



Minnesota State Colleges and Universities  
System Procedures  
Chapter 3 – Educational Policies

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## Procedures 3.36.1 Academic Programs

### Part 1. Purpose and Applicability.

**Subpart A. Procedure Purpose.** The purpose of academic program procedures is to establish standards, processes and conditions that enable consistent implementation of academic program policy.

**Subpart B. Applicability.** These procedures apply to policy 3.36 Academic Programs.

**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 Characteristics.** Academic program characteristics are attributes that operationally describe an approved academic program and include:

1. name,
2. academic award,
3. federal Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code,
4. credit length,
5. location(s),
6. emphases, if any,
7. articulation or collaborative agreements, if any, among colleges, universities or other parties, and
8. status (active, suspended, closed).

**Subpart D. Academic Program Closure.** Academic program closure means a change in status which permanently closes the academic program to new enrollment.

**Subpart E. Academic Program Curriculum Component.** Academic program curriculum component is a program element with set requirements.

**Emphasis.** Emphasis means a focused component of an academic program.

**Major.** Major means a curriculum component of an academic program intended to provide in-depth study in a discipline, a professional field of study or an occupation. A major may include an academic program emphasis.

**Minor.** Minor means a curriculum component of limited depth and/or breadth within a baccalaureate academic program.

**Other Components.** Other components of an academic program may include electives, required courses, and general education.

**Subpart F. Academic Program Inventory.** Academic program inventory means the official list of academic programs offered by system colleges and universities.

**Subpart G. Academic Program Redesign.** Academic program redesign is a change to an academic program characteristic.

**Subpart H. Academic Program Reinstatement.** Academic program reinstatement is a change from suspended to active status.

**Subpart I. Academic Program Relocation.** Academic program relocation occurs when an active academic program is closed at its present location and approved for delivery at a different location.

**Subpart J. Academic Program Replication.** Academic program replication occurs when an active academic program is offered at an additional location.

**Subpart K. Academic Program Suspension.** Academic program suspension is a change in status which temporarily closes the academic program to new enrollment.

**Subpart L. Advisory Committee.** Advisory committee means a group established to provide guidance on academic program development and improvement including need, design, accountability, and closure.

**Subpart M. Articulation Agreement.** Articulation agreement means a formal agreement between two or more educational entities to accept credits in transfer toward a specific academic program.

**Subpart N. Collaborative Agreement.** Collaborative agreement means a formal agreement between two or more parties, at least one of which is a system college or university, to co-deliver an academic program. Each college or university may, as appropriate, confer the award.

**Subpart O. Course.** Course means a set of designed learning experiences with defined outcomes.

**Subpart P. 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 Q. Curriculum.** Curriculum means a coherent set of instructional experiences designed through established system college and university procedures to achieve desired student learning outcomes. Curriculum may refer to an academic program, an academic program element such as the major, an instructional unit, the general education component, or the entirety of offerings of a college or university.

**Subpart R. Fine Arts.** Fine arts include disciplines of creative writing, dance, music, theatre or the visual arts in which artistic purposes are primary.

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

**Subpart T. Graduate Course Enrollment.** Graduate course enrollment specifies which students are permitted to enroll in a graduate course.

**Master's Dual-Enrollment.** Master's dual-enrollment courses are open to undergraduate students and graduate students at the master's level.

**Master's.** Master's courses are open only to graduate students at the master's level.

**Doctoral Dual-Enrollment.** Doctoral dual-enrollment courses are open to graduate students at the master's and doctoral levels.

**Doctoral.** Doctoral courses are open only to graduate students at the doctoral level.

**Subpart U. Liberal Arts and Sciences.** Liberal arts and sciences include the humanities, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences.

**Subpart V. Location.** Location means a geographic place where a college or university has been approved to deliver an entire academic program.

**Subpart W. Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.** The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum comprises transferable general education that reflects competencies adopted by the public higher education institutions in Minnesota.

