

R401, Approval and Modification of Instructional Programs and Administrative Units within Institutional Role, Mission, and Designated Service Region¹

R401-1 Purpose: This policy establishes processes for approval and modification of programs and administrative units within a Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”) institution’s role, mission, and designated service region.

R401-2 References

- 2.1** Utah Code § 53B-16-102, Changes in Curriculum
- 2.2** Utah Code § 53B-16-105, Common Course Numbering
- 2.3** Board Policy R220, Delegation of Responsibilities to the President and Board of Trustees
- 2.4** Board Policy R312, Institutional Roles and Missions and Approval of Out-of-Role Instructional Programs
- 2.5** Board Policy R315, Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers
- 2.6** Board Policy R402, Certificate and Degree Award Structures
- 2.7** Board Policy R411, Cyclical Institutional Program Reviews
- 2.8** Board Policy R470, General Education
- 2.9** Board Policy R510, Tuition
- 2.10** Board Policy R517, Course and Program Fees
- 2.11** Board Policy R701, Capital Facilities

R401-3 Definitions

3.1 “Administrative Unit” means an academic department, college, professional school, or bureau. Centers, institutes, and bureaus are administrative units that primarily perform research, instruction, and technology transfer functions or provide services to students, the community, businesses, or other external audiences to obtain external funds. For purposes of this policy, an administrative unit does not include branch campuses, extension centers, or instructional service

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centers, which are covered under Board Policy R315, *Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers*. However, such a campus or center may be home to one or more administrative units.

3.2 “Branch Campus” means a site subordinate to an institution's main campus that operates under the same governance and provides a full range of student services.

3.3 “Classification of Instructional Programs (“CIP”) Code” means the code associated with a particular program of instruction as specified by the National Center for Education Statistics (“NCES”) taxonomy of programs. This code is critical for data requests, reporting, tracking, and performance funding.

3.4 “Extension Center” means a research, continuing education, or technical education facility that is permanent and geographically separate from the institution's main campus but is under the same governance.

3.5 “General Education” means a set of essential learning outcomes, the foundational subject areas outlined in Board Policy R470, *General Education*, and the individual courses and the disciplines that comprise those subject areas. The foundational subject areas include written communications, quantitative literacy or mathematics, American Institutions, Humanities, fine arts, social sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences.

3.6 “Instructional Service Center” means a temporary or permanent site that is a joint venture between the institution and an employer or educational agency.

3.7 “Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System” (“IPEDS”) means a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the National Center for Education Statistics (“NCES”), the primary statistical agency of the United States Department of Education, responsible for collecting, analyzing, and publishing information on the condition of American education. IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical institution participating in federal student financial aid programs.

3.8 “Peer Review Council” means a council comprised of staff in the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (“OCHE”), Chief Academic Officers (“CAOs”) or Chief Instructional Officers (“CIOs”) of USHE institutions, and institutional faculty and staff with the expertise to evaluate a proposed program.

3.9 “Program Awards and Credentials” (“Awards”) means awards and credentials offered at USHE institutions ranging from certificates to doctoral degrees that certify a student has

completed an approved program. Utah Board of Higher Education (“Board”) Policy R402, *Certificate and Degree Award Structures*, defines awards, credentials, and criteria that allow for in-role program approval by Boards of Trustees (“Trustees”).

3.10 “Program of Instruction” (“Program”) means a for-credit structured curriculum that leads to the knowledge and skills required for a certificate or degree and meets parameters established by institutional accreditation agencies.

3.10.1 “Academic Program” means an educational program offered by a degree-granting institution. An academic program comprises discipline-specific or interdisciplinary courses leading to an intellectual specialty, skills, and experiences necessary for meaningful employment. Academic programs lead to academic certificates or associate, bachelor's, graduate, and professional degrees as defined in Board Policy R402, *Certificate and Degree Award Structures*. Academic programs are only offered at USHE degree-granting institutions.

3.10.2 “Technical Education Program” means an undergraduate program that prepares students for employment in occupations that do not require a degree and meets the needs of Utah's employers for technically skilled workers. Technical education programs are only offered at USHE institutions that have a technical education role.

3.10.3 Within USHE, "technical education programs" and "academic programs" are also defined based on CIP-Code tables maintained by OCHE.

