

SECTION I

PART D POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE APPROVAL OF NEW VOCATIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMS IN STATE-SUPPORTED INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN COLORADO

The following is an agreement between the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) concerning the process and procedures for the review and approval of Associate of Applied Science degrees.

The policy applies to Associate of Applied Science degree programs only and does not include the approval of vocational certificate programs. (Proposals for associate of arts, science, and general studies degrees, baccalaureate, and graduate degree programs follow the process outlined in *CCHE Policy I-B Policy And Procedures For The Approval Of New Academic Programs In State-Supported Institutions Of Higher Education In Colorado*; proposals for coordinated academic programs follow CCHE Policy I-I, the *Policy and Procedures for Review of Proposals for Coordinated Academic Programs*. No degree may be offered at a state postsecondary institution unless approved under one of these policies.

Because the Commission, the governing boards, and the institutions participate in the program review and approval process, the policy defines the roles and responsibilities of each entity:

- 1.00 Statutory Authority for Program Approval
- 2.00 Commission Responsibilities
- 3.00 Governing Board Responsibilities
- 4.00 Institution Responsibilities

1.00 Statutory Authority

By statute, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education has the responsibility to review and approve proposals for new programs. The statute reads:

The commission shall review and approve, consistent with the institutional role and mission and statewide educational needs, the proposal for any new program before its establishment in any institution and transmit its decision to the institution within one hundred twenty days after receipt of such proposal. The commission and the institution may mutually agree to an extension of not more than forty days. Failure of the commission to submit its decision shall be deemed approval of the proposal for a new program. No institution shall establish a new program without first receiving the approval of the commission. As used in this subsection (1), "new program" includes any new curriculum which would lead to a new vocational or academic degree. The commission shall further define what constitutes an academic or vocational program and shall establish criteria or guidelines which define programs and procedures

for approval of new academic or vocational program offerings. (see 23-1-107(1), C.R.S. 1973) as amended.

2.00 Commission Responsibilities

The Commission's role is to approve all proposed academic and vocational degree programs, granting a Colorado public postsecondary institution the right to admit students and grant degrees in specific programs. In regard to AAS degrees, the Commission delegates the authority to approve proposed degree programs to the Executive Director of CCHE. Because of the nature of the AAS degree and because the AAS review process emphasizes technical standards and labor market needs, the Commission delegates the definition of the criteria used to evaluate an AAS degree program and evaluation of the curriculum to SBCCOE's staff.

The Commission reserves the right to comment on individual program proposals with regard to the following:

- a. Consistency of the program with the role of the institution as defined in CCHE's Statewide Master Plan.
- b. Consistency of the program with the general education component as defined in SBCCOE's policy.
- c. Appropriateness of the program title with the curricular description and program goals.
- d. Inclusion of the proposed program in the annual Academic Initiatives Report. Programs not included in the current Academic Initiatives Report will not be considered for approval.

2.01 CCHE formally delegates its authority to the Executive Director of CCHE to approve new AAS degree programs if the proposal is found to:

- 2.01.01 be consistent with the principles of B. P. 9-40, SBCCOE policy that defines the parameters for sub-baccalaureate degrees,
- 2.01.02 be consistent with the role and mission of the institution and in compliance with CCHE's Academic Initiatives Report policy, and
- 2.01.03 receive no serious criticism during the review by other Colorado state-supported colleges offering two-year vocational degrees.

2.02 The AAS degree program approval process is a two-phase process. During phase one, the requesting community college receives authorization to plan the degree program. During phase two, the requesting community college receives authorization to implement the AAS degree program.

- 2.02.01 SBCCOE will provide CCHE staff with a copy of the preliminary proposal in phase one. CCHE staff shall provide a written statement of endorsement to SBCCOE within ten (10) working days of receipt of a new

degree program proposal if it meets the criteria stated in section 2.01 of this policy. If the program raises an issue, CCHE staff will provide a written response detailing its concerns within ten days. The community college may not proceed with the development of a full degree program proposal without CCHE's endorsement.

2.02.02 After SBCCOE completes the review process and formally approves a degree program by board action, the governing board will forward the board approval statement and a copy of the full proposal to CCHE. The Executive Director will approve the AAS degree if the full proposal meets CCHE's criteria. A letter conferring this approval will be sent to the governing board under the Executive Director's signature.

2.02.03 CCHE approval of an AAS degree program proposal authorizes a community college to offer the degree program and all the courses listed in the curriculum within the community college's designated service area. CCHE approval will recognize and honor all conditions and caveats associated with the program approval at the governing board level.