**Subpart X. Mission Statement.** A mission statement conveys the broad intentions and distinctive character of a college or university; describes its primary educational programs and their purposes; recognizes the diversity of its learners; identifies the students to be served, including particular constituents; defines a primary service area; and communicates a commitment to the advancement of society's values and common purposes and the advancement of excellence in higher learning. Use of this definition is restricted to this procedure and related guidelines, if any.

**Subpart Y. New Academic Program.** New academic program means an academic program identified by curricular content and an academic award that is significantly different from other academic programs at a system college or university.

**Subpart Z. Online Academic Program.** Online academic program means an academic program that is delivered entirely or almost entirely over the Internet. When pedagogically necessary, limited portions of an online academic program may require face-to-face instruction, professional practice or applied activities that are not appropriate for online delivery.

**Subpart AA. Preparatory Course.** Preparatory course means a lower-division college level course, outside of an academic program, that compensates for insufficient high school or equivalent preparation.

**Subpart BB. Prerequisite Course.** Prerequisite course means a college level course within an academic program that all students must complete before enrolling in another college level course or a major.

**Subpart CC. System Colleges and Universities.** System colleges and universities are colleges and universities governed by the Board of Trustees.

**Colleges.** System colleges means community colleges, technical colleges, and consolidated colleges that are separately accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. A consolidated college refers to community colleges and technical colleges that, under board direction, have formally organized into a single institution.

**Universities.** System universities confer academic awards through the graduate level and are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association.

**Subpart DD. Task Analysis.** Task analysis means a process used to identify the knowledge, skills, tools, and abilities needed to perform an occupation.

**Subpart EE. Undergraduate Course Level.** Course level reflects the degree of difficulty, the breadth and depth of learning expectations or the sequential learning required of knowledge. Course content and level are determined by system college and university faculty through established procedures.

**Developmental.** Developmental course content prepares students for entry into college level courses. Developmental level course credits do not apply toward a certificate, diploma, or degree.

**Lower-division.** Lower-division course content prepares students for specific academic program outcomes or for upper-division undergraduate coursework at a university.

**Upper-division.** Upper-division course content builds upon or integrates knowledge gained in lower-division undergraduate courses. Content of upper-division courses is determined by the university faculty through established procedures.

### **Part 3. Authorized Academic Awards.**

**Subpart A. System College and University Award Authority.** A system college or university may change its institution type or confer academic awards for which it is not authorized by submitting an application to the chancellor and obtaining approval from the Board of Trustees. The application shall include demonstration of system college or university readiness and capacity to deliver the new award.

**Subpart B. Academic Award Attributes.** Academic awards shall have the following attributes.

- 1. Undergraduate Certificate.** An undergraduate certificate is awarded upon completion of a 9 to 30 credit academic program. An undergraduate certificate may have an occupational outcome or address a focused area of study.

An undergraduate certificate shall not have emphases.

At least one-third of the credits in the undergraduate certificate shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation by the faculty and approval by the president of the institution.

An undergraduate certificate less than 9 or more than 30 credits in length may be approved when the academic program prepares an individual for employment and the length or the designation as a certificate is (1) required by an employer, a licensing body or other regulatory agency, accrediting association, or board or (2) based on a formal task analysis conducted within the previous three years and the results endorsed by an advisory committee.

- 2. Diploma.** A diploma is awarded upon completion of a 31 to 72 credit undergraduate academic program that prepares students for employment. A minimum of 24 credits shall be in occupational or technical courses.

A diploma may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits when there are at least 30 credits in the major that are common to the emphases.

A diploma may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5. Subpart C, to provide a student an opportunity to design an academic program to meet specific occupational goals that cannot be met by current program offerings.

At least one-third of the credits in the diploma shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation by the faculty and approval by the president of the college.

A diploma of more than 72 credits in length may be approved when the academic program prepares an individual for employment and the length is (1) required by an employer, a licensing body or other regulatory agency, accrediting association, or board or (2) based on a formal task analysis conducted within the previous three years and the results endorsed by an advisory committee.