3.11 “Program Proposal” means a document submitted by an institution using a template maintained by OCHE that includes all statutory requirements and other criteria determined by the Utah Board of Higher Education (“Board”) for approval of a new academic or technical program.

3.12 “Regional Demand” means a combination of the following:

3.12.1 Sufficient labor market demand to justify offering the program within the institution's service region, even if other programs exist in the state; or

3.12.2 Modalities that promote program affordability and student access and completion, such as face-to-face and hybrid instruction aimed at local demand.

3.13 “Unnecessary Duplication” exists where there is:

3.13.1 Undergraduate Program: An undergraduate program that substantially duplicates the curricular content of a program defined as outside the institution's assigned role; or

3.13.2 Graduate Program

3.13.2.1 A high-cost graduate research program or specialty already existing at another institution and for which existing programs adequately meet present and projected industry demand; or

3.13.2.2 A master's degree program at a regional university for which there is no regional demand.

R401-4 Program and Administrative Unit Approval Authority

4.1 Program Approval Delegation to Trustees: Based on criteria established by the Board, an institution's Trustees may approve a new program or a change to an existing program under the process outlined in subsections 4.2 through 4.4 and sections R401-5 and R401-6 of this policy if the program:

4.1.1 Is appropriate to the awards authorized within the requesting institution's mission, role, and scope of programs as outlined in Board policies *R312, Institutional Roles and Missions and Approval of Out-of-Role Instructional Programs*, and *R402, Certificate and Degree Award Structures*;

4.1.2 Is within the institution's assigned geographic service region as defined in Board Policy *R315, Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers*;

4.1.3 Meets identified workforce, community, and student needs that are not adequately met by existing programs;

4.1.4 Maximizes collaboration with other institutions of higher education to provide for efficiency in offering the program of instruction to ensure transferability and stackability of credentials;

4.1.5 Does not unnecessarily duplicate programs offered at other USHE institutions; and

4.1.6 Conforms to law and other Board policy, including Board Policy *R470, General Education*, common course numbering under Utah Code section 53B-16-105 and Board

Policy R475, *Common Course Numbering*, technical education program alignment requirements, and transfer and lower-division major requirements under Board Policy R471, *Lower Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits*.

4.2 Board Approval Required: An institution must receive Board approval for all programs that do not meet the criteria of subsection 4.1, including:

4.2.1 A new program of instruction that is outside of the institution's primary role or changes to an existing program that would bring it outside the role under Board Policy R312, *Institutional Roles and Missions and Approval of Out-of-Role Instructional Programs*;

4.2.2 Any program proposed for delivery outside of the institution's designated service area under Board Policy R315, *Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers*;

4.2.3 A new program that deviates from the award characteristics and criteria under Board Policy R402, *Certificate and Degree Award Structures*; and

4.2.4 A program that OCHE has deemed to be unnecessarily duplicative of other programs.

4.3 Trustee Approval of Administrative Units: Trustees may approve a new administrative unit or changes to an existing one under subsection 4.1. Institutions shall use the notification template provided by OCHE to notify the Board that Trustees have approved a new unit or change to an existing unit.

4.3.1 Branch Campuses, Extensions, and Instructional Service Centers require Board approval as outlined in Board Policy R315, *Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers*.

4.4 Budget Requests Requiring Board Approval: Neither Trustee nor Board approval of a program or an administrative unit constitutes Board approval of a special budget request necessary to fund the program, such as differential tuition or building appropriations. Special budget requests that require Board approval shall be submitted under relevant Board policies, including R510, *Tuition*, R517, *Course and Program Fees*, and R701, *Capital Facilities*.

R401-5 New Program Approval Process

5.1 Program Proposal: An institution seeking approval of a new certificate or degree program shall submit a new program proposal to OCHE. OCHE shall determine whether the program is eligible for Trustee approval under subsection 4.1. If the program is not appropriate for Trustee approval, an institution may seek approval under one of the following Board policies:

5.1.1 Board Policy R312, *Institutional Roles and Missions and Approval of Out-of-Role Instructional Programs*;

5.1.2 Board Policy R315, *Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers*; or

5.1.3 Board Policy R402, *Certificate and Degree Award Structures*.

5.2 Peer Review: OCHE staff will coordinate the peer review process for new certificates and degrees. OCHE will schedule a Peer Review Council ("Council") and provide the Council with the proposal and supporting materials to review. Both degree-granting and technical college peers may review programs as needed to evaluate transfer and program alignment considerations.

