

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

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Revised Process for Review of New Academic Program Proposals
Coordinating Board for Higher Education
June 8, 2017

DESCRIPTION

The Higher Education System Review Task Force, in its report to the Coordinating Board, recommended streamlining the process for reviewing new academic program proposals so that institutions have the flexibility to meet workforce and student needs while also maintaining fidelity to their core missions. The Coordinating Board, in accepting the Task Force's report, directed the department to make recommendations for further action. This agenda item presents to the Coordinating Board for its review a revised process for the review and approval of new academic program proposals.

Background

The task force agreed on a three-tiered framework for the review of new academic program proposals, which had been developed by a subcommittee of MDHE staff and chief academic officers. MDHE staff used the program approval framework endorsed by the Higher Education System Review Task Force and existing CBHE rules and policies to draft a revised process for the review and approval of new academic program proposals. This draft was vetted through the Council of Chief Academic Officers, revised based on a vigorous discussion among council members, and sent electronically to all chief academic officers for their review and feedback. The draft also included a list of definitions pertinent to the approval process. The final version of the draft is attached.

The revised process animates the three types of reviews identified by the Task Force: Staff, Routine, and Comprehensive reviews.

Staff review applies to minor program changes such as deleting a program, changing the program's title or CIP, or adding an option to an existing program. MDHE staff will review requests for minor changes to existing academic programs, and may request additional information about the proposal from the institution. For all Staff Review requests received by the first of each month, MDHE staff will process, review, and report back to institutions by the end of that same month. MDHE staff will report Staff Review actions to the CBHE according the following schedule:

Requests received between	will be reported at the CBHE meeting in:
May 2- August 1	September
August 2-November 1	December (for spring semester implementation)
November 2-January 1	February (for summer semester implementation)
January 2-March 1	April (for fall semester implementation)
March 2-May 1	June

Routine review applies to proposed programs that are clearly within an institution's CBHE-approved mission and service region, do not unnecessarily duplicate an existing program in the

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geographically applicable area or other relevant distinction, will be offered at the institution's main campus or at a CBHE-approved off-site location, will build on existing programs and faculty expertise, and can be launched with minimal expense and within an institution's current operating budget. Proposals that fit within these parameters will be approved on an expedited basis.

Institutions will provide appropriate information about the proposed program to the MDHE and certify that the proposal meets the criteria for routine review and that the program meets the criteria for all new academic programs. If warranted, MDHE staff may request additional information from the proposing institution. Requests submitted by the first of the month will be reviewed and processed, and in most cases, institutions will be notified by the end of that same month. MDHE staff shall review the proposal to verify the proposed program meets the criteria for routine review.

Once this information is verified, MDHE staff will post the proposal on the department's website to allow for twenty days of public review and comment. This action signifies the department's intent to approve the program provisionally. All other institutions are invited to review and comment on programs being considered under routine review; comments must be received within 20 days of the posting on the department website. The proposing institution shall address comments received during the comment period. Once all comments or concerns are resolved, the commissioner of higher education shall approve the program provisionally for a period of five years.

At the end of the five-year period, the MDHE will review the program to determine whether it should be approved unconditionally, remain provisionally approved for two additional years, or be terminated. Requests submitted by the first of the month will be reviewed and processed, and in most cases institutions notified, by the end of that same month. MDHE staff will follow the schedule below only to report routine review actions to the CBHE.

Requests received between	will be reported at the CBHE meeting in:
May 2- August 1	September
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Comprehensive review applies to proposals that constitute more significant changes described in detail in the attached framework. Proposals that meet any one of the criteria in the framework is be subject to a comprehensive review through which the proposing institution will be required to demonstrate that the offeror made a good-faith effort to explore the feasibility of offering the program in collaboration with an institution the mission of which includes offering the program, is contributing substantially to the goals in the Coordinating Board's *Blueprint for Higher Education*, and has the existing capacity to ensure the program is delivered in a high-quality manner. The institution will also have to demonstrate that the proposed program is needed and that it has a clear plan to meet the articulated workforce need.

