



UNIVERSITY POLICY AC-09.03-09/23

TO: The University of West Florida Community

FROM: Dr. Martha D. Saunders, President

SUBJECT: New Academic Degree Program Approval

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Office of the Provost

I. Purpose:

To ensure that new academic degree programs implemented by the University of West Florida (UWF) are of the highest quality, align with the missions of UWF and the Florida Board of Governors (BOG), meet the needs of the citizens of Florida, and conform with Florida Board of Governors Regulations, the University establishes the following criteria and guidelines for new academic degree program authorization.

Information concerning minors, concentrations, areas of emphasis, tracks, college credit certificate programs, and non-college credit certificates is set forth in AC-13, Addition, Modification, and Deletion of Specializations, Minors, and Certificates, as it may be amended.

II. Definitions:

Degree Program – An organized curriculum leading to a degree in an area of study recognized as an academic discipline by the higher education community, as demonstrated by assignment of a Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code by the National Center for Educational Statistics or as demonstrated by the existence of similar degree programs at other colleges and universities, and having designated faculty effort and instructional resources. Each degree program shall have designated faculty effort and instructional resources and shall be assigned a CIP code and be included in the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory. Each degree program shall include at least one program major but may have multiple majors.

Program Major – An organized curriculum offered as part or all of an existing or proposed degree program. A program major, or its equivalent, shall be reasonably associated with the degree program under which it is offered and shall share core courses with all other majors within the same degree program. Core courses, for the purposes of this policy, shall not include common prerequisites as defined in section 1007.25, Florida Statutes. Although in some cases the major and the degree program names are identical, only the degree program shall be assigned a CIP code and included in the SUS Academic Degree Program Inventory as a stand-alone program. At UWF, a program major is known as a specialization.

III. Policy:

A. Criteria for New Degree Program Approval

A proposal for a new degree program must be approved by the University of West Florida Board of Trustees (BOT) (and the BOG for a doctoral program) prior to implementation. New programs must meet the following criteria:

1. Institutional and State Level Accountability

- a. The program is consistent with the BOG and State University System Strategic Plan as well as UWF's Mission, Strategic Plan, and University Accountability Plan

The proposal must demonstrate that the goals of the program are aligned with UWF's Mission, relate to specific institutional strengths, and are consistent with the current State University System (SUS) Strategic Planning Goals as demonstrated by an explanation of the goals that the program will directly advance. The program must be consistent with the program list in the University's Accountability Plan (required also by BOG Regulation 2.002, University Accountability Plans).

- b. The Program Demonstrates a Need for Program Graduates, Research, and/or Service

The proposal must demonstrate a need for more individuals to be educated in this program at the level proposed, provide an estimate of the headcount and full-time equivalent for students who will major in the program, and indicate steps to be taken to achieve a diverse student body. If an argument is made for the program based upon research or service, then specific information supporting the argument must be provided. In analyzing the need for the proposed program, the University shall consider whether similar programs are offered at other postsecondary institutions in Florida and include an analysis of the impact as evidence to substantiate the need for the program.

- c. The Program Does Not Unnecessarily Duplicate Existing SUS Degree Programs

If the program duplicates another degree program at a private or public university in Florida that has a substantially similar curriculum, evidence must be provided that UWF has investigated the potential impact on that program, has discussed opportunities for collaboration with the affected university, and can substantiate a need for duplication. If the proposed program curriculum substantially duplicates an existing program at a historically black university in the SUS, an analysis must be conducted to determine whether the proposed program may adversely affect that university's ability to achieve or maintain student diversity in its existing program.

d. Financial Planning and Resources Are Sufficient for Implementation

The proposal must provide a complete budget for the program that is comparable in cost to similar existing programs, reflects the purpose of the proposal, and provides evidence that, in the event resources within UWF are redirected to support the new program, such a redirection will not have an unjustified negative impact on other programs.

e. There is a Sufficient Projected Benefit of the Program to UWF, the Local Community, and the State of Florida

The proposal must provide a statement that describes the projected benefit to UWF, the local community, and the state of Florida if the program is implemented. The proposal should demonstrate efficient use of resources and justification for the investment. The projected benefit can be both quantitative (data driven) and qualitative in nature.

