

**Idaho State Board of Education**  
**GOVERNING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**SECTION: III. POSTSECONDARY AFFAIRS**

**SUBSECTION: G. Postsecondary Program Review and Approval**

**June 2024**

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This subsection shall apply to the University of Idaho, Idaho State University, Boise State University, Lewis-Clark State College, North Idaho College, College of Eastern Idaho, College of Southern Idaho, and College of Western Idaho.

1. Classifications and Definitions

- a. Academic Program shall mean a postsecondary educational program offered by an institution of higher education that leads to an academic or professional degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential as defined in Board Policy Section III.E.
- b. Academic Program Components shall include options, minors, emphases, tracks, concentrations, specializations, and cognates as defined by each institution. For the purposes of this policy, a certificate is not an academic program component.
- c. Administrative Unit shall mean offices, centers, bureaus, or institutes that are responsible for carrying out administrative functions, research, or public service as their primary purpose, and are not responsible for academic or career technical programs.
- d. Career Technical Program shall mean a sequence or aggregation of competencies that are derived from industry-endorsed outcome standards and directly related to preparation for employment in occupations requiring a career technical certificate or degree as defined in Board Policy Section III.E. These programs must include competency-based applied learning that contributes to an individual's technical skills, academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning, and problem-solving skills.
- e. Financial Impact shall mean the total financial expenditures, regardless of funding source, needed to support personnel costs, operating expenditures, capital outlay, capital facilities construction or major renovation, and indirect costs that are incurred as a direct result of establishing, modifying, or discontinuing a new instructional program, instructional unit, or administrative unit.
- f. Full Proposal shall mean a document submitted to the Board Office or Idaho Division of Career Technical Education (IDCTE) that contains details about substantive changes to academic or career technical education programming or administration that require review and approval by the full Board, the Board's Executive Director, the IDCTE State Administrator (State Administrator), or designee, as specified in this policy. The Full Proposal template is developed and maintained by the Board Office in collaboration with IDCTE as appropriate.
- g. Instructional Unit shall mean departments, institutes, centers, divisions, schools, colleges, campuses, branch campuses, and research units (e.g. extension centers) that are responsible for academic programs or career technical programs.

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- h. Letter of Notification shall mean a letter from the institution to the Executive Director, State Administrator or designee, notifying the Board Office or IDCTE as appropriate of changes to academic or career technical education programming or administration that do not require advanced approval by the Board, Executive Director, State Administrator, or designee, as specified in this policy.
- i. Major shall mean a principal field of academic specialization that usually accounts for 25 to 50 percent of the total degree requirements. The concentration of coursework in a subject matter major serves to distinguish one program from others leading to the same or a similar degree.
- j. Short Proposal shall mean a document submitted to the Board Office or IDCTE that contains details about non-substantive changes to academic or career technical education programming or administration that require review and approval by the Executive Director, State Administrator, or designee, as specified in this policy. The Short Proposal template is developed and maintained by the Board Office in collaboration with IDCTE as appropriate.

**2. Roles and Responsibilities**

Program planning, review, and approval shall be a collaborative process which includes the Board, Board office staff, IDCTE staff, the institutions, faculty, external advisory groups, regional and specialized accreditation bodies, and other stakeholders pursuant to Board Policy III.Z.

- a. Each institution shall establish and maintain policies and procedures for evaluating existing programs and developing new program proposals. This evaluation process should be an integral component of the institution's academic and career technical education planning and budgeting processes.
- b. The Council on Academic Affairs and Programs (CAAP) shall review new program proposals and discontinuation requests). CAAP shall make recommendations to the Instruction, Research, and Student Affairs (IRSA) committee on instructional programmatic matters and related policy issues.
- c. The State Administrator shall approve academic microcredentials developed by the institutions, in consultation with Board Staff, in addition to career technical microcredentials. The State Administrator shall review and make recommendations as appropriate to the IRSA Committee and/or the Board on instructional programmatic matters and policy issues related to IDCTE's roles and responsibilities.

