

ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
PLANNING AND COORDINATION  
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

CHAPTER 300-2-1

PROGRAM REVIEW

TABLE OF CONTENTS

300-2-1-.01	Definitions Recognized by the Commission	To be compiled
300-2-1-.02	Review and Approval or Disapproval of Proposed Postsecondary Course Offerings in Alabama by Non-Alabama Institutions Seeking State Authorization	Circulated for review
300-2-1-.03	Evaluation and Review of New Instructional Program Proposals of Public Postsecondary Institutions	Open Forum 8/4/22
300-2-1-.04	Operational Policy on the Approval, Disapproval, Deferral, and Withdrawal of New Programs of Instruction	Open Forum 8/18/22
300-2-1-.05	Review of Off-Campus Instruction Offered by Public Postsecondary Institutions	Open Forum 9/1/22
300-2-1-.06	Reasonable Extensions and Alterations of Existing Units and Programs of Instruction	Open Forum 9/15/22 10/6/22
300-2-1-.07	Operational Policy on Inactive Status and Reinstatement of Programs	Open Forum 10/6/22
300-2-1-.08	Operational Policy on the Designation of Branch Campus Sites	Not discussed
300-2-1-.09	Guidelines for the Review and Approval of the Consolidation or Merger of Two-Year Postsecondary Institutions	Not discussed
300-2-1-.10	Distance Education	Open Forum 11/3/22
<del>300-2-1-.XX</del>	<del>*New Section* Micro-Credential Designation</del>	Open Forum 12/1/22
300-2-1-.XX	*New Section* Changes to Instructional Role and Units of Instruction	Open Forum 12/15/22

NOTE: This document shows recommended updates for ACHE's Administrative Procedures §300-2-1-.03 ("Evaluation and Review of New Instructional Program Proposals of Public Postsecondary Institutions"). Included are the following versions:

- OVERVIEW of proposed changes to Administrative Procedures §300-2-1-.03
- Clean DRAFT of proposed changes, using red text to indicate language added and black text to indicate language kept from the existing regulation. Comments are included to orient the reader. If recommendations are accepted, the new version of the section would read similar to this version.
- Marked-up DRAFT of the proposed changes, using strikethrough text to show language recommended for deletion, red text to indicate language added, and black text to indicate language kept from the existing regulation. Comments are included to orient the reader.
- EXISTING VERSION of Administrative Procedures §300-2-1-.03, also found at <http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/hged/300-2-1.pdf>

---

## OVERVIEW

300-2-1-.03      Evaluation and Review of New Instructional Program Proposals of Public Postsecondary Institutions

**Last Amended: 1999**

**Synopsis of Section:** This section sets forth the procedures for reviewing proposals for new academic degree programs and applies only to public institutions in Alabama. Separate review processes are given for each degree level, including review by institutional stakeholder groups. Processes for reviewing baccalaureate and graduate proposals include a two-month waiting period between receipt of the Notification of Intent to Submit a Proposal (NISP) and the full proposal.

### **Summary of Recommended Changes:**

- Outdated terminology should be updated.
- Definitions of degree levels should be added to improve clarity.
- Required notification of intent should be eliminated so that proposals can be processed more efficiently.
- Review processes by institutional stakeholders should allow for more flexibility.
- New subsection needed on review of programs above instructional role, adapting existing guidelines into policy.

**Link to Open Forum:** Administrative Procedures, Part 2 (Posted 8/2/22):  
[https://www.ache.edu/?page\\_id=16109](https://www.ache.edu/?page_id=16109)

---

CLEAN DRAFT

300-2-1-.03 **Evaluation and Review of New Instructional Program Proposals of Public Postsecondary Institutions.**

(1) **Purpose:** The purpose of reviewing new program proposals of public postsecondary institutions is to ensure that such proposals meet the criteria established by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

(2) **Commission Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to establish policies and procedures for reviewing and taking action on all new instructional program proposals for Alabama's public postsecondary institutions.

(3) **Scope and Definitions:** This section shall apply to academic programs leading toward one of the following degree designations as defined within the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS):

(a) Level 2, Long certificate (CER): an award granted on completion of a program consisting of at least 30 but no more than 59 semester hours of undergraduate coursework. Typically, CERs consist of technical coursework and are offered by community and technical colleges.

(b) Level 3, Associate degree: an award granted on completion of an educational program that requires at least 60 semester hours of undergraduate coursework or the equivalent, with a general education component consisting of at least 15 semester hours or the equivalent.

(c) Level 5, Baccalaureate degree: an undergraduate award granted on completion of an educational program that requires at least 120 semester hours of undergraduate coursework or the equivalent, with a general education component consisting of at least 30 semester hours or the equivalent.

(d) Level 7, Master's degree: a graduate award granted on completion of an educational program that requires at least 30 semester hours of post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional coursework.

(e) Level 8, Education Specialist (EdS): Within the field of education, a degree that requires completion of an organized program beyond the master's degree but does not

**Commented [RM1]:** Scope and definitions added for clarity. Degree definitions adapted from IPEDS glossary:  
<https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary>

meet the requirements of an academic degree at the doctorate level.

(f) Level 17, Research Doctorate: A Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) or other doctor's degree that requires advanced work beyond the master's level, including the preparation and defense of a dissertation based on original research, or the planning and execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement. ACHE includes Doctor of Education (EdD) in this level.

(g) Level 18, Professional Doctorate: A doctor's degree that is conferred upon completion of a program providing the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice.

