

Academic Program Terminology and Approval Process Guidelines

Southern Illinois University (SIU) System

What is the definition of a major? What is a minor? How is that different from a specialization, or an emphasis or an option? The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) defines some of these terms. Other terms are not officially defined, and different academic units use the terms differently. To move towards consistency, this document was created to help faculty members select the most appropriate description of the new program they are developing. All IBHE definitions are noted, as are definitions cited from other organizations.^{1,2} All other definitions were developed through discussions with academic officers and faculty. A (T) indicates that the degree or non-degree designation (e.g., major, minor, certification) is transcriptable. This document also identifies program proposals or other items that must be submitted to IBHE and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for review.

Degrees Types

Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma (less than 9 semester hours) – Level 1a (T). An award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) designed for completion in less than 9 semester or trimester credit hours, or in less than 13 quarter credit hours, or in less than 300 contact or clock hours.²

Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma (9 or more semester hours but less than 1 year) Level 1b (T). An award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) designed for completion in at least 9, but no more than 29 semester or trimester credit hours, or at least 13, but no less than 44 quarter credit hours, or in at least 300, but no more than 899 contact or clock hours.²

Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma (at least 1 but less than 2 academic years) Level 2 (T): “An award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in at least 1 but less than 2 full-time equivalent academic years , or designed for completion in at least 30 but less than 60 semester or trimester credit hours, or in at least 45 but less than 90 quarter credit hours, or in at least 900 but less than 1,800 contact or clock hours.”²

Associate Degree (T) Level 3 – “An award that normally requires at least 2 but less than 4 years of fulltime equivalent college work.² The Associate Degree requires at least 60 semester hours or 90 quarter credit hours.”¹

Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma (at least 2 but less than 4 academic years) Level 4 (T): “An award that requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in at least 2 but less than 4 full-time equivalent academic years , or designed for completion in at least 60 but less than 120 semester or trimester credit hours, or in at least 90 but less than 180 quarter credit hours, or in at least 1,800 but less than 3,600 contact or clock hours.”²

Bachelor’s Degree (T) Level 5 – “An award (baccalaureate or equivalent degree, as determined by the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education) that normally requires at least 4 but not more than 5 years of full-time equivalent college-level work. This includes all bachelor's degrees conferred in a 5-year cooperative (work-study) program. A cooperative plan provides for alternate class attendance and employment in business, industry, or government; thus, it allows students to combine actual work experience with their college studies. Also includes bachelor's degrees in which the normal 4 years of work are completed in 3 years.”² A Baccalaureate degree requires at least 120 semester credit hours or 180 quarter credit hours and at least 40 semester credit hours (60 quarter credit hours) in upper-division courses.¹

Liberal Studies Degree (T) – “Liberal Studies degrees are generally designed to allow for baccalaureate degree completion in non-traditional circumstances. The IBHE is extremely conservative in approving such degrees and generally will do so only when the preponderance of evidence suggests both a serious need and a sufficiently diverse and qualified faculty able to serve the degree.”¹

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (T) Level 6 – “An award that requires completion of an organized program of study beyond the bachelor's. It is designed for persons who have completed a baccalaureate degree, but does not meet the requirements of a master's degree.”² “NOTE: Even though Teacher Preparation certificate programs may require a bachelor's degree for admission, they are considered sub-baccalaureate undergraduate programs, and students in these programs are undergraduate students.”

Master’s Degree (T) Level 7 – “An award that requires the successful completion of program of study of at least the full-time equivalent of 1 but not more than 2 academic years of work beyond the bachelor's degree. Some of these degrees, such as those in Theology (M.Div., M.H.L./Rav) that were formerly classified as "first-professional", may require more than two

full-time equivalent academic years of work.”² The Master’s Degree requires at least 30, semester credit hours or 45 quarter credit hours of appropriate post-baccalaureate coursework.”¹

Post-Master Certificate (T) Level 8 – “An award that requires completion of an organized program beyond the master's degree, but does not meet the requirements of academic degrees at the doctor's level.”²

Specialist Degree (T) – The Specialist degree is found in some programs of education or psychology and is awarded for study beyond the Bachelor’s or Master's degree but below the doctorate. It is most often referred to as an Ed.S. (Specialist of Education), SSP (Specialist of School Psychology), or Psy.S. (Specialist of Psychology). Schooling usually involves one to three years of coursework and may involve practica and/or internship.³

