

SECTION I

PART I POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE APPROVAL OF PROPOSALS FOR COORDINATED ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAMS

1.00 Introduction

This policy describes the approval criteria, incentives, and transition procedures for coordinated degree programs -- those programs that are jointly offered by multiple institutions of higher education, including at least one Colorado public institution of higher education. A coordinated degree may not be offered at a Colorado state-funded postsecondary institution unless approved under this policy. Proposals for stand-alone degree programs are reviewed and approved under CCHE Policy I-V: *Policy and Procedures for Approval of New Academic Degree Programs in State-Supported Institutions of Higher Education in Colorado Operating Under a Performance Contract*.

2.00 Statutory Authority

The Commission shall develop cooperative programs among state-supported institutions of higher education (C.R.S. 23-1-108(3)).

3.00 Goals, Principles, and Terminology

3.01 Policy Goals

The goals of a coordinated degree program include:

- 3.01.01 To encourage collaboration among institutions.
- 3.01.02 To provide the quality and type of educational opportunity that one institution alone could not offer.
- 3.01.03 To maximize the use of existing state resources.
- 3.01.04 To extend access to programs in areas of the state that exceed reasonable travel distances from an existing program.

3.02 Principles

The principles that exemplify a coordinated degree program include:

- The program is a single academic entity, with a single curriculum and a single set of graduation requirements.
- The quality of a coordinated degree program shall meet the same quality standards as a stand-alone degree program.
- The quality of a coordinated program is not compromised or diminished when extended from the institution with the original degree authorization to one or more other institutions.
- The program predominantly benefits the State of Colorado and its residents.
- The host institution must be a Colorado institution.

3.03 Definition of Terms and Limits

3.03.01 A **coordinated degree program** is a single program that the Commission has approved for more than one college or university to offer jointly. It is characterized by a single curriculum, a common set of admission criteria, a single set of graduation requirements, and shared resources

3.03.02 All participating institutions share in the delivery of the coordinated degree program curriculum. Consequently, all institutions that participate in a coordinated degree program will offer courses to fulfill the curricular requirements and no single institution will offer the complete curriculum.

3.03.03 A coordinated program may include **collaboration** among Colorado public institutions under the same or different governing boards or between a Colorado public institutions and an accredited out-of-state, private or international college or university.

3.03.04 **Degree conferral authority** of a coordinated degree program is limited by the statutory role and mission of the participating institutions. Approval of a coordinated degree program does not alter nor imply modification of an institution's role and mission. The various type of relationships supported by the Coordinated Degree Approval Policy include:

- (1) A coordinated degree program proposed between two or more Colorado public institutions of higher education with parallel degree authority. If all participating institutions have explicit statutory authority for the degree program (e.g., baccalaureate), all institutions may confer the degree.
- (2) A coordinated degree program proposed between two or more Colorado public institutions of higher education with non-parallel degree authority. Only the institution with the explicit statutory authority may confer the degree.
- (3) A coordinated degree program that involves a consortium of public, private, and out-of-state institutions of higher education. Degree authority will be

determined by statutory role and mission of the participating institutions or the accreditation status of participating private institutions.

- (4) A coordinated degree program that evolves from merging two or more existing degree programs. All institutions may confer the degree.
- (5) A coordinated degree program that evolves from extending an existing degree to another institution of higher education.

3.03.05 The Commission's approval of a coordinated degree program is limited to the institutions specified in the proposal.

4.00 Criteria and Procedures

4.01 Criteria

Coordinated degree programs will meet several specific criteria pertaining to quality and efficiency:

- That a coordinated degree program has a common predefined curriculum.
- That the participating institutions have designed or arranged for a common accreditation and program review process.
- That a coordinated degree program has a fiscal infrastructure delineated in a memorandum of understanding.

4.02 Approval Process

The approval process for new coordinated degree program proposals requires a full proposal, and memorandum of understanding.

4.02.01 The participating institutions shall notify CCHE of their intent to develop a coordinated degree program through the academic planning process.

4.02.02 The institutions and governing boards shall prepare a proposal and negotiate a memorandum of understanding that specifies:

- Curriculum design and the curricular components that the participating institutions will deliver.
- Admission process and criteria.
- Graduation requirements.

- Resources needed to support the program, including faculty, library, student affairs, physical facilities, telecommunications and plan to finance the program as proposed.
- Program administration responsibilities.
- Plans for program recognition for financial aid eligibility.
- Plans for coordinated accreditation or program review.
- Organizational chart diagramming relationships among participating institutions.
- Mechanism for communicating between programs/institutions.

4.02.03 Each governing board of the participating institutions shall review and act on the full proposal, including the memorandum of understanding, prior to forwarding the proposal to the Commission. Affirmative action by the governing boards means that they pledge to support the coordinated degree program at the resource level specified in the memorandum of understanding.

4.02.04 The Commission will act on the coordinated degree proposal at the next possible Commission meeting.

4.03 Exit and Transition Procedures

Approved coordinated degree programs will be subject to CCHE policy Section I, Part G: Discontinuance of Academic Degrees with Low Program Demand.

4.04 Student Status

Students who are admitted into a coordinated degree program receive a degree from the institution at which they matriculate provided this institution has the authority to confer a degree. Because a coordinated degree program operates as a single entity, students wishing to change institutions do not need to transfer from one participating institution to another. They are considered continuing students as long as the student maintains good academic standing. Initial admission to the degree program is honored.

5.00 Statewide Extended Studies Clause

Any coordinated degree program that is offered on a cash-funded basis or not hosted by a Colorado public institution of higher education must adhere to CCHE Policy Section IV: Statewide Extended Studies.

6.00 Policy Effective Dates

This policy will sunset if no institution applies for coordinated degree program status within five years of the date this policy is adopted.

HISTORY: CCHE Agenda Item III, B – May 4, 2006