

MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Policy and Procedures Manual

SUBJECT: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Policy 303.1 – Academic Program Proposals

Adopted: October 19, 1973; Revised: March 4, 2016; November 22, 2019; November 21, 2025

I. Board policy:

- A. The commissioner of higher education shall establish a process whereby institutions of the Montana University System may propose new postsecondary educational program offerings or modifications to existing offerings.
- B. The board of regents will monitor all such academic proposals through notification or request for approval at regular meetings of the board. The commissioner shall determine the level of review and/or action necessary for each item.
- C. Additional details concerning the academic proposal process established by the commissioner of higher education, including required documentation, will be made available by the commissioner via the Montana University System website.
- D. When developing academic proposals, all institutions are encouraged to collaborate rather than duplicate existing programmatic offerings. Unnecessary duplication will be taken in to consideration by the commissioner of higher education and the board of regents when evaluating proposals.
- E. In all instances, the board of regents may request additional information or require a report from outside consultants to analyze the proposal.
- F. When considering program proposals, the commissioner and board may consider, among other criteria, whether:
 - i. The proposed program aligns with the MUS strategic plan, the campus mission, and the campus mission parameters as defined in BOR Policy 219.1.
 - ii. The proposed program demonstrates convincing evidence of student demand, employer demand, or societal need.
 - iii. The proposed program avoids unnecessarily duplication and cannot be delivered more efficiently through collaboration or alternative arrangements.
 - iv. The projected benefits to the state outweigh the costs of the proposed program.
 - v. The institution has the capacity to deliver the proposed program to an acceptable degree of quality with existing and projected resources.

II. Review of new academic programs

- A. The commissioner of higher education shall establish a process whereby newly approved academic programs will be reviewed. The commissioner shall determine the level of review necessary for each such program.
- B. The commissioner shall determine thresholds for adequate enrollment in newly approved academic programs. Programs failing to meet these thresholds shall either develop an action plan for improvement for review and approval by the board of regents or shall be placed into moratorium. The commissioner shall set what level of performance corresponds with each sanction.
- C. Additional details concerning the new academic program review process established by the commissioner of higher education, including required documentation, will be made available by the

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 126-101-R0305), and approved May 31, 2007 (ITEM 135-102-R0507); revised and approved May 28, 2010 (ITEM 147-106-R0510). Revised extensively March 4, 2016 (Item 170-101-R0316). ITEM 185-109-R1119 (Revised), November 22, 2019. Revised November 21, 2025 (ITEM 221-101-R1125).

MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Policy and Procedures Manual

SUBJECT: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Policy 303.1 – Academic Program Proposals

Adopted: October 19, 1973; Revised: March 4, 2016; November 22, 2019; November 21, 2025

commissioner via the Montana University System website.

III. Definitions

A. Postsecondary educational program - A series of courses arranged in a scope or sequence leading to credentials described in 301.11 and 301.12.

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

C. 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.

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 126-101-R0305), and approved May 31, 2007 (ITEM 135-102-R0507); revised and approved May 28, 2010 (ITEM 147-106-R0510). Revised extensively March 4, 2016 (Item 170-101-R0316). ITEM 185-109-R1119 (Revised), November 22, 2019. Revised November 21, 2025 (ITEM 221-101-R1125).