Doctorate: Professional Practice (T) Level 18 – As defined by IBHE: “requires the completion of a program providing the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential or license required for professional practice; at least 60 semester hours of postsecondary credit required for admission to the program; and a total of at least six academic years of college work to complete the degree program, including prior required postsecondary work plus the length of the professional program itself.”¹

IPEDS defines a doctoral degree - professional practice as follows: “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. The degree is awarded after a period of study such that the total time to the degree, including both pre-professional and professional preparation, equals at least six full-time equivalent academic years. Some of these degrees were formerly classified as first-professional and may include: Chiropractic (D.C. or D.C.M.); Dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.); Law (J.D.); Medicine (M.D.); Optometry (O.D.); Osteopathic Medicine (D.O); Pharmacy (Pharm.D.); Podiatry (D.P.M., Pod.D., D.P.); or, Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.), and others, as designated by the awarding institution.”²

Doctorate: Research and Scholarship (T) Level 17 – As defined by IBHE: “requires the completion of an organized program of study beyond the master's level. The program shall demonstrate full understanding of the level and range of doctoral scholarship; the function of a dissertation and its defense based on original research, or the planning and execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement; the nature of comprehensive examination; and other standards commonly held for these degrees; at least 2 full time years of advanced academic coursework beyond the master's degree; and an independent performance of basic or applied research at the level of the professional scholar,

typically a dissertation, or to perform independently the work of a profession that involves the highest levels of knowledge and expertise.”¹

IPEDS defines this degree as: “A Ph.D. 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. Some examples of this type of degree may include Ed.D., D.M.A., D.B.A., D.Sc., D.A., or D.M, and others, as designated by the awarding institution.”²

Doctoral Degree: Other (T) Level 19 – “A doctor's degree that does not meet the definition of a doctor’s degree - research/scholarship or a doctor’s degree - professional practice.”²

Honorary Degree (T) – “Degree awarded upon an individual who has made outstanding contributions to society through intellectual, artistic, scientific, professional, or public service accomplishments. The following criteria shall guide institutions in selection of individuals to receive honorary degrees and in the awarding of such degrees.

1. An institution shall confer honorary degrees only at the highest level for which it is authorized to award earned degrees.
2. Any such honorary degree conferred shall be distinguishable from earned degrees.
3. Institutions shall not confer honorary degrees upon any faculty member, administrator, or other official associated with the institution until such individuals have been separated from the institution for two or more academic semesters.
4. Institutions shall not confer honorary degrees based upon quid pro quo arrangements, either for contributions promised or received, or for any other mutually beneficial arrangement between the institution or an official of the awarding institution and the recipient.”⁴

Posthumous Degree (T) – “Nonacademic degree awarded to a deceased student who may not have completed all requirements for graduation. Posthumous degrees must clearly be indicated as such on any and all documentation.”⁴

Non-Degree Types

Certification (T) – A course of study that prepares graduates for certification or licensure in select professions, such as teaching or school administration. The curriculum is defined by the discipline and state licensing or certification requirements.⁴

Diploma – “An academic credential conferred by a postsecondary institution as official recognition for the successful completion of an instruction program that does not lead to a degree.”⁴

Emphasis/Option/Track – An emphasis/option/track is defined as “a focused component of an academic program.”² There are no standard guidelines for an emphasis/option/track. An emphasis/option/track is not transcriptable.

Professional Development Sequence (PDS) – A PDS is a focused collection of 3 to 5 courses that are not part of a degree. A PDS is generally designed to meet the skill and knowledge needs of professionals in the discipline. A PDS is not to be confused with a certificate, which is a formal award certifying the satisfactory completion of a postsecondary education program.⁴

Specialization/Concentration (T) – A specialization or concentration is a focused percentage of courses within a major. The percent varies by major. A specialization/concentration is transcriptable.⁴

Curriculum Definitions

Degree (T) – “means any designation, appellation, series of letters or words, or other symbol that signifies or purports to signify that the recipient has satisfactorily completed an organized program of study of at least one year beyond the secondary school level. It shall include, but not be limited to, the following: certificate, associate, bachelor, post-baccalaureate certificate, master, post-master certificate, doctor's degree – professional practice (degree required for entry into specific profession such as law or medicine), and doctor's degree – research and scholarship.”¹

Major (T) – An organized program of study in an academic discipline *usually* requiring completion of 30 to 90 credit hours (depending on the discipline). “Major means a curriculum component of an academic program intended to provide in-depth study in a discipline, a professional field of study or an occupation. A major may include an academic program emphasis. A major has a core of courses which are perceived to be the basic foundation courses of an academic area without which students would have difficulty continuing to learn or which provide an overview of the field.”⁴

