

Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges

Academics

POLICY
NAME: Academic Programs

POLICY
NUMBER: 4200

A. PURPOSE

To establish processes for proposing new academic programs, review of existing programs, and program discontinuation.

B. DEFINITIONS

None

C. POLICY

1. New Academic Program Approval

All new academic programs, which include degrees; majors; options/concentrations, focus areas and endorsements within majors; certificates and minors, require prior approval of the Board. Proposals for new academic programs shall be submitted to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for initial review and recommendation to the Chancellor and Board of Trustees.

Academic program termination and subsequent reinstatement of a program also requires the submission of a formal proposal identifying the College's recommendation for approval of the Board. In all cases, the Board may require objective consultants to assist the Board in analyzing the proposal and arriving at a decision.

2. Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree Programs

All new reduced-credit bachelor's degree programs, typically defined as bachelor's degree programs requiring fewer than 120 credit hours, also require prior approval by the Board of Trustees, regardless of whether the major for such program already exists through a traditional bachelor's degree pathway. Proposals for such programs must be submitted to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for initial review and recommendation to the Chancellor and Board of Trustees, following the same procedures as traditional academic programs.

3. Existing Academic Program Review Process

3.1. Review Requirements

- Existing academic programs shall be reviewed on a regular basis by each College, following the academic program review schedule established by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE) for the Nebraska State Colleges. Such review shall be for the purpose of determining the quality and effectiveness of each academic program, the efficiency with which each is delivered, and for the purpose of avoiding unnecessary duplication.
- Such review shall be consistent with state statutes and shall contain both qualitative and quantitative measures representative of sound academic practices. The review process provides for evaluation of each academic program once every seven (7) years and is primarily a self-study conducted at the department, school and/or College levels. Although designed to assist in program improvement to enhance program quality and promote attainment of educational goals, the review is also useful in planning and assuring efficient use of resources.
- Each College shall perform the review according to the established CCPE program review schedule and shall submit a report which compiles the results to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for review, along with supporting documentation and a recommendation for each program reviewed.
- In the event a program does not meet or exceed the threshold requirements established by the CCPE, the College shall include in its report either a recommendation for terminating the program or a plan for taking corrective action which will improve and justify continuance of the program.
- Each program report will be considered by the Board for continuation of the program; those programs approved for continuation will then have their reports forwarded for consideration and approval by the CCPE.
- Should a program be approved for continuation that does not meet the threshold requirements established by the CCPE, the program's number of graduates/completers will be reported annually on the Low-Threshold Program Report, which is provided to the Board each year during the March/April Board meeting.

3.2. Outside Accreditation and Review

- Should an academic program hold state and/or national accreditation and is in good standing with the accrediting agency at the time of review by the Board, the official documentation that provides the results of the most current review of the program shall be accepted, along with a one (1) to two (2) page summary of the

primary findings of the most recent accreditation visit, as the College's analysis of the program.

4. Right to Modify or Discontinue Academic Programs

4.1. Program Continuation

- Acceptance of registration by a Nebraska State College and admission to any academic program of a State College does not constitute a contract or warranty that the College will continue indefinitely to offer the program in which a student is enrolled.
- The College expressly reserves the right to change, phase out, or discontinue any academic program.

4.2. Modification Procedures

The listing of courses contained in any College bulletin, catalog or schedule is by way of announcement only and shall not be regarded as an offer of contract. The College expressly reserves the right to:

- Add or delete courses from its offerings;
- Change times or locations of courses or programs;
- Change academic calendars without notice;
- Cancel any course for insufficient registrations; or
- Revise or change rules, charges, fees, schedules, courses, requirements for degrees and any other policy or regulation affecting students, including, but not limited to, evaluation standards, whenever the same is considered to be in the best interests of the College.

5. Procedure for Discontinuing Academic Programs

Once a decision has been made to discontinue an academic program, the College will assist the student to identify program completion options inside and outside the Nebraska State College System.

The College will notify the Higher Learning Commission, in accordance with HLC policies and procedures, and comply with their directives.

FORMS/APPENDICES

None

SOURCE:

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. 85-1414 Programs; capital construction projects;

review; commission, public institution, and governing boards; duties.

Policy Adopted: March 1985

Policy Revised: June 1993, January 2010, January 2020, March 2022, January 2023, April 2024, January 2026, February 2026