Procedure 3.36.1 Academic Programs

Part 1. Purpose and Applicability.

Subpart A. Purpose. To establish standards, processes and conditions that enable consistent implementation of academic program policy.

Subpart B. Applicability. These procedures implement Policy 3.36 Academic Programs.

Part 2. Definitions. The following definitions have the meanings indicated for all board policies unless the text clearly indicates otherwise.

Subpart A. Academic Award. A certificate, diploma or degree.

Subpart B. Academic Program. A cohesive arrangement of college level credit courses and experiences designed to accomplish predetermined objectives leading to the awarding of a degree, diploma, or certificate. Undergraduate degree programs include a general education component and the purpose is to:
1. increase students' knowledge and understanding in a field of study or discipline,
2. qualify students for employment in an occupation or range of occupations, and/or
3. prepare students for advanced study.

Subpart C. Academic Program Characteristics. Attributes that operationally describe an approved academic program including:
1. name,
2. academic award,
3. federal Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code,
4. credit length,
5. location(s),
6. emphases, if any,
7. articulation or collaborative agreements, if any, among system colleges and universities or other parties, and
8. status (active, suspended, closed).

Subpart D. Academic Program Closure. An academic program change in status which permanently closes the academic program to new enrollment.
Subpart E. Academic Program Curriculum Component. Academic program curriculum component is a program element with set requirements.

Emphasis. A focused component of an academic program.

Major. A curriculum component of an academic program intended to provide in-depth study in a discipline, a professional field of study or an occupation. A major may include an academic program emphasis.

Minor. A curriculum component of limited depth and/or breadth within a baccalaureate academic program.

Other Components. Other components of an academic program may include electives, required courses, and general education.

Subpart F. Academic Program Inventory. The official list of academic programs offered by system colleges and universities.

Subpart G. Academic Program Redesign. A change to an academic program characteristic.

Subpart H. Academic Program Reinstatement. An academic program status change from suspended to active.

Subpart I. Academic Program Relocation. Academic program relocation occurs when an active academic program is closed at its present location and approved for delivery at a different location.

Subpart J. Academic Program Replication. Academic program replication occurs when an active academic program is offered at an additional location.

Subpart K. Academic Program Suspension. Academic program suspension is a change in status which temporarily closes the academic program to new enrollment.

Subpart L. Advisory Committee. A group established to provide guidance on academic program development and improvement including need, design, accountability, and closure.

Subpart M. Articulation Agreement. A formal agreement between two or more educational entities to accept courses in transfer toward a specific academic program using the system articulation agreement template or equivalent evidence of course transfer encoded into the degree audit reporting system.

Subpart N. Collaborative Agreement. A formal agreement between two or more parties, at least one of which is a system college or university, to co-deliver an academic program. Each system college or university may, as appropriate, confer the award.

Subpart O. Course. A set of designed experiences with defined student learning outcomes.
Subpart P. Credit. A unit of measure assigned to a system college or university course offering or an equivalent learning experience that takes into consideration achieved student learning outcomes and instructional time.

Subpart Q. Credit Hour.
1. 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 -
   a. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time, such as in distance learning environments; or
   b. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1.a.) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the system college or university including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.
2. Or, for a program that is subject to a clock/credit-hour conversion, the lesser of
   a. Clock hours in the credit-hour program divided by 37.5 clock hours of instruction or
   b. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system approved credit hour.

Subpart R. Curriculum. A coherent set of instructional experiences designed through established system college and university procedures to achieve desired student learning outcomes. Curriculum may refer to an academic program, an academic program element such as the major, an instructional unit, the general education component, or the entirety of offerings of a system college or university.

Subpart S. Fine Arts. The disciplines of creative writing, dance, music, theatre, the visual arts, and performing arts in which artistic purposes are primary.

Subpart T. General Education. A cohesive curriculum defined by system college or university faculty to develop general knowledge and reasoning ability through an integration of learning experiences in the liberal arts and sciences.

Subpart U. Graduate Course Enrollment. There are four types of graduate course enrollment that specify which students are permitted to enroll in a graduate course.

   Master's Dual-Enrollment. Master's dual-enrollment courses are open to undergraduate students and graduate students at the master’s level.

   Master's. Master’s courses are open only to graduate students at the master's level.

   Doctoral Dual-Enrollment. Doctoral dual-enrollment courses are open to graduate students at the master’s and doctoral levels.

   Doctoral. Doctoral courses are open only to graduate students at the doctoral level.

Subpart V. Liberal Arts and Sciences. Liberal arts and sciences include the humanities, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences.
Subpart W. Location. A geographic place where a system college or university has been approved to deliver an entire academic program.