(h) Level 19, Doctorate Other: A doctor's degree that does not meet the definition of a doctor's degree - research/scholarship or a doctor's degree - professional practice

Commented [RM2]: Section combined with below

(4) **Preparation and Submission of Proposals:** Program proposals will be prepared by the institutions in keeping with procedures set forth below and with guidelines published by Commission staff. Program proposals may be submitted electronically to the Commission at any time. Receipt of a proposal for review by the Commission does not imply approval of the program.

(5) **Procedures for the Evaluation and Review of New Two-Year College Programs of Instruction:** In the case of proposals from community, junior, and technical colleges, evaluation and review of new program proposals will occur in conjunction with the Alabama Community College System (ACCS).

Commented [RM3]: ADPE updated to ACCS throughout

(a) Review of Program Applications: ACCS will conduct a review of the program application. This review will determine whether the program is denied, whether additional information is required, or whether the program is eligible for further consideration. If approved, ACCS will send the program application to the Commission staff for review, which shall include consideration of program design, state and regional needs, and stewardship of resources. Should additional information or program

Commented [RM4]: ISPA/NISP submission eliminated throughout.

modifications be deemed necessary, ACCS will provide such for consideration.

(b) Completion of Staff Recommendation and Commission Action on the Program: Completion of the Commission staff recommendation and Commission action on the program will occur within ninety days after receipt of the formal request. Commission staff recommendations will encompass expected program outcomes that will be assessed in subsequent post-implementation review.

(c) Review of Programs Designed to Meet the Needs of Business and Industry: The purpose of these procedures is to expedite the review of new programs designed to meet the immediate needs of business and industry. For such programs, the proposing college will submit a program application to ACCS, providing evidence of the immediate need of a specific business or industry which can be met only through the development and implementation of the proposed instructional program. Completion of the Commission staff recommendation and Commission action on the program will occur within ninety days after receipt of the program proposal, unless a longer time frame is recommended for the institution to address deficiencies within the proposal. Commission staff recommendations will encompass expected program outcomes that will be assessed in subsequent post-implementation review.

Commented [RM5]: Time frame adjusted to reflect current practice. Flexibility for extending the review period added in.

(d) Provision for Reconsideration of Programs Disapproved by the Commission: Upon the request of the institution, ACCS may request a second review of the program six months after the program has been disapproved by the Commission on the basis of substantial additional information bearing on previous concerns and issues.

---

(6) **Procedures for the Evaluation and Review of New Baccalaureate Programs of Instruction:** The evaluation and review of new baccalaureate programs shall be conducted with the participation of the University Chief Academic Officers.

(a) Submission and Peer Review of the Program Proposal: The program proposal may be submitted electronically to the Commission at any time. In preparation for each Commission meeting, Commission staff will contact the chair of the University Chief Academic

Commented [RM6]: Separate NISP submission eliminated to streamline submission process.

Officers to request feedback on baccalaureate proposals from institutional representatives. As appropriate, Commission staff may request responses from the proposing institution to issues raised in the peer review and may recommend changes to improve the proposal.

(b) Review of the Program by Commission Staff: Commission staff will consider the following factors in its review, along with other factors as appropriate:

1. The objectives of the proposed program in relation to student demand and the workforce needs of the state;
2. The fit of the program within the institution's mission and role;
3. Resources required and the capacity of the institution to deliver the program as proposed;
4. Potential for unnecessary duplication of offerings beyond core academic programs; and
5. Opportunities for collaboration with other institutions that offer similar or related programs.

(c) Staff Recommendation and Commission Action on the Proposed Program: Completion of the staff recommendation and action by the Commission will occur within ninety days after receipt of the program submission, unless a longer time frame is recommended for the institution to address deficiencies within the proposal. The staff recommendation will encompass expected program outcomes that will be monitored over the post-implementation period, as described in §300-2-1-.04. Commission approval of a program requires agreement by the institution to discontinue the program if expected outcomes are not reached within the established time frame.

---

(7) **Procedures for the Evaluation and Review of New Graduate Programs of Instruction:** The evaluation and review of new master's, education specialist, and doctorate programs shall be conducted with the participation of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans (ACGD).

**Commented [RM7]:** Review factors included for clarity.

Note that #4 mentions potential unnecessary duplication for undergraduate programs.

**Commented [RM8]:** Flexibility for extending the review period added in.

**Commented [RM9]:** Separate NISP submission eliminated to expedite proposal review process.

(a) Submission and Peer Review of the Program Proposal: The program proposal may be submitted electronically to the Commission at any time. In preparation for each Commission meeting, Commission staff will contact the ACGD chair to request members' feedback on graduate proposals, especially around academic quality of the proposed program, potential student demand for the proposed program, and additional capacity within similar programs offered by the responding institution. ACGD shall establish the format and procedures for peer review. As appropriate, Commission staff may request responses from the proposing institution to issues raised in the peer review and may recommend changes to improve the proposal.

**Commented [RM10]:** Peer review process simplified to allow for flexibility.

**Commented [RM11]:** Considerations for peer review specified at the recommendations of ACGD. This does not prevent ACGD from considering additional factors and submitting feedback to ACHE.

(b) Review of the Program by Commission Staff: A higher level of scrutiny will be given to graduate program proposals due to increased resources and capacity that such programs require. Commission staff will consider the following factors in its review, along with other factors as appropriate:

**Commented [RM12]:** Note that section was modified to indicate that graduate programs will receive a higher level of scrutiny than undergraduate programs.

