

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM: 3 – C (2)

DATE: September 1-2, 2020

SUBJECT

AAC Guideline 2.6 – New Specialization and AAC Guideline 2.9 – New Undergraduate Degree or Major

CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

[AAC Guideline 2.6](#) – New Specialization Revisions

[AAC Guideline 2.9](#) – New Undergraduate Degree or Major Revisions

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

While it has been the practice of the BOR System to not accept specializations for associate degree programs, this has never been explicitly stated in AAC Guidelines. This was noted as something that needed to be corrected for clarity. Historically, this has not been allowed, as there are simply not enough credit hours in an associate degree program to warrant a specialization.

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION

After reviewing current AAC guidelines, language stating that specializations are not allowed for associate degree programs has been added to both AAC Guideline 2.6 – New Specialization and to AAC Guideline 2.9 – New Undergraduate Degree or Major. In 2.9, the language was added in the section specifically addressing associate degree programs.


ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I – Revisions to AAC Guideline 2.6 – New Specialization

Attachment II – Revisions to AAC Guideline 2.9 – New Undergraduate Degree or Major

DRAFT MOTION

Approve the revised versions of AAC Guideline 2.6 – New Specialization and AAC Guideline 2.9 – New Undergraduate Degree or Major, as presented in Attachments I & II.

 <h2 style="text-align: center;">ACADEMIC AFFAIRS GUIDELINES</h2>		
Section 2:	Academic Programs and Curriculum: Guidelines and Procedures	
Title:	New Specialization within a Degree Program	
Number (Current Format)	Number (Prior Format)	Date Last Revised
2.6		10/2018 09/2020
Reference:	BOR Policy 2:23 – Program and Curriculum Approval	
Related Form(s):	AAC Form 2.6 – New Specialization Form	

Approval Summary Quick View

New Specialization ► CAO ► AAC Program Tracker ► Univ. Website ► AAC ► BOR


1. A **specialization** is a designated plan of study within an existing degree program. It provides a student an alternative to the primary format of the major or it may be one of several tracks within a broad major. Specializations contain courses within the discipline(s) of the existing program. Specializations appear in the institutional catalog and on the transcript. Majors that offer specializations typically have one-third to two-thirds of the credits in common with the remaining course work fulfilling the requirements of the specialization(s) offered. A specialization may attach to only one major. Associate degree programs shall not have specializations.
2. While no minimum and maximum number of credits exists for a specialization, universities should align credit hours with current university and system policies and guidelines on academic majors and minors.
3. Board of Regents (BOR) action is required to establish a new specialization within an existing program.
4. The university Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) will review the new specialization request with the system Chief Academic Officer (CAO). The notification to the system CAO shall occur at least one Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) meeting prior to the initial posting of the new proposal. If the proposal involves new courses for the university, the notification to the system CAO shall include a brief justification and evidence that the program does not duplicate existing programming within the Regental system (or that the duplication is justified).
5. The Executive Director grants formal approval to move forward with the new specialization request and for posting on the [AAC Program Tracking Dashboard](#).
6. Program development notifications will be posted to the AAC Program Tracking Dashboard, and institutions shall have the opportunity prior to the next AAC meeting to make formal inquiries with the posting institutions about the intent and nature of the program. Such inquiries

shall be made directly with the provost/VPAA at the posting institution and should include both the system CAO and the system Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs.

7. The system CAO and the Executive Director may approve, deny, or send the proposal form back to the campus for revisions. The Executive Director has final authority for advancing a new specialization request forward for AAC review and to the Board of Regents. Final recommendations to the Board may outline Board staff or institutional concerns for the requested specialization in the “Impact and Recommendation” section of the Board cover sheet.
8. The system CAO Officer will place the request on the AAC agenda.
9. Proposals approved by the AAC move to the agenda of the Board of Regents for review and final approval.

SOURCE:

AAC May 2018; October 2018 (Clerical). [AAC September 2020](#).