Subpart X. Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum is curriculum comprised of general education courses and goal area definitions and competencies designed for transfer among Minnesota public colleges and universities.

Subpart Y. Mission Statement. A mission statement conveys the broad intentions and distinctive character of a system college or university; describes its primary educational programs and their purposes; recognizes the diversity of its learners; identifies the students to be served, including particular constituents; defines a primary service area; and communicates a commitment to the advancement of society’s values and common purposes and the advancement of excellence in higher learning. Use of this definition is restricted to this procedure and related guidelines, if any.

Subpart Z. New Academic Program. An academic program identified by curricular content and an academic award significantly different from other academic programs at a system college or university.

Subpart AA. Occupational Program. An academic program designed to prepare program graduates for entry, retention, or advancement in a specific occupation or set of closely allied occupations.

Subpart BB. Online Academic Program. An academic program that is offered entirely or almost entirely over the Internet. When pedagogically necessary, limited portions of an online academic program may require face-to-face instruction, professional practice or applied activities that are not appropriate for online delivery. Two types of online academic programs are recognized by the system:

- **Online Exclusive.** Online exclusive means an online program only offered online; no participation in face-to-face delivery is available.

- **Online Plus.** Online plus means an online program is offered entirely online with face-to-face options available for one or more courses.

Subpart CC. Preparatory Course. A lower-division college-level course outside of an academic program that compensates for insufficient high school or equivalent preparation.

Subpart DD. Prerequisite Course. A college-level course within an academic program that all students must complete before enrolling in another college-level course or a major.

Subpart EE. Program Service Area. The region encompassing a significant majority of prospective or current students for a program location. The service area may be described as a list of communities, cities, counties, zip codes, states, number of miles from the program site, Minnesota planning or economic development regions, or by one or more employer sites.
Subpart FF. Program Transfer. All courses from a completed certificate, diploma, or degree that apply toward completion of another certificate, diploma, or degree but may not necessarily do so with equal course credits.

Subpart GG. Students with an Intellectual Disability. Students who:
1. have a developmental disability or cognitive impairment characterized by significant limitations in intellectual and cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills; or
2. are currently or were formerly eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 20 U.S.C. §1401, including students who were determined eligible for special education or related services under the IDEA but were homeschooled or attended private school.

Subpart HH. System Colleges and Universities. System colleges and universities are colleges and universities governed by the Board of Trustees.

Colleges. Community colleges, technical colleges, and consolidated colleges that are separately accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. A consolidated college refers to a community college and technical college that, under board direction, have formally organized into a single college.

Universities. System universities confer academic awards through the graduate level and are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

Subpart II. Task Analysis. A process used to identify the knowledge, skills, tools, and abilities needed to perform an occupation.

Subpart JJ. Undergraduate Course Level. Course level reflects the degree of difficulty, the breadth and depth of learning expectations or the sequential learning required of knowledge. Course content and level are determined by system college and university faculty through established procedures.

Developmental. Developmental course content prepares students for entry into college level courses. Developmental level course credits do not apply toward a certificate, diploma, or degree.

Lower-Division. Lower-division course content prepares students for specific academic program outcomes or for upper-division undergraduate coursework at a university.

Upper-Division. Upper-division course content builds upon or integrates knowledge gained in lower-division undergraduate courses. Content of upper-division courses is determined by the university faculty through established procedures.

Subpart KK. Unnecessary Program Duplication. When two or more academic programs serve overlapping program service areas in which the number of prospective and enrolled students is insufficient to sustain one or more of the programs or, for occupational programs, the number of current and projected job openings is insufficient to maintain an acceptable related employment rate for graduates.
**Subpart LL. Work-Based Learning.** Paid or unpaid applied work experiences designed to address one or more program learning outcomes in courses or programs designed and evaluated by faculty members. Work-based learning involves a method such as apprenticeship, clinical experience, cooperative education, experiential learning, externship, internship, or practicum.

**Part 3. Authorized Academic Awards.**

**Subpart A. System College and University Award Authority.** A system college or university may change its college or university type or become authorized to confer new academic awards by submitting an application to the chancellor and obtaining approval from the Board of Trustees. The application shall include demonstration of system college or university readiness and capacity to deliver the new award.

**Subpart B. Academic Award Attributes.** Academic awards shall have the following attributes.

1. **Undergraduate Certificate.** An undergraduate certificate is awarded upon completion of a 9 to 30 credit academic program. An undergraduate certificate may have an occupational outcome or address a focused area of study.