2.03 Funding Eligibility

2.03.01 Approval of an AAS degree program authorizes the community college to claim state support (FTE funding) for the courses of the approved AAS degree that are delivered within its designated service area.

2.03.02 SBCCOE will comply with the statutory requirements (23-1-109, 23-60-207) and CCHE's FTE policy relating to off-campus instruction.

3.00 Governing Board Role and Responsibilities

SBCCOE shall develop criteria and a plan for program approval and submit the SBCCOE approved AAS approval process and criteria to CCHE for its approval. The governing board shall coordinate the peer review process, analyze the program based on labor market information, and assist the institution in developing strong and complete program proposals.

3.01 Procedures and Guidelines

3.01.01 SBCCOE, in consultation with CCHE staff, has designed a two-stage program approval process. In phase one, the governing board authorizes the institution to plan the program. In phase two, the governing board reviews the implementation plan and acts on the request to offer a new AAS degree program. Appendix A describes the SBCCOE program approval process.

3.01.02 SBCCOE staff may request in writing approval for "new programs" involving the consolidation of several existing programs into one program, or renaming an existing program instead of following the full program approval process. CCHE has the sole authority to act on these types of requests.

3.01.03 If the SBCCOE governing board approves an AAS degree proposal,

the Executive Director of the Commission will send a letter granting the Commission's final approval of the new program. The institution may start admitting students into the approved AAS degree program beginning on the date the CCHE letter is received by SBCCOE.

3.01.04 The governing board shall monitor the implementation of the newly approved AAS degree programs in accordance with its current existing program review process.

3.01.05 SBCCOE may modify its program approval process. An acceptable approval process must include, at minimum, peer review, CCHE review, a technical assessment of the program, a resource impact analysis, and input from business and industry. Both SBCCOE and the Commission must formally approve the revised process to be used in the review and action on new AAS degree proposals.

4.00 Institution Responsibilities

The institution initiates the program approval process. The institution, together with the appropriate advisory committees, shall develop a complete proposal based on defined need or opportunity, accurate information and institutional priorities and goals, and shall submit a complete proposal, as defined in SBCCOE policy, to the governing board for approval. In addition, institutions are to participate in the review process by providing written responses to SBCCOE staff regarding significant curricular or program implementation concerns in accordance with the program approval policy adopted by SBCCOE.

APPENDIX A: Program Approval Process

The following process will be used by SBCCOE and CCHE staff in the review of new AAS degree programs:

Phase One: Preliminary Approval/Authorization to Plan.

- During phase one, the authorization to plan phase, SBCCOE staff will assess the program goals and curricular design to determine if the proposed program meets the general academic standards as outlined in B.P. 9-40 and legitimate market need.
- The institutions and CCHE has an opportunity to voice specific concerns during the peer review process.
 - When a proposal passes the internal review, SBCCOE staff will provide copies of the new program proposal to CCHE as well as to all public higher education institutions offering two-year degree programs.
 - The proposal is presented to the Instructional Council for discussion and official endorsement. This council is composed of the Instructional Vice Presidents of the fifteen community colleges. If the council concurs that the proposal warrants preliminary approval and does not unnecessarily duplicate existing programs, each council member will indicate its endorsement by signing the preliminary approval document. CCHE will receive a copy of the signature document for its files.
 - CCHE will review the proposal to determine if it meets the criteria listed in its approval policy. CCHE will send a letter indicating its endorsement or its concerns to SBCCOE prior to the meeting of the Instructional Council.
- If disagreement occurs over a proposed degree program, the objecting institutions may enter into arbitration. If arbitration cannot settle the difference of opinion, the proposing institution may not proceed with the program planning process.

Phase Two: Final Approval/Authorization to Implement.

- If the proposal receives preliminary approval, the institution may proceed with detailed planning and provide the information required by SBCCOE's program approval process.
- SBCCOE staff will conduct a technical review and analysis of the full proposal when it receives the complete program request information packet. The proposal and the staff analysis will be forwarded to the Board Program and Planning Committee, a sub-committee composed of SBCCOE governing board members. This sub-committee will discuss the resources available, the facilities required, the enrollment potential, the labor market supply and demand, and other relevant factors of the proposed program.

- The sub-committee will present the program approval request and its recommendation to the governing board for action at a regularly scheduled board meeting.
- The possible governing board actions include:
 - Board full approval;
 - Board provisional approval; or
 - Board disapproval.
- SBCCOE will notify CCHE of the governing board decision, including the specific language of the recommendation, immediately following the governing board meeting.

For all history prior to 1999, please see physical CCHE agenda books located in Department office.