3. **Associate in Arts Degree.** An associate in arts degree is awarded upon completion of a 60 credit academic program in the liberal arts and sciences without a named field of study. It is designed for transfer to baccalaureate degree-granting institutions.

An associate in arts degree requires completion of at least a 40 credit general education curriculum that fulfills the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum goal areas.

An associate in arts degree may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits each in liberal arts and science fields, provided there is an articulation agreement with a baccalaureate major offered by at least one system university.

At least 20 credits in the associate in arts degree shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the college or university.

4. **Associate in Fine Arts Degree.** An associate in fine arts degree is a named degree awarded upon completion of a 60 credit academic program in particular disciplines in the fine arts.

An associate in fine arts degree is designed to transfer in its entirety to a related baccalaureate degree program. At least one articulation agreement is required between the community college or the community and technical college and a system university awarding a baccalaureate degree in a related fine arts discipline, unless the chancellor grants an exception.

An associate in fine arts degree program may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5. Subpart C. Associate in fine arts individualized studies degree programs do not require an articulation agreement.

An associate in fine arts degree requires a minimum of 24 general education credits selected from at least six of the ten goal areas of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. Requirements for the following disciplines have been adopted.

**Art.** An associate in fine arts degree in art requires the minimum of 24 general education credits selected from at least six of the ten goal areas of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.

**Music.** An associate in fine arts degree in music requires at least 30 general education credits selected from at least six of the ten goal areas of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.

**Theatre Arts.** An associate in fine arts degree in theatre arts requires at least 40 general education credits and completion of the entire Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.

An associate in fine arts degree shall not have emphases.

An associate in fine arts degree program may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5. Subpart C, to provide a student an opportunity to design an academic program to meet specific academic or occupational goals that cannot be met by current program offerings

At least 20 credits in the associate in fine arts degree shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the college or university.

A waiver may be granted to exceed a length of 60 credits when (1) the waiver criteria in Subpart C are met and (2) an articulation agreement specifies the transfer of a greater number of credits.

- 5. Associate in Science Degree.** An associate in science degree is awarded upon completion of a 60 credit academic program in scientific, technological, or other professional fields.

The associate in science degree is designed to transfer in its entirety to a related baccalaureate program by way of an articulation agreement.

An associate in science degree program may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5. Subpart C. Associate in science individualized studies programs do not require an articulation agreement.

An associate in science degree may be awarded in either a broad or specific field of study.

***Broad Field.*** A broad field associate in science degree transfers to all system universities offering related baccalaureate programs through a statewide articulation agreement. Broad fields may include areas such as (1) agriculture, (2) business, (3) computer and information sciences, (4) education, (5) engineering, (6) engineering technologies, (7) environmental sciences, (8) health sciences, and (9) natural sciences.

***Specific Field.*** Specific field associate in science degrees may be designed for both transfer and employment. A specific field associate in science degree requires at least one articulation agreement between a community college, community and technical college, or technical college and a system university awarding a baccalaureate degree in a related discipline, unless the chancellor grants an exception.

The associate in science degree requires a minimum of 30 general education credits selected from at least six of the ten goal areas of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.

An associate in science degree shall not have emphases.

An associate in science degree may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5. Subpart C, to provide a student an opportunity to design an academic program to meet specific occupational goals that cannot be met by current program offerings.

At least 20 credits in an associate in science degree shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the college or university.

A waiver may be granted to exceed a length of 60 credits when (1) the waiver criteria in Subpart C are met and (2) an articulation agreement specifies the transfer of a greater number of credits.

- 6. Associate in Applied Science Degree.** An associate in applied science degree is awarded upon completion of a 60 credit academic program in a named field of study in scientific, technological or other professional fields.

An associate in applied science degree prepares students for employment in an occupation or range of occupations. An associate in applied science degree may also be accepted in transfer to a related baccalaureate program.