   An undergraduate certificate shall not have emphases.

   At least one-third of the credits in the undergraduate certificate shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation by the faculty and approval by the president of the college or university.

   An undergraduate certificate less than 9 or more than 30 credits in length may be approved when the academic program prepares an individual for employment and the length or the designation as a certificate is (1) required by an employer, a licensing body or other regulatory agency, accrediting association, or board, or (2) based on a formal task analysis conducted within the previous three years and the results endorsed by an advisory committee.

2. **Diploma.** A diploma is awarded upon completion of a 31 to 72 credit undergraduate academic program that prepares students for employment. A minimum of 24 credits shall be in occupational or technical courses.

   A diploma may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits when there are at least 30 credits in the major that are common to the emphases.

   A diploma may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5. Subpart C, to provide a student an opportunity to design an academic program to meet specific occupational goals that cannot be met by current program offerings.
At least one-third of the credits in the diploma shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation by the faculty and approval by the president of the college.

A diploma of more than 72 credits in length may be approved when the academic program prepares an individual for employment and the length is (1) required by an employer, a licensing body or other regulatory agency, accrediting association, or board, or (2) based on a formal task analysis conducted within the previous three years and the results endorsed by an advisory committee.

3. **Associate of Arts Degree.** An associate of arts degree is awarded upon completion of a 60 credit academic program in the liberal arts and sciences without a named field of study. It is designed for transfer to baccalaureate degree-granting college or university.

An associate of arts degree requires completion of at least a 40 credit curriculum that fulfills the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum goal areas.

The associate of arts degree program is named Liberal Arts and Sciences.

An associate of arts degree may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits each in liberal arts and science fields, provided there is an articulation agreement with a related baccalaureate major offered by one or more system universities.

At least 15 credits in the associate of arts degree shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the system college or university.

4. **Associate of Fine Arts Degree.** An associate of fine arts degree is a named degree awarded upon completion of a 60 credit academic program in particular disciplines in the fine arts.

An associate of fine arts degree is designed to transfer in its entirety to a related fine arts discipline baccalaureate degree program. An articulation agreement with a related baccalaureate degree program at a regionally accredited university is required. A system college shall pursue an articulation agreement with a system university before establishing an articulation agreement with a non-system university.

An associate of fine arts degree program may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5, Subpart F. Associate of fine arts individualized studies degree programs do not require an articulation agreement.

An associate of fine arts degree requires a minimum of 24 credits selected from at least six of the ten goal areas of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. Requirements for the following disciplines have been adopted.

*Art.* An associate of fine arts degree in art requires the minimum of 24 credits selected from at least six of the ten goal areas of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.
Music. An associate of fine arts degree in music requires at least 30 credits selected from at least six of the ten goal areas of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.

Theatre Arts. An associate of fine arts degree in theatre arts requires completion of the entire Minnesota Transfer Curriculum with a minimum of 40 credits.

An associate of fine arts degree shall not have emphases.

An associate of fine arts degree program may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5, Subpart F, to provide a student an opportunity to design an academic program to meet specific academic or occupational goals that cannot be met by current program offerings.

At least 15 credits in the associate of fine arts degree shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the system college or university.

A waiver may be granted to exceed a length of 60 credits when (1) the waiver criteria in Part 3, Subpart C, are met and (2) an articulation agreement specifies the transfer of a greater number of credits.

5. Associate of Science Degree. An associate of science degree is awarded upon completion of a 60 credit academic program in scientific, technological, or other professional fields.

The associate of science degree is designed to transfer in its entirety to one or more related baccalaureate degree programs. A college shall pursue an articulation agreement with one or more system universities before establishing an articulation agreement with a non-system university.

An associate of science degree program may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5, Subpart F. Associate of science individualized studies programs do not require an articulation agreement.

An associate of science degree may address a single specialty or a set of allied specialties such as, but not limited to, (1) agriculture, (2) business, (3) computer and information sciences, (4) education, (5) engineering, (6) engineering technologies, (7) environmental sciences, (8) health sciences, and (9) natural sciences.

The associate of science degree requires a minimum of 30 credits selected from at least six of the ten goal areas of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.

An associate of science degree shall not have emphases.

An associate of science degree may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5, Subpart F, to provide a student an opportunity to design an academic program to meet specific occupational goals that cannot be met by current program offerings.
At least 15 credits in an associate of science degree shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the system college or university.

A waiver may be granted to exceed a length of 60 credits when (1) the waiver criteria in Part 3, Subpart C, are met and (2) an articulation agreement specifies the transfer of a greater number of credits.

