

## **POLICY FOR THE REVIEW OF EXISTING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

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Arkansas Code §6-61-214 requires that the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) review existing academic programs. The goals of existing academic program review are as follows:

1. To establish a process for the statewide review of academic programs.
2. To identify certificate and degree programs not meeting minimum standards of quality and establish schedules for either resolving these concerns or removing the programs for the AHECB approved program inventory.

### **Existing Academic Program Review Process**

All certificate and degree programs offered by public colleges and universities in Arkansas will be reviewed through the Existing Academic Program Review Process. This review process includes the following parameters:

1. All active academic programs will be externally reviewed every 7-10 years. Each institution will submit its recommended program review cycle to ADHE. If changes in the review schedule are necessary, ADHE will be notified.
  - a. Accredited/licensed/state certified programs will follow the usual review practices and schedule of the accrediting/approval body. The site team's written evaluation and institutional response will be sent to ADHE annually upon the due date published by ADHE. Accredited/licensed/state certified programs failing to maintain accreditation/certification/licensure will be subject to further review by ADHE.
  - b. Academic programs which are not program-specific accredited will be reviewed by external reviewers/consultants. Institutions will select a minimum of two reviewers affiliated with programs that are similar in mission and scope to the program under review.
    - Career and Technical Education (CTE) certificate and associate degree programs may allow one reviewer from a local or regional business or industry
    - General education and transfer associate degree programs require a minimum of one reviewer from an Arkansas 4-year university.
    - Bachelor's and graduate degree programs require a minimum of two out-of-state reviewers.
2. At least one consultant is required to conduct a site visit and meet with program faculty, students, and administrators. Programs approved to be delivered online may conduct virtual site visits. Virtual reviewers must be able to virtually view

and confirm all physical sites and resources are adequate and appropriate.

Individuals selected as consultants will be well-qualified and without bias toward institutions under review.

3. The institution will complete a comprehensive self-study that is reviewed by the program consultants. Components of the self-study will include, but not be limited to, information related to: program need/demand, curriculum, faculty, resources, course delivery methods, student outcomes, and recent/planned program improvements.
4. The consultants will submit a written report of findings to the institution. Key information on continued program improvement will be included in the report submitted to ADHE. Specific contents of the consultants' reports will be determined by ADHE staff and Chief Academic Officers (CAOs).

### **Recommendations to Coordinating Board**

1. The consultant's written evaluation and institutional response will be sent to ADHE annually upon the due date published by ADHE.
2. Findings from academic program reviews will be reported annually to the AHECB. ADHE staff will recommend that the AHECB receive the consultants' reports and acknowledge that the contents may be consulted as a resource when decisions must be made by the Board regarding institutional role and scope, budget requests, new program approval, and statewide funding issues. The staff may propose other general resolutions that address statewide issues.
3. A further resolution will encourage institutional administrators, faculty members, and boards of trustees to consider implementing the recommendations made by the consultants for program improvement.
4. If appropriate, a resolution will be offered concerning program deletions, modifications, and/or follow-up. A resolution recommending program deletions will place the program(s) on notice for removal from the AHECB approved program inventory. At the end of the two-year notice period, those programs still not meeting minimum standards will be deleted from the approved program inventory. In extraordinary cases, documentation of legitimate extenuating circumstances may prompt the Coordinating Board to extend the notice period. State general revenue funds may not be used for the operation of a program beyond the termination deadline set by the Coordinating Board. ADHE will not include SSCHs generated by major courses of programs removed from the approved program inventory in its funding formula calculations.
5. The president, chancellor, or chief academic officer may respond to ADHE staff recommendations in writing or request a conference to discuss the recommendations prior to consideration by the Coordinating Board. The

discussions will be limited to those issues that concern the state's interests, i.e., program closings and broader statewide issues that the Coordinating Board may wish to address. Any recommendations in the consultants' reports that are not included in the ADHE staff recommendations would pertain to matters of campus concern and, therefore, would represent suggestions to be considered locally.

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