

**Council on Postsecondary Education  
September 22, 2011**

## **New Academic Programs: Policy and Procedures**

**ACTION:** The staff recommends that the Council approve the attached policy and procedures for the approval of new academic programs.

The Council on Postsecondary Education has statutory authority to approve new academic programs at state colleges and universities. KRS 164.020 (15) empowers the Council to define and approve the offering of all postsecondary education technical, associate, baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degree, certificate, or diploma programs in the public postsecondary education institutions. It also mandates that the Council expedite the approval of requests from the Kentucky Community and Technical College System Board of Regents relating to new certificate, diploma, technical, or associate degree programs of a vocational-technical-occupational nature.

KRS 164.020 (19) allows the Council to postpone the approval of any new program at a state postsecondary educational institution, unless the institution has met its equal educational opportunity goals as established by the Council. In accordance with administrative regulations promulgated by the Council, those institutions not meeting the goals shall be able to obtain a temporary waiver if the institution has made substantial progress toward meeting its equal educational opportunity goals.

The Council's current academic program approval policy for public institutions dates back to 1999. The postsecondary environment has changed dramatically since then, so the policies and procedures need revision.

The Council has convened a group of representatives from each of the public institutions and one representative from KCTCS to reexamine the current policies and recommend changes. The group (Attachment 1) worked between April 2010 and July 2011 to define terms related to academic programming (Attachment 2) and create an updated policy for approval of new academic programs (Attachment 3). The policy and procedures reflect best practices, reinforce state-level and institutional policies to create a more coordinated approach to academic programming, and better connect academic program approval with the review of existing academic programs. If approved by the Council, the policy will go into effect on January 1, 2012.

Academic Program Approval and Review of Existing Academic Programs:  
Campus Representatives

**Eastern Kentucky University:**

Edward J. Keeley, Ph.D.  
Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Research

**Kentucky Community and Technical College System:**

Mary A. Kleber, Ph.D.  
Director of Curriculum and Program Support

**Kentucky State University:**

Titilayo Ufomata, Ph.D.  
Associate Provost & Professor

**Morehead State University:**

Dayna Seelig, Ph.D.  
Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs

**Murray State University:**

Jay Morgan, Ph.D.  
Associate Provost for Graduate Education & Research

**Northern Kentucky University:**

J. Patrick Moynahan, Ph.D.  
Vice Provost, University Programs

**University of Kentucky:**

Constance A. Ray, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness

**University of Louisville:**

Robert S. Goldstein, MPH  
Associate University Provost, Office of Academic Planning & Accountability

**Western Kentucky University:**

Sylvia S. Gaiko, Ph.D.  
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs

## DEFINITIONS RELATED TO ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

Academic Programs

An **academic program** refers to a combination of courses and related activities organized for the attainment of broad educational objectives that lead to a certificate or diploma or an associate's, bachelor's, master's, specialist, or doctoral degree.

**Academic program modifications** are of two types:

1. **Minor academic program modifications** refer to program name changes and changes in degree designation that do not involve significant changes in a program's purpose and curriculum.
2. **Major academic program modifications** refer to significant changes in the program's purpose and curriculum such that a different CIP code more accurately describes the revised program. Separation of an academic program into two programs and the combination of two existing programs into one program constitute major academic program modifications.

A Classification of Instructional Programs code, or **CIP code**, is a six-digit code in the form of xx.xxx that identifies instructional program disciplines. The CIP code supports the accurate tracking and reporting of fields of study and program completions activity as required for federal reporting.

A **major** is a primary area of study defined by a set of course and/or credit hour requirements within a specified discipline or with a clearly defined multi-disciplinary focus.

A **minor** is a secondary area of study that is separate from the major and is defined by a set of course and/or credit hour requirements within a specified discipline or with a clearly defined multi-disciplinary focus.

A **core** is a set of courses required by all students within a major or area. It also refers to the set of courses required by all students within a track, concentration, or specialization.

A **new academic program** is a program not previously offered at an institution or one that was previously offered but has been suspended for five or more years or has been closed.

An **area** is a primary field of study, typically consisting of more credit hours than a major that does not require a minor and can be completed in lieu of a major-minor combination.