Minor (T) – An organized program of study in an academic discipline. “A minor is defined as a coherent group of courses which stands alone and provides a student with broad knowledge of and competency in an area outside the student's major.”⁴ A minor *usually* requires 12 to 20 credit hours of study (depending on the discipline).⁵

IBHE Reportable Items**

IBHE requires universities to report certain program changes. In addition, some changes are reported annually, while others must go through a review process. All reportable changes, along with significant restructuring activities, should be reviewed by the Office of the President. All existing programs that are being moved to a new geographic region as an off-campus program must undergo IBHE review. It should also be noted that new programs may have to undergo Higher Learning Commission review (such as off-campus programs) or a specialized accreditation review (such as a new health care program) before implementation. In addition to the information below the 23 Illinois Administrative Code 1050 for Public Universities provides useful information (<https://www.ibhe.org/aamain.html>).

**Further information on IBHE reporting for programs can be found in Appendix A

The following table “Definitions for Approval of New Programs and Reasonable and Moderate Extension (RME) Requests by Public Universities” is from IBHE. Actions to be taken for review and approval are included in the table below.

Revised August 3, 2020		
Definitions for Approval of New Programs and Reasonable and Moderate Extension (RME) Requests by Public Universities **		
	Programmatic Request	IBHE Action
1	Creation of a new non-credit program or a program of study composed of credit courses that does not result in the formal award of a degree. ¹	No reporting and no action
SIU System: Campus handles, no reporting to VPAIPP/President		
2	Creation of a new unit that does not have an instructional research, or public service mission, including new units that might be named department, division, center or institute. ²	No reporting and no action
SIU System: Campus handles, no reporting to VPAIPP/President		
3	Addition of a new organized set of courses within a major (e.g., option, concentration, specialization, or sequence) to an existing degree program.	Annual listing of changes
SIU System: RME with appropriate campus approvals. Submit to VPAIPP office for approval.		
IBHE does not track minors or specializations, but <u>specializations wouldn't have a CIP code that is different from the main program</u> . If it did, it would be a new program. So, if the proposal is to elevate a specialization to its own program, it would be an RME for staff approval. Credit hours: option=, concentration =, sequence =, Specialization=at least 12		

4	Addition of an externally funded research or public service activity labeled as a center or institute because of grant requirements. The activity is temporary, not formally organized, and has no continuous mission.	Annual listing of changes
SIU System: Notification to VPAIPP office.		
5	Addition of a new minor. The staff expects that the curriculum of each minor should include upper division courses.	Annual listing of changes
<p>SIU System: RME with appropriate campus approvals. Submit to VPAIPP office for approval.</p> <p>IBHE does not track or award CIP codes to minors. However, a minor would not <u>have a CIP code that is different from the main program</u>. If it did, it would be a new program. So, if the proposal is to elevate a specialization to its own program, it would be an RME for staff approval. The required credit hours for a minor – neither the IBHE nor the HLC has one –most institutions like us have minors ranging from as low as 12 to as high as 20 hours. Anything in that range is fine, but if a program seeks anything more or less, a clear justification of it in the RME (accreditation, staffing, and/or student demand, for example) is needed. <i>Note: If the proposal is to elevate a specialization to its own program, it would be an RME for IBHE staff approval.</i></p>		
6	Change in a degree title (e.g., the name of a discipline or major without changes in objectives or content such as the change from “medical technology” to “clinical laboratory sciences”).	Annual listing of changes
SIU System: RME with appropriate campus approvals. Submit to VPAIPP office for President’s approval. UG degree = Faculty Senate approval; G degree = Graduate Council approval; plus approval of dean; provost; and chancellor		
7	Change in the name of an administrative (including departments), research or public service unit.	Annual listing of changes
SIU System: RME with appropriate approvals. Submit to VPAIPP office for President’s approval. UG degree = Faculty Senate approval; G degree = Graduate Council approval; approval of dean; provost; and chancellor		
8	Elimination or temporary suspension of an existing degree program (please indicate Phase Down, Elimination, or Temporary Suspension status and include a status update for programs previously suspended temporarily. ³).	Annual listing of changes
SIU System: RME with appropriate approvals. Submit to VPAIPP office for President’s approval. UG degree = Faculty Senate approval; G degree = Graduate Council approval; approval of dean; provost; and chancellor		

