



SECTION I

PART V APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMS FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION OPERATING UNDER A PERFORMANCE CONTRACT

1.00 Introduction

The public higher education system in Colorado is intended to provide access to certificate and degree programs, specifically broad geographic access to undergraduate programs, access to master's degree programs based on market demand, and unique access to doctoral degree programs. No new degree programs may be implemented at a state postsecondary institution unless the proposal is approved by the appropriate governing board and by the Commission, except as noted below.

This program approval policy and set of procedures applies to Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of General Studies, baccalaureate and graduate degree programs. This policy does not apply to Associate of Applied Science degrees [per Commission Policy I, D] or certificate programs offered at technical colleges or 2- and 4-year institutions, which must be approved by each institution's or system's governing board, are reviewed by Department staff for fit with statutory role and mission, and do not require action by the Commission to be entered into the Student Unit Record Data System (SURDS) and thus be considered "state approved."

It should be noted that 4-year institutions may offer other programs that are commonly referred to as "certificates" but that do not require review by the Department and are not eligible for entry into SURDS. Examples include, but are not limited to, non-credit bearing programs offered on a cash-funded basis, emphasis areas within degrees, and other sequences of courses that do not result in a bona fide credential. To be eligible for entry into SURDS, certificates must be credit-bearing, standalone programs (i.e., not part of a baccalaureate or graduate degree program). Certificates that can be applied to degree program requirements, such as "stackable certificates," are considered to be standalone programs.

2.00 Statutory Authority

The Commission's role and responsibility in the approval of new programs at institutions operating under a performance contract is defined in §23-5-129, which states that:

- (6) While operating pursuant to a performance contract negotiated pursuant to this section, the governing board of a state institution of higher education:
 - (b) Need not consult with nor obtain approval from the Colorado commission on higher education to create, modify, or eliminate academic and vocational programs offered by the institution, so long as such creations, modifications, and eliminations are consistent



with the institution's statutory role and mission. Institutions shall submit information to the department demonstrating that the creation or modification of an academic or career and technical education program is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. The Colorado commission on higher education shall have the authority to override the creation or modification of an academic or vocational program if the change made by the governing board is inconsistent with the institution's statutory role and mission.

3.00 Policy Goal

The goal of this policy is to ensure that a new or substantially modified program is consistent with the statutory role and mission of the institution.

4.00 Process and Procedures

4.01 Governing Board Approval

4.01.01 A governing board may act to approve a new certificate or degree program before or after the Department's endorsement of the program's fit with the institution's statutory role and mission.

4.01.02 The governing board shall formally notify the Department of its approval of a new certificate or degree program immediately following board action. Institutions should follow their normal process to ensure compliance with any Title IV, federal Gainful Employment, or accreditation requirements.

4.02 Review by the Department

4.02.01 Upon receipt of the notification of the governing board's action, the Department reviews the program for fit with the institution's statutory role and mission, 60 credit cap for associate of arts and associate of science degrees, 120 credit cap for baccalaureate degrees [per §23-1-125(1)(a)], and gtPathways requirements unless a waiver is sought [per 23-1-125(3)] and responds to the governing board within 30 days of receiving the proposal. There may be additional requirements for which the Department reviews proposals and those are outlined here:

- a) educator preparation programs are reviewed for additional criteria, as defined in §23-1-121, C.R.S.;
- b) baccalaureate degrees at Colorado Mountain College are reviewed for additional criteria, as defined in §23-71-133, C.R.S.;
- c) bachelor of applied science degrees within the Colorado Community College System are reviewed for additional criteria, as defined in §23-1-133(1), C.R.S.;



- d) bachelor of applied science degrees at Aims Community College are reviewed for additional criteria, as defined in §23-1-133(2), C.R.S.; and
- e) baccalaureate degrees at Colorado State University – Global Campus are reviewed for additional criteria, as defined in §23-31.3-101(2).

4.02.02 If the Department determines that the proposed program is consistent with an institution's statutory role and mission and meets other applicable requirements outlined above, it shall collaborate with the institution to assign a CIP code to the program and recommend the Commission approve the new program.

4.02.03 If the Department determines that the proposal is not consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission or other applicable requirements outlined above, it will so inform the governing board.

4.03 Final Action by the Commission

4.03.01 Once the Commission has approved the new program, the Department will enter the program in the Department's list of approved certificate and degree programs in SURDS and inform the governing board. The program may be implemented any time after this notification is received.

5.00 Changes to existing approved programs

Following institutional and/or governing board approval, proposals that involve non-substantive modification of the academic scope of an existing program, consolidation of programs, renaming a program or closing a program must be reported to the Department for appropriate entry in the list of approved programs in SURDS and do not require action by the commission. Examples include:

- Changing the degree (e.g., B.A. to B.S.) or name of a program.
- Changing the CIP or sequence number.
- Splitting an already approved program into multiple programs (e.g., splitting a B.S. Physical Sciences into a B.S. Physics, B.S. Chemistry and B.S. Geosciences).
- Adding an emphasis area that requires a sequence code and separate entry in SURDS so that enrollment and completion can be reported just for that emphasis area. If the institution does not want the emphasis area listed separately in SURDS then no Departmental notification is required.
- Closing a program.