A **track** is a set of courses designed to develop expertise within a major or area at the undergraduate level.

A **concentration** is a set of courses designed to develop expertise within a major or area at the master's level.

A **specialization** is a set of courses designed to develop expertise within a major at the doctoral level.

A program of **vocational-technical and occupational nature** refers to undergraduate certificate, diploma, technical, or associate degree programs designed to prepare students to enter the workforce immediately after graduation. The programs fall into categories/career pathways of: (1) Health Science; (2) Business Administration and Management; (3) Manufacturing; (4) Architecture and Construction; (5) Agriculture (Food and Natural Resources); (6) Hospitality and Tourism; (7) Human Resources; (8) Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications; (9) Information Technology; (10) Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security; (11) Education and Training; (12) Government and Public Administration; (13) Marketing; (14) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); (15) Finance; and (16) Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics.

A **suspended program** is an academic program that no longer accepts new students as of a specified date but allows current or previously accepted students to complete the program. The program can be reopened within five years without going through the new academic program approval process. After five years, if the program has not been reopened, it is considered a closed program.

A **closed program** is an academic program that is no longer offered by an institution and has been removed from the institution's catalog and the *Registry of Degree Programs*.

### Academic Program Delivery Methods

An **accelerated course** refers to a course that can be completed in less than a traditional semester.

An **accelerated program** refers to the use of accelerated courses, credit for prior learning, and/or other methods to allow students to complete the program in less than the usual amount of time.

A **collaborative program** is an academic program under the sponsorship of more than one institution or organization and contains elements of resource sharing agreed upon by the partners. None of the participating institutions delivers the entire program alone, and the partnering institutions/organizations share responsibility for the program's delivery and quality. The credential awarded may indicate the collaborative nature of the program.

- If only one institution (primary) offers the degree or credential but other institutions or organizations (secondary) provide some resources, the program at the secondary institution(s) is registered on the Council's *Registry of Degree Programs* in an "**enrollment-only**" reporting category.

- If the degree or credential is offered by all institutions participating in the resource-sharing arrangement but only one institution is listed on a graduate's diploma, the program is registered on the Council's *Registry of Degree Programs* in an **enrollment- and degree-granting category for each participating institution**.

A **cooperative (work study) program** is an academic program that provides for alternate class attendance and employment in business, industry, or government.

**Credit for prior learning** refers to college credit for the college-level knowledge and skills gained from non-college instructional programs or life experiences, including but not limited to employment, military experience, civic activities, and volunteer service. Credit is evaluated through nationally standardized exams in specific disciplines, challenge exams for specific courses at individual institutions, evaluations of non-college training programs, and individualized assessments.

A **distance learning program** is an academic program in which the majority of the instruction occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous.

A **100% distance learning program** is an academic program in which all of the required courses in a program occur when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous.

A **distance learning course** is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous.

A **correspondence course** is a form of distance learning that is self-paced and involves the exchange of instructional materials and exams, by mail or electronic transmission, to students who are geographically remote from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student.

A **dual degree program** is a formalized path of study that allows a student to pursue two different degrees at the same time, either at the same institution or at different institutions, and possibly complete them in less time than it would take to earn them separately. The two degrees could be in the same subject or in two different subjects; they could be at the same level (for example, two bachelor's degrees) or at two different levels (for example, bachelor's and master's degrees). Students must meet the admission requirements for both degree programs.

An **embedded program** consists of required courses of a lower-level degree or credential that are part of a higher-level degree or credential. Such programs usually do not admit students directly, and therefore, students may not be enrolled in these programs. Students are awarded a lower-level degree or credential as these programs serve as an exit option for students who do not complete the requirements for the higher-level degree or credential.

An **extended-campus program** is an academic program offered at any center, branch, campus, or other site at which postsecondary degree or nondegree work is offered, in addition to the parent campus. It refers to locations both within and outside an institution's area of geographic responsibility.

A **joint program** is an academic program that is sponsored by two or more institutions leading to a single credential or degree, which is conferred by all participating institutions. None of the participating institutions delivers the entire program alone, and all participating institutions and organizations share responsibility for all aspects of the program's delivery and quality.

