**Academic Program Approval Policy and Process**

**Revision Effective**: July 1, 2017

KRS 164.020 (15) empowers the Council on Postsecondary Education to define and approve the offering of all postsecondary education technical, associate, baccalaureate, graduate and professional degree, certificate, or diploma programs in public postsecondary education institutions.

The program approval policy was significantly revised at the September 2011 Council meeting. Over the past five years, the policy has worked well; however the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (iPEDS) and the Southern Association of College of Schools Commission on College (SACSCOC revised some definitions. Therefore, CPE staff and institutional representatives identified ares of the policy and processes that could use future clarification or alternation.

The current CPE academic program approval process consists of three stages.

*Stage 1 (Notification of Intent):* Institutionssubmitnotices of intent for new academic degree programs for review by the CPE Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer. This information will be on two successive CCAO agendas as a necessary prequel to submitting the pre-proposal. This allows for inter-institutional discussion of a proposed program, before the public posting.

*Stage 2 (Pre-proposal):* Institutions submit information on the proposed program, such as justification for creating the program, evidence that the program is aligned with an institution’s mission, the state’s postsecondary education Strategic Agenda, and the statewide strategic implementation plan, student demand for the program, employment opportunities for graduates, evidence of sufficient resources to offer the program, and (if applicable) efforts to explore collaboration with other institutions with similar programs. This information will be posted for 45 days in order to allow comments from the Chief Academic Officers of institutions within the State, and the CPE Staff will work to resolve any issues that may arise.

*Stage 3 (Full Proposal):* If Council staff approves the pre-proposal, the institution will then submit, within eighteen months, a full program proposal that has been approved by the institutional governing board.

The below highlights the updated policy approved at the CPE meeting 2/3/2017:

* A streamlined process for a new certificate that is not considered SACSCOC substantive change. (As of 7/1/2017, certificates do not require the CPE program approval process, unless it is considered a substantive change by SACSCOC. There is a new form being developed for reporting new certificates to the CPE – not sure information required, but guessing it will match the new database).
* A shorter review period to help institutions better respond to student and workforce demand.
  + Notification of Intent (NOI) (not sure if it is still 2 CCAO meetings)
  + Post pre-proposal within six months after NOI approved.
  + Pre- proposal posted for 30 days instead of 45 for review by public institutions
  + If additional information needed/requested, must submit within 30 days of the request.
  + If no issues, institution has six months to submit the full-proposal (was 18 months)
  + After program approved by CPE, have up to 5 years to implement
* A more explicit connection between the academic program approval policy and the review of existing academic programs policy by requiring complete submission of the previous year’s program reviews before any new programs can be proposed (not a problem for WKU).

**Definition Changes:**

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|  | **Definition** | |
| **Term** | **Current** | **New, as of July 1, 2017** |
| 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. | Requires completion of an organized program of study beyond the bachelor’s level. It is designed for persons who have completed a baccalaureate degree, but does not meet the requirements of a master’s degree. Even though Teacher Preparation certificate programs may require a bachelor’s degree for admission, they are considered subbacalaureate undergraduate programs, and students in these programs are undergraduate students. |
| 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. | Requires completion of an organized program beyond the master’s degree, but does not meet the requirements of academic degrees at the doctoral level. |
| Distance Learning Program | An academic program in which the majority of the instruction occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction maybe synchronous or asynchronous. | Formal education process in which the majority (more than 50%) of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) is a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use the internet; one-way or two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD’s, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program (SACSCOC) |

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|  | **Definition** | |
| **Term** | **Current** | **New, as of July 1, 2017** |
| Dual Degree | 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. | Academic program in which students study at two or more institutions and each institution grants a separate academic award bearing only its name, seal, and signature. (SACSCOC)  **Important Note**: this is a substantive change and requires reporting to SACSCOC |
| Joint Degree | 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. | Academic programs in which students study at two or more institutions and the institutions grant a single academic award bearing the names, seals, and signatures of each of the participating institutions. (SACSCOC) **Important Note**: this is a substantive change and requires reporting to SACSCOC |
| Modularized Program | Academic program that can lead to interim credentials after completion of a specified number of courses. | Academic program in which the majority (more than 50%) of the coursework is offered in modules (SACSCOC) |

**New Definitions:**

**Competency-Based Educational Program** – outcome-based program that assesses a student’s attainment of competencies as the sole means of determining whether the student earns a degree or a credential. Such programs may be organized around traditional course-based units (credit or clock hours) that students must earn to complete their education program, or may depart from course-based units (credit or clock hours) to rely solely on attainment of defined competencies. (SACSCOC).

**Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Program** – instructional program that, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, uses direct assessment of student learning relying solely on the attainment of defined competencies, or recognizes the direct assessment of student learning by others. The assessment must be consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program using the results of the assessment. (SACSCOC) **Important Note**: this is a substantive change and requires reporting to SACSCOC