9	Reorganization, restructuring, consolidation, elimination, and other changes of existing administrative (including departments), research, or public service units that does not result in an increase in subunits.	Annual listing of changes
<p>SIU System: RME with appropriate approvals. Submit to VPAIPP office for President's approval.</p> <p><i>Note: VPAIPP will consult with IBHE (e.g., SIUC's reorganization required IBHE approval due to restructuring of the entire campus academic structure)</i></p>		
10	Creation of a certificate program in a field in which there is a previously approved degree program (e.g., undergraduate certificates at Levels 1 and 2 from a prior approved bachelor's program; post-baccalaureate certificates at Level 5 from a prior approved master's program).	Annual listing of changes
<p>SIU System: RME with appropriate approvals. Submit to VPAIPP office for President's approval. UG degree = Faculty Senate approval; G degree = Graduate Council approval; approval of dean; provost; and chancellor</p> <p>Credit Hours: UG Level 1a = Less than 9 credits; UG Level 1b = 9-29 credits; UG (1-2 yrs) = 30-less than 60; UG (2-4 yrs) = 60-less than 120; Post-Bacc Cert. = An award that requires completion of an organized program of study beyond the bachelor's. It is designed for persons who have completed a baccalaureate degree, but does not meet the requirements of a master's degree (at least 9 credits at SIUE). Post-Master Cert. = An award that requires completion of an organized program beyond the master's degree, but does not meet the requirements of academic degrees at the doctor's level (at least 12 credits at SIUE)</p>		
<p>Professional Development Sequence (PDS) are like "mini" certificates, they could fall under one of these options: #10 is approved through annual listing of changes or #14 through an RME. If they are just a sequence option added to a degree, they would fall under #3 with RME. If they are a stand-alone certificate, not attached to an existing degree, they would have to be approved by IBHE..</p>		
11	Creation of a joint degree program from two previously approved programs.	Annual listing of changes
<p>SIU System: RME with appropriate campus approval. Submitted to VIAIPP for President's approval. Joint degree, dual, concurrent fall under this category.</p> <p>Note: Additional approval from IBHE is not required when the concurrent degrees are a collaboration between two campuses within the same system and the two degrees are already approved.</p> <p>Joint=A joint degree is a single academic degree jointly conferred by two or more schools/colleges.⁶</p> <p>Dual/Concurrent: A dual degree program is an integrated program of study designed to result in students earning two distinct University degrees in parallel by completing the requirements of two full degree programs, typically over a period of time shorter than would otherwise be required to</p>		

complete both programs sequentially. It requires the completion of all requirements for each degree, but allows students to count designated credits to fulfill the requirements for both degrees. Students must be accepted and meet the requirements for each degree and follow the rules for the transfer or use of credit from one program to the other. Dual degree programs are primarily designed for the degrees to be earned concurrently. ⁶		
12	Reactivation of a temporarily suspended program ³ .	RME
SIU System: RME with appropriate campus approval. Submitted to VPAIPP for IBHE approval.		
13	Creation of a new formally organized research or public service unit that has a temporary mission of up to five years. (Criteria for continuation and a date for submission and request for permanent approval should accompany the RME).	RME
SIU System: RME for IBHE staff approval. Submitted to VPAIPP upon appropriate approval from Graduate Council/Centers and Institutes Committee (as appropriate) and campus administration.		
14	Creation of a certificate program in a field or at a level in which there is not a previously approved degree program at that level or a higher level.	RME
SIU System: RME for IBHE staff approval. Submitted to VPAIPP upon appropriate approval from Faculty Senate and campus administration. Refer to "Credit Hours" comment in #10 above.		
15	Creation of a new program that results from the reorganization or restructuring of the curricular elements of an existing program that have over time evolved into separate and distinct programs (e.g., split into two or more autonomous programs, or options have evolved into separate programs).	RME
SIU System: RME for IBHE staff approval. Submitted to VPAIPP upon appropriate approval from Faculty Senate (for UG degrees)/ Graduate Council (Graduate degrees) and campus administration.		
16	Reclassification (change in CIP) of a program resulting from incremental changes or consolidation of two or more degree programs into a single program	RME
SIU System: RME for IBHE staff approval. Submitted to VPAIPP upon appropriate approval from Faculty Senate (for UG degrees)/Graduate Council (Graduate degrees) and campus administration.		
17	Changes in degree designation at the same level (e.g., BA to BFA, BBA to BS, or DBA to PhD)	RME
SIU System: RME for IBHE staff approval. Submitted to VPAIPP upon appropriate approval from Faculty Senate (for UG degrees)/Graduate Council (Graduate degrees) and campus administration.		