- The program is registered on the Council's *Registry of Degree Programs* in an enrollment and degree-granting category for each institution participating in the joint program.

A **module** is a standalone segment/component of a parent course for which content (description, requisites, outline, competencies, and activities/experiments) has been determined and credit assigned. The sum of constituent segments is equal to the credit of the parent course. Credit is awarded upon successful completion of all modules comprising the parent course.

A **modularized program** is an academic program that can lead to interim credentials after completion of a specified number of courses.

## **Degrees and Credentials**

A **degree** is an award conferred by a postsecondary education institution as official recognition for the successful completion of an academic program.

An **associate's degree** is an award that normally requires at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent.

A **bachelor's degree** is an award that normally requires at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent. This includes all bachelor's degrees conferred in a five-year cooperative (work-study) program and degrees in which the normal four years of work are completed in three years.

A **master's degree** is an award that requires the successful completion of an academic program of at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level.

- A **professional science master's degree** program consists of two years of non-thesis academic training in science, mathematics, or technology and contains a professional component that may include internships and cross-training in business, management, regulatory affairs, computer applications, and communications. The program is designed with the input of one or more employers.

A **specialist degree** is an award that normally requires 60 semester hours of concentrated and approved graduate coursework beyond the bachelor's degree. It is generally offered in the field of education to acknowledge completion of advanced graduate study designed to help individuals meet licensure requirements or develop additional knowledge and skill beyond the master's degree but not at the doctoral level.

A **doctoral degree** is the highest award a student can earn for graduate study. The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System recognizes three types of doctorates.

- A **doctor's degree—professional practice** is awarded upon completion of a program providing the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice. The total time to the degree, including both pre-professional and professional preparation, equals at least six full-time equivalent academic years. Some of these degrees were formerly classified as “first-professional.”
- A **doctor's degree—research/scholarship** requires advanced work beyond the master's level, including the preparation and defense of a dissertation based on original research, or the planning and execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement.
- A **doctor's degree—other** is a doctor's degree that does not meet the definition of a doctor's degree-research/scholarship or a doctor's degree-professional practice.

An **advanced practice doctorate**, also known as a **professional doctorate**, is a program of study beyond the master's degree designed to meet the workforce and applied research needs of a profession. It requires close cooperation between institutions and employers to ascertain employers' needs. The degree may or may not be necessary for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice. In most cases, it is a clinical program designed to meet the needs of allied health professions. It can be classified as either *doctor's degree—professional practice* or *doctor's degree—other* for IPEDS reporting.

**Undergraduate (pre-baccalaureate) certificate** is a subbaccalaureate credential granted upon satisfactory completion of a series of courses related to a specific topic or skill. It has the primary purpose of providing marketable, entry-level skills. These certificates qualify students to take external licensure, vendor-based, or skill standards examinations in the field. If standardized external exams are not available in the field of study, certificates prepare students at skill levels expected of employees in an occupation found in the local economy.

- **Postsecondary certificate (less than one academic year)** requires completion of an academic program below the baccalaureate degree in less than one academic year, or designed for completion in less than 30 semester or trimester credit hours, or in less than 45 quarter credit hours, or in less than 900 contact or clock hours, by a student enrolled full time.
- **Postsecondary certificate (at least one but fewer than two academic years)** requires completion of an academic program below the baccalaureate degree in at least one but fewer than two full-time equivalent academic years, or is designed for completion in at least 30 but fewer than 60 semester or trimester credit hours, or in at least 45 but less than 90 quarter credit hours, or in at least 900 but less than 1,800 contact or clock hours, by a student enrolled full time.
- **Postsecondary certificate (at least two but fewer than four academic years)** requires completion of an academic program below the baccalaureate degree in at least two but fewer than four full-time equivalent academic years, or designed for completion in at least 60 but less than 120 semester or trimester credit hours, or in at least 90 but less than 180 quarter credit hours, or in at least 1,800 but less than 3,600 contact or clock hours, by a student enrolled full time.