6. **Associate of Applied Science Degree.** An associate of applied science degree is awarded upon completion of a 60 credit academic program in a named field of study in scientific, technological or other professional fields.

An associate of applied science degree prepares students for employment in an occupation or range of occupations. An associate of applied science degree may also be accepted in transfer to a related baccalaureate program.

An associate of applied science degree requires a minimum of 15 credits selected from at least three of the ten goal areas of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. At least 30 credits shall be in the academic program’s occupational or technical field of preparation.

An associate of applied science degree may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits each when there are at least 30 credits in the major that are common to the emphases.

An associate of applied science degree program may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5, Subpart F, to provide a student an opportunity to design an academic program to meet specific occupational goals that cannot be met by current program offerings.

At least 15 credits in an associate of applied science shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the system college or university.

A waiver may be granted to exceed a length of 60 credits when (1) the waiver criteria in Part 3, Subpart C, are met and (2) an articulation agreement, where applicable, specifies the transfer of a greater number of credits.

7. **Baccalaureate Degree.** A baccalaureate degree is awarded upon completion of a 120 credit academic program incorporating general education, major requirements and, as appropriate, a minor.

The bachelor of arts degree is awarded upon completion of a curriculum with a major that focuses on study in the liberal or fine arts.

The bachelor of science degree is awarded upon completion of a curriculum with a major that prepares individuals to apply knowledge and skills in areas other than the liberal or fine arts.
A bachelor of applied science (BAS) degree features application of knowledge, skills, and abilities and includes at least 30 credits focused on an occupation or set of closely allied occupations. A bachelor of applied science degree may incorporate a variety of methods to achieve its applied focus such as experiential learning or a capstone project. A bachelor of applied science degree may achieve its applied focus through an articulation agreement with an applied occupational certificate, diploma, or degree and may reflect a model such as:

a. Career Ladder: A career ladder model adds additional technical course work to an applied certificate, diploma, or degree,
b. Management: A management model adds business and administrative course work to an applied certificate, diploma, or degree, or
c. Completion: A completion model adds general education course work to one or more applied certificates, diplomas, or degrees.

The chancellor may approve academic programs culminating in a more specific baccalaureate degree type, for example, bachelor of applied science, bachelor of fine arts, bachelor of music, bachelor of science in nursing, bachelor of social work, or another designated type.

At least 40 of the required credits for the baccalaureate degree shall be at the upper-division level.

A baccalaureate degree requires at least a 40 credit curriculum that fulfills all of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.

A baccalaureate degree may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits each when at least 18 credits in the major are common to all the emphases.

A baccalaureate degree program may be individualized according to the standards outlined in Part 5, Subpart F, to provide a student an opportunity to design an academic program to meet specific occupational goals that cannot be met by current program offerings.

At least 30 credits in a baccalaureate degree shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. These requirements may be decreased upon recommendation by the faculty and approval by the president of the university.

A waiver may be granted to exceed a length of 120 credits when the waiver criteria in Part 3, Subpart C, are met.

8. **Graduate Certificate.** A graduate certificate is awarded upon completion of a 9 to 30 credit academic program in a focused area of study at the graduate level.

A graduate certificate shall not have an “emphasis.”
All credits in a graduate certificate shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the university.

9. **Master’s Degree.** A master’s degree is awarded upon completion of a 30 to 54 credit academic program at the graduate level in a discipline or professional field.

A master of arts degree is awarded upon completion of a curriculum with a major that focuses on study in the liberal or fine arts.

A master of science degree is awarded upon completion of a curriculum with a major that prepares individuals to apply knowledge and skill in areas other than the liberal or fine arts.

The chancellor may approve academic programs culminating in a more specifically named master’s degree type, for example, master of arts in teaching, master of business administration, master of fine arts, master of public administration, or master of science in nursing.

At least one-half of the required credits in a master’s degree, exclusive of a thesis, capstone, or similar culminating project, shall be credits restricted exclusively to graduate student enrollment.

A master’s degree may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits when at least 18 credits in the major are common to all the emphases.

All credits in the master’s degree shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the university.

A master’s degree more than 54 credits in length may be approved by the chancellor when the length is (1) required by an employer, a licensing body or other regulatory agency, accrediting association, or board, or (2) consistent with nationwide common practice.

10. **Education Specialist Degree.** An education specialist degree is awarded upon completion of a 60 to 72 credit academic program at the graduate level in the professional education field. The education specialist degree may be awarded to a holder of a master’s degree after the successful completion of a course of graduate study of at least 30 semester credits.