18	Creation of an out-of-region degree program. As much as possible the proposed program should be functionally equivalent to the existing program offered on campus, including curriculum, faculty qualifications, instructional technology, and library resources. The program must have effective student support systems.	RME
SIU System: RME for IBHE staff approval. Submitted to VPAIPP upon appropriate approval from Faculty Senate (for UG degrees)/Graduate Council (Graduate degrees) and campus administration. There are separate RME forms 1) New Degree Program Out-of-Region Application and 2) Existing Program Out-of-Region Application- (forms found on VPAIPP website at: http://siusystem.edu/academic-affairs/forms.shtml). A <u>Notice of Intent (NOI)</u> is first posted on IBHE website for 30 days and then RME is reviewed by IBHE staff.		
19	Creation of a degree program (excluding certificate programs) in a new field or at a new level (based on CIPS or IPEDS definitions).	Board Action
SIU System: NOI (Notice of Intent) submitted to VPAIPP for 30 day public posting on IBHE website (NOI is valid for one year beyond the last day of public posting). NUI (New Unit of Instruction) submitted to VPAIPP upon appropriate campus approvals (Faculty Senate or Graduate Council & Administration). Upon VPAIPP approval, uploaded to IBHE for review by analyst. http://siusystem.edu/academic-affairs/forms.shtml		
20	Creation of new units of instruction, research, or public service that involve a change or expansion in mission, including programs, departments, colleges, centers or institutes or other formally organized units.	Board Action
SIU System: NOI (Notice of Intent) submitted to VPAIPP for 30 day public posting on IBHE website (NOI is valid for one year beyond the last day of public posting). NUI (New Unit of Instruction) or NPR (New Program Request) submitted to VPAIPP upon appropriate campus approvals (Faculty Senate or Graduate Council or Centers and Institute Committee and Administration). Upon VPAIPP approval, uploaded to IBHE for review by analyst. http://siusystem.edu/academic-affairs/forms.shtml		
21	Creation of a new campus	Board Action
SIU System: NOI and NUI will have to be prepared. VPAIPP will work with IBHE staff to receive guidance.		

Program Listing. Each public university will submit a list of program changes annually on the last day of July. It may submit some individual changes before the end of July. Appropriate changes to the program inventory will be made. The IBHE staff will reserve the authority to advise that a change is inconsistent with common practices or definitions in higher education and recommend corrective action. (E.g., if a specialization were added that is commonly considered a major, the staff would recommend that the institution seek approval for a new program in the future.)

Reasonable and Moderate Extension (RME). An RME request consists of a brief description of the proposed changes. Based on criteria related to program objectives, clientele and resources, the staff will determine if the proposed change is a reasonable and moderate extension of existing program authority.

Board Action. A fully developed proposal will be submitted. The staff will review the proposal and formulate a recommendation. The Board will formally approve or deny.

1 A “formal award of a degree” means that a formal document is awarded to the student, and is a notice that the award has been conferred by a college, university or board of trustees and appears permanently on the student’s transcript. Formal awards generally do not include continuing education credits or certificates, certificates of completion, or other forms of recognition issued by departments or individual faculty members, including most “professional development sequences.”

2. Most student services, advising and counseling, administrative activities, and co- curricular activities do not have an instructional mission, research, or public service mission.

3. See Section 1050.50 (C) (2) of the Administrative Rules for rules regarding Programs Placed in Temporary Suspension Status.

Guidelines for System Programs in the Same Discipline

The following are three questions to consider prior to developing programs at two system universities in the same discipline:

- 1) Is there a regional need for the program?
- 2) Does the program have distinctiveness compared to a program on another system campus?
- 3) What is the potential for collaboration (student learning, faculty collaboration, infrastructure sharing) across two campuses in the same discipline?

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)

The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) is an agreement among member states, districts and territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. It is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by postsecondary institutions based in another state. SARA is overseen by a National Council and administered by four regional education compacts.⁷

Illinois has been accepted as part of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) through the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC). There is a specific application process through IBHE. Details of this process and contact information can be found at <https://www.ibhe.org/sara.html>.⁷

Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Reportable Items

HLC recognizes that change at institutions of higher learning is constant, and it supports institutional efforts to improve educational quality. Depending on the type of change an

institution plans to make—expanding its academic offerings, opening a new location, changing its mission, etc.—it may be required to apply for prior HLC approval or notify HLC of the change.