5.2.1 Peer Review Process: For academic or technical education programs, CAOs or CIOs or their staff will review the proposal and solicit feedback from appropriate departments at their institutions. Each CAO/CIO shall consolidate feedback from their institution and submit written comments or questions for a response from the proposing department in the platform provided by OCHE. Either the CAOs/CIOs or their designees shall attend a peer review meeting to ask questions of the proposing institution and to provide oral feedback, which OCHE shall summarize in writing.

5.2.2 Special Funding Support: Specialized groups will review programs for approval of special funding support, such as workforce development grants or Perkins eligibility for Career and Technical Education ("CTE") programs. Approval for special funding does not constitute approval of a program of instruction.

5.3 OCHE Assessment: OCHE shall provide an assessment for Trustees to use when determining whether to approve new programs or changes to existing programs.

5.3.1 The assessment:

5.3.1.1 Shall evaluate the proposed program structure under Board Policy R402, *Certificate and Degree Award Structures*;

5.3.1.2 May recommend a particular CIP code for a program to ensure program alignment or transferability, where appropriate; and

5.3.1.3 May assess whether the proposed program unnecessarily duplicates another program, as well as the program's potential impact on other institutions.

5.3.2 OCHE shall issue a report of its assessment to the Trustees, including the completed program proposal with supporting materials, written and oral comments from the peer review process, external reviews if applicable, and any additional information for Trustees to consider when determining whether to approve the proposed program.

R401-6 Trustee Consideration: To ensure that approval of a proposed program or administrative unit supports USHE and state needs, Trustees will consider the system-level impact of new instructional programs and refer to the assessments and information provided by OCHE when making their approval determinations.

R401-7 Board Notification and Review

7.1 Notification of Trustee Approval: When Trustees approve a new program, administrative unit, or changes to an existing program, the institution shall notify OCHE in writing.

7.2 Board Review of Trustee Approval

7.2.1 OCHE shall add Trustee approval of the new program, administrative unit, or program change to the next Board meeting agenda as a consent calendar item.

7.2.2 The Board will review Trustee approval and may:

7.2.2.1 Require an interim review of the new program or administrative unit or a change of programs outside of the normal cyclical review process under Board Policy R411, *Cyclical Institutional Program Reviews*; or

7.2.2.2 Override the Trustees approval if the approval is for a program that is not in compliance with Board policy.

7.2.3 If the Board overrides Trustee approval under subsection 7.2.2.2, OCHE shall notify the institution's president and Trustee Chair in writing of the Board's decision, including the reasons.

7.2.3.1 The institution may address the reasons for overriding and resubmit the program, unit, or changes for approval by following the process in sections R401-5 through R401-7 of this policy.

R401-8 Approvals and Changes Requiring Notification to Board

8.1 Program and Administrative Unit Changes: The following require notification to the Board following Trustee approval. OCHE will evaluate the changes to ensure they meet Board policy requirements, record program modifications to the OCHE programs database, and list the following changes to a program or administrative unit as information items on the Board's agenda:

8.1.1 Changes to programs, including name change, discontinuance and teach-out, change in delivery methods, change in CIP code, academic program restructure, academic consolidation, suspension of an academic program, reinstatement of a previously suspended academic program; and changes to transfer articulations at degree-granting institutions;

8.1.2 New administrative units, including institutes, bureaus, centers, and departments; and

8.1.3 Changes to administrative units, including name change, transfer, restructure, consolidation, suspension, reinstatement of a previously suspended administrative unit; and discontinuance.

R401-9 Suspended, Discontinued, or Reinstated Programs

9.1 Suspended Academic Programs: A suspended academic program remains on the Board's list of approved programs and may remain in the online and printed catalog at the institution's discretion until entirely discontinued.

9.2 Discontinued Programs: An institution may discontinue a program only after current students can complete the program (i.e., through a "teach out"). When an institution discontinues a program, OCHE shall remove the program from the Board's list of approved programs, and the institution shall remove the program from catalogs.

9.2.1 Institution Considerations: The institution shall consider the statewide impact of discontinuing the program and, where there is sufficient demand, identify whether the program may be viable at another USHE institution.