**3. Procedures for Review and Approval of Changes to Academic Programming and Administration**

Proposed changes to academic programs and administration at the institutions shall be submitted to the Board for one of three levels of review: a Full Proposal, a Short Proposal, or a Letter of Notification. Institution staff shall consult with Board staff to determine the appropriate level of review before submitting proposed changes to the Board office.

a. Actions Requiring a Full Proposal

Subsequent to institutional review and consistent with institutional policies, but prior to implementation, actions related to academic programs or units identified in this subsection require approval by the Board or the Executive Director or designee as indicated and shall be submitted by the institution as a Full Proposal. There are three different types of Full Proposal forms: a form for a discontinuation of a program, a form for new instructional/administrative units, and a form for all other actions requiring a Full Proposal.

i. The following actions require approval by the Board:

- 1) Establishment of a new branch campus or change in location geographically apart from the main campus, regardless of financial impact. A location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus is permanent in nature; offers at least 50% of the courses of an educational program leading to a degree, certificate, or other educational credential; has its own faculty and administrative organization; and has its own budgetary and hiring authority. Subsection 3.a.i.1 does not apply to community colleges.
- 2) Establishment of any new academic undergraduate or graduate program with a financial impact of \$250,000 or more per fiscal year.
  - a) All doctoral program proposals shall require an external peer review, regardless of financial impact. The external peer-review panel shall consist of at least two (2) members and will be selected by the Executive Director or designee and the requesting institution's Chief Academic Officer. Board staff shall notify the institution in writing whether it may proceed with the external peer-review process. External reviewers shall not be affiliated with a public Idaho institution. The review shall consist of a paper and on-site peer review, followed by the issuance of a report and recommendations by the panel. Each institution shall provide the panel with a template developed by the Executive Director or designee. The peer reviewer report and recommendations shall be a significant factor in the Board's evaluation of the program.

- i. For programs that require specialized accreditation, external review for the accreditation process may supplant standard external peer review as described in this paragraph and may occur after approval of the program by the Board, if and only if receipt of initial accreditation is required before any student enrolls in the program. Institutions must receive from the Executive Director or designee approval to supplant external peer review with specialized accreditation review prior to submitting a doctoral program proposal. Institutions shall submit a copy of the specialized accreditation report to the Board Office within 30 days of completion of the review.
    - b) New educator preparation programs must utilize the Board approved new education preparation program approval process and require submission of a Full Proposal to the Executive Director or designee regardless of financial impact. The new education preparation program approval process ensures programs meet the Idaho standards for educator certification. The Executive Director or designee ensures the program proposal is consistent with the program approval process and meets the standards approved by the Board and pursuant to Section 33-1254 Idaho Code.
  - 3) Establishment by a community college of any new applied baccalaureate program, pursuant to Section 33-2107A, Idaho Code.
  - 4) Establishment of any new program with academic program fees as defined in Board Policy Section V.R.
  - 5) Adding program fees to existing programs requires full Board approval consistent with Board Policy Section V.R; however, such changes do not require submission of a Full Proposal.
- ii. The following actions require approval by the Executive Director or designee:
- 1) Establishment of any new academic undergraduate or graduate program with a financial impact of less than \$250,000 per fiscal year.
  - 2) Discontinuation of an academic undergraduate or graduate program or instructional or administrative unit.
  - 3) Establishment of any new instructional or administrative unit.
  - 4) Establishment of any new or discontinuation of any existing academic undergraduate and graduate certificates consisting of more than 30 credits and with a financial impact of \$250,000 or more per fiscal year.
  - 5) Expansion of an existing program outside an institution's Designated Service Region, with the exception of programs for which institutions have statewide program responsibilities as defined in Board Policy III.Z.