When prior approval is required, the institution must submit an application describing the change. The application will be reviewed by HLC staff or peer reviewers (depending on the complexity of the change), and an HLC decision-making body will take final action to approve or deny the request. This process ensures that institutions continue to meet HLC’s standards as they evolve and grow.

Authorization to submit requests and notifications on behalf of the institution must be processed through the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

The following types of changes may require approval/notification include:⁸ A glossary of terms for substantive changes is provided by HLC at <https://www.hlcommission.org/General/glossary.html>.

The information below are general guidelines. Each campus should contact their HLC Staff Liaison to confirm that HLC approval or notification is required.⁹

Consortial Agreements:

A consortial arrangement is one wherein a portion of an academic program of an institution is provided by one or more institution(s) accredited by an accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. (Note: All participants in a consortial arrangement are accredited institutions.) While HLC does not specifically review consortial arrangements, institutions that participate in consortial arrangements must still adhere to HLC policy requiring prior approval of a new program if they want to award one or more academic programs through a consortial arrangement that would represent a substantial departure from their current academic offerings or are outside their current stipulations.⁸

Academic Programs:

- Starting a Degree Program
- Starting a Certificate or Diploma Program
- Starting a Competency-Based Education (CBE) Program
- Addition of a Program Concentration or Specialization
- Cancellation or Suspension of Academic Programs

Approvals or notification are generally required for substantive change or departure from original program approval.

Change in Clock Hours/Credit Hours, Program Content and Length of Term ¹⁰

- Converting a program or portion of a program from clock hours to credit hours
- Converting a program or a portion of a program from credit hours to clock hours
- Substantially increasing or decreasing the number of clock or credit hours required for completion of a program
- Substantially changing the content of a program
- Changing the length of term affecting allocation of credit

Contractual Agreements ¹¹

Prior HLC approval or notification may be required for substantive changes related to the initiation, modification or renewal of contractual arrangements. A contractual arrangement is an arrangement in which the institution outsources some portion of its academic programs—that is, degrees or certificates offered for academic credit—to:

1. An unaccredited institution.
2. An institution that is not accredited by an accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
3. A corporation or other entity.

The services provided by the contractual party may include instruction, oversight of the curriculum, assurance of the consistency in the level and quality of instruction and in expectations of student performance, and/or the establishment of the academic qualifications for instructional personnel.

Off-Campus Activities: Branch Campus, Additional Location, International Course Location ¹²

Prior HLC approval or notification may be required for substantive changes related to additional locations, branch campuses and course locations. Institutions use the Location and Campus Update System to update HLC's records about their existing additional locations and existing branch campuses. In addition, institutions that are in the Notification Program for Additional Locations may use this system to request new additional locations (<https://lcu.hlcommission.org/lcu/pages/auth/>).

Definition of Additional Location: A facility that is geographically apart from the main campus, where instruction takes place and it is possible for students to do one or more of the following:

- Complete 50 percent or more of the courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate or other recognized educational credential.

- Complete 50 percent or more of a degree completion program (even if the degree completion program provides less than 50 percent of the courses leading to the degree).

An additional location may qualify as a branch campus under circumstances that meet the definition of the branch campus. There is no base or threshold number of students or distance from the campus necessary for a facility to qualify as an additional location under this definition.

An additional location typically does not have a full range of administrative and student services staffed by the facility's personnel. Such services may be provided from the main campus or another campus.

A facility may provide access to instruction requiring students to be present at a physical location that receives interactive TV, video or online teaching. It is considered an additional location when 50 percent or more of a distance delivery program is available through one or more of these modalities at that facility. Note: This requirement does not apply for locations in which there is a general computer lab that students might use for distance delivery courses.

An additional location has active status when students are enrolled. Its status is inactive when students are not enrolled. The status can change between active and inactive without approval from HLC. However, a location may only be classified as inactive with no student enrollment for a maximum of two consecutive years. At that point, HLC will require the institution to close the location.