An associate in applied science degree requires a minimum of 15 general education credits selected from at least three of the ten goal areas of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. At least 30 credits shall be in the academic program's occupational or technical field of preparation.

An associate in applied science degree may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits each when there are at least 30 credits in the major that are common to the emphases.

An associate in applied science degree program may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5, Subpart C, to provide a student an opportunity to design an academic program to meet specific occupational goals that cannot be met by current program offerings.

At least 20 credits in an associate in applied science shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the college or university.

A waiver may be granted to exceed a length of 60 credits when (1) the waiver criteria in Subpart C are met and (2) an articulation agreement, where applicable, specifies the transfer of a greater number of credits.

- 7. Baccalaureate Degree.** A baccalaureate degree is awarded upon completion of a 120 credit academic program incorporating general education, major requirements and, as appropriate, a minor.

The bachelor of arts degree is awarded upon completion of a curriculum with a major that focuses on study in the liberal or fine arts.

The bachelor of science degree is awarded upon completion of a curriculum with a major that prepares individuals to apply knowledge and skills in areas other than the liberal or fine arts.

The chancellor may approve academic programs culminating in a more specific baccalaureate degree type, for example, bachelor of applied science, bachelor of fine arts, bachelor of music, bachelor of science in nursing, bachelor of social work, or another designated type.

At least 40 of the required credits for the baccalaureate degree shall be at the upper-division level.

A baccalaureate degree requires at least a 40 credit general education curriculum that fulfills all of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.

A baccalaureate degree may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits each when there are at least 18 credits in the major that are common to the emphases.

A baccalaureate degree program may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5. Subpart C, to provide a student an opportunity to design an academic program to meet specific occupational goals that cannot be met by current program offerings.

At least 30 credits in a baccalaureate degree shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. These requirements may be decreased upon recommendation by the faculty and approval by the president of the university.

A waiver may be granted to exceed a length of 120 credits when the waiver criteria in Subpart C are met

- 8. Graduate Certificate.** A graduate certificate is awarded upon completion of a 9 to 30 credit academic program in a focused area of study at the graduate level.

A graduate certificate shall not have emphases.

All credits in a graduate certificate shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the university.

- 9. Master's Degree.** A master's degree is awarded upon completion of a 30 to 54 credit academic program at the graduate level in a discipline or professional field.

A master of arts degree is awarded upon completion of a curriculum with a major that focuses on study in the liberal or fine arts.

A master of science degree is awarded upon completion of a curriculum with a major that prepares individuals to apply knowledge and skill in areas other than the liberal or fine arts.

The chancellor may approve academic programs culminating in a more specifically named master's degree type, for example, master of arts in teaching, master of business administration, master of fine arts, master of public administration, or master of science in nursing.

At least one-half of the required credits in a master's degree, exclusive of a thesis, capstone or similar culminating project, shall be credits restricted exclusively to graduate student enrollment.

A master's degree may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits when there are at least 18 credits in the major that are common to the emphases.

All credits in the master's degree shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the university.

A master's degree more than 54 credits in length may be approved by the chancellor when the length is (1) required by an employer, a licensing body or other regulatory agency, accrediting association, or board or (2) consistent with nationwide common practice.

- 10. Education Specialist Degree.** An education specialist degree is awarded upon completion of a 60 to 72 credit academic program at the graduate level in the professional education field. The education specialist degree may be awarded to a holder of a master's degree after the successful completion of a course of graduate study of at least 30 semester credits.

An education specialist degree may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits each when at least 18 credits are required in the post-master's portion of the degree.

No more than 16 credits of an education specialist degree may be master's dual-enrollment courses.

All credits in the education specialist degree shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the university.

- 11. Doctorate.** A doctorate is awarded upon completion of a graduate level academic program of at least 72 credits beyond the baccalaureate degree in an applied professional field.

Minnesota state universities are authorized to grant the doctorate in audiology, business, education, nursing, psychology, and physical therapy.