9.2.2 Board Discontinuance of Unnecessarily Duplicative Programs: The Board may require USHE institutions to discontinue programs that are unnecessarily

duplicative of programs already offered, based on reviews conducted under Board Policy R411, *Cyclical Institutional Program Reviews*.

9.3 Student Completion in Discontinued or Suspended Programs: When a program is discontinued or suspended, an institution must provide a path for enrolled students to complete the program in a period compatible with accreditation standards. Such a path may require enrolling the students at other institutions of higher education or providing a teach-out by offering courses until no other admitted students may complete the program or for a maximum of two years after discontinuing an academic program or a maximum of six months after discontinuance of a technical education program, whichever comes first.

9.4 Reinstatement of a Previously Suspended Academic Program or Administrative Unit: If an institution plans to restart a suspended program or administrative unit, its notification to OCHE shall include a statement with the program name, either the administrative unit structure or the curricular content that is identical to the original program, and a justification for reinstating the program. If the program's name, curricular content, or structure has changed, the institution shall submit the request as a new program or administrative unit proposal and discontinue the suspended program or administrative unit.

R401-10 Program Planning: Institutions should send OCHE a list of programs they anticipate proposing in an academic year by September 30 that academic year.

R402, Certificate and Degree Award Structures¹

R402-1 Purpose: This policy defines the awards and credentials offered by institutions in the Utah System of Higher Education ("USHE").

R402-2 References

- 2.1 Utah Code § 53B-16-102, Changes in Curriculum
- 2.2 Utah Code § 53B-16-105, Common Course Numbering
- 2.3 Board Policy R312, Institutional Roles and Missions and Approval of Out-of-Mission Instructional Programs
- 2.4 Board Policy R315, Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers
- 2.5 Board Policy R403, Short-term Training
- 2.6 Board Policy R470, General Education
- 2.7 Board Policy R471, Lower-Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits
- 2.8 Board Policy R475, Common Course Numbering

R402-3 Definitions

3.1 “Basic Instruction” provided by technical colleges, means pre-college-level instruction offered in areas such as reading, language arts, and mathematics, which is necessary for student success in a technical education program. Basic instruction does not include general education courses but may parallel developmental education offered by degree-granting institutions.

3.2 “Developmental Education” means instruction designed to address knowledge and skills gaps necessary for college-level coursework. Developmental education does not grant college credit and is generally numbered below 1000 in the USHE common course numbering system. Developmental education may be eligible for credit and designated at the 1000-level when integrated into or supplementing a college-level course through co-requisite remediation models.

3.3 “General Education” means a set of essential learning outcomes, the foundational subject areas outlined in Utah Board of Higher Education (“Board”) Policy R470, *General Education*, and the individual courses and the disciplines that comprise those subject areas. The foundational

¹ Adopted June 6, 2024.

subject areas include written communications, quantitative literacy or mathematics, American Institutions, Humanities, fine arts, social sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences.

3.4 “Graduate Course” means courses numbered 6000 to 7999. These courses are generally limited to graduate students and graduate degrees and certificates. Graduate courses may only be offered at USHE institutions with a Board-approved mission to provide graduate-level programs.

3.5 “Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System” (“IPEDS”) means a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the National Center for Education Statistics ("NCES"), the primary statistical agency of the United States Department of Education, responsible for collecting, analyzing, and publishing information on the condition of American education. IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical institution participating in federal student financial aid programs.

3.6 “Lower-Division Course” means a course numbered 1000-2999 and expected to be completed during the first 60 credits of study. Lower-division courses offer breadth, foundation, general education, preparation for employment, or preparation for continued study and may serve as prerequisites for upper-division courses.

3.7 “Program of Instruction” (“Program”) means a for-credit structured curriculum that leads to the knowledge and skills required for a certificate or degree and meets parameters established by institutional accreditation agencies.

3.7.1 “Academic Program” means an educational program offered by a degree-granting institution. An academic program comprises discipline-specific or interdisciplinary courses leading to an intellectual specialty, skills, and experiences necessary for meaningful employment. Academic programs lead to academic certificates or associate, bachelor's, graduate, and professional degrees as defined in this policy. Academic programs are only offered at USHE degree-granting institutions.

3.7.2 “Technical Education Program” means an undergraduate program that prepares students for employment in occupations that do not require a degree and meets the needs of Utah's employers for technically skilled workers. Technical education programs are only offered at USHE institutions that have a technical education role.