**Graduate certificate** is a post-baccalaureate credential granted upon satisfactory completion of a set of related courses within a discipline or a set of related disciplines. It has the primary purpose of supplementing or enhancing skills for degree-seeking students who wish to demonstrate competency in a high-demand or emerging area that will increase their marketability in local, national, and global markets.

- A **post-baccalaureate certificate** requires completion of an academic program equivalent to 18 semester credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree but does not meet the requirements of a master's degree.
- A **post-master's certificate** requires completion of an academic program equivalent to 24 semester credit hours beyond the master's degree but does not meet the requirements of academic degrees at the doctor's level.
- A **first professional certificate** provides advanced training and enhances knowledge in important areas of clinical or research specialization and specialty practice for individuals who hold a professional degree (e.g., J.D., D.M.D., or M.D.).

A **diploma program** is designed to prepare students for technical employment within a one to two-year period. A prescribed program of technical and general education courses is designed to prepare students for a specific job title, credit toward an associate degree, and continued training opportunities for certificate program graduates.

A **diploma** is a formal document certifying the successful completion of a prescribed pre-baccalaureate program of studies, either requiring less than one year or up to at least two but fewer than four years of work beyond grade 12.

- **Postsecondary diploma (less than one academic year)** requires completion of an academic program below the baccalaureate degree in less than one academic year or designed for completion in less than 30 semester or trimester credit hours, or in less than 45 quarter credit hours, or in less than 900 contact or clock hours, by a student enrolled full time.
- **Postsecondary diploma (at least one but fewer than two academic years)** requires completion of an academic program below the baccalaureate degree in at least one but fewer than two full-time equivalent academic years, or is designed for completion in at least 30 but fewer than 60 semester or trimester credit hours, or in at least 45 but less than 90 quarter credit hours, or in at least 900 but less than 1,800 contact or clock hours, by a student enrolled full time.
- **Postsecondary diploma (at least two but fewer than four academic years)** requires completion of an academic program below the baccalaureate degree in at least two but fewer than four full-time equivalent academic years, or designed for completion in at least 60 but less than 120 semester or trimester credit hours, or in at least 90 but less than 180 quarter credit hours, or in at least 1,800 but less than 3,600 contact or clock hours, by a student enrolled full time.

### Miscellaneous

A **credit hour**, as defined in regulation by the United States Department of Education, is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than: (1) one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or 10 to 12 weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time or (2) at least an equivalent amount of work as required in (1) for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

**Academic program implementation** occurs when the first student matriculates into a program and enrolls in any course specified in the program of study.

## New Academic Program Approval

The approval of new academic programs is one of the main responsibilities of state higher education coordinating boards. Reasons for approving new academic programs at the state level include determination of quality maintenance or improvement, need and demand, consistency with institutional mission, unnecessary duplication, cost efficiency and effectiveness, and consumer protection.

### 1. Background

Before postsecondary education reform, institutions notified the Council's predecessor, the Council on Higher Education (CHE), semi-annually of new programs under development. The institution then submitted a program proposal and a two-page executive summary after the proposal had completed all institutional approvals. Staff performed the preliminary review; a Programs Committee made up of CHE members had an active role in the review and approval of programs; and the full CHE acted upon the staff and Programs Committee recommendations.

In January 1995, staff suspended preliminary reviews as CHE members assumed a greater role in the review of new academic programs. In November 1997, the newly formed Council on Postsecondary Education (the Council) directed staff to review academic program policies. Until the new policies were established, staff was to consider a new academic program only if it documented an immediate, critical need.

KRS 164.003 links academic programming to economic development and emphasizes academic and fiscal responsibility. In light of this, a November 1997 Council agenda item posed this question: "What programs should be offered by which institutions and at what locations in order to provide appropriate access to quality programs for the citizens of the Commonwealth in the most efficient manner possible?"

The Council streamlined its academic policies at its September 1998 meeting by directing staff to develop new procedures that "enable institutions to respond quickly to changing market demands and place primary responsibility for quality assurance with institutional governing boards, within broad systemwide guidelines that address statewide needs and protect consumer interests."