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MDHE staff, in consultation with appropriate and qualified representatives from other institutions, will review a complete proposal for comprehensive review. MDHE staff and institutional representatives will provide feedback to the proposing institution. The proposing institution responds to feedback.

Proposals will be submitted to the Coordinating Board by July 1 of each year. The Coordinating Board will determine which proposals to move forward with and announce its decision in September. Final decisions to approve programs will ordinarily be made by February.

In the first year the new framework is operational, the Coordinating Board will consider no more than three proposals, in total, to offer a degree that is outside an institution's CBHE-approved mission, including those degrees institutions are prohibited from offering under current state statute. No more than two proposals may come from either public universities or public two-year institutions.

In the second year, the Coordinating Board will consider no more than five proposals, in total, to offer a degree outside an institution's CBHE-approved mission. No more than three proposals may come from either public universities or public two-year institutions.

Should the current statutory prohibition on community colleges offering baccalaureate degrees be changed, and if a changed licensure requirement might warrant the authorization of more than one public two-year institution to offer a bachelor degree, that proposal may be considered one proposal for purposes of this section only. Each individual institution's proposal will be evaluated on its own merits. The Coordinating Board will reconvene a task force to evaluate the new framework after two proposal cycles and recommend changes.

Next Steps

Once the board has approved the draft language, MDHE staff will begin revising the sections of the Code of State Regulations pertaining to the review and approval of new academic program proposals. This process typically takes about six months and provides opportunities for public comment.

MDHE staff are revising forms and adjusting internal procedures to align with the revised program approval process. The revised process is effective July 1, 2017.

STATUTORY REFERENCE

Section 173.005, RSMo – Department of Higher Education created, Coordinating Board duties

Section 173.030, RSMo – Additional responsibilities

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Coordinating Board approve the revised process for the review and approval of new academic program proposals, and direct MDHE staff to implement it effective July 1, 2017.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment A – Review of New Academic Program Proposals Policy

Process for Review of New Academic Program Proposals

Staff Review

1. Type of actions

Minor changes to existing academic programs and the addition of some certificates may be addressed through a staff review. Institutions shall report all minor changes to ensure that the state program inventory is accurate and complete. Examples of minor changes include:

- Inactive status
- Program deletion
- Change of program title or CIP code
- Combination programs
- Single-semester certificate programs
- One-year certificate programs
- Options
- Change of address
- Closed location

2. Process

Requests for minor changes to existing academic programs shall be submitted to the MDHE on forms provided by the department. The following guidelines apply to specific change requests:

- Moving an existing program to inactive status
 - Programs placed on inactive status will be suspended for a specified period not to exceed five years.
 - Students in the program at the time this status is adopted shall be permitted to conclude their course of study if they have no more than two years of coursework remaining, but no new students may be admitted to the program.
 - At the conclusion of the designated inactive period, not to exceed five years, the institution must review the program's status and may either delete it or reactivate it.
 - Only programs and certificates may be placed in inactive status; options can only be deleted through the program deletion process.
- Program deletion
 - At the time an institution notifies the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in writing about the circumstances that require a teach-out, the institution must also notify the Missouri Department of Higher Education.
 - Institutions must provide program name, level, CIP code, and effective date of deletion.
- Location notification
 - This includes change of address updates, and notifications of closed location notifications.
 - Notifications of closed locations must also include the list of programs to be deleted at the location.
- Change of program title or CIP code