Definition of Branch Campus: An additional location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. HLC considers a location of an institution to be independent of the main campus if the location has all four of the following attributes:

- It is permanent in nature.
- It offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate or other recognized educational credential.
- It has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization.
- It has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

The following require HLC approval:

- Opening of a Branch Campus
- Creation of an Additional Location
- Relocation of a Branch Campus
- Relocation of an Additional Location
- Closure of a Branch Campus

- Closure of Active Additional Location that offers a full degree or certificate program

The following require HLC notification:

- Opening of International Course Location
- Closure of Active Additional Location that does not offer a full degree or certificate program
- Closure of Inactive Additional Location that offered a full degree or certificate program
- Closure of Inactive Additional Location that did not offer a full degree or certificate program
- Suspension for more than one semester of Active Additional Location
- Reclassification of a Branch Campus as an Additional Campus
- Reclassification of and Additional Location as a Branch Campus

*Distance or Correspondence Education*¹³

Prior HLC approval may be required for the initiation or expansion of an institution's distance or correspondence education courses and programs.

Definition of Correspondence Education: education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor.

Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced. Correspondence education is not distance education.

Definition of Distance Education: education that uses one or more of the technologies listed below to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include:

1. The internet.
2. One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite or wireless communications devices.
3. Audio conferencing.
4. Video cassettes, DVDs and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed above.

*Provisional Plan and Teach –Out*¹⁴

Provisional Plan: A plan that details the arrangements an institution makes for students when it intends to cease operating as an educational institution or when it undergoes other

circumstances that require a Teach-Out Agreement. If the institution is closing entirely or closing campus(es) or additional location(s), and it has students in academic programs at that location, then the Provisional Plan will need to include arrangements for teaching out of those students so that they can complete their academic program. If the institution is prepared to stay open or keep the branch campus(es) or additional location(s) open and if it will continue to have sufficient resources, it may teach out those students that are within one year of graduation and assist other students in transferring to other institutions. If it does not have sufficient resources to accommodate current students through graduation or transfer, it must have a teach-out agreement with another accredited institution to be the teach-out receiving institution.

Tech-Out Agreement: An agreement made between the institution required to teach-out students and each teach-out receiving institution identified in the former institution's Provisional Plan. Teach-out agreements are required as part of a Provisional Plan for certain situations as described in HLC policy. The institution required to teach-out students should ensure that the teach-out agreement is binding as a written contract or letter of agreement with the teach-out receiving institution. The agreement should be detailed about the obligations being undertaken by each party and should be signed by an appropriate authorized representative of each institution. A teach-out agreement is with one or more institutions nearby or online that have the same academic programs to provide courses to those students who can reasonably complete their academic programs within no more than one year from the date the institution that is required to teach-out students closes.

A detailed description of the HLC policy on Provisional Plans and Teach-Out Agreements can be found at <https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/teach-out-arrangements.html>.

References:

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4. Academic Program Terminology and Approval Process Guidelines. Southern Illinois University System, August 22, 2011 (Available in Hard Copy in VP for Academic Innovation, Planning and Partnerships office).

5) Academic Program Definitions

<http://www.temple.edu/provost/aaair/documents/academic-programs/academic-program-definitions.pdf> (Accessed January 5, 2021)

6) Joint and Dual Degree Definitions <http://catalog.creighton.edu/general-information-about-creighton/joint-dual-degree/> (Accessed, January 13, 2021)

7) State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA): <https://www.ibhe.org/sara.html> (Accessed, January 21, 2021)

8) Substantive Changes Requiring Prior Approval or Notification.

<https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/changes-requiring-approval-or-notification.html> (Accessed, January 22, 2021)

9) HLC Staff Liaisons. <https://www.hlcommission.org/About-HLC/staff-liaisons.html> (Accessed, January 22, 2021)

10) Substantive Change: Clock/Credit Hours, Program Content and Length of Term.

<https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/institutional-change-clock-hours-credit-hours-and-length-of-term.html> (Accessed, January 22, 2021)

11) Substantive Changes: Contractual Agreements.

<https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/institutional-change-contractual-arrangements.html> (Accessed, February 2, 2021)

12) Substantive Change: Off-Campus Activities.

<https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/institutional-change-off-campus-activities.html> (Accessed, February 2, 2021)

13: Substantive Change: Distance or Correspondence Education.