1. The objectives of the proposed program in relation to student demand and the workforce needs of the state;
2. The fit of the program within the institution's mission and role;
3. Resources required and the capacity of the institution to deliver the program as proposed;
4. Potential for unnecessary duplication of offerings; and
5. Opportunities for collaboration with other institutions that offer similar or related programs.

**Commented [RM13]:** Review factors included for clarity.

Note that #4 mentions potential unnecessary duplication for graduate programs, but does not mention core programs as the undergraduate section does.

(c) Staff Recommendation and Commission Action on the Proposed Program: Completion of the staff recommendation and action by the Commission will occur within ninety days after receipt of the program submission, unless a longer time frame is recommended for the institution to address deficiencies within the proposal. The staff recommendation will encompass expected program outcomes that will be monitored over the post-implementation period, as described in §300-2-1-.04. Commission approval of a program requires

**Commented [RM14]:** Flexibility for extending the review period added in.

agreement by the institution to discontinue the program if expected outcomes are not reached within the established time frame.

**(8) Consideration of Program Proposals above the Instructional Role Level Recognized by the Commission:**

(a) The Commission may review program proposals in a single discipline at a level higher than an institution's Commission-recognized instructional degree level, so long as the proposed program accords with the institution's description in state statute. Proposals for programs that are outside the statutory description of the institution will be considered incomplete and returned to the proposing institution.

(b) An institution may seek approval for a proposal above its recognized instructional role under one of the following provisions:

1. Strategic Benefit: Beyond standard criteria for program review stated above, the proposed program must demonstrate that it contributes a "strategic benefit" to the configuration of current public institution offerings in the State of Alabama. "Strategic benefit" is defined as significant and meaningful overall benefit for the state of Alabama, and includes:

(i) Alabama's need for graduates in the field;

(ii) The program's academic quality and articulation with the institution's academic mission;

(iii) Demonstration that the proposed program will not result in unnecessary duplication of offerings [Alabama code 16-5-8(4)(b)] with other Alabama Public Universities;

(iv) Justification of having no anticipated/projected adverse influence on enrollments at public institution(s) already having that program [as determined by the Academic Program Inventory CIP code], particularly those within 50 miles of the proposing institution or within that service area;

**Commented [RM15]:** New section added from existing "Guidelines for Instructional Role"  
[https://ache.edu/ACHE\\_Reports/Forms/Program\\_Request/Instr-Role.pdf](https://ache.edu/ACHE_Reports/Forms/Program_Request/Instr-Role.pdf)



(v) Priority consideration being accorded to institution(s) with seniority in that service area [Alabama Code 16-5-10];

(vi) Demonstration that the proposed program will serve a strong, distinct, and well-documented societal, educational, and economic need for Alabama.

2. Specialized accreditation requirement: The Commission will review program proposals in a single discipline at a level higher than an institution's Commission-recognized instructional degree level if an elevation in degree level for an existing program is required by the recognized accrediting agency for that single discipline program and must be attained to continue the program's accreditation.
- (c) During the review process, if staff determines that a higher degree program proposal does not meet one of the criteria above (strategic benefit or accreditation), the staff recommendation will be to "not approve" the proposal.
- (d) If a single discipline elevation proposal does not receive an approve vote, the institution may not resubmit that program's revised single discipline proposal until at least one year has elapsed from date of refusal.
- (e) Receipt of a higher degree-level proposal for review by the Commission does not imply approval of the program. The proposal still will be subject to the regular academic program review process, vote by the Commission, and post-implementation procedures and conditions.
- (f) An institution submitting a higher degree level program(s) in a single discipline will be evaluated and voted on by the Alabama Graduate School Deans or Chief Academic Officers.
- (g) An institution may be approved for up to three higher degree-level programs before seeking an expansion of instructional role. Successive single discipline program implementation requests shall be evaluated sequentially in that demonstration of prior success is a substantive factor in subsequent

**Commented [RM16]:** "Strategic benefit" defined based on language in existing guidelines. Note #iii, iv, and v deal with duplication.

review process(es). An institution is not "automatically" granted three single discipline program request opportunities.

---

- (9) **Possible Commission Actions on New Program**  
**Proposals:** The Commission may take one of three actions on proposed programs: disapproval, approval, or deferral.
- (10) **Program Implementation:** Once program approval is given by the Commission, the institution must implement the program within two years of the proposed implementation date, unless another implementation time frame is granted.

**Author:** William O. Blow  
**Statutory Authority:** Code of Ala. 1975, §§16-5-1, et seq.  
**History:** Filed December 10, 1985. **Amended:** Filed April 10, 1989; August 18, 1989; December 5, 1990. **Amended:** Filed March 12, 1996; effective April 16, 1996. **Repealed and New Rule:** Filed November 5, 1999; effective December 10, 1999.  
New Rule XXXXXX

---

**MARKED-UP DRAFT**

**300-2-1-.03 Evaluation and Review of New Instructional Program Proposals of Public Postsecondary Institutions.**

(1) **Purpose:** The purpose of reviewing new program proposals of public postsecondary institutions is to ensure that such proposals meet the criteria established by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

(2) **Commission Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to establish policies and procedures for reviewing and taking action on all new instructional program proposals for Alabama's public postsecondary institutions.