- A title, CIP code, or nomenclature revision that includes substantive curriculum changes may be deemed tantamount to a new program and may be referred to the institution for consideration at the routine or comprehensive review level.
- Combination programs
 - This category is narrowly defined to include only those programs that result from the mechanical combination of two previously existing programs.
 - Substantive curricular changes shall ordinarily be limited to the elimination of duplicated requirements.
 - The development of interdisciplinary programs and area study programs that utilize the resources of several existing programs shall be handled through the routine or comprehensive new program approval process.
- Single-semester certificate programs
 - Either as a standalone or as part of a parent degree program.
- Certificate programs
 - One-year certificate programs developed from an approved parent degree program provided that the program is directly related to the approved program and consists predominantly of courses included in the degree program.
 - A one-year certificate not associated with an approved parent degree program must be submitted as a new program at the routine or comprehensive review level, whichever is appropriate.
 - Graduate certificates greater than a single semester in length may be approved at the staff review level if they are part of an existing approved parent degree program.
 - Graduate certificates greater than a single semester that are not part of an approved parent degree must be submitted as a new program at the routine or comprehensive review level, whichever is appropriate.
- Adding an Option to an existing program
 - The addition of a specialized course of study as a component of an umbrella degree program may be submitted as an option addition program change subject to the limitation that the CBHE or its designee shall make a determination regarding the potential for unnecessary or inappropriate duplication of existing programs. Only in those instances in which duplication is not a problem may the proposed option be implemented.
 - Options within a parent degree program shall have the same CIP code as the parent degree.
 - The institution must provide evidence that the proposed option functions as a component of an umbrella degree program, including the curriculum common to the parent degree and all of its options.

3. Review and reporting

MDHE staff shall review requests for minor changes to existing academic programs. If warranted, MDHE staff may request additional information from the proposing institution. MDHE staff will report staff review actions at the next CBHE meeting.

4. Timeline

For all requests submitted by the first of the month MDHE staff will process, review, and report back to institutions by the end of that same month. MDHE staff will follow the schedule below only to report Staff Review actions to the CBHE.

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Routine Review

1. Types of action

Proposals for new academic programs that do not constitute a significant change in an institution's current role, scope, or mission shall be reviewed under the routine review process. For a proposed program to be considered through routine review, it shall meet all of the following criteria:

1. The program is clearly within the institution's CBHE-approved mission;
2. The program will be offered within the proposing institution's CBHE-approved service region;
3. The program will not unnecessarily duplicate an existing program in the applicable geographic area;
4. The program will be offered at the main campus or at a CBHE-approved off-site location;
5. The program will build on existing programs and faculty expertise; and
6. The cost to launch the program will be minimal and within the institution's current operating budget.

In addition, the following proposals generally will be considered under the routine review process:

1. Substantive curricular changes to an existing program;
2. The delivery of an approved program at a CBHE-approved off-site location; and
3. New degree programs that are offered in collaboration with an institution already approved to offer such a program.

2. Process

Institutions shall provide appropriate information about the proposed program, submitted to the MDHE on forms provided by the department. This information shall include certification that the proposal meets the criteria for routine review and that the program meets the [criteria for all new academic programs](#). If warranted, MDHE staff may request additional information from the proposing institution.

Once verified, MDHE staff shall post the proposal on the department’s website to allow for twenty days of public review and comment. This action signifies the department’s intent to approve the program provisionally.

MDHE staff shall invite all institutions to review and comment on programs being considered under routine review, which shall be posted on the department website. Comments must be received within 20 days of the posting on the department website.

Requests submitted by the first of the month will be reviewed and processed, and in most cases institutions notified, by the end of that same month. MDHE staff shall review the proposal to verify the proposed program meets the criteria for routine review.

The proposing institution shall address comments received during the comment period. Once all comments or concerns are resolved, the commissioner of higher education shall approve the program provisionally for a period of five years.

At the end of the five-year period, the MDHE will review the program to determine whether it should be approved unconditionally, remain provisionally approved for two additional years, or be terminated.

3. Timeline

Requests submitted by the first of the month will be reviewed and processed, and in most cases institutions notified, by the end of that same month. MDHE staff will follow the schedule below only to report routine review actions to the CBHE.