An education specialist degree may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits each when at least 18 credits are required in the post-master’s portion of the degree.

No more than 16 credits of an education specialist degree may be master’s dual-enrollment courses.
All credits in the education specialist degree shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award. This requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval by the president of the university.

11. Doctorate. A doctorate is awarded upon completion of a graduate level academic program of at least 72 credits beyond the baccalaureate degree in an applied professional field.

Minnesota state universities are authorized to grant the doctorate in audiology, business, education, nursing, psychology, and physical therapy.

At least 45 credits in graduate level courses shall be taught by the faculty recommending the award, including up to 12 credits for a dissertation or equivalent project. At least 36 of these 45 credits shall be in doctoral only courses. This 45 credit requirement may be decreased upon recommendation of the faculty and approval of the president of the university.

No more than 16 credits of the doctorate may be master's dual enrollment courses. A doctorate may have one or more emphases of at least 9 credits when there are at least 18 credits in the post-master's portion of the academic program.

Subpart C. Program Credit Length Waivers for Associate and Baccalaureate Degrees.

1. Authority. The system office determines the approval or disapproval of all requests for waivers to exceed program credit length limitations.

2. Criteria for Granting Waivers. Credit length waivers may be granted when determined necessary to ensure that the degree provided meets industry or professional standards. Waivers shall be granted only when a need for a longer program credit length is demonstrated by one or more of the following:
   a. Industry Standards
      (1) National or international program certification;
      (2) National or international standards, including skill standards;
      (3) Standards recommended by a primary employer or multiple employers within a program service area;
   b. Professional Standards
      (1) National specialized program accreditation;
      (2) State licensure requirements;
      (3) National practices or standards;

3. Waiver Process for Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Fine Arts, and Baccalaureate degrees. The following process shall be followed to request a waiver:
   a. Preparation of a waiver application for submission to the system office shall be consistent with accepted system college or university curriculum approval processes. Waiver requests for similar academic programs may be pursued on a
multi-college/university basis when recommended by faculty consistent with accepted processes at each participating system college or university.

b. Academic program advisory committees may provide recommendations on learning requirements. Program advisory committee recommendations that support the standards may be submitted with the waiver request. For student representation on college or university academic program advisory committees, see Board Policy 2.3 and System Procedure 2.3.1 Student Involvement in Decision-Making.

c. Waiver applications will be distributed for review and comment to state student associations, faculty union leadership, and system college and university administrators.

d. The system office will act on the waiver application and notify the applicant.

e. Appeals related to waiver decisions will be processed through the vice chancellor for academic and student affairs.

f. Public information regarding the waiver process, review criteria, rationale for decisions, and decisions reached will be available on the system office website.

4. Waiver Process for Associate of Applied Science degrees. The following process shall be followed to request a waiver:

a. Preparation of a waiver application for submission to the system office shall be consistent with accepted system college or university curriculum approval processes.

b. An associate of applied science waiver application shall compare and contrast credit lengths of comparable programs and provide a program analysis describing learning outcomes not found in shorter programs.

c. Academic program advisory committees shall provide recommendations on learning requirements. For student representation on college or university academic program advisory committees, see Board Policy 2.3 and System Procedure 2.3.1.

d. Waiver applications shall document the approval of the system college or university curriculum committee, the program advisory committee, and the system college or university student representative on the program advisory committee. If there was no student representative on the program advisory committee, the system college or university student association shall review and comment on the waiver application.

e. Waiver applications will be distributed for review and comment to state student associations, faculty union leadership, and system college and university administrators.

f. The system office will act on the waiver application and notify the applicant.

g. Appeals related to waiver decisions will be processed through the senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs.

h. Public information regarding the waiver process, review criteria, rationale for decisions, and decisions reached will be available on the system office website.

i. Associate of applied science programs approved to exceed 60 credits shall include an explanation of why the program is longer than similar programs in the catalog description.
Subpart D. Clock Hour to Credit Equivalence. Student work-based learning experiences measured in clock hours may be equated to credits.

System colleges and universities shall collaborate to establish a common number of credits for a work-based learning experience when a state or federal agency or regulatory board requires a set number of clock hours.

Subpart E. Reporting Credit Hours for Federal Student Aid. For purposes of determining program eligibility for federal student aid, system colleges and universities shall report credit hours in conformance with requirements of U.S. Code of Federal Regulations 34 CFR 600.2 and 668.8 (k) and (l).

Part 4. Authority to Establish Academic Program Locations.