(3) **Scope and Definitions:** This section shall apply to academic programs leading toward one of the following degree designations as defined within the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS):

(a) Level 2, Long certificate (CER): an award granted on completion of a program consisting of at least 30 but no more than 59 semester hours of undergraduate coursework. Typically, CERs consist of technical coursework and are offered by community and technical colleges.

(b) Level 3, Associate degree: an award granted on completion of an educational program that requires at least 60 semester hours of undergraduate coursework or the equivalent, with a general education component consisting of at least 15 semester hours or the equivalent.

(c) Level 5, Baccalaureate degree: an undergraduate award granted on completion of an educational program that requires at least 120 semester hours of undergraduate coursework or the equivalent, with a general education component consisting of at least 30 semester hours or the equivalent.

(d) Level 7, Master's degree: a graduate award granted on completion of an educational program that requires at least 30 semester hours of post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional coursework.

(e) Level 8, Education Specialist (EdS): Within the field of education, a degree that requires completion of an organized program beyond the master's degree but does not

**Commented [RM1]:** Scope and definitions added for clarity. Degree definitions adapted from IPEDS glossary:  
<https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary>

meet the requirements of an academic degree at the doctorate level.

(f) Level 17, Research Doctorate: A Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) or other doctor's degree that requires advanced work beyond the master's level, including the preparation and defense of a dissertation based on original research, or the planning and execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement. ACHE includes Doctor of Education (EdD) in this level.

(g) Level 18, Professional Doctorate: A doctor's degree that is conferred upon completion of a program providing the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential, or license required for professional practice.

(h) Level 19, Doctorate Other: A doctor's degree that does not meet the definition of a doctor's degree - research/scholarship or a doctor's degree - professional practice

~~Preparation of Proposals: Program proposals will be prepared by the institutions according to the Commission's Procedures for the Review of New Programs of Instruction adopted in May 1989, as amended.~~

Commented [RM2]: Section combined with below

~~(2) (4) Preparation and Submission of Proposals: Program proposals will be prepared by the institutions in keeping with procedures set forth below and with guidelines published by Commission staff. Program proposals may be submitted electronically to the Commission at any time. Two signed copies of the proposal must be submitted to the Commission staff with a transmittal letter signed by the institution's chief executive officer. Receipt of a proposal for review by the Commission does not imply approval of the program.~~

~~(3) (5) Procedures for the Evaluation and Review of New Two-Year College Programs of Instruction: In the case of proposals from community, junior, and technical colleges, evaluation and review of new program proposals will occur in conjunction with the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education (ADPE) Alabama Community College System (ACCS).~~

Commented [RM3]: ADPE updated to ACCS throughout

~~(a) Review of "Intent to Submit a Program Application (ISPA)": The institution proposing the program will submit an ISPA to ADPE. ADPE will acknowledge receipt of the ISPA and advise the college as to the adequacy of the information. ADPE~~

~~will send the eligible ISPA to the Commission. The ADPE staff and the Commission staff will conduct joint preliminary review of the ISPA. Following the joint review, ADPE will advise the proposing college that the program is or is not eligible for further consideration.~~

Commented [RM4]: ISPA/NISP submission eliminated throughout.

~~(b)(a) Review of Program Applications: If it is determined that the program is eligible for further consideration, the college may submit a program application (proposal) to ADPE. ADPE-ACCS will conduct an independent preliminary review of the program application. This review will determine whether the program is denied, whether additional information is required, or whether the program is eligible for further consideration. ADPE-If approved, ACCS will send the eligible program application to the Commission staff for review, which shall include consideration of program design, state and regional needs, and stewardship of resources. of need and duplication factors. Following review by the Commission staff, ADPE and the Commission staff will conduct a joint preliminary review of the application. Should additional information or program modifications be deemed necessary, ADPE-ACCS will provide such for consideration.~~

~~(e)(b) Completion of Staff Recommendation and Commission Action on the Program: Following the joint preliminary review, ADPE will formally request Commission approval of the program. Completion of the Commission staff recommendation and Commission action on the program will occur within ninety days after receipt of the formal request. Commission staff recommendations will encompass expected program outcomes which that will be assessed in subsequent program post-implementation review. Commission approval of a program is based upon agreement of ADPE and the Alabama State Board of Education to discontinue the program if the expected outcomes are not reached within the established time frame.~~

~~1. (c) Review of Programs Designed to Meet the Needs of Business and Industry: The purpose of these procedures is to expedite the review of new programs designed to meet the immediate needs of business and industry. For such programs, the statement of "Intent to Submit a Program Application" (ISPA) is not necessary. The proposing college will submit a program application to ADPEACCS, providing evidence of the immediate need of a specific business or industry which can be met only through~~

the development and implementation of the proposed instructional program. ~~ADPE will acknowledge receipt.~~

~~2. \_\_\_\_\_~~

~~3. ADPE will conduct an immediate review of the application. This review will determine whether the program is denied, whether additional information is required, or whether the program is eligible for further consideration.~~

~~4. \_\_\_\_\_~~

~~5. ADPE will send the eligible program application to the Commission for review of need and duplication factors.~~

~~6. \_\_\_\_\_~~

~~7. Following receipt of the application by the Commission, ADPE staff and the Commission staff will conduct a joint preliminary review of the proposal. Should additional information or program modifications be deemed necessary, ADPE will provide such for consideration.~~

~~8. \_\_\_\_\_~~

~~Following the joint preliminary review, ADPE will formally request Commission approval of the program. Completion of the Commission staff recommendation and Commission action on the program will occur within sixty-ninety days after receipt of the formal request program proposal, unless a longer time frame is recommended for the institution to address deficiencies within the proposal. Commission staff recommendations will encompass expected program outcomes that which will be assessed in subsequent program post-implementation review.~~

Commented [RM5]: Time frame adjusted to reflect current practice. Flexibility for extending the review period added in.