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- 6) Conversion of a program option into a stand-alone program with a financial impact of \$250,000 or more per fiscal year.
- 7) Consolidation of two or more undergraduate programs into one undergraduate program with a financial impact of \$250,000 or more per fiscal year.
- 8) Consolidation of two or more graduate programs into one program.
- 9) Splitting of a graduate program into two or more programs.
- 10) Addition of an academic undergraduate, graduate, or specialized certificate to an existing program with a financial impact of \$250,000 or more per fiscal year.

Each Full Proposal shall be reviewed by CAAP within thirty (30) days of submission to the Board Office. At the sole discretion of the Executive Director or designee, any Full Proposal may be referred to the full Board for review and approval. The Executive Director or designee shall develop and publish a timeline for review of full proposals for timely inclusion on the agendas of regularly scheduled board meetings.

b. Actions Requiring a Short Proposal

Subsequent to institutional review and consistent with institutional policies, but prior to implementation, the following actions related to academic programs or units require approval by the Executive Director or designee and shall be submitted by the institution as a Short Proposal:

- i. Establishment of a new or discontinuation of any existing academic undergraduate or graduate certificate consisting of more than 30 credits with a financial impact of less than \$250,000 per fiscal year.
- ii. Addition of an academic undergraduate, graduate, or specialized certificate to an existing program with a financial impact of less than \$250,000 per fiscal year.
- iii. Splitting of an undergraduate program into two or more undergraduate programs.
- iv. Consolidation of two or more undergraduate programs into one undergraduate program with a financial impact of less than \$250,000 per fiscal year.
- v. Conversion of one program option into a stand-alone program with a financial impact of less than \$250,000 per fiscal year.
- vi. Conversion or transition of a degree type (e.g., Bachelor of Arts to Bachelor of Science).
- vii. Conversion or transition of a certificate type (e.g., Technical Certificate of Completion to Basic Technical Certificate).
- viii. Deviation from certificate or degree program credit definitions as provided in Board Policy III.E.

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- ix. Changes to program names or degree titles related to Statewide Program Responsibilities as defined in Policy III.Z (requires full board approval).
- x. Establishment of new programs consisting of multiple certificates with similar coursework.
- xi. Establishment of a dual degree from existing programs with a financial impact of less than \$250,000 per fiscal year.
- xii. Modification to existing academic instructional or administrative units.

At the sole discretion of the Executive Director or designee, institutions may be required to submit a Full Proposal for any action identified in this subsection.

c. Actions Requiring a Letter of Notification

Subsequent to institutional review and consistent with institutional policies, and at least 30 days before implementation, institutions shall notify the Executive Director or designee of the following actions related to academic programs or units via a Letter of Notification:

- i. Establishment of a new, modification to, or discontinuation of an academic program component.
- ii. Establishment of a new or discontinuation of any existing academic undergraduate or graduate certificate consisting of fewer than thirty (30) credits.
- iii. Expansion of an existing program within an institution's Service Region as defined in Board Policy III.Z.
- iv. Expansion of an existing statewide program offered by an institution with Statewide Program Responsibilities as defined in Board Policy III.Z.
- v. Addition of an online option to an existing academic program.
- vi. Transition of an academic program with less than fifty percent (50%) of courses offered online exclusively to fifty percent (50%) or more of courses offered online exclusively.
- vii. Transition of an academic program to an exclusively online format.
- viii. Addition or removal of courses that represent a significant departure from existing academic program offerings or method of delivery.
- ix. A change in name or title of any academic program or instructional or administrative unit.
- x. A change of Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code for any academic program.
- xi. A change to the total number of credits required to earn a certificate or degree to an existing academic program.

At the sole discretion of the Executive Director or designee, institutions may be required to submit a Short Proposal or Full Proposal for any action identified in this subsection.

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- d. Other minor content changes to curriculum, descriptions of individual courses, or catalog listings do not require notification to or approval by the Board or the Executive Director or designee.
- e. Requests to establish, modify, or discontinue a microcredential, as defined in Board Policy III.E, require approval by the State Administrator or shall be submitted by the institution in accordance with a template developed by IDCTE.

