

MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Policy and Procedures Manual

SUBJECT: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
Policy 303.1 – Curriculum Proposals
Revised May 31, 2007; Issued June 11, 2007

I. Board policy:

A. All new postsecondary educational programs (i.e. degrees, majors, minors, options, and certificates), substantive changes in those programs, delivery of programs in a distance format, changes in organizational structure, and revision of institutional mission shall be reviewed and approved by the board of regents. The amount of review and approval shall be determined by the level I and level II procedures adopted by the board, and that review shall begin with the academic and student affairs committee of the board.

B. Certificate programs of more than 30 credits will be reviewed and approved under the procedures established by this policy. Certificates of 30 credits or less may be implemented by the individual campuses of the Montana university system (MUS), without approval by the board of regents. All such certificates shall be reported to the office of the commissioner of higher education, however, and listed on the official degree and program inventory of the system. They will be removed from the inventory upon notice to the commissioner's office.

II. Procedures:

A. Level II proposals shall include documentation that sets out information in the following general categories:

1. an overview of the proposed program;
2. need for the program, including the anticipated student demand;
3. institutional and system fit, including the connection of the proposed program to other programs in the institution, the connection to the institution's strategic plan and the relationship of the program to similar programs in the MUS;
4. program details, including curriculum details, implementation plans and student estimates at each stage of the implementation process;
5. resources, including faculty needs and other, additional institutional needs with information on how those resources will be met;
6. the assessment plan;
7. the development and approval process for the program, including relevant parties who assisted with that program development.

B. Additional details concerning the level II proposal documentation can be determined by reviewing the curriculum proposal guidelines that were approved by the Montana board of regents as a supplement to this policy. Those guidelines are at: <http://mus.edu/asa/LevelIIdocumentation.pdf>.

C. In all cases the board of regents may require an appropriate report from outside, objective consultants to assist the board in analyzing the proposal and arriving at a just decision.

D. A copy of every curriculum proposal shall be forwarded to the deputy commissioner for academic affairs and to the chief academic officers of the campuses of the MUS as soon as it has been approved by the campus concerned. Copies of all proposals for associate degree programs and vocational-technical programs shall also be forwarded to the chief academic officers of the community colleges. In addition, proposals for vocational-technical programs shall be forwarded to the deputy commissioner for academic and student affairs and to the chief academic officers of the colleges of technology.

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III. Definitions:

A. Degree - A specific designation of letters representing the words on the diploma indicating completion or attainment, e.g., B.A., B.S., B.Arch., B.B.A., M.A., M.F.A., Ed.D., D.A., Ph.D.

B. Certificate - Awarded upon successful completion of entry-level programs, a specialty within an occupational area, and/or upgrading skills and knowledge within an occupation. Usually, certificate programs are no more than 60 semester hours in length.

C. Major - The specific field of concentration for the degree. A designated and coherent sequence of courses in a discipline, related disciplines, or professional area in which a student concentrates as a part of a baccalaureate degree program. The requirements of the major are usually defined by one academic department, but may be defined jointly by two or more departments in the case of an interdisciplinary major. Majors may range from 30 to 48 semester hours, half of which must be at the upper division level. Study in the major will conclude with a capstone, integrating experience in which the knowledge and skills learned in the major are applied or demonstrated.

D. Extended Major - Where required by professional expectations or specialized accreditation standards, extended majors may be offered in undergraduate programs. The extended major may require up to 80 hours.

E. Minor - The supporting or complementary field undertaken along with a major for a degree. A designated and coherent sequence of courses in a discipline, related disciplines, or professional area which provides support or enhancement of a student's major in a baccalaureate program. Minors may range from 18 to 30 semester hours of credit, one-third of which must be at the upper division level.

F. Option - One of two or more alternative tracks available to students in an associate degree, baccalaureate minor or major or graduate degree program. Each option consists of a core of required courses in the program plus required and/or elective courses in the specialty area indicated by the title of the option. The core of required courses must constitute at least one-third of the hours required for the program.

G. New postsecondary educational programs - All proposals for a new series of courses arranged in a scope or sequence leading to a certificate, option, major, or minor where a major does not already exist.

History:

Item 2-001-R0973, (Revised), October 19, 1973, as revised April 11, 1978; Item 24-001-R0579, Changes in Institutional Organization, May 30, 1979; Item 2-001-R0973, as revised June 14, 1990; November 18, 1999 (Item 104-103-R0999); September 21, 2000 (Item 108-101-R0700); March 18, 2005 (Item 126-103-R0305), and approved May 31, 2007 (Item 135-102-R0507).