3.7.3 Within the USHE, "technical education programs" and "academic programs" are also defined based on CIP-Code tables maintained by the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (“OCHE”).

3.8 “Undergraduate program” means a program at the baccalaureate level or lower.

3.8 “Upper-Division” means courses numbered 3000 to 5999. These courses integrate and build upon learning outcomes from earlier studies and are for students beyond their first 60 credits of study in college. Upper-division courses offer specialized learning outcomes for a specific degree and provide depth, specialization, refinement, and preparation for employment or graduate study.

R402-4 Guiding Principles

4.1 Institutions may only award credentials relevant to programs with applicable roles and missions as defined in Board Policy R312, *Institutional Roles and Missions and Approval of Out-of-Mission Instructional Programs*, or by special Board approval for select out-of-role programs.

4.2 Awards should be structured to facilitate program completion and transfer, where applicable.

4.3 The total credit count for academic certificates and degrees must include all prerequisite requirements and selective admissions conditions where they exist.

4.4 Foundational coursework and prerequisites for subsequent coursework should have sequential lower-division numbering to help students move consecutively through the program and provide options for the first 60 credits of study.

4.5 Technical certificates and associate degrees shall not include upper-division coursework.

4.6 If a USHE faculty major committee has established a lower-division major or a technical education program has undergone program alignment, the program structure must comport with the established curricular core, course numbering, and sequencing.

4.7 Where specific general education courses are necessary to satisfy a bachelor's degree's major program requirements, institutions must specify the courses in the bachelor's degree structure and any associated transfer associate degree structure and lower-division major maps.

R402-5 Description of Awards

5.1 Certificate

5.1.1 Certificates are credit-bearing credentials that may qualify for federal financial aid if of sufficient length.

5.1.2 Technical Certificate: A technical certificate:

5.1.2.1 Is an undergraduate, lower-division award;

5.1.2.2 May not substantively duplicate the curriculum content of an academic program;

5.1.2.3 Must be approved by the body that accredits the institution;

5.1.2.4 Shall meet a documented need of Utah employers within the service region and fully prepare a student for related employment in the occupational field;

5.1.2.5 Must meet federal definitions of Perkins eligibility requirements in a recognized occupational field;

5.1.2.6 May be designed to enhance student transfer into associate or bachelor's degrees associated with credential and career progression; and

5.1.2.7 Is the only credential for which students pay a technical education tuition rate and may only be offered at institutions with a technical college role.

5.1.3 Academic Certificate: An academic certificate may be an undergraduate, post-bachelor's, master's, or post-master's-level award.

5.1.3.1 An academic certificate must offer an appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis of learning. An academic certificate must reflect a structured program and may not simply indicate the completion of a minimum number of credits.

5.1.3.2 An academic certificate may not substantively duplicate the curriculum content of a technical education program.

5.1.3.3 If focused on a professional specialty enhancing a degree, an academic certificate should incorporate appropriate licensure requirements and meet U.S. Department of Education regulations to notify students of licensure education requirements.

5.1.3.4 To facilitate transfer and degree completion, an institution should automatically award a general education certificate once a student has completed the general education requirements.

5.1.3.5 A supplemental academic certificate enhances a major by providing an emphasis, specialty, or interdisciplinary focus beyond the basic major requirements.

5.1.3.6 Institutions may use academic certificates to mark the completion of minors or emphases.

5.2 Associate Degree: An associate degree comprises lower-division coursework that may be structured to lead to a particular occupation or transfer to a bachelor's degree program.

5.2.1 Associate of Applied Science ("AAS") Degree: An AAS degree prepares students for entry into a particular occupation that requires more than a certificate and less than a bachelor's degree.

5.2.1.1 Wherever possible, AAS degrees should include transfer articulations for technical college programs, as outlined in *Board Policy R471, Lower-Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits*. In those circumstances, the AAS degree should expand competencies acquired through technical certificates with additional advanced instruction in the subject and general education requirements added by the degree-granting institution. Institutions shall encourage students to begin with the technical certificate where such articulations exist.

5.2.1.2 Depending on occupation needs and possible transfer into an affiliated Bachelor of Applied Science degree, an AAS degree may require partial completion of the general education program and general education learning outcomes may be embedded within discipline courses needed in the program as outlined in *Board Policy R470, General Education*.

