



Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policies Chapter 3 – Educational Policies

3.36 Academic Programs

Part 1. Purpose and Applicability. The purpose of the Academic Programs policy is to direct decision-making regarding the development, approval and management of credit-based academic programs.

The academic programs of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities should prepare graduates for work, life, and citizenship. Academic programs should create graduates who are creative, innovative, and able to respond with agility to new ideas, new technologies, and new global relationships. Graduates should be able to lead their professions and adapt to the multiple careers they will have over their lifetimes. Graduates should have the ability to think independently and critically; be able to resourcefully apply knowledge to new problems; proactively expect the unexpected, embrace change and be comfortable with ambiguity; and be able to communicate and work effectively across cultural and geographic boundaries.

In order to meet Minnesota's educational needs, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities shall endeavor to:

1. Ensure quality and excellence that is competitive on a national and international level in meeting the needs of students for occupational, general, undergraduate, and graduate education;
2. Facilitate ease of transfer among schools and programs, integrate course credit, and coordinate degree programs;
3. Give highest priority to meeting the needs of Minnesota employers for a highly skilled and adaptable workforce;
4. Enhance Minnesota's quality of life by developing understanding and appreciation of a free and diverse society; and
5. Eliminate unnecessary duplication and achieve efficient and streamlined operations.

Part 2. Definitions. The following definitions have the meanings indicated for all Board policies unless the text clearly indicates otherwise.

Subpart A. Academic award. Academic award means a certificate, diploma or degree.

Subpart B. Academic program. Academic program means a cohesive arrangement of college-level credit courses and experiences designed to accomplish predetermined objectives leading to the awarding of a degree, diploma, or certificate. Undergraduate degree programs shall include a general education component. The purpose of an academic program is to:

1. increase students' knowledge and understanding in a field of study or discipline,

2. qualify students for employment in an occupation or range of occupations, and/or
3. prepare students for advanced study.

Subpart C. Academic program inventory. Academic program inventory means the official list of academic programs offered by system colleges and universities.

Subpart D. Credit. Credit means a quantitative measure of instructional time assigned to a course or an equivalent learning experience such as class time per week over an academic term.

Subpart E. General education. General education means a cohesive curriculum defined by faculty through system college or university procedures to develop reasoning ability and breadth of knowledge through an integration of learning experiences in the liberal arts and sciences.

Part 3. Authorized Academic Awards.

Subpart A. System college and university award authority. System colleges and universities have authority to confer academic awards only as specified below.

1. **Community colleges.** Community colleges have the authority to confer undergraduate certificates, diplomas, associate in arts, associate in fine arts, associate in science, and associate in applied science degrees.
2. **Consolidated colleges.** Consolidated colleges have the authority to confer undergraduate certificates, diplomas, associate in arts, associate in fine arts, associate in science, and associate in applied science degrees.
3. **Technical colleges.** Technical colleges have the authority to confer undergraduate certificates, diplomas, associate in science, and associate in applied science degrees.
4. **Universities.** Universities have the authority to confer undergraduate and graduate certificates and associate in arts, associate in fine arts, associate in science, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees.

Approval by the Board of Trustees is required for a system college or university to confer an academic award type for which specific authority is not granted in this policy.

Subpart B. Academic award characteristics. The chancellor shall specify the characteristics of academic awards.

Subpart C. Academic program credit length limits. Academic programs that lead to an associate degree shall be limited to 60 credits and academic programs that lead to a baccalaureate degree shall be limited to 120 credits unless the chancellor grants a waiver based on industry or professional accreditation standards that require a greater number of credits.

The chancellor shall set program credit length requirements and waiver criteria for undergraduate certificates, diplomas and graduate level awards.

Part 4. Authority to Establish Academic Program Locations. Approval of the chancellor is required for establishment of a location at which an academic program may be offered.

Part 5. Academic Program Approval. Approval of the chancellor is required for new academic programs, changes to existing academic programs, suspension of academic programs, and closure of academic programs at system colleges and universities.

An approved academic program shall include curricular requirements for earning an academic award, such as credits in general education, a major and/or minor, and all prerequisite courses. The chancellor shall maintain the academic program inventory and annually report to the Board of Trustees on the status of the inventory. The annual report to the Board will include data and analysis of programs measured against program goals established by the Chancellor. The goals will be based on aligning program offerings to workforce needs statewide, regionally and locally in collaboration with the Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC), and including data from the State Demographer. Only academic programs approved by the chancellor as recorded in the academic program inventory may be offered by system colleges and universities.

Part 6. Student Options when Academic Programs are Suspended, Closed, or Changed. A system college or university shall provide a student admitted to an academic program an opportunity, consistent with system college or university policy, to complete the academic program when it is suspended or closed or when the requirements have changed.

Part 7. Academic Review. Each system college and university shall regularly review its academic programs for the purpose of academic planning and improvement.

Each system college and university shall submit an annual summary of its academic program review activity to the chancellor.

The chancellor, as appropriate, may conduct statewide or regional reviews of academic programs or program clusters, report findings to the Board of Trustees and, when necessary, impose conditions on academic programs.

Date of Adoption: 06/20/07,

Date of Implementation: 08/01/07,

Date and Subject of Revision:

11/16/11 – Amends Part 1 to include foundational language that specifically reflects legislation found in State Higher Education Objectives, Budget Priorities, Powers and Duties, Missions, Courses and Programs, and Education Priorities. Amends Part 5 to require that the annual academic program status report to the Board include data and analysis of programs measured against program goals established by the Chancellor.

01/21/09 - Amends Part 2, Subp. B to require undergraduate degree programs to include a general education component. Adds Part 3, Subp C, Academic Program Credit Length Limits.

06/20/07 – Repealed the following policies:

3.2 - Academic Program Inventory

- 3.10 - Academic Program Review*
- 3.12 - Academic Program Suspension and Reinstatement and Closure*
- 3.14 - Academic Program Approval*
 - Procedure 3.14.1 - Addressing Transfer in Approval of New Programs*
- 3.17 - Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates*
 - Procedure 3.17.1 - Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates*
- 3.19 - Academic Program Redesign.*
- 3.20 - Academic Program Replication or Relocation.*
- 3.25 - Degree Granting Authority*