f. Access and Articulation are Maintained for All Programs

i. In a proposal for a baccalaureate program, all prerequisite courses shall be consistent with common prerequisites for similar degree programs within the SUS and the Florida College System, or an exception must be sought through the Articulation Coordinating Committee in accordance with BOG Regulation 8.010, Common Prerequisites.

ii. In a proposal for a baccalaureate program, if special admissions status is sought in accordance with BOG Regulation 8.013, Specialized Admissions, adequate justification must exist for such a designation, and evidence must be provided that diversity, articulation, and workforce issues are appropriately addressed.

iii. In a proposal for a baccalaureate program, the total number of credit hours shall not exceed 120. If the proposed program requires more than 120 credit hours, the requirements outlined in BOG Regulation 8.014, Bachelors Degree Exceptions to 120 Credit Hours Requirement must be met.

iv. A proposal for any degree level must include a plan to achieve a diverse student body in the program.

2. Institutional Readiness

a. Indication of Ability to Implement a High-Quality Program

The proposal shall provide evidence that the institution has the resources in place, or will make the necessary investments, to ensure that the proposed program will be of high quality. If appropriate, the proposal must provide evidence that the

proposed program will specifically relate to existing institutional strengths such as other academic programs that have achieved national recognition or related institutes and centers. If program reviews or accreditation activities in the discipline pertinent to the proposed program or in related disciplines have included recommendations affecting the proposed program, the proposal must provide evidence that progress has been made in implementing those recommendations.

b. Curriculum is Appropriate for the Discipline and Program Level

The proposal must describe a sequenced course of study with expected student learning outcomes, including any appropriate industry-driven competencies, as well as a strategy for assessing student learning and reviewing academic-workforce alignment to make curricular adjustments as needed. Admissions and graduation criteria must be clearly specified and appropriate. The course of study and credit hours required should include a timeframe consistent with similar programs. In cases in which specialized accreditation is available, evidence must be provided that the program will seek accreditation, or a rationale must be provided as to why the program will not seek specialized accreditation as required by BOG Regulation 3.006, Accreditation.

c. Sufficient Qualified Faculty are Available

The proposal shall demonstrate that sufficient qualified faculty are available to initiate the program based on estimated enrollments and that, if appropriate, there is a commitment to hire additional faculty in later years. The proposal shall demonstrate that the academic unit or units associated with this new degree have been productive in teaching, research, and service. For a research or professional doctoral program, evidence shall be provided that the faculty in the aggregate has the necessary instructional experience, as well as research and grant activity, to sustain a doctoral program.

d. Sufficient Institutional Resources are Available

The proposal must demonstrate that the necessary library volumes and serials; classrooms, teaching laboratories, research laboratories, offices, and any other types of physical spaces; equipment; and appropriate clinical and internship sites are available to implement the program. The proposal shall also indicate whether appropriate fellowships, scholarships, and assistantships are in place, or if the University has made sufficient plans for their existence when student support is the norm for similar programs in the discipline.

B. New Degree Program Approval Authority and Process

1. All Degree Programs

A new academic degree program pre-proposal shall be submitted for review by the academic program coordination workgroup established by the Council of Academic Vice Presidents pursuant to BOG Regulation 8.004, Academic Program Coordination, in order to facilitate collaboration, articulation, and coordination of new academic degree programs across the SUS. This action should be taken prior to a new degree program under consideration being moved into the one-year category on the annual University Accountability Plan. Prior to submitting this pre-proposal, the internal UWF pre-proposal shall be submitted to the Dean and Academic Affairs.

2. Professional and Research Doctoral Degree Programs

The BOT must approve any proposed new research and professional doctoral degree programs for submission to the BOG for authorization in accordance with BOG Regulation 8.011(3), Authorization of New Academic Degree Programs and Other Curricular Offerings. The BOT must determine that a proposal is complete and meets all criteria for new program authorization before submitting the proposed program to the BOG for approval. In approving a new doctoral degree program, the BOG shall consider the sufficiency of the University's proposal evaluation process, the distinctive mission of the University, alignment with the SUS and UWF strategic plans, and the extent to which the program will contribute to the economic development of the local community and the State of Florida as demonstrated by its alignment with the Programs of Strategic Emphasis adopted as part of the current State University System Strategic Plan.

- a. BOG will only consider new doctoral programs at the June and November meetings.
- b. If it is contemplated that a master's and a doctoral degree program will be implemented in the same field simultaneously, a single proposal for both degree levels should be developed, differentiating elements within the proposal as necessary. Both degree levels must be approved by the BOT prior to submitting the doctoral program for approval by the BOG.
- c. UWF may not offer the program earlier than the date specified in the proposal.