5.2.2 Transfer Associate of Arts/Associate of Science ("AA/AS") Degree: A degree that prepares students for upper-division work in baccalaureate programs. Upon completion, students should be able to transfer to a four-year institution with junior status and complete a bachelor's degree with only 60 additional credits of study.

5.2.2.1 Transfer associate degree requirements should include completing all general education requirements outlined in Board Policy R470, *General Education*, except in specialized associate degrees aligned with bachelor's degree major requirements that are too prescriptive to facilitate completion of general education in the first 60 credits of study. Where specific general education courses are necessary to satisfy the bachelor's degree major program requirements, institutions must specify the courses within the associate degree design.

5.2.2.2 A transfer AA/AS degree in a particular subject must be structured around the USHE-aligned lower-division major if a faculty major committee has determined one. Institutions must use the same CIP Code as the four-year program to which the student will transfer wherever possible.

5.2.2.2.1 An AA degree may require competence in a world language besides English to parallel requirements of BA degrees.

5.2.2.2.2 An AS degree may have additional science, mathematics, or technical requirements to parallel requirements of a BS degree.

5.2.2.3 Transfer AA/AS degrees should articulate across USHE whenever possible. Where systemwide articulations are not possible, institutions shall develop and maintain formal articulation agreements with four-year institution(s). Articulation agreements shall identify any additional unique requirements for seamless transfer to the four-year institution.

5.2.2.4 Specialized Associate Degree: A transfer degree that includes extensive specialized coursework and prepares students to initiate upper-division work in a particular baccalaureate program. General education requirements may be less extensive in this degree than in AA or AS degrees to meet the requirements for lower-division major preparation. Students must satisfy the receiving institution's remaining general education and upper-division baccalaureate requirements post-transfer. Specialized associate degrees have formal articulation agreements for course transfer; in some cases, articulation may be systemwide.

5.3 Bachelor's Degree: The highest level of undergraduate degree, a bachelor's degree comprises a disciplinary major or majors to develop specialized skills and knowledge and cross-disciplinary general education to develop critical thinking, analytical and ethical skills, and broad-based foundational knowledge. It includes upper-division and lower-division coursework.

5.3.1 Characteristics

5.3.1.1 A bachelor's degree consists of undergraduate courses and should be designed so that upper-division courses are not required in the first 60 credits. Courses identified as preparatory should be the same or similar to courses offered by two-year programs in the same discipline. A bachelor's degree should be part of the systemwide articulation processes of lower-division majors where faculty major committees have developed those. A bachelor's degree uses common course numbers outlined in Board policies R471, *Lower-Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits* and R475, *Common Course Numbering*.

5.3.1.2 The completion of required preparatory, lower-division courses may not be sufficient for admission to selective majors with limits on the number of students who may pursue the major. Admissions requirements, such as minimal Grade Point Averages and exam scores, should be explained to students early in their program.

5.3.2 Bachelor of Arts (“BA”) and Bachelor of Science (“BS”) Degrees:

5.3.2.1 A BA degree may require competence in a world language besides English.

5.3.2.2 A BS degree may have additional science, mathematics, or technical requirements.

5.3.3 Professional Bachelor's Degree: A bachelor's degree that prepares students for a particular profession by emphasizing skills and practical analysis built upon theory and research. Specialized accreditation sets acceptable practice standards. Professional degrees may be designed to lead to third-party licensure and must meet U.S. Department of Education requirements to notify students how the program meets licensure education requirements.

5.3.4 Bachelor of Applied Science ("BAS"): A bachelor's degree focusing on workforce preparation and links to industry or organizations where opportunities for applied learning are available to students. A BAS degree may be designed as a completion program that builds upon an Associate of Applied Science degree or technical or academic certificates. The BAS must be structured to allow for completion of the general education requirements that were not included in the AAS degree.

5.3.5 Bachelor of Applied Studies ("BAP"): A bachelor's degree for which the major requirements plus the General Education and institutional requirements are fewer than 120 credits. A BAP degree must have a minimum of 90 credits and must measurably demonstrate disciplinary competencies, mastery of subject matter, and student learning outcomes comparable to and mapped to those of 120-credit degree programs in the same subject, with the elimination only of unstructured, non