At least 45 credits in graduate level courses shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award, including up to 12 credits for a dissertation or equivalent project. At least 36 of these 45 credits shall be in doctoral only courses. This 45-credit requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval of the president of the university.

No more than 16 credits of the doctorate may be master's dual enrollment courses. A doctorate may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits when there are at least 18 credits in the post-master's portion of the academic program.

### **Subpart C. Program Credit Length Waivers for Associate and Baccalaureate Degrees.**

1. **Authority.** The system office determines the approval or disapproval of all requests for waivers to exceed program credit length limitations.
2. **Criteria for Granting Waivers.** Credit length waivers may be granted when determined necessary to ensure that the degree provided meets industry or professional standards. Waivers shall be granted only when a need for a longer program credit length is demonstrated by one or more of the following:
  - a. Industry Standards
    - (1) National or international program certification,
    - (2) National or international standards, including skill standards,
    - (3) Standards recommended by a primary employer or multiple employers within a program service area.
  - b. Professional Standards
    - (1) National specialized program accreditation,
    - (2) State licensure requirements,
    - (3) National practices or standards.
3. **Waiver Process for Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate in Fine Arts and Baccalaureate degrees.** The following process shall be followed to request a waiver:
  - a. Preparation of a waiver application for submission to the system office shall be consistent with accepted college or university curriculum approval processes. Waiver requests for similar academic programs may be pursued on a multi-college/university basis when recommended by faculty consistent with accepted processes at each participating college or university.
  - b. Academic program advisory committees may provide recommendations on learning requirements. Program advisory committee recommendations that support the standards may be submitted with the waiver request. Board policy requires student representation on college academic program advisory committees as specified in Policy 2.3 and Procedure 2.3.1.
  - c. Waiver applications will be distributed for review and comment to statewide associations, faculty union leadership, and college and university administrators.
  - d. The system office will act on the waiver application and notify the applicant.
  - e. Appeals related to waiver decisions will be processed through the vice chancellor for academic and student affairs.
  - f. Public information regarding the waiver process, review criteria, rationale for decisions, and decisions reached will be available on the system office website.
4. **Waiver Process for Associate in Applied Science degrees.** The following process shall be followed to request a waiver:
  - a. Preparation of a waiver application for submission to the system office shall be consistent with accepted college or university curriculum approval processes.
  - b. An associate in applied science waiver application shall compare and contrast credit lengths of comparable programs and provide a program analysis describing learning outcomes not found in shorter programs.

- c. Academic program advisory committees shall provide recommendations on learning requirements. Board policy requires student representation on college academic program advisory committees as specified in Policy 2.3 and Procedure 2.3.1.
- d. Waiver applications shall document the approval of the college curriculum committee, the program advisory committee, and the college student representative on the program advisory committee. If there was no college student representative on the program advisory committee, the college student association shall review and comment on the waiver application.
- e. Waiver applications will be distributed for review and comment to state student associations, faculty union leadership, and college and university administrators.
- f. The system office will act on the waiver application and notify the applicant.
- g. Appeals related to waiver decisions will be processed through the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs.
- h. Public information regarding the waiver process, review criteria, rationale for decisions, and decisions reached will be available on the system office website.
- i. Associate in Applied Science programs approved to exceed 60 credits shall include an explanation of why the program is longer than similar programs in the catalog description.

#### **Part 4. Authority to Establish Academic Program Locations.**

**Subpart A. Approval of an Academic Program Location.** Location approval is required for a system college or university to deliver a new, replicated or relocated academic program at a location where it is not currently delivering any academic program. Location approval requires academic program approval and, when applicable, lease approval.

The academic program application shall specify the location name, postal address and lease information as applicable. For a location not owned by the system, the location application shall include information regarding approval of the lease:

1. \$2 million or more requires Board of Trustees approval,
2. \$100,000 or more or for a time period longer than five years requires Vice Chancellor-Chief Financial Officer approval, or
3. under \$100,000 requires notification to the chancellor

**Subpart B. Termination of Location Approval.** A location approval expires when a system college or university has closed all academic programs at the location.