3. Bachelor's, Master's, Advanced Master's, and Specialist and other Non-Doctoral Degree Programs

The BOT has the responsibility and authority to approve for implementation new degree programs at the bachelor's, master's, advanced master's, and specialist level in accordance with BOG Regulation 8.011, Authorization of New Academic Degree Programs and Other Curricular Offerings.

4. UWF New Degree Program Authorization

- a. Academic departments wishing to explore new degree program implementation will submit internal and CAVP pre-proposals to the appropriate dean and Academic Affairs. These pre-proposals should describe support for UWF's strategic plan and the University Accountability Plan;
- b. Once pre-proposals have been approved, academic departments will prepare a request to offer a new degree program proposal using the BOG template identifying an appropriate curriculum, financial and administrative resources.
- c. Doctoral program proposals should include a review by a qualified external consultant prior to consideration of the proposal by the BOT. Their contribution must be documented and described in the proposal;
- d. The BOT will review the proposed program in its Academic Affairs Committee with regard to implementation costs and the BOG approval criteria prior to approval by the full BOT; and
- e. All changes to degree programs must be effective with a fall semester and be included in the Catalog.

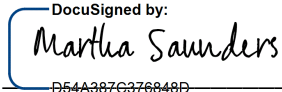
C. SUS Academic Degree Program Inventory

1. The BOG shall maintain a SUS Academic Degree Program Inventory that will identify the approved degree programs for each university and that will be used by UWF for reporting enrollments, degree completions, and other information related to instructional delivery. Within four weeks of the approval of a bachelor's, master's, specialist, or advanced master's degree by the BOT, UWF will notify the BOG in writing and provide an electronic copy of the proposal for each program along with related BOT approval documents. For baccalaureate programs, the notification shall include any request for approval of specialized admissions status, exceptions to the 120 credit hours to degree, and exceptions to the established statewide common prerequisite courses. A CIP code for each program shall be assigned by the BOG in consultation with UWF.
2. Upon resolution of any outstanding issues regarding the program, it shall be added to the SUS Academic Degree Program Inventory, and a letter of notification shall be provided to UWF.
3. It is recognized that academic disciplines and degree program curricula evolve over time to align with emerging knowledge in the field or changing workforce requirements. Existing programs' curricula may also evolve over time in response to faculty research interests and student demand. On occasion, a new CIP code is created by the National Center for Educational Statistics that is a better fit for an existing program than the one assigned when it was approved. Accordingly, the University may

request a CIP code change in accordance with the policies and processes established by BOG for an existing degree program in the SUS Academic Degree Program Inventory. A CIP code change cannot have the net effect of adding a new degree program to the academic program inventory by changing the code for a major offered under a currently approved program. The new CIP code will be used for state-level accountability calculations beginning with the effective term.

D. Independent Degree Programs at Off-Campus Instructional Sites

Whether or not UWF has authority to offer a given degree program, off-campus instructional sites may not institute complete degree programs, or substantially complete degree programs, having designated faculty lines with independent curricula decision making authority, designated facilities and instructional resources, and a designated student body unless such programs are approved by the BOT. Each such program must meet the BOT and BOG new degree program approval criteria and follow the same approval process as other new program offerings at UWF. This policy does not apply to programs that share faculty and students between instructional locations.

Approved by:  **Date:** 09/15/2023
D54A387C376848D...
 Dr. Martha D. Saunders

Authority: BOG Regulation 2.002, University Accountability Plans
 BOG Regulation 8.004, Academic Program Coordination
 BOG Regulation 3.006, Accreditation
 BOG Regulation 8.010, Common Prerequisites
 BOG Regulation 8.011, Authorization of New Academic Degree Programs and Other Curricular Offerings
 BOG Regulation 8.013, Specialized Admissions
 BOG Regulation 8.014, Bachelors Degree Exceptions to 120 Credit Hours Requirement
 P-01, University Policy Development and Issuance Process

Cross Ref.: AC-13, Addition, Modification, and Deletion of Specializations, Minors, and Certificates
 P-01, University Policy Development and Issuance Process

History: Adopted July 2009; revised May 2016 and September 2023

Last Review: September 2023