



Manual of Policy and Procedures

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| APPROVAL OF NEW DEGREES AND MAJORS | | |

PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the policy is to support the mission of the VSC: for the benefit of Vermont, to provide affordable, high quality, student-centered and accessible education, fully integrating professional, liberal, and career study consistent with student aspirations and local, state, regional, national, and global needs. In addition, the policy:

1. links the development of new programs directly to institutional and system priorities and strategic planning,
2. encourages early program planning collaboration across VSC institutions,
3. requires proposed new programs to identify student learning outcomes and begin to plan for their assessment,
4. maintains flexibility for colleges to respond to market demands, and
5. streamlines and accelerates the program approval process.

The VSC supports the development of new academic programs that meet the changing educational needs of students and the State. This policy affects proposals for new degrees and new majors.

CRITERIA FOR REVIEW

At a minimum, a new academic program will:

1. align with and support the mission of the VSC and the institution,
2. support institutional and system strategic planning directions,
3. assist in meeting State needs and/ or serve a new student market,
4. provide a clear and viable career path for program completers, and
5. strengthen the fiscal stability/ health of the institution.
6. Demonstrate the ability to be offered in multiple modalities (e.g., online, in-person, hybrid) to meet the accessibility and flexibility needs of students.
7. Complement, extend, and/or diversify the educational offerings of the VSC.

PROPOSAL AND REVIEW PROCESS

Step 1: Preliminary Review

- Before proceeding with a full proposal, institutions are encouraged to pilot the concept as a concentration, certificate, or minor. This approach allows testing of market demand, viability, and alignment with state and regional needs before a larger commitment is made.
- At the time that a full proposal is deemed appropriate, the President of the institution initiating the program idea requests that the program idea is added to the agenda of the Chancellor's Cabinet.
- If the Chancellor's Cabinet agrees that further pursuit is warranted, then the Chancellor's Cabinet requests that the President provides an Initial Program Proposal following the Policy 102: New Program Proposal Template.

Step 2: Proposal Development

- Initial Submission: Institutions submit a preliminary proposal to the Chancellor's Cabinet for review. This proposal should include:
 - Program Description
 - Preliminary Data on Market Demand
 - Required Modalities: Programs must be prepared to be offered in all relevant modalities (e.g., online, in-person, hybrid) to ensure accessibility and flexibility for all students.
 - Expected Outcomes
 - Budget Considerations (initial draft)
 - Consultation with Subject Matter Experts: Institutions must involve relevant subject matter experts during program development. This may include faculty, external industry professionals, or other experts with specialized knowledge pertinent to the proposed program.
- Iterative Feedback Process: The Chancellor's Cabinet provides feedback and may request additional data or revisions before moving forward. The final proposal should continue to be refined based on feedback from the Chancellor's Cabinet before being formally submitted to EPSL.
- Submission to EPSL: Once the Chancellor's Cabinet approves the proposal, it is submitted to EPSL for review and recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

Step 3: Proposal Review

- The President submits a New Program Proposal to EPSL for review and recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

- EPSL may identify specific issues/questions for the college to address in a proposal revision before considering whether to recommend the proposal for approval by the Board.
- If forwarded by EPSL, the full Board of Trustees reviews the New Program Proposal and makes a final decision about whether or not to approve the new program.

Signed by:



Dr. Elizabeth K. Mauch, Chancellor

| Date | Version | Revision | Approved By |
|------------|---------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 10/25/2001 | 1.0 | Adopted | VSCS Board of Trustees |
| 4/17/03 | 2.0 | Revised for Uniform Guidance | VSCS Board of Trustees |
| 4/28/11 | 3.0 | Revised for Uniform Guidance | VSCS Board of Trustees |
| 7/21/16 | 4.0 | Revised for Uniform Guidance | VSCS Board of Trustees |
| 6/20/19 | 5.0 | Revised for Uniform Guidance | VSCS Board of Trustees |
| 6/14/25 | 6.0 | Revised for system transformation | VSCS Board of Trustees |