(d) Provision for Reconsideration of Programs Disapproved by the Commission: Upon the request of the institution, ~~ADPE-ACCS~~ may request a second review of the program six months after the program has been disapproved by the Commission on the basis of substantial additional information bearing on previous concerns and issues. ~~If the Commission disapproves a second time, and ADPE does not agree with the Commission's rationale, ADPE may present the program application to the Alabama State Board of Education. The State Board of Education may then request a second reconsideration by the Commission.~~

~~(4)(6)~~ **Procedures for the Evaluation and Review of New Baccalaureate Programs of Instruction:** The evaluation and review ~~is of new baccalaureate programs shall be~~ conducted with the

participation of the University Chief Academic Officers.

~~(a) Submission and Review of the "Notification of Intent to Submit a Proposal" (NISP): The institution planning to submit a program proposal will submit a NISP to the Commission at least two months prior to submission of the program proposal. The NISP will also be sent by the institution to each university chief academic officer. Comments on the NISP by the chief academic officers will be sent to the Commission within three weeks of the receipt of the NISP. Within four weeks of receipt of the NISP, Commission staff and representatives of the proposing institution will meet to discuss institutional comments on the NISP and the program objectives in relation to the needs of the state; to consider any program duplication and explore possible means of collaboration; and to evaluate the centrality of the program to the institution's mission and role.~~

**Commented [RM6]:** Separate NISP submission eliminated to streamline submission process.

~~(b)~~ (a) Submission and Peer Review of the Program Proposal: The program proposal may be submitted electronically to the Commission at any time ~~beyond two months of the NISP submission.~~ In preparation for each Commission meeting, Commission staff will contact the chair of the University Chief Academic Officers to request feedback on baccalaureate proposals from institutional representatives.~~The proposing institution will send a copy of the proposal to each university chief academic officer. Peer review of the proposal with specific questions and recommendations will be completed within one month of the proposal submission. Representatives of the proposing institution and Commission staff members will meet to review questions and recommendations derived from the peer review and to reach agreement on any necessary proposal changes. As appropriate, Commission staff may request responses from the proposing institution to issues raised in the peer review and may recommend changes to improve the proposal.~~

(b) Review of the Program by Commission Staff: Commission staff will consider the following factors in its review, along with other factors as appropriate:

1. The objectives of the proposed program in relation to student demand and the workforce needs of the state;
2. The centrality/fit of the program to within the institution's mission and role;

3. Resources required and the capacity of the institution to deliver the program as proposed;
4. Potential for unnecessary duplication of offerings beyond core academic programs; and
5. Opportunities for collaboration with other institutions that offer similar or related programs.

(c) Staff Recommendation and Commission Action on the Proposed Program: Completion of the staff recommendation and action by the Commission will occur within ninety days after receipt of the program submission, unless a longer time frame is recommended for the institution to address deficiencies within the proposal~~two months of the peer-review~~. The staff recommendation will encompass expected program outcomes ~~that which~~ will be ~~assessed in subsequent program review~~monitored over the post-implementation period, as described in §300-2-1-.04. Commission approval of a program requires agreement by the institution to discontinue the program if expected outcomes are not reached within the established time frame.

**Commented [RM7]:** Review factors included for clarity.

Note that #4 mentions potential unnecessary duplication for undergraduate programs.

**Commented [RM8]:** Flexibility for extending the review period added in.

~~(5)-(7)~~ **Procedures for the Evaluation and Review of New Graduate Programs of Instruction:** The evaluation and review of new ~~graduate programs is~~master's, education specialist, and doctorate programs shall be conducted with the participation of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans (ACGD).

~~Submission and Review of the "Notification of Intent to Submit a Proposal" (NISP): The institution proposing the program will submit a NISP to the Commission at least two months prior to submission of the program proposal. The NISP will also be sent by the institution to each member of the ACGD. Institutional comments on the NISP will be sent to the Commission within three weeks of the receipt of the NISP. Within four weeks of receipt of the NISP, Commission staff and representatives of the proposing institution will meet to discuss institutional comments on the NISP and the program objectives in relation to the needs of the state; to consider any program duplication and explore possible means of collaboration; and to evaluate the centrality of the program to institution's mission and role.~~

**Commented [RM9]:** Separate NISP submission eliminated to expedite proposal review process.

(a) Submission and Peer Review of the Program



Proposal: The program proposal may be submitted electronically to the Commission at any time. In preparation for each Commission meeting, Commission staff will contact the ACGD chair to request members' feedback on graduate proposals, especially around academic quality of the proposed program, potential student demand for the proposed program, and additional capacity within similar programs offered by the responding institution. ACGD shall establish the format and procedures for peer review. As appropriate, Commission staff may request responses from the proposing institution to issues raised in the peer review and may recommend changes to improve the proposal.

**Commented [RM10]:** Peer review process simplified to allow for flexibility.

~~(a) The program proposal may be submitted to the Commission at any time beyond two months of the NISP submission.~~

**Commented [RM11]:** Considerations for peer review specified at the recommendations of ACGD. This does not prevent ACGD from considering additional factors and submitting feedback to ACHE.