**Part 5. Academic Program Approval.** The chancellor shall prepare guidelines for the preparation of academic program applications. The chancellor may place conditions on an academic program upon approval.

**Subpart A. Approval of New Academic Programs.** A new academic program requires approval by the chancellor before it is offered by a system college or university.

All college level courses required for academic program completion, with the exception of preparatory courses, shall be included in the total number of credits for an undergraduate academic program.

Pursuant to guidelines prepared by the chancellor, academic program proposals must provide documentation of:

1. **Authorization.** Alignment with the system college or university mission and award authority.
2. **Resources.**
  - a. the capability to provide necessary human, facility, technological and financial resources,
  - b. faculty qualifications, and
  - c. facility leases and bonding requests, where applicable.
3. **Need.**
  - a. student interest,
  - b. occupational demand; and
  - c. avoidance of unnecessary duplication with academic program at other system colleges and universities.
4. **Academic Program Attributes.**
  - a. location(s) and delivery mode,
  - b. regional or other inter-institutional reviews where applicable, and
  - c. special circumstances, such as a specified termination date, intermittent delivery, or rotating sites.
5. **Curriculum.**
  - a. conceptual framework;
  - b. catalog description;
  - c. student learning outcomes;
  - d. academic program goals and objectives;
  - e. list of courses;
  - f. delivery mode;
  - g. college programmatic pathway, where applicable;
  - h. conformance to award and design requirements; and
  - i. academic program assessment plan.
6. **External academic program requirements, where applicable.**
  - a. transferability of credit;
  - b. academic program accreditation;
  - c. third party assessment of student learning outcomes, such as assessments under the federal Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, Public Law 105-332;
  - d. industry skills standards; and
  - e. industrial or professional certification and/or licensure requirements.

**7. Approvals and Agreements.**

- a. signed articulation agreements or collaborative agreements where applicable,
- b. academic program advisory committee recommendations where applicable,
- c. documentation of system college or university approval, and
- d. other documentation that supports the application.

**Subpart B. Approval of Changes to Existing Academic Programs.**

1. **Closure.** Closure of an academic program must be approved by the chancellor. Approval will only be granted under the following circumstances:
  - a. The closure is requested by a system college or university, and the chancellor determines that the documentation provided supports closure,
  - b. The chancellor determines that closure is warranted, or
  - c. The academic program has not been reinstated following a suspension.

The academic program closure application must be documented by information, as applicable, regarding:

- a. academic program need,
- b. student enrollment trends,
- c. employment of graduates,
- d. the financial circumstances affecting the academic program, system college or university,
- e. the plan to accommodate students currently enrolled in the academic program,
- f. impact on faculty and support staff,
- g. consultation with appropriate constituent groups including students, faculty and community,
- h. alternatives considered, and
- i. other factors affecting academic program operation.

A closed academic program cannot be relocated, replicated or reinstated.

2. **Accreditation to Deliver Academic Programs Online.** Higher Learning Commission accreditation can be extended for online delivery of one or more academic programs that culminate in a degree. When approval is granted by the Higher Learning Commission, a system college or university shall notify the chancellor of its authorization to deliver one or more degrees online within 60 days of receiving that notice.

A system college or university may deliver courses, certificates and diplomas online without an extension of accreditation.

Academic program approval and authority to deliver degrees online can occur simultaneously.

The chancellor shall maintain an inventory of degrees approved for online delivery.

3. **Redesign.** Prior approval shall be obtained from the chancellor for academic program redesigns that affect the approved name, CIP code, the addition of emphases, a change in

award, or a change in credit length when the change exceeds the maximum or fails to meet the minimum credit lengths defined in policy.

Prior approval is not required for deletion of emphases or changes in credit length when the change is within the limits established by board policy. System colleges and universities shall report these changes to the chancellor.