4. Career Technical Program Proposal Submission and Approval

a. Actions Requiring a Full Proposal

Subsequent to institutional review and consistent with institutional policies, but prior to implementation, requests for changes to career technical programs or units identified in this subsection require approval by the State Administrator or designee and shall be submitted by the institution as a Full Proposal.

- i. Establishment of a new career technical education program or certificate. New career technical programs or certificates with a financial impact of \$250,000 or more per fiscal year require approval by the full Board.
- ii. Discontinuation of career technical programs.
- iii. Establishment of new career technical administrative or instructional units.
- iv. Expansion of a career technical program outside an institution's Designated Service Region as defined in Board Policy III.Z.
- v. Consolidation of two or more career technical programs into one career technical program with a financial impact of \$250,000 or more per fiscal year.
- vi. Conversion of one certificate or degree option within a career technical program into a stand-alone career technical program with a financial impact of \$250,000 or more per fiscal year.
- vii. Addition of career technical certificates or degrees to existing career technical programs with a financial impact of \$250,000 or more per fiscal year.

For new or modified career technical programs or certificates, a Program Profile is required. Each Full Proposal shall be reviewed by CAAP within 30 days of submission to IDCTE. At the sole discretion of the State Administrator or designee, any Full Proposal may be referred to the Board for review and approval. The State Administrator shall develop and publish a timeline for review of full proposals for timely inclusion on the agendas of regularly scheduled board meetings.

b. Actions Requiring a Short Proposal

Subsequent to institutional review and consistent with institutional policies, but prior to implementation, requests for changes in career technical programs or units identified in this subsection require approval by the State Administrator or designee and shall be submitted by the institution as a Short Proposal.

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- i. Splitting of a career technical program into two or more career technical programs.
- ii. Consolidation of two or more career technical programs into one career technical program with a financial impact of less than \$250,000 per fiscal year.
- iii. Conversion of one certificate or degree option within a career technical program into a stand-alone career technical program with a financial impact of less than \$250,000 per fiscal year.
- iv. Addition of career technical certificates, specialized certificates, or degrees to existing career technical programs with a financial impact of less than \$250,000 per fiscal year.
- v. Inactivation of a career technical program (refer to paragraph 8 of this policy).
- vi. Addition or removal of courses that represent a significant departure from existing career technical program offerings or method of delivery.
- vii. Modification to existing career technical instructional or administrative units.
- viii. Conversion or transition of one career technical program degree or certificate level to another degree or certificate level.
- ix. Transition of a career technical program to an exclusively online format.
- x. Addition of an online option to an existing career technical program.
- xi. Transition of a career technical program with less than fifty percent (50%) of courses offered online exclusively to fifty percent (50%) or more of courses offered online exclusively.

For the addition or modification of career technical programs or certificates, a Program Profile is required. Upon the recommendation of the State Administrator or at the discretion of the Executive Director or designee, institutions may be required to submit a Full Proposal for any action identified in this subsection.

c. Actions Requiring a Letter of Notification

Subsequent to institutional review and consistent with institutional policies, and within 30 days before implementation, institutions shall notify the State Administrator or designee of the following changes to career technical programs or units via a Letter of Notification and Program Profile as appropriate:

- i. Career technical program expansion within an institution's Designated Service Region as defined in Board policy III.Z.
- ii. Re-activation of a career technical program within three years from inactivation.
- iii. A change from clock hours to credit hours for a career technical program.
- iv. A change in the name or title of any career technical program or instructional or administrative unit.
- v. A change of Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code for any career technical program.
- vi. A change to the total number of credits required to earn a certificate or degree to an existing career technical program.



- vii. Minor changes to career technical courses.

Upon the recommendation of the State Administrator or designee, institutions may be required to submit a Short Proposal or Full Proposal for any action identified in this subsection.

