After clarifications by the initiator(s) and/or CAO and any further discussion, the ASA votes on whether or not to approve the establishment of the proposed new Center/Institute, or to request that specified clarifications and/or improvements be made in the application prior to it being re-submitted to the ASA for re-consideration. An affirmative vote generally triggers the *Proposal's* Staff Report and Board Resolution being placed on the Consent Agenda of the full Board at its next meeting.

## II. Modification of Accredited Program

1. Per the institution's established procedures, the *Application* form for the **Modification of Accredited Program** is completed and approved internally. With the endorsement of the CAO, the *Application* is submitted by initiator(s) or CAO to the System Office of the Provost.

2. After verifying the *Application*, the Academic Affairs staff arranges for the *Application* to be placed on the agenda and within the agenda package for the next meeting of the AC, for its consideration.
3. The *Application* is presented to the AC at its meeting by the CAO and/or initiator(s) and the AC responds with questions and its feedback having read the *Application* prior to the meeting. After the deliberations, the AC takes an action vote.
4. Office of the Provost staffers will prepare a Staff Report and Board Resolution, and any appropriate documents to accompany the *Application* to be forwarded to the ASA.
5. The *Application* is presented to the ASA at its meeting by the CAO and/or initiator(s) and the ASA responds with questions having read the *Application* prior to the meeting. After clarifications by the initiator(s) and/or CAO, the ASA votes on whether to approve the proposed modification of the program. An affirmative vote generally triggers the **Modification's** Staff Report and Board Resolution being placed on the Consent Agenda of the full Board at its next meeting.

**NOTES:** A program modification is a substantive change to a previously approved (licensed and accredited) academic program, as defined on the *Application* form for program modification, namely a modification of more than 15 credit hours in a previously approved undergraduate program or more than 12 credits in a previously approved graduate program. For a simple name change modification of an accredited program, a short *Application for Name Change-Accredited Academic Program-Modification* form is available. Likewise, abbreviated **Modification of Accredited Program** application forms are available for *CIP Code Number Change* and *Adding an Auxiliary Instructional Site*. An *Application for CIP Code Change* will not be reviewed by either the AC or ASA – it will be processed by the Office of the System Provost for submission to the Office of Higher Education.

### III. Discontinuation or Suspension of Existing Program

1. Per the institution's established procedures, the *Application* form for the **Discontinuation of Existing Program** or **Suspension of Existing Program** is completed and approved internally. With the endorsement of the CAO, the *Application* is submitted by initiator(s) or CAO to the System Office of the Provost.
2. After verifying the *Application*, the Academic Affairs staff arranges for the *Application* to be placed on the agenda and within the agenda package for the next meeting of the AC, for its consideration.
3. The *Application* is presented to the AC at its meeting by the CAO and/or initiator(s) and the AC responds with questions and its feedback having read the *Application* prior to the meeting. After the deliberations, the AC takes an action vote.
4. Office of the Provost staffers will prepare a Staff Report and Board Resolution, and any appropriate components to accompany the *Application* forwarded to the ASA.
5. The *Application* is presented to the ASA at its meeting by the CAO and/or initiator(s) and the ASA responds with questions having read the *Application* prior to the meeting. After

clarifications by the initiator(s) and/or CAO, the ASA votes on whether to approve the discontinuation or suspension of an existing program. An affirmative vote generally triggers the program's Staff Report and Board Resolution being placed on the Consent Agenda of the next BOR meeting.

**NOTE:** The Academic Council will undertake its deliberation of an application for program discontinuation or suspension only if a member raises a substantial concern or question, or per the discretion of the System Provost. Likewise, the ASA will undertake its deliberation if a member raises a substantial concern or question, or upon the recommendation of the System Provost.

### **PROCEDURAL NOTES**

1. In order for an academic program approval document to be included in the agenda of the next meeting of the CSU Academic Council, it must be received electronically in the Office of the System Provost to the attention of the Administrative Assistant at least 10 business days prior to that meeting. Otherwise, the approval document will be considered by the Academic Council at its subsequent meeting.
2. All required data and information in approval forms must be complete, including CIP Code numbers and OHE numbers for existing programs in order to be presented to the Academic Council.
3. In submitting or authorizing an application to the Academic Council, the chief academic officer is assuring the Council that the institution's internal (development and review) processes have been completed with approvals.
4. A number of institutional actions regarding academic programming do not require prior approval by the BOR. Such actions include:
  - a) establishment or modification of degree minors, concentrations and specializations,
  - b) an undergraduate certificate or program of 30 credit hours or fewer which falls within an approved program,
  - c) establishment or modification of undergraduate certificates of 15 or fewer credit hours, or graduate certificates of 12 or fewer semester hours,
  - d) modification of 15 or fewer credits in undergraduate programs or of 12 or fewer credits in graduate programs,
  - e) establishment or modification of non-credit-bearing certificates, and
  - f) establishment or modification of academic programs that do not qualify students to become eligible for federal financial aid.

However, CSU institutions are required to inform the BOR of their establishing the academic programming listed above via an Informational Report, outlined below:

**Below Threshold Proposal**

1. Per the institution's established procedures, the *Information Report Form* for the establishment of a *Below-Threshold – New Academic Offering* or a *Below-Threshold – Program Modification* is completed and approved internally. With the endorsement of the chief academic officer (CAO), the form is submitted by initiator(s) or CAO to the System Office of the Provost.
2. After verifying the *Information Form* is in order – that the proposed program's requirement for course credit hours does not exceed the threshold requiring BOR action or the definition of academic programming requiring prior BOR approval – the Academic Affairs staff arranges for the **New Academic Offering** or **Program Modification** to be placed sequentially on the agendas of the AC and ASA as an Information Item.

**BOR: June 24, 2021**