 <h2 style="text-align: center;">ACADEMIC AFFAIRS GUIDELINES</h2>		
Section 2:	Academic Programs and Curriculum: Guidelines and Procedures	
Title:	New Undergraduate Degree or Major	
Number (Current Format)	Number (Prior Format)	Date Last Revised
2.9	II.C.3.d	10/2018 09/2020
Reference:	BOR Policy 2:25 – Articulation of General Education Courses: South Dakota Technical Institutes without a Memorandum of Agreement with the Board of Regents BOR Policy 2:29 – Definition of Credits and Related Institutional Requirements BOR Policy 2:23 – Program and Curriculum Approval	
Related Form(s):	AAC Form 2.9 – New Undergraduate Degree Program Form	

Approval Summary Quick View

New Undergraduate Degree or Major ► CAO ► AAC Program Tracker ► Univ. Website ► AAC ► BOR

1. Definitions of System Undergraduate Degrees and Majors:

1.1. Undergraduate Academic Major

An academic major or primary area of study within a degree program enables students to make in-depth inquiry into a discipline or a professional field of study. Majors consist of a specific set of goals and objectives achieved through a series of courses whose connections define an internal structure and whose sequence advances levels of knowledge and understanding. A major introduces students to a discipline or field of study and related areas through a foundation of theory and method. A major that focuses on a specific discipline draws its courses predominantly from one department. A major that is interdisciplinary or encompasses a professional field of study usually obtains its courses from more than one department.

The number of credit hours required for a major and its organizational structure will vary, depending on whether it aims at disciplinary or professional preparation. Variations are due to the demands of accrediting agencies, certification requirements, professional competence, and expectations. Undergraduate majors require both discipline specific and support courses. Credits required for the major combine with general education core and electives to meet the total degree requirement (See ACC Guideline 2.1).

1.2. Bachelor's Degree

Universities award a bachelor's degree to a student for satisfactory completion of a prescribed course of study. Bachelor's degree programs shall require one hundred twenty (120) credit hours. The Board of Regents may grant exceptions those cases in which a

program must comply with specific standards established by external accreditation, licensure or regulatory bodies or for other compelling reasons approved by the executive director in consultation with the Board of Regents' president (Board Policy 2:29). A diploma and transcript signify the measure of achievement and verify the degree. The bachelor's degree enables a student to acquire a certain amount of general learning and become proficient in a particular field of study or a profession. The curricular structure of a bachelor's degree program includes a system general education core curriculum (thirty [30] credit ours per Board Policy 2:7), support courses, major courses, and electives.

1.3. Associate of Arts/Associate of Science Degrees

Associate of Science (A.S.) and Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree are typically two-year transfer degrees. Within Regental institutions, these degrees are often (but not always) complementary to existing four-year bachelor's degrees in closely aligned academic fields. Universities award an associate degree to a student for satisfactory completion of a prescribed course of study. Associate degree programs shall require sixty (60) credit hours. The Board of Regents may grant exceptions those cases in which a program must comply with specific standards established by external accreditation, licensure or regulatory bodies or for other compelling reasons approved by the executive director in consultation with the Board of Regents' president (Board Policy 2:29). The curricular structure of an associate degree program includes a system general education core curriculum (twenty-four [24] credit ours per Board Policy 2:26), support courses, major courses, and electives. Up to sixteen (16) credit hours at the 300 and 400 level may be required. More than sixteen (16) credit hours at the 300 and 400 level may be required if specified by an accrediting agency. An associate degree program shall not have specializations.

2. Board of Regents (BOR) action is required to establish a new major or undergraduate degree program.
3. Permission to submit a new major or undergraduate degree program proposal is dependent upon prior approval or waiver of an intent to plan.
4. The university Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) will review the new program proposal request with the system Chief Academic Officer (CAO). The notification to the system CAO shall occur at least one AAC meeting prior to the initial posting of the new program proposal. If the proposal involves new courses for the university, the notification to the system CAO shall include a brief justification for the new program proposal and evidence that the program does not duplicate existing programming within the Regental system (or that the duplication is justified).
5. The Executive Director grants formal approval to move forward with the new program proposal request and for posting on the [AAC Program Tracking Dashboard](#).
6. Program development notifications will be posted to the [AAC Program Tracking Dashboard](#), and institutions shall have the opportunity prior to the next AAC meeting to make formal inquiries with the posting institutions about the intent and nature of the program. Such inquiries shall be made directly with the provost/VPAA at the posting institution and should include both the system CAO and the system Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs.

7. The system CAO and the Executive Director may approve, deny, or send the proposal form back to the campus for revisions. The Executive Director has final authority for advancing a new specialization request forward for AAC review and to the Board of Regents. Final recommendations to the Board may outline Board staff or institutional concerns for the requested program proposal in the “Impact and Recommendation” section of the Board cover sheet.
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