~~1. The proposing institution will send a copy of the proposal to each member of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans (ACGD). Within three weeks of receipt, the ACGD will evaluate the proposal and seek campus input on criteria for new programs and to provide questions and recommendations to strengthen the proposal if it is approved.~~

~~2. The Chair of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans will summarize questions and will list any recommendations. This summary will be sent to the Executive Board of the ACGD for feedback and approval. The Chair will forward the approved questions and recommendations to the proposing institution for response.~~

~~3. Responses from the proposing institution will be sent to the Chair of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans within 2 weeks of receiving the ACGD's approved questions and recommendations.~~

~~4. Within one week of receipt of the proposing institution's responses, the Chair of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans will send the ACGD members the institutional responses to questions and recommendations. Each graduate dean will vote to approve each recommendation and the overall proposal. Each member will indicate if institutional presentation before the ACGD is needed. A majority vote is needed to require an institutional presentation.~~

~~5. The Chair of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans will send the final version of the questions and~~

~~recommendations to the ACCD members within one week. Prior to the Commission's second meeting with the proposers, the Chair of the ACCD will inform the Commission of the vote (considered as a "preliminary vote" if there will be an institutional presentation) and reports whether or not the ACCD requires an institutional presentation. There will be a presentation at a regular ACCD meeting if the proposers request it and/or the ACCD requires it. There will not be an institutional presentation if the proposers do not request it and the ACCD indicates it is not needed.~~

~~6. Within two weeks of peer review, a second meeting of the representatives of the proposing institution and Commission staff members will be held. The purpose of the meeting is to review questions and recommendations derived from the peer review and to reach agreement on any necessary proposal changes.~~

(b) Review of the Program by Commission Staff: A higher level of scrutiny will be given to graduate program proposals due to increased resources and capacity that such programs require. Commission staff will consider the following factors in its review, along with other factors as appropriate:

1. The objectives of the proposed program in relation to student demand and the workforce needs of the state;
2. The fit of the program within the institution's mission and role;
3. Resources required and the capacity of the institution to deliver the program as proposed;
4. Potential for unnecessary duplication of offerings; and
5. Opportunities for collaboration with other institutions that offer similar or related programs.

(c) Staff Recommendation and Commission Action on the Proposed Program: Completion of the staff recommendation and action by the Commission will occur within ninety days after receipt of the program submission, unless a longer time frame is recommended for the institution to address deficiencies within the proposal. ~~two months of the peer-~~

**Commented [RM12]:** Note that section was modified to indicate that graduate programs will receive a higher level of scrutiny than undergraduate programs.

**Commented [RM13]:** Review factors included for clarity.

Note that #4 mentions potential unnecessary duplication for graduate programs, but does not mention core programs as the undergraduate section does.

**Commented [RM14]:** Flexibility for extending the review period added in.

~~review.~~ The staff recommendation will encompass expected program outcomes that will be monitored over the post-implementation period, as described in §300-2-1-.04. ~~which will be assessed in subsequent program review.~~ Commission approval of a program requires agreement by the institution to discontinue the program if expected outcomes are not reached within the established time frame. ~~The evaluation of program outcomes will entail one or more brief progress reports to the Commission.~~

**(8) Consideration of Program Proposals above the Instructional Role Level Recognized by the Commission:**

(a) The Commission may review program proposals in a single discipline at a level higher than an institution's Commission-recognized instructional degree level, so long as the proposed program accords ~~is in agreement~~ with the institution's description in state statute. Proposals for programs that are outside the statutory description of the institution will be considered incomplete and returned to the proposing institution.

(b) An institution may seek approval for a proposal above its recognized instructional role under one of the following provisions:

1. Strategic Benefit: Beyond standard criteria for program review stated above, the proposed program must demonstrate that it contributes a "strategic benefit" to the configuration of current public institution offerings in the State of Alabama. "Strategic benefit" is defined as significant and meaningful overall benefit for the state of Alabama, and includes:

- (i) Alabama's need for graduates in the field;
- (ii) The program's academic quality and articulation with the institution's academic mission;
- (iii) Demonstration that the proposed program will not result in unnecessary ~~demonstrating~~ ~~no substantive needless~~ duplication of offerings [Alabama code 16-5-8(4) (b)] with other Alabama Public Universities;

**Commented [RM15]:** New section added from existing "Guidelines for Instructional Role"  
[https://ache.edu/ACHE\\_Reports/Forms/Program\\_Request/Instr-Role.pdf](https://ache.edu/ACHE_Reports/Forms/Program_Request/Instr-Role.pdf)

(iv) Justification of having no anticipated/ projected adverse influence on enrollments at public institution(s) already having that program [as determined by the Academic Program Inventory CIP code], particularly those within 50 miles of the proposing institution or within that service area;

(v) Priority consideration being accorded to institution(s) with seniority in that service area [Alabama Code 16-5-10];

(vi) Demonstration that the proposed program ~~must will serve and provide documentation of~~ a strong, distinct, and well-documented societal, educational, and economic need for Alabama.

2. Specialized accreditation requirement: The Commission will review program proposals in a single discipline at a level higher than an institution's Commission-recognized instructional degree level if an elevation in degree level for an existing program is required by the recognized accrediting agency for that single discipline program and must be attained to continue the program's accreditation.