Subpart A. Approval of an Academic Program Location. Location approval is required for a system college or university to deliver a new, replicated, or relocated academic program at a location where it is not currently delivering any academic program. Location approval requires academic program approval and, when applicable, lease approval.

The academic program application shall specify the location name, postal address, and lease information as applicable. For a location not owned by the system, the location application shall include information regarding approval of the lease as required in System Procedure 6.7.2, Part 4.

Part 5. Academic Program Approval. The chancellor shall establish processes for academic program applications and continued maintenance and administration of programs.

Subpart A. Approval of New Academic Programs. A new academic program requires approval by the chancellor before it is offered by a system college or university.

All college-level courses required for academic program completion, with the exception of preparatory courses, shall be included in the total number of credits for an undergraduate academic program.

New program applications shall address the following items as detailed in the program application form available online:
1. Alignment with system college or university mission
2. Collaboration, agreements, and applicable approvals
3. Curriculum attributes
4. Enterprise system requirements
5. Program marketing
6. Program demand and unnecessary duplication
7. Resources

The chancellor mayconditionally approve an academic program.

Subpart B. Maintenance of Academic Program Records. System colleges and universities shall maintain their academic program records in the system program inventory to inform
students, address consumer disclosure requirements, and support system college or university business practices. Program information to be maintained includes the following:

1. Accreditation for the program, if applicable
2. Career clusters, pathways, and assessments (system colleges)
3. Center of excellence affiliation, if applicable
4. Closed enrollment status and organization(s) served
5. Delivery mode
6. Effective begin and end terms
7. Emphases, if applicable
8. Green designation, if applicable
9. Locations
10. Name, description, student learning outcomes, and URL
11. Time to completion
12. Type, Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code, and level
13. Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes, if applicable

Subpart C. Approval of Individualized Names for Academic Programs and Emphases.
System colleges and universities have considerable latitude to name an academic program consistent with its content and purpose, although consideration should be made for clarity, brevity, and professionalism.

1. Names for academic programs shall:
   a. represent program learning outcomes as reflected by core content of the curriculum,
   b. reflect the assigned Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code unless a suitable CIP code is not available,
   c. be less than or equal to 50 characters in length, including spaces so that a name can appear on student awards and transcripts. If this title exceeds 50 characters (including spaces), a short title must also be identified due to ISRS field limitations,
   d. include the word “advanced only” when justified relative to preceding programs, comparison to entry level job standards, or special admissions criteria,
   e. be permitted to use the prefix “pre-” when
      i. the program prepares individuals for an associate of science degree that a graduate must complete to be admitted to a baccalaureate-level program that is the minimum necessary qualification for practice, such as any of the engineering specialties,
      ii. marketing a baccalaureate degree for a post-baccalaureate professional field such as pre-dentistry, pre-medicine, pre-pharmacy, pre-veterinary medicine, pre-nursing, pre-chiropractic medicine, pre-occupational therapy, pre-optometry, and pre-physical therapy.
2. Academic program names shall not include ampersands or references to:
   a. the words “program,” “awards” (certificate, diploma, associate, baccalaureate, master’s, doctorate), “delivery mode,” “pathway,” “emphasis,” “option,” or other curricular descriptors,
   b. words such as “basic,” “careers,” “concepts,” “core,” “foundations,” “fundamentals,” “general,” “introduction,” and “orientation” when the program is intended for occupational preparation,
c. accreditation or external curriculum approvals, such as AACSB, ABET, ACS, or NCATE. An acronym, if essential, may be used in conjunction with relevant text to communicate program content,
d. licensure when licensure is granted by an external agency and not a system college or university. An emphasis title may include the word “non-licensure” to indicate that the program does not prepare a student to apply for licensure,
e. certified or registered when this recognition is granted by an external agency and not a system college or university. Either term is allowed in an academic program name if doing so is required by an external agency. Nursing program titles recommended by the Minnesota Board of Nursing shall exclude use of the words “certification” and “registered”, for example:
   • “Nursing Assistant” for nursing assistant certification and home health aide certification,
   • “Practical Nursing” for licensed practical nursing, or
   • “Nursing” for registered nursing.

Subpart D. Approval of Changes to Existing Academic Programs.

1. **Closure.** Closure of an academic program must be approved by the chancellor. Approval will only be granted under the following circumstances:
   a. the closure is requested by a system college or university, and the chancellor determines that the documentation provided supports closure,
   b. the chancellor determines that closure is warranted, or
   c. the academic program has not been reinstated following a suspension.