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Comprehensive Review

1. Types of action

Proposed new academic programs that meet any one of the following will be subject to a comprehensive review:

1. The program is outside an institution’s CBHE-approved mission.

2. The program will be offered outside the institution's CBHE-approved service region;
 3. The institution will incur substantial costs to launch and sustain the program;
 4. The program will include the offering of degrees at the baccalaureate level or higher that fall within the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code of 14, Engineering;
 5. The program will include the offering of a doctoral degree;
 6. The program will include the offering of a professional degree; or
 7. The program will include the offering of an education specialist degree.
2. Elements of a Complete Proposal for Comprehensive Review
- Institutions shall provide information about the proposed program and submit the proposal to the MDHE on forms provided by the department. The proposal shall include the following:
1. Evidence of a good faith effort to explore the feasibility of collaboration with other institutions whose mission or service region are within the scope of the proposed program.
 - 1.1. At a minimum, this shall include letters from the chief academic officers of both the proposing institution and other institutions involved in exploring the feasibility of collaborative attesting to the nature of the discussions and explaining why collaboration in this instance is not feasible.
 2. Evidence that the offering institution is contributing substantially to the CBHE's Blueprint for Higher Education and is committed to advancing the goals of that plan.
 3. Evidence of institutional capacity to launch the program in a high-quality manner. This evidence shall include:
 - 3.1 An external review conducted by a team including faculty experts in the discipline to be offered and administrators from institutions already offering programs in the discipline and at the degree level proposed. The review must include an assessment of the offering institution's capacity to offer the new program in terms of general, academic, and student service support;
 - 3.2 A comprehensive cost/revenue analysis summarizing the actual costs for the program and information about how the institution intends to fund and sustain the program;
 - 3.3 Evidence indicating there is sufficient student interest and capacity to support the program, and, where applicable, sufficient capacity for students to participate in clinical or other external learning requirements; and
 - 3.4 Where applicable, a description of accreditation requirements for the new program and the institution's plans for seeking accreditation.
 4. Evidence that the proposed program is needed, including:
 - 4.1 Documentation demonstrating that the program does not unnecessarily duplicate other programs in the applicable geographic area; and

4.2 A rigorous analysis demonstrating a strong and compelling workforce need for the program, which might include data from a credible source, an analysis of changing program requirements, the current and future workforce and other needs of the state, and letters of support from local or regional businesses indicating a genuine need for the program.

5. A clear plan to meet the articulated workforce need, including:

5.1 Aligning curriculum with specific knowledge and competencies needed to work in the field(s) or occupation(s) described in the workforce need section;

5.2 Providing students with external learning experiences to increase the probability that they will remain in the applicable geographic area after graduation;

5.3 A plan for assessing the extent to which the new program meets that need when implemented.

3. Review Process

MDHE staff, in consultation with appropriate and qualified representatives from other institutions, shall review a complete proposal.

MDHE staff and institutional representatives shall provide feedback to the proposing institution. The proposing institution responds to feedback.

New programs approved under the comprehensive review process must report annually to the CBHE on the number of students completing the program, financial performance of the program, job placement rates of program graduates, success on any applicable licensure exams, and the extent to which the program is meeting the needs it was designed to address.

4. Timeline

Proposals will be submitted to the Coordinating Board by July 1 of each year. The Coordinating Board will determine which proposals to move forward with and announce its decision in September. Final decisions to approve programs will ordinarily be made by February.

Comprehensive reviews will be phased in to the program approval process.

- In the first year, the Coordinating Board will consider no more than three proposals, in total, to offer a degree outside an institution's CBHE-approved mission during the first year the new framework is operational.
 - No more than two proposals may come from either public universities or public two-year institutions.
- In the second year, the Coordinating Board will consider no more than five proposals, in total, to offer a degree outside an institution's CBHE-approved mission.
 - No more than three proposals may come from either public universities or public two-year institutions.

- Should the current statutory prohibition on community colleges offering baccalaureate degrees be changed, and if a changed licensure requirement might warrant the authorization of more than one public two-year institution to offer a bachelor degree, that proposal may be considered one proposal for purposes of this section only.
- Each individual institution's proposal will be evaluated on its own merits.
- The Coordinating Board will reconvene a task force to evaluate the new framework after two proposal cycles and recommend changes.