- d. Requests to establish, modify, or discontinue a microcredential, as defined in Board Policy III.E, require approval by the State Administrator or shall be submitted by the institution in accordance with a template developed by IDCTE.
- e. Requests requiring new state appropriations shall be included in the annual budget request of IDCTE for Board approval.

#### 5. Sunset Clause for Academic and Career Technical Program Approval

Academic and career technical programs approved by the Board, Executive Director, or State Administrator must be implemented within five years. A program not implemented within five years from the approval date requires submission for approval of an updated proposal. Institutions shall notify the Executive Director, State Administrator, or designee in writing when an approved program has not been officially implemented within the sunset timeframe. Institutions may request a change in the sunset timeframe indicated in the program proposal if a program's implementation is delayed.

#### 6. Academic and Career Technical Program Proposal Review Timeline and Denial Procedures

- a. The Executive Director, State Administrator, or designees shall act on any Full Proposal or Short Proposal within forty-five (45) days from proposal submission
- b. If the Executive Director or designee denies a proposal, he/she shall provide specific reasons in writing to the institution. The institution shall have thirty (30) days in which to address the issue(s) for denial of the proposal. The Executive Director or designee shall have ten (10) working days after the receipt of the institution's response to re-consider the denial. If the Executive Director or designee denies the request after re-consideration, the institution may send its request and the supporting documents related to the denial to the Board for final reconsideration.

#### 7. Program Discontinuance

The primary considerations for program discontinuance are whether the program is an effective use of the institution's resources, no longer serves student or industry needs, or when programs no longer have sufficient students to warrant allocation of

resources. This policy does not apply to programs that are discontinued as a result of financial exigency as defined in Board Policy Section II.N.

- a. Institutions shall develop policies, in accordance with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Accreditation Handbook, which requires institutions to make appropriate arrangements for enrolled students to complete affected programs in a timely manner with minimum interruptions.
- b. Any faculty or staff members whose employment the institution seeks to terminate due to the discontinuance of a program based upon Board Policy Section III.G. shall be entitled to the following procedures:
  - i. Non-classified contract employees, including non-tenured faculty, may be dismissed or have their contracts terminated or non-renewed in accordance with Board and institutional policies.
  - ii. State of Idaho classified employees shall be subject to layoff as provided in the rules of the Division of Human Resources. Classified employees of the University of Idaho shall be subject to layoff as provided in the policies of the University of Idaho.
  - iii. Tenured faculty will be notified in writing that the institution intends to dismiss them as a result of program discontinuance. This notice shall be given at least twelve (12) months prior to the effective date of termination.
  - iv. An employee who receives a notice of termination as a result of program discontinuance is entitled to use the internal grievance procedures of the institution. The sole basis to contest a dismissal following a program closure is in compliance with these policies.

#### 8. Career Technical Program Reduction, Termination, Prioritization, and Inactivation

For the reduction or termination of career technical programs, institutions shall adhere to criteria set forth by IDCTE.

##### a. Conditions for Reduction or Termination

A program is subject to reduction or termination when two or more of the following conditions exist. Standards for the metrics listed below will be predetermined at the local level according to the institution's program health metrics for each category.

- i. Inadequate Job Opportunities
- ii. Inadequate Student Enrollment
- iii. Inadequate Positive Placement
- iv. Inadequate Completion Rate

v. Inadequate Finances

- b. Inactivation allows program re-evaluation and assessment in response to rapid changes in industry for up to three years. If industry demand for the program does not resume within three years following approved inactivation, the institution shall submit a discontinuation full proposal pursuant to paragraph 4 of this policy.

c. Notice to Employees

The institution must give notice in writing to employees who are affected by a program reduction or termination in accordance with Board and institutional policies.

9. Reporting

- a. Semi-annually all approved program changes shall be reported to the Board.
- b. All baccalaureate and graduate level programs approved by the Board require a report on the program's progress in accordance with a timeframe and template developed by the Executive Director or designee.