   The academic program closure application must be documented, as applicable, regarding:
   a. academic program need,
   b. student enrollment trends,
   c. employment of graduates,
   d. the financial circumstances affecting the academic program, system college, or university,
   e. the plan to accommodate students currently enrolled in the academic program,
   f. impact on faculty and support staff,
   g. consultation with appropriate constituent groups including students, faculty, and community,
   h. alternatives considered, and
   i. other factors affecting academic program operation.

   A closed academic program cannot be relocated, replicated, or reinstated.

2. **Redesign.** Prior approval shall be obtained from the chancellor for academic program redesigns that affect the approved name, CIP code, the addition of emphases, a change in award, or a change in credit length when the change exceeds the maximum or fails to meet the minimum credit lengths defined in policy.
Prior approval is not required for deletion of emphases or changes in credit length when the change is within the limits established by board policy. System colleges and universities shall report these changes to the chancellor.

3. Suspension and Reinstatement. A system college or university may suspend an academic program for three years. The system college or university shall apply to the chancellor for suspension of an academic program. The application shall include documented reasons for suspension and a reinstatement plan with a date for reinstatement. The suspension may be extended for up to one year with notification to the chancellor. The chancellor shall close an academic program that has not been reinstated following a suspension.

Reinstatement requires approval of the chancellor based on review of required documentation. The reinstatement plan must describe reasons for the suspension, identify specific actions to resolve the problems, and address the following factors, as applicable:

- a. academic program need,
- b. student enrollment trends,
- c. employment of graduates,
- d. financial circumstances affecting the academic program, system college, or university,
- e. the plan to accommodate students currently enrolled in the academic program,
- f. impact on faculty and support staff,
- g. consultation with appropriate constituent groups including students, faculty, and community,
- h. academic program accreditation or licensure,
- i. alternatives considered, and
- j. other factors affecting academic program operation.

A suspended academic program shall not be relocated or replicated until it is reinstated.

4. Academic Program Replication or Relocation. Replication and/or relocation of an academic program requires approval by the chancellor when the replication or relocation:

- a. is offered at a location that is new to the system college or university,
- b. affects an existing agreement between colleges and/or universities,
- c. is in the same service area or within a reasonable commute of a similar academic program offered by another system college or university, or
- d. involves leasing non-system property.

If none of the above applies, only notification by the president to the chancellor of the location is required.
Relocation to another system college or university requires approval of the chancellor. The system college or university to which an academic program is reassigned must provide for the viability of the academic program.

Subpart E. Student Consultation and Review Regarding Academic Program Decisions. When academic program changes are proposed as described in Part 5, Subpart D, students must be provided an opportunity to be involved as required by Board Policy 2.3 and System Procedure 2.3.1.

Subpart F. Approval of Individualized Academic Programs

1. Guidelines. Individualized studies programs shall:
   a. not have emphases,
   b. be called “Individualized Studies” and use the CIP code 30.9999, and
   c. transfer in their entirety (when designed for transfer) to a specific or individualized baccalaureate degree program.

2. Student Program Plan. Individualized studies programs require system colleges and universities to manage student program plans such that each student prepares their plan with guidance from a faculty advisor and with approvals as required by the system college or university. The student program plan shall be kept on file by each participating system college and university.
   a. For associate degree programs designed for transfer, the student program plan will include:
      1) a statement of the student’s intent to transfer to a specific baccalaureate degree program at one or more universities,
      2) a statement of the intended program outcomes,
      3) identification of the courses to be completed in the associate degree program, and
      4) when applicable, assessment of student job prospects upon program completion.
   b. For non-transfer programs, the student program plan will include:
      1) a statement of the intended program outcomes,
      2) identification of the courses to be completed in the program, and
      3) when applicable, assessment of student job prospects upon program completion.

3. Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. Individualized studies programs offered by a system college or university must meet the minimum number of Minnesota Transfer Curriculum goal areas as specified for the academic award in this procedure.

4. Program Design. Students may consider the following program designs:
   a. thematic focus indicates coursework is in two or more disciplines organized around a theme, for example, food safety, from the perspectives of sociology, economics, and health.
   b. interdisciplinary focus indicates coursework is in two disciplines, such as gerontology and exercise science.
c. disciplinary focus indicates that coursework is all in the same discipline, for example, computer science.

Subpart G. Expedited Approval of 9-16 Credit Certificate Programs. Approval of certificate programs designed to meet a near-term workforce training need requested by employer(s), workforce center(s), or other entities can be expedited depending upon the potential for unnecessary program duplication. Documentation must demonstrate training need for the current or next semester, but evidence of other labor market information and student interest is not required.

