A. **PURPOSE**

To define the process by which academic curricula and programs receive approval, modification, and review.

B. **DEFINITIONS**

1. **Intent to Plan**: A preliminary, conceptual proposal requesting authorization to plan a new academic degree or major.

2. **Academic Degree Program**: A student’s primary area of study at the associate, bachelor’s, master’s, education specialist, or doctoral level.

3. **Accelerated Graduate Program**: An accelerated graduate program is a graduate program at a Regental institution that allows a student to count specific courses for undergraduate and graduate credit simultaneously.

C. **POLICY**

1. **Academic Program Approval**

   The Board of Regents approves academic programs that are recorded on a transcript, including specializations, certificates, undergraduate minors, undergraduate degrees and majors, and graduate degrees and programs.

   1.1. **Intent to Plan**

      1.1.1. Universities must submit an intent to plan for approval by the Board of Regents prior to submitting a program proposal for a new associate degree program/degree, baccalaureate program/degree, or graduate program/degree. The Executive Director may waive the intent to plan.

      1.1.2. An intent to plan is not required for associate degree programs provided:

         1.1.2.1. The program is a two-year equivalent of an existing four-year bachelor’s program currently approved for the university; or

         1.1.2.2. The program proposal has eighty percent of the curriculum in common with an existing four-year bachelor’s program current approved for the university; or
1.1.2.3. The program is stackable to two or more four-year bachelor’s degree programs approved for the university; or

1.1.2.4. The Executive Director determines the program will have an immediate impact on an emerging critical workforce shortage area in South Dakota as documented by the university.

1.1.3. The Executive Director will inform the Board of waivers granted under this policy as part of the interim actions Report of the Executive Director at the next regularly scheduled Board of Regents meeting.

1.2. Undergraduate and Graduate Degrees and Majors

1.2.1. The Board of Regents approves new academic degrees and majors.

1.2.2. New graduate degree program proposals must also follow the processes identified in Policy 2:1.

1.3. Academic Certificates, Specializations, and Minors

1.3.1. The Board of Regents approves new certificates, specializations, and minors.

1.3.2. Academic Certificates: Universities may deliver academic certificate programs involving a sequence, pattern, or group of academic credit courses that focus upon an area of specialized knowledge or information and have specifically defined student learning outcomes.

1.3.2.1. Academic certificate programs require admission to the university and result in an official academic transcript.

1.3.2.2. Completion of the academic certificate program shall be indicated on the student’s academic transcript.

1.3.3. Specializations: An academic specialization is a designated plan of study within an existing degree program or major.

1.3.3.1. Specializations may attach to only one major.

1.3.3.2. Completion of the academic specialization shall be indicated on the student’s academic transcript.

1.3.4. Minors: An academic minor enables a student to make broad but limited inquiry into a discipline or field of study beyond the major.

1.3.4.1. Minors are only awarded in conjunction with completion of a degree program and the awarding of a bachelor’s degree.

1.3.4.2. Completion of the minor shall be indicated on the student’s academic transcript.

2. Certificates of Recognition

Universities may confer certificates of recognition to persons who have successfully completed credit or non-credit educational experiences, e.g. workshops. Completion is based on learning objectives and requires formal learner evaluation.

2.1. Certificates of recognition do not require Board approval.
2.2. Certificates of recognition are not part of a degree program and do not require formal admission to the university.

2.3. If credit bearing course work is involved and the participant registers for it, the course will appear on the transcript.

2.4. Non-credit experiences may be recognized but do not result in a transcript.

3. Curriculum Approval

3.1. The South Dakota Regental system maintains a common course catalog designed to facilitate ease of student transfer and collaborative programing across institutions.

3.2. The university Vice President for Academic Affairs approves minor course and program modifications as defined by Academic Affairs Council.

3.3. The System Chief Academic Officer approves new courses unique to a single university or common to more than one university after formal review by the Academic Affairs Council.

3.4. The System Chief Academic Officer approves substantive course and program modifications after a formal review by the Academic Affairs Council.

3.5. Accelerated graduate programs accepting thirteen (13) total credit hours up to a maximum of twenty-five (25) total transfer credit hours require formal approval by the Board of Regents. (See Academic Affairs Guideline Form 2.20)

4. Institutional Program Review

4.1. Institutional program reviews assist in the continuous improvement of educational program quality. The review process should integrate strategic planning, budgeting, regional and specialized accreditation processes, and student-learning outcome assessment.

4.2. The Academic Affairs Council (AAC, defined in Board of Regents Policy 1:7:2) shall maintain a detailed and formal set of guidelines related to institutional program review.

4.3. Institutional program reviews shall occur at least once every seven (7) years for undergraduate and graduate programs that are not subject to specialized program accreditation or nationally recognized review processes. Institutions may use specialized program accreditation reviews to satisfy the requirements for institutional program reviews. In such cases, the timing of the review is determined by the cycle of specialized program accreditation.

4.4. Program reviews shall include identification of undergraduate cross-curricular skill requirements as part of programmatic student learning outcomes and a review of assessment methods and outcomes for cross-curricular skill requirements per Board of Regents Policy 2:11

5. Academic Degree Program Productivity Review Process

5.1. Students should have the opportunity to learn from and work with a diverse group of faculty and colleagues; programs that produce too few graduates have fewer opportunities for these beneficial interactions. Academic degree programs that do not
meet the established minimum number of graduates will be inactivated unless the Board
of Regents approves a continuation plan.

5.2. The Academic Affairs Council (AAC, defined in Board of Regents Policy 1:7:2) shall
maintain a detailed and formal set of guidelines related to academic degree program
productivity.

5.3. All academic degree programs that fail to meet the established graduate production
thresholds will be identified in the academic degree program productivity report. The
program productivity report will depict the graduate production for all academic degree
programs in the Regental system for the five most recent academic years.

5.4. The graduate production thresholds for each type of academic degree program are:

5.4.1. **Associate Degree**: Five (5) graduates a year or twenty-five (25) during the five
(5)-year reporting period.

5.4.2. **Bachelor’s Degree**: Seven (7) graduates a year or thirty-five (35) during the five
(5)-year reporting period.

5.4.3. **Master’s Degree**: Four (4) graduates a year or twenty (20) during the five (5)-
year reporting period.

5.4.4. **Professional & Doctoral Degree**: One (1) graduate a year or five (5) during the
five (5)-year reporting period.

5.5. Programs flagged through the program productivity review process require a formal
review at the institutional level. Following the review, the institution shall assign one of
five designations to those programs for submission as part of the academic degree
program productivity report that comes forward to the Board: 1) Retain Due to Critical
Need; 2) Retain with Further Review Required; 3) Consolidate with Another Program
on Campus; 4) Consolidate with Another Program within the System; 5) Terminate.

**FORMS / APPENDICES:**

AAC Form 2.20 – Accelerated Graduate Program Request

**SOURCE:**

BOR May 1993; BOR January 2002; BOR December 2003; BOR August 2005; BOR March 2017;
December 2018.