- 4. Suspension and reinstatement.** A system college or university may suspend an academic program for three years. The system college or university shall apply to the chancellor for suspension of an academic program. The application shall include documented reasons for suspension and a reinstatement plan with a date for reinstatement. The suspension may be extended for up to one year with notification to the chancellor. The chancellor shall close an academic program that has not been reinstated following a suspension.

Reinstatement requires approval of the chancellor based on review of required documentation. The reinstatement plan must describe reasons for the suspension, identify specific actions to resolve the problems and address the following factors, as applicable:

- a. academic program need,
- b. student enrollment trends,
- c. employment of graduates,
- d. financial circumstances affecting the academic program, system college or university,
- e. the plan to accommodate students currently enrolled in the academic program,
- f. impact on faculty and support staff,
- g. consultation with appropriate constituent groups including students, faculty and community,
- h. academic program accreditation or licensure,
- i. alternatives considered, and
- j. other factors affecting academic program operation.

A suspended academic program shall not be relocated or replicated until it is reinstated.

- 5. Academic Program Replication or Relocation.** Academic program replication and/or relocation within one college or university requires approval by the chancellor when the replication or relocation:
- a. is offered at a location that is new to the system college or university,
  - b. affects an existing agreement between institutions,
  - c. is in the same service area or within a reasonable commute of a similar academic program offered by another system college or university, or
  - d. involves leasing non-system property.

If none of the above applies, only notification by the president to the chancellor of the location is required.

Relocation to another system college or university requires approval of the chancellor. The system college or university to which an academic program is reassigned must provide for the viability of the academic program.

### Subpart C. Approval of Individualized Academic Programs

1. **Guidelines.** Individualized studies programs shall:
  - a. not have emphases,
  - b. be called *Individualized Studies*, and use the CIP code, 30.9999, and
  - c. transfer in their entirety (when designed for transfer) to a specific or individualized baccalaureate degree program.
  
2. **Student Program Plan.** Individualized studies programs require colleges/universities to manage student program plans such that each student prepares their plan with guidance from a faculty advisor and with approvals as required by the college/university. The student program plan, which shall be kept on file by each participating college/university, will:
  - a. For associate degree programs designed for transfer, include:
    - 1) a statement of the student's intent to transfer to a specific baccalaureate degree program at one or more universities;
    - 2) a statement of the intended program outcomes;
    - 3) identification of the courses to be completed in the associate degree program; and
    - 4) when applicable, assessment of student job prospects upon program completion.
  
  - b. For non-transfer programs, include:
    - 1) a statement of the intended program outcomes;
    - 2) identification of the courses to be completed in the program; and
    - 3) when applicable, assessment of student job prospects upon program completion.
    - 4) **Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.** Individualized studies programs offered by a college or university must meet the minimum number of Minnesota Transfer Curriculum goal areas as specified for the academic award in Procedure 3.36.1.
    - 5) **Program Design.** Students may consider the following program designs:
      - a) Thematic focus indicates coursework is in two or more disciplines organized around a theme, for example, Food Safety, from the perspectives of sociology, economics and health.
      - b) Interdisciplinary focus indicates coursework is in two disciplines, such as gerontology and exercise science.
      - c) Disciplinary focus indicates that coursework is all in the same discipline, for example, computer science.

**Part 6. Student Options when Academic Programs are Suspended, Closed, or Changed.** A system college or university shall establish plans to address students' opportunities to complete an academic program when it has been suspended or closed or when the requirements have changed.

**Subpart A. Academic Program Suspension and Closure.** A system college or university shall develop a plan to serve students who were admitted to an academic program proposed for suspension or closure. The plan shall identify admitted students who are covered by the plan and their options to complete the academic program.

The system college or university shall notify students about their options and assist them with their individual plans. Students covered by the plan shall maintain full-time enrollment status unless the system college or university makes other provisions.

**Subpart B. Academic Program Changes.** A system college or university shall notify students who have been admitted to an academic program of any changes to the academic program. Students shall be given an opportunity to graduate under the catalog requirements at the time of their admission to the college or university or under any subsequent catalog requirements.