(c) During the review process, if staff determines that a higher degree program proposal does not meet one of the criteria above (strategic benefit or accreditation), the staff recommendation will be to "not approve" the proposal.

(d) If a single discipline elevation proposal does not receive an approve vote, the institution may not resubmit that program's revised single discipline proposal until at least one year has elapsed from date of refusal.

(e) Receipt of a higher degree-level proposal for review by the Commission does not imply approval of the program. The proposal still will be subject to the regular academic program review process, vote by the Commission, and post-implementation procedures and conditions.

**Commented [RM16]:** "Strategic benefit" defined based on language in existing guidelines. Note #iii, iv, and v deal with duplication.

(f) An institution submitting a higher degree level program(s) in a single discipline will be evaluated and voted on by the Alabama Graduate School Deans or Chief Academic Officers.

(g) An institution may be approved for up to three higher degree-level programs before seeking an expansion of instructional role. Successive single discipline program implementation requests shall be evaluated sequentially in that demonstration of prior success is a substantive factor in subsequent review process(es). An institution is not "automatically" granted three single discipline program request opportunities.

(9) **Possible Commission Actions on New Program**

**Proposals:** The Commission may take one of three actions on proposed programs: disapproval, approval, or deferral.

(10) **Program Implementation:** ~~If Once program approval is given by the Commission, the institution may implement the program at any time~~ must implement the program within two years of the proposed implementation date, unless another implementation time frame is granted.

**Author:** William O. Blow

**Statutory Authority:** Code of Ala. 1975, §§16-5-1, et seq.

**History:** Filed December 10, 1985. **Amended:** Filed April 10, 1989; August 18, 1989; December 5, 1990. **Amended:** Filed March 12, 1996; effective April 16, 1996. **Repealed and**

**New Rule:** Filed November 5, 1999; effective December 10, 1999. New Rule XXXXXX

## EXISTING VERSION

### 300-2-1-.03 Evaluation and Review of New Instructional Program Proposals of Public Postsecondary Institutions.

(1) **Purpose:** The purpose of reviewing new program proposals of public postsecondary institutions is to insure that such proposals meet the criteria established by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

(2) **Commission Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to establish policies and procedures for reviewing and taking action on all new instructional program proposals for Alabama's public postsecondary institutions.

(3) **Preparation of Proposals:** Program proposals will be prepared by the institutions according to the Commission's Procedures for the Review of New Programs of Instruction adopted in May 1989, as amended.

(4) **Submission of Proposals:** Program proposals may be submitted to the Commission at any time. Two signed copies of the proposal must be submitted to the Commission staff with a transmittal letter signed by the institution's chief executive officer.

(5) **Procedures for the Evaluation and Review of New Two-Year College Programs of Instruction:** In the case of proposals from community, junior, and technical colleges, evaluation and review of new program proposals will occur in conjunction with the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education (ADPE).

(a) Review of "Intent to Submit a Program Application (ISPA)": The institution proposing the program will submit an ISPA to ADPE. ADPE will acknowledge receipt of the ISPA and advise the college as to the adequacy of the information. ADPE will send the eligible ISPA to the Commission. The ADPE staff and the Commission staff will conduct joint preliminary review of the ISPA. Following the joint review, ADPE will advise the proposing college that the program is or is not eligible for further consideration.

(b) Review of Program Applications: If it is determined that the program is eligible for further

## *Existing Version*

consideration, the college may submit a program application (proposal) to ADPE. ADPE will conduct an independent preliminary review of the program application. This review will determine whether the program is denied, whether additional information is required, or whether the program is eligible for further consideration. ADPE will send the eligible program application to the Commission staff for review of need and duplication factors. Following review by the Commission staff, ADPE and the Commission staff will conduct a joint preliminary review of the application. Should additional information or program modifications be deemed necessary, ADPE will provide such for consideration.

(c) Completion of Staff Recommendation and Commission Action on the Program: Following the joint preliminary review, ADPE will formally request Commission approval of the program. Completion of the Commission staff recommendation and Commission action on the program will occur within ninety days after receipt of the formal request. Commission staff recommendations will encompass expected program outcomes which will be assessed in subsequent program review. Commission approval of a program is based upon agreement of ADPE and the Alabama State Board of Education to discontinue the program if the expected outcomes are not reached within the established time frame.

(d) Review of Programs Designed to Meet the Needs of Business and Industry: The purpose of these procedures is to expedite the review of new programs designed to meet the immediate needs of business and industry.

1. For such programs, the statement of "Intent to Submit a Program Application" (ISPA) is not necessary. The proposing college will submit a program application to ADPE, providing evidence of the immediate need of a specific business or industry which can be met only through the development and implementation of the proposed instructional program. ADPE will acknowledge receipt.

2. ADPE will conduct an immediate review of the application. This review will determine whether the program is denied, whether additional information is required, or whether the program is eligible for further consideration.

3. ADPE will send the eligible program application to the Commission for review of need and duplication factors.

4. Following receipt of the application by the

## *Existing Version*

Commission, ADPE staff and the Commission staff will conduct a joint preliminary review of the proposal. Should additional information or program modifications be deemed necessary, ADPE will provide such for consideration.

5. Following the joint preliminary review, ADPE will formally request Commission approval of the program. Completion of the Commission staff recommendation and Commission action on the program will occur within sixty days after receipt of the formal request.