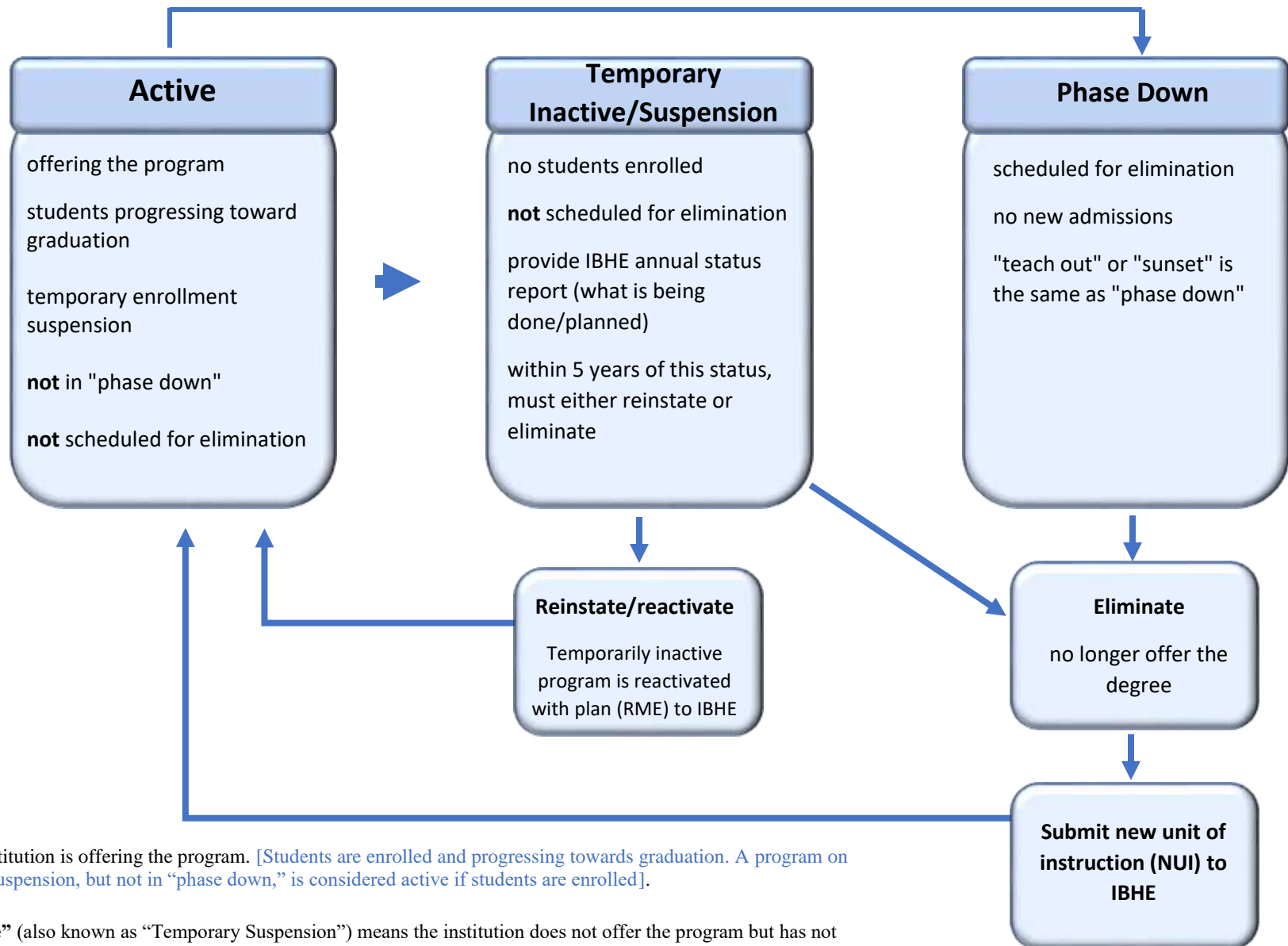
<https://www.hlcommission.org/Accreditation/institutional-change-distance-or-correspondence-education.html> (Accessed, February 2, 2021)

14: Provisional Plan and Teach-Out.

<https://www.hlcommission.org/General/glossary.html> (Accessed, February 2, 2021)

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IBHE PROGRAM STATUS FLOW CHART

“Active” means the institution is offering the program. [Students are enrolled and progressing towards graduation. A program on temporary enrollment suspension, but not in “phase down,” is considered active if students are enrolled].

“Temporarily Inactive” (also known as “Temporary Suspension”) means the institution does not offer the program but has not scheduled the program for elimination. Institutions are required to provide annual reports to the IBHE. May petition for reinstatement. After five years the program will be eliminated (see 23 Ill. Adm. Code 1050). [By definition, a temporarily inactive program has no students enrolled].

“Eliminated” means the institution is no longer offering the program.

“Phase Down” means the institution has scheduled the program for elimination. No new admits and the enrolled students are finishing the program or transferring to a different program. [The terms “teach out” and “sunset” have been used interchangeably with “phase down”].