**Part 7. Academic Review.** Periodic review of academic programs is the responsibility of the college or university. The review shall encompass all instructional areas and be structured according to discipline, academic program or program cluster, department or other academic unit.

**Subpart A. Review Criteria.** The review shall address:

1. mission and plans of the system college or university,
2. assessment of student learning outcomes,
3. academic program assessment,
4. accreditation, licensure or certification requirements where appropriate,
5. advisory committee or other appropriate industry or professional input as determined by the system college or university through established procedures,
6. labor market information when preparation for an occupation or a profession is a stated purpose of the program,
7. resources,
8. applicable system policy, procedures and guidelines,
9. Minnesota Transfer Curriculum requirements,
10. articulation agreements, where appropriate, and
11. other factors as appropriate.

**Subpart B. Review of New Doctoral Programs.** All new doctoral programs must be reviewed at the end of the first three years of operation and a report submitted to the chancellor. Elements to be reviewed include:

1. outcomes for goals and objectives described in the application,
2. achievement of specialized accreditation if required for operation,
3. enrollments levels and resources for sustainability,
4. unanticipated problems or developments, and
5. plans for improvement.

**Subpart C. Annual Report.** The annual summary reported to the chancellor shall include:

1. a list of academic programs or academic units that were reviewed, including those that completed specialized accreditation review,
2. selected exemplary accomplishments,
3. identification of potential problems, and
4. the system college or university academic program review policy and procedure.

**Subpart D. Chancellor's Reviews.** The chancellor may report to the Board of Trustees on statewide or regional reviews of academic programs or program clusters. When necessary, the chancellor may impose conditions on academic programs.

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*Approval Date:* 08/01/07,  
*Effective Date:* 08/01/07,

*Date and Subject of Revision:*

- 7/20/12 - Amended Part 3, subparts B2, B4, B5, B6, and B7, to provide students an opportunity to design an academic program to meet specific goals. Amended Part 3, subpart C3c to allow other forms of distribution for the waiver application. Amended Part 4, subpart 4, replaced language.
- 6/20/12 - Amended Part 3, subpart B2 to allow individualization of diplomas. Amended Part 3, subpart B4 to allow individualization of an associate in fine arts degree program. Amended Part 3, subpart B5 to allow individualization of an associate in science degree program. Amended Part 3, subpart B6 to allow individualization of an associate in applied science degree program. Amended Part 3, subpart B7 to allow individualization of a baccalaureate degree program. Amended the title of Part 3, subpart C3. Amended Part 3, subpart C3b to include academic program advisory committee waiver language from subpart C2. Added a new Part 3, subpart C4, Waiver Process for Associate in Applied Science degrees. Added a new Part 5, subpart C, Approval of Individualized Academic Programs.
- 1/25/12 - The Chancellor amends all current system procedures effective February 15, 2012, to change the term "Office of the Chancellor" to "system office" or similar term reflecting the grammatical context of the sentence.
- 10/12/10 - amended Part 4, Subpart A, Number 2 to require approval by the Vice Chancellor-Chief Financial Officer instead of the Chancellor.
- 4/5/10 - amended to replace "institution" with "college and university." Part 3, Subpart B4 amended to define the disciplines as presented in the procedure. Part 5 amended to allow the chancellor to place conditions on an academic program. Amends Part 5, Subpart B2 to remove language to clarify that approval will be through the Higher Learning Commission. Amends Part 5, Subpart B4 to require that reinstatement plans describe reasons for suspension and specific actions for resolution. Amends Part 7, Subpart A to include labor market information, resources, policies, procedures and guidelines, and articulations agreements.
- 1/30/09 - amended to set program credit length limits for associate and baccalaureate degree programs; define waiver criteria and processes; improve language for Bachelor's & Master's degrees and doctorate; align procedure with policy regarding program suspension; set additional documentation requirements for new program applications; and clarify scope and criteria for academic program review.