(e) Provision for Reconsideration of Programs Disapproved by the Commission: Upon the request of the institution, ADPE may request a second review of the program six months after the program has been disapproved by the Commission on the basis of substantial additional information bearing on previous concerns and issues. If the Commission disapproves a second time, and ADPE does not agree with the Commission's rationale, ADPE may present the program application to the Alabama State Board of Education. The State Board of Education may then request a second reconsideration by the Commission.

(6) **Procedures for the Evaluation and Review of New Baccalaureate Programs of Instruction:** The evaluation and review is conducted with the participation of the University Chief Academic Officers.

(a) Submission and Review of the "Notification of Intent to Submit a Proposal" (NISP): The institution planning to submit a program proposal will submit a NISP to the Commission at least two months prior to submission of the program proposal. The NISP will also be sent by the institution to each university chief academic officer. Comments on the NISP by the chief academic officers will be sent to the Commission within three weeks of the receipt of the NISP. Within four weeks of receipt of the NISP, Commission staff and representatives of the proposing institution will meet to discuss institutional comments on the NISP and the program objectives in relation to the needs of the state; to consider any program duplication and explore possible means of collaboration; and to evaluate the centrality of the program to the institution's mission and role.

(b) Submission and Review of the Program Proposal: The program proposal may be submitted to the Commission at any time beyond two months of the NISP submission. The proposing institution will send a copy of the proposal to each university



## *Existing Version*

chief academic officer. Peer review of the proposal with specific questions and recommendations will be completed within one month of the proposal submission. Representatives of the proposing institution and Commission staff members will meet to review questions and recommendations derived from the peer review and to reach agreement on any necessary proposal changes.

(c) **Staff Recommendation and Commission Action on the Proposed Program:** Completion of the staff recommendation and action by the Commission will occur within two months of the peer review. The staff recommendation will encompass expected program outcomes which will be assessed in subsequent program review. Commission approval of a program requires agreement by the institution to discontinue the program if expected outcomes are not reached within the established time frame.

(7) **Procedures for the Evaluation and Review of New Graduate Programs of Instruction:** The evaluation and review of new graduate programs is conducted with the participation of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans (ACGD).

(a) **Submission and Review of the "Notification of Intent to Submit a Proposal" (NISP):** The institution proposing the program will submit a NISP to the Commission at least two months prior to submission of the program proposal. The NISP will also be sent by the institution to each member of the ACGD. Institutional comments on the NISP will be sent to the Commission within three weeks of the receipt of the NISP. Within four weeks of receipt of the NISP, Commission staff and representatives of the proposing institution will meet to discuss institutional comments on the NISP and the program objectives in relation to the needs of the state; to consider any program duplication and explore possible means of collaboration; and to evaluate the centrality of the program to institution's mission and role.

(b) **Submission and Review of the Program Proposal:** The program proposal may be submitted to the Commission at any time beyond two months of the NISP submission.

1. The proposing institution will send a copy of the proposal to each member of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans (ACGD). Within three weeks of receipt, the ACGD will evaluate the proposal and seek campus input on criteria for new programs and to provide questions and recommendations to strengthen the proposal if it is approved.

*Existing Version*

2. The Chair of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans will summarize questions and will list any recommendations. This summary will be sent to the Executive Board of the ACGD for feedback and approval. The Chair will forward the approved questions and recommendations to the proposing institution for response.

3. Responses from the proposing institution will be sent to the Chair of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans within 2 weeks of receiving the ACGD's approved questions and recommendations.

4. Within one week of receipt of the proposing institution's responses, the Chair of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans will send the ACGD members the institutional responses to questions and recommendations. Each graduate dean will vote to approve each recommendation and the overall proposal. Each member will indicate if institutional presentation before the ACGD is needed. A majority vote is needed to require an institutional presentation.

5. The Chair of the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans will send the final version of the questions and recommendations to the ACGD members within one week. Prior to the Commission's second meeting with the proposers, the Chair of the ACGD will inform the Commission of the vote (considered as a "preliminary vote" if there will be an institutional presentation) and reports whether or not the ACGD requires an institutional presentation. There will be a presentation at a regular ACGD meeting if the proposers request it and/or the ACGD requires it. There will not be an institutional presentation if the proposers do not request it and the ACGD indicates it is not needed.

6. Within two weeks of peer review, a second meeting of the representatives of the proposing institution and Commission staff members will be held. The purpose of the meeting is to review questions and recommendations derived from the peer review and to reach agreement on any necessary proposal changes.

(c) Staff Recommendation and Commission Action on the Proposed Program: Completion of the staff recommendation and action by the Commission will occur within two months of the peer review. The staff recommendation will encompass expected program outcomes which will be assessed in subsequent program review. Commission approval of a program requires agreement by

*Existing Version*

the institution to discontinue the program if expected outcomes are not reached within the established time frame. The evaluation of program outcomes will entail one or more brief progress reports to the Commission.

(8) **Possible Commission Actions on New Program**

**Proposals:** The Commission may take one of three actions on proposed programs: disapproval, approval, or deferral.

(9) **Program Implementation:** If approval is given by the Commission, the institution may implement the program at any time.

**Author:** William O. Blow

**Statutory Authority:** Code of Ala. 1975, §§16-5-1, et seq.

**History:** Filed December 10, 1985. **Amended:** Filed April 10, 1989; August 18, 1989; December 5, 1990. **Amended:** Filed March 12, 1996; effective April 16, 1996. **Repealed and**

**New Rule:** Filed November 5, 1999; effective December 10, 1999.