

Chapter Five: New Program Approval Process

A. Overview of the New Program Approval Process

At its October 29, 2009, meeting, the Coordinating Board adopted rules that significantly streamlined the process of approval for new associate of applied science degree and certificate programs. The adopted rules allow automatic approval of a new associate of applied science degree or certificate program if an institution and its governing board certify that certain criteria are met and documentation is available to support the criteria. The criteria are available in [Coordinating Board Rule 9.93](#).

A new applied associate degree or certificate program that meets these criteria may be requested using the [Certification Form for New Associate of Applied Science and Certificate Programs](#) and is automatically approved if no objections are received during the 30-day public comment period. The institution's program inventory will be updated accordingly, and a letter of approval will be sent to the institution.

If a licensing or accrediting agency requires confirmation that a program is approved by the Coordinating Board, the institution may request that a letter be sent to the appropriate agency affirming Coordinating Board approval.

1. New Program Approval Required

Colleges must submit a Certification Form for new programs under the following circumstances:

- a. to create a certificate, including an advanced technical certificate or a Field of Study Completion certificate, or an associate degree (AAS, AAA) in a program for which the college has no current offerings on its inventory;
- b. to create a certificate, including an advanced technical certificate or a Field of Study Completion certificate, or an associate degree (AAS, AAA) in a program that has been deactivated for over three years;
- c. to create an associate degree in a program in which the college currently only offers certificates; or
- d. to offer a sequence of workforce continuing education courses for which the total number of contact hours is 360 or more. See Chapter Three for more information.

A Certification Form is not required to add certificates to an existing program. For this purpose, an application for program revision may be used. See Chapter Six for more information.

2. Application Deadlines

Program certification forms must be received at least 45 days prior to the planned start date of the program in order to allow an adequate amount of time for public comment.

3. Texas Skill Standards Board Recognition

Institutions are encouraged to apply for [program recognition](#) from the [Texas Skill](#)

[Standards Board](#) (TSSB). This process applies to disciplines for which [skill standards](#) have been recognized. A list of current TSSB-recognized programs and application documentation may be found on the [TSSB-Recognized Community and Technical College Programs](#) page.

B. Application Procedures and Requirements

1. Letter of Intent to Apply for New Workforce Education Program

A letter of intent must be sent to the chair(s) of the appropriate Higher Education Regional Council(s) and to the appropriate local workforce development board(s). The institution is not required to send a copy of this letter to the Coordinating Board. A listing of local workforce development boards is available at www.texasworkforce.org/dirs/wdbs/wdbmap.html. See Figure 5.1, Sample Letter of Intent, at the end of this chapter.

2. Documentation for New Program Development

Institutions should document that the following were reviewed during the new program design and planning process. Coordinating Board staff may request additional documentation during the new program approval process.

a. Documentation of Workforce Demand for the Program

Institutions must document pertinent local, regional, and/or statewide workforce demand for the program. Links to data sources from the Texas Workforce Commission are available at <http://socrates.cdr.state.tx.us/iSocrates/Files/GIPWE.asp>. To satisfy this requirement, institutions must document the program would accomplish at least *two* of the following:

- (1) prepare students for an occupation that has been documented as needed from a strategic planning website such as Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc.;
- (2) prepare students for an occupation that is on the list of targeted, high demand, or priority occupations on the institution's [Local Workforce Development Board](#) website;
- (3) prepare students for an occupation that has been identified as an emerging and/or evolving occupation for the region or state in the Texas Workforce Commission's [Labor Market and Career Information](#);
- (4) offer a program for which the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#), published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, indicates high occupational demand for the next five to 10 years;
- (5) offer a program for which a survey of local or regional employers documents sufficient employment opportunities for the projected enrollment in the program. If a survey is used, documentation should include the type of survey (phone, mail, etc.); description and size of the population; description of sampling techniques; number and location (in district, service area, and/or statewide) of employers surveyed, including the total number of surveys sent and the number returned; number of usable responses; salary ranges and

employment opportunities by job title; and demonstration that the program education or training results in added value or an entry level wage higher than minimum wage and/or a standard of living above poverty;

- (6) offer a program that meets advisory committee recommendations;
- (7) offer a program for an occupation listed in the [Occupational Information Network](#) (O*NET); or
- (8) offer a program that meets new regulatory/accrediting requirements.

b. Assurance of Basic and Workforce Skills

The college must maintain documentation that the appropriate level of academic and workplace skills will be achieved upon completion of the described curriculum. See Chapter Three for more information on identifying program competencies during program development.

c. Enrollment Management Plan

The institution should design a program-specific enrollment management plan. The plan should provide evidence that the proposed new program will have sufficient enrollment to support the program, including the following:

- (1) identification of articulated feeder institutions and programs (e.g., high schools offering programs of study or dual credit courses);
- (2) a strategy for enrollment projection and management that includes student recruitment and program marketing;
- (3) a plan that specifies activities for access, recruitment, retention, and placement of students from special populations;
- (4) a history of enrollment in related continuing education/workforce education courses (if applicable); and
- (5) projected enrollment, including the anticipated number of program majors for the first year of program operation, the anticipated average annual enrollment thereafter, and the anticipated annual number of graduates once the program is fully implemented.

d. Program Linkages and Demonstration of Non-Duplication

Each program (or group of similar programs) should document linkage(s) with public secondary schools and/or other institutions of higher education, as well as non-duplication with similar programs within the higher education region and/or service area. Documentation should include the following (as applicable):

- (1) identification of similar workforce education programs and related training programs in the region/service area. Assistive data are available at the Coordinating Board's [Texas Higher Education Data](#) website;
- (2) documentation that contact has been made with appropriate institutional administrators to initiate program-specific articulation;
- (3) a timeline for the formal initiation of these linkages;

- (4) a statement specifying the form(s) of program linkage(s) that will be initiated [e.g., articulation agreements, programs of study, dual credit; Advanced Technical Credit]; and/or
- (5) documentation that clearly justifies the need for any proposed program that duplicates an existing program in the region or service area.

e. External Agency Approval, Certification, and Accreditation

Institutions wishing to enter contractual agreements with non-regionally accredited organizations should consult [Coordinating Board Rules Chapter 9, Subchapter G](#). The institution must document the process and timeline for any required or voluntary external agency approval or accreditation required to ensure the eligibility of graduates to take the examinations required for certification, licensure, or registration.

f. Assurance of Adequate Funding

The institution should detail the initial resources needed for the program, including existing and additional faculty, facilities, equipment, and an estimate of annual operating costs. The following areas should be addressed:

- (1) Faculty. For applied associate degree programs, at least one full-time faculty member with appropriate credentials must have his or her primary teaching assignment in the major, curriculum area, or concentration. All certificate programs must have at least an assigned program coordinator who is a full-time employee of the college and at least one part-time faculty member with appropriate credentials. See Chapter Two for more information about personnel requirements;
- (2) Facilities. These must be adequate for the delivery of the program. All out-of-district or off-campus resources must be adequate to support a program of quality equal to that of the main campus;
- (3) Equipment. A general list of required equipment, estimated costs, and potential donations must be provided; and
- (4) Five-year Costs and Revenue. Details of how the institution will meet projected new program costs for the first five years, including personnel, operating expenses, and capital outlay, must be provided.

g. Advisory Committee Minutes

The institution must keep on file the minutes of all advisory committee meetings conducted for the planning of the program. The minutes from at least two formal advisory committee meetings held prior to submitting the new program application should clearly document industry support. See Chapter Three for more information about advisory committee requirements.

C. New Program Review Process

When developing a new program, institutions are encouraged to consult with Coordinating Board staff as well as members of other appropriate state agencies and the appropriate

local workforce development board(s).

1. Staff Review of the Application

Coordinating Board staff will make an administrative determination that the application is complete no later than five business days after receiving the application. Completed program applications will be posted for 30 days on the Coordinating Board website for public comment. Applications will be approved or disapproved within one year. However, colleges should receive notification of approval 30-45 days after the comment period ends, provided there are no unresolved objections.

If the Coordinating Board does not act on a completed application, the program will be approved by default on the first anniversary after submission of the application.

2. Objections to Proposed New Programs and Resolution of Disputes

Objections raised by an institution concerning another institution's proposed new career/technical/workforce education program must be submitted in writing to the Assistant Commissioner for Workforce, Academic Affairs, and Research within 30 days from the date the letter of intent is sent to the Higher Education Regional Council. The Assistant Commissioner may delay formal review of the new program until objections are resolved.

Associate degree and certificate programs must be referred to the Coordinating Board if they are the subject of an unresolved grievance or dispute. Other programs may be referred to the Coordinating Board at the Assistant Commissioner's discretion.

3. Implementation Deadline

Programs must be implemented within 18 months of the approved implementation date as stated by the Assistant Commissioner in the approval letter. To pursue new program implementation after that time, the institution must submit a new Program Certification Form.

Figure 5.1: Sample Letter of Intent

[date]

Chair, Higher Education Regional Council
Chair, Local Workforce Development Board

Dear _____:

Please be advised that _____ [college] intends to apply for a new workforce education program leading to a [certificate/associate of applied science or associate of applied arts degree/advanced technical certificate] in [name of major].

It is our intent to submit an application for program approval to the Coordinating Board staff by [applicable due date; see approval process deadlines]. If the program is approved, it is our intent to implement the program during [semester/year].

If members of the Higher Education Regional Council or the Local Workforce Development Board have questions about our intent to offer this program, please inform me as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

[Name of president]

[Name of college]