1. Potential Duplication. When another system college or university offers a similar program online or within an overlapping program service area or within a 45 mile commute distance, a notice of intent must be distributed to other system colleges or universities through Program Navigator with a five-day waiting period. Upon approval, the proposed program can be offered for one or more cohorts within a 12-month period from the start of the first cohort. Subsequently, a new program application must be submitted for the program to be considered for continuation.

2. Non-Duplicative. When another system college or university does not offer a similar program online or within the program service area, a notice of intent is not required. Upon approval, the proposed program may be offered without conditions.

Part 6. Student Options when Academic Programs are Suspended, Closed, Relocated, or Changed. A system college or university shall establish plans to address students’ opportunities to complete an academic program when it has been suspended, closed, relocated, or when the requirements have changed.

Subpart A. Academic Program Suspension, Closure, or Relocation. A system college or university shall develop a plan to serve students who were admitted to an academic program proposed for suspension, closure, or relocation. The plan shall identify admitted students who are covered by the plan and their options to complete the academic program. The system college or university shall notify students about their options and assist them with their individual plans. Students covered by the plan shall maintain full-time enrollment status unless the system college or university makes other provisions.

Subpart B. Academic Program Changes. A system college or university shall notify students who have been admitted to an academic program of any changes to the academic program. Students shall be given an opportunity to graduate under the catalog requirements at the time of their admission to the system college or university or under any subsequent catalog requirements.

Part 7. Academic Review. Periodic review of academic programs is the responsibility of the system college or university. The review shall encompass all instructional areas and be structured according to discipline, academic program or program cluster, department, or other academic unit.
Approval Date: 08/01/07,
Effective Date: 08/01/07,

Date and Subject of Revision:
3/6/15 - Amended Part 2 to add definitions in Subparts Q, AA, EE, FF, GG, KK, and LL. Amended Part 3.B, sections 3, 4, 5, and 6 to reduce the minimum number of credits required to be taught by faculty offering the award from 20 to 15 to align with Higher Learning Commission assumed practices. Amended Part 3.B.3 to adopt a standard name for associate of arts degree programs. Amended Part 3.B.5 to prioritize system universities for articulation agreements and reclassified specific and broad fields of study as single and allied sets of specialties. Amended Part 3.B.7 to specify the requirements for the bachelor of applied science degree. Amended Part 3, by adding Subparts D and E to address credit hour definitions and requirements for federal student aid. Amended Part 4.A to delete the list of specific requirements included in a related procedure. Amended Part 5 by replacing the specific list of reporting requirements with seven areas in which requirements may be set. Added Part 5.B to establish rules for the collection and maintenance of records for academic programs, and added Part 5.C to establish restrictions on program names. Deleted Part 5.D.2 to avoid duplicating efforts with the Higher Learning Commission in regard to online programs. Added Part 5.E to emphasize the role of students in academic program decisions. Added Part 5.G to offer means for expedited approval processes for certificate programs. Amended Part 7 to eliminate regular system program review requirements in deference to those required by the Higher Learning Commission.
3/10/13 – Amended Part 3 to permit approval of associate in fine arts and associate in science degree programs to be considered when the articulation agreement is with an accredited non-system university; remove reference to general education and thereby clarify that required credits be selected from Minnesota transfer curriculum goal areas.
7/20/12 - Amended Part 3, subparts B2, B4, B5, B6, and B7, to provide students an opportunity to design an academic program to meet specific goals. Amended Part 3, subpart C3c to allow other forms of distribution for the waiver application. Amended Part 4, subpart 4, replaced language.
1/25/12 - The Chancellor amends all current system procedures effective February 15, 2012, to change the term “Office of the Chancellor” to “system office” or similar term reflecting the grammatical context of the sentence.
10/12/10 - amended Part 4, Subpart A, Number 2 to require approval by the vice chancellor-chief financial officer instead of the Chancellor.
4/5/10 - amended to replace “institution” with “college and university.” Part 3, Subpart B4 amended to define the disciplines as presented in the procedure. Part 5 amended to allow the chancellor to place conditions on an academic program. Amends Part 5, Subpart B2 to remove language to clarify that approval will be through the Higher Learning Commission. Amends Part 5, Subpart B4 to require that reinstatement plans describe reasons for suspension and specific actions for resolution. Amends Part 7, Subpart A to include labor market information, resources, policies, procedures and guidelines, and articulations agreements.
1/30/09 - amended to set program credit length limits for associate and baccalaureate degree programs; define waiver criteria and processes; improve language for Bachelor’s & Master’s degrees and doctorate; align procedure with policy regarding program suspension; set additional documentation requirements for new program applications; and clarify scope and criteria for academic program review.