As a first step in streamlining, in April 1999 the Council delegated to the KCTCS Board of Regents program approval authority for new certificate, diploma, associate in arts, associate in science, associate in applied science, and associate in applied technology degree programs at the KCTCS institutions. This delegation was reaffirmed in November 2000.

At the November 1999 meeting, the Council devolved its approval authority for new academic programs within designated program bands to each institution's governing board while retaining approval authority in the following areas:

- First-professional programs.
- Engineering programs at the comprehensive institutions and engineering programs at the doctoral level at the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville.
- Teacher and school personnel preparation programs.
- Health-related programs above the baccalaureate level.
- Associate degree programs at the four-year institutions.
- Other programs falling outside each institution's negotiated program band.

An institution's approval authority for a new program depended on whether the program fell within its band. Proposals for new academic programs within an institution's program band were subject to a six-week public review by the chief academic officers of Kentucky's public institutions, the president of the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities, and others. If there were no significant problems with the proposal after the six-week period, the institution was allowed to complete its internal process of program approval and subsequently implement the program without full Council approval.

In January 2000, the Council approved program bands for each four-year university. An institution's program band was based on its mission, existing programs, and disciplinary strengths. An institution or the Council could seek reconsideration of an institution's band at a later date if the nature, emphasis, or strength of its existing programs changed.

After a decade of operating under the streamlined policy, Council staff, after consulting with the institutions, determined it was time to review and update the program approval policy. Staff worked with representatives from each institution over the course of several months in 2010 and 2011 to review the policy and make changes that would provide staff with better information about proposed programs in order to make more informed decisions.

As part of this update, the following evaluation criteria, policy, and procedures will guide the approval of new academic programs.

## 2. Policy

- a. Institutions will notify the Council semi-annually of any new programs that they intend to develop on their campuses within three years of the notification. However, failure to notify the Council of intent to develop a program will not preclude an institution from undergoing the new academic program approval process.
- b. The academic program approval process consists of two stages. In the pre-proposal stage, institutions provide Council staff, among other information, justification for creating a new program; validation for creating a stand-alone program if similar programs already exist; and evidence that the program is aligned with an institution's mission, the state's postsecondary education Strategic Agenda, and the statewide strategic implementation plan. If Council staff approves the pre-proposal, the institution may submit a more in-depth program proposal. In the proposal stage, the institution submits a full program proposal that has been approved by the institutional governing board.

- c. An institution may not submit a pre-proposal or proposal unless it has achieved automatic eligibility status, or has obtained the appropriate waiver, under 13 KAR 2:060.
- d. Institutions should submit a pre-proposal to Council staff. Upon approval of the pre-proposal, the institution has up to 18 months to submit a full proposal to the Council. The full proposal should be approved by the institution's governing board before submission to the Council.
- e. After a program is approved by the Council, an institution has up to five years to implement the program. After that, the program must undergo the new program approval process.
- f. If a program has been suspended for fewer than five years, an institution may reinstate the program by notifying the Council staff.
- g. If a program has been suspended for five years, it will be closed.
- h. If a program has been closed and an institution wants to reopen the program, an institution must complete the new program approval process.
- i. Institutions may not advertise to the public or publish in institutional catalogs a new academic program prior to approval by the Council.
- j. The Council reserves the right to create special program approval processes for programs that require extraordinary consideration, such as responding to legislative requirements and administrative regulations.

### **Credential Programs**

- a. Certain types of undergraduate (pre-baccalaureate) certificates require Council approval. Institutions proposing new postsecondary certificates of at least one but fewer than two academic years and postsecondary certificates of at least two but fewer than four academic years must complete the pre-proposal stage only.
  - i. Postsecondary certificates of less than one academic year do not require Council approval. However, institutions shall notify Council staff on a quarterly basis of all new postsecondary certificates of less than one academic year.
- b. Proposals for new graduate certificates require Council approval. Institutions proposing new graduate certificates must complete the pre-proposal stage only.
  - i. For graduate certificates that do not meet the definitions of post-baccalaureate certificate, post-master's certificate, or first professional certificate, institutions shall notify Council staff on a quarterly basis of any new certificate programs that do not require Council approval.

## Degree Programs

- a. Proposals for new associate degree programs not of a vocational-technical-occupational nature from KCTCS must undergo the program approval process (e.g., AA or AS).
- b. Pre-proposals for new associate degree programs not of a vocational-technical-occupational nature from comprehensive and research institutions must be reviewed by the KCTCS Board of Regents. If KCTCS determines that a community and technical college(s) in the proposing institution's area of geographic responsibility (1) does not have an interest in creating a similar program and (2) does not have the ability to implement the program in a more cost-efficient and effective manner, then the proposing institution should submit a full proposal for a new undergraduate program to the Council and will not be subject to the pre-proposal stage.
  - i. If KCTCS can demonstrate, through a pre-proposal, that a community or technical college in the proposing institution's area of geographic responsibility will implement a similar program within one year and can do so more efficiently and effectively than the proposing institution, this is a basis for Council denial of the proposed program at the comprehensive or research institution.
  - ii. If the proposing institution provides evidence that KCTCS will not create a similar program and/or cannot provide it in a more efficient and cost-effective manner, the Council may approve the program.
- c. Proposals for new bachelor's degree programs must undergo the program approval process.
- d. Proposals for new master's degree programs must undergo the program approval process.
- e. Proposals for new specialist degree programs above the master's degree must undergo the program approval process.
- f. Proposals for new doctoral degree programs must undergo the program approval process.
- g. For new collaborative or joint programs that involve development of a new academic program, a "Memorandum of Understanding" that clearly outlines program responsibilities and fiscal arrangements among participating institutions must be developed and approved concurrently with the program proposal at each institution and must be submitted with the final program proposal when it is submitted to the Council.
  - i. If any partner institution does not currently offer the academic program, that institution must undergo the new academic program approval process.
  - iii. If two or more institutions create a collaborative or joint program with academic programs that have already been approved at each institution, then the new collaborative or joint program does not need to undergo the new academic program process. The institutions should notify the Council of the arrangement and provide a copy of the "Memorandum of Understanding."

- h. If two academic programs are combined into one program, this constitutes a major academic program modification. The combined program will be considered a new academic program and must follow the policy and procedures related to new academic programs only if it requires a new CIP code (two-, four-, or six-digit level) to describe accurately the discipline of the combined program.
- i. If an existing academic program is separated into two or more academic programs, this constitutes a major academic program modification. At least one of the separated programs is considered a new academic program and must follow the policy and procedures related to new academic programs. The other program will not be considered a new academic program if the same CIP code remains the best disciplinary descriptor of the program.
- j. The combination of core courses within any major or area and core courses within a track or concentration should equal at least half of the credit hours required by the major or area at the undergraduate and master's levels. Exceptions to this policy will be made for individualized programs that vary depending on a student's previous education, training, and experience and what the institution determines a student needs to complete a degree program. Exceptions will also be made when curriculum requirements are mandated by a specialized accrediting agency or upon approval of other rationale presented by the institution.
- k. Advanced practice doctorates shall be approved pursuant to KRS 164.295. As required by KRS 164.295 (3), the criteria for approval includes a determination of the academic and workforce needs for a program, consideration of whether the program can be effectively delivered through a collaborative effort with an existing program at another public university within the Commonwealth, and the capacity of a university to effectively offer the program. A university requesting approval of an advanced practice doctoral program shall be required to provide assurance that funding for the program will not impair funding of any existing similar program at any other public university. Proposed applied doctorates should build upon a high-quality master's degree offered by the institution. Institutions must demonstrate that advanced practice doctorates are necessitated by new practice requirements or licensure in the profession and/or requirements by specialized accrediting agencies. Institutions should also demonstrate that a new advanced practice doctorate will not negatively impact undergraduate education.

#### **Programs of a Vocational-Technical-Occupational Nature**

- a. Pre-proposals for new undergraduate (pre-baccalaureate) certificate and diploma programs of a vocational-technical-occupational nature at all postsecondary institutions must be reviewed by the KCTCS Board of Regents before submission to the Council for approval. The KCTCS Board of Regents must evaluate these proposals using all components of the pre-proposal form for undergraduate programs. If approved, the proposing institution may submit the pre-proposal to the Council. A full proposal is not required. If the KCTCS Board of Regents does not approve the program, the proposing institution may appeal to the Council and Council staff will decide how to proceed.

- b. As required by KRS 164.020 (15), the Council will expedite the approval of requests from the KCTCS Board of Regents relating to new certificate, diploma, technical, or associate degree programs of a vocational-technical-occupational nature. The Council will expedite this approval process by waiving the full proposal process for these types of programs. These types of programs require a pre-proposal only.

### 3. Procedures

#### Pre-Proposal Stage

Institutions must pre-post a proposed program on the Kentucky Postsecondary Program Proposal System (KPPPS) after it has been approved at the college level. Pre-posting a program upon initial approval at the college level allows more time for institutions to share information and create collaborative arrangements, including articulation agreements with KCTCS institutions.

As part of the pre-proposal, information about the program should be posted to KPPPS including:

- i. CIP code, program name, and degree level.
- ii. Proposed implementation date.
- iii. Program description and objectives and their consistency with institutional mission, statewide postsecondary education strategic plan, and the statewide strategic implementation plan.
- iv. Intended student learning outcomes and preliminary assessment plan.
- v. Justification, including a preliminary needs assessment.
- vi. Relationship with other programs within the institution.
- vii. Relationship with programs at other institutions.<sup>1</sup>
- viii. Course delivery methods.
- ix. Faculty qualifications and resources.
- x. Preliminary cost estimates.

If the proposed program is an advanced practice doctorate, additional information will be required on:

- i. Availability of clinical sites (if applicable).
- ii. Feeder programs within the institution.
- iii. New practice, licensure, or accreditation requirements.
- iv. Impact on undergraduate education.

---

<sup>1</sup> Before submitting a pre-proposal, proposing institutions must contact institutions with similar programs, as defined by CIP and degree level, to initiate discussions about the possibilities for collaborative or joint programs. Similar programs can be identified through the Council's Registry of Degree Programs, also known as the program inventory. The program inventory can be found on the Council's website at <http://dataportal.cpe.ky.gov/AcadProg.shtm>.

After posting this information to KPPPS, the chief academic officers, or their designees, of other public institutions and Council staff will have 45 days to review and comment on the proposed program. If there are no unresolved objections to the proposed program, the Council staff will notify the institution that it may continue the process for developing the program. The institution should submit a full proposal, which has been approved by the institutional governing board, to the Council within 18 months of the approval of the pre-proposal.

If another institution or the Council staff expresses concerns about the proposed program, the Council staff will decide how best to proceed. In doing so, the Council staff may require additional information and may request review by the chief academic officers of public institutions. If additional information is requested, the proposing institution must submit that information within 30 days of the request.

After concerns have been resolved, the Council staff will notify the institution that it may complete the next stage of the academic program approval process. If those concerns cannot be fully resolved to the Council's satisfaction, the Council staff will inform the institution that the institution should not proceed with its internal process of program approval.

#### Proposal Stage

In the proposal stage, the institution submits a full program proposal that has been approved by the institutional governing board. Upon successful completion of the pre-proposal stage, institutions have up to 18 months to submit a proposal. If applicable, the proposal should address concerns and any possibilities for collaboration with other institutions that arose during the pre-proposal process. The proposal should address the following elements:

- i. Centrality to the institution's mission and consistency with the state's postsecondary education goals.
- ii. Program quality and student success issues.
- iii. Program demand and unnecessary duplication.
- iv. Cost and funding sources.
- v. Program review and assessment.

A principal purpose of the full proposal is to establish the criteria against which future program reviews will be gauged. Comments on the full proposal from other institutions will generally not be solicited by the Council; however, the Council reserves the right to confer with institutions that submitted comments during the pre-proposal process to establish the extent to which these comments have been adequately addressed.

Council staff will review the full proposal. If there are no issues, staff will recommend approval to the Council. If approved by the Council, new programs will be placed on provisional status and will be subject to an initial review process as outlined in the Review of Existing Academic Programs Policy. If staff has questions or concerns about the full proposal, staff will not recommend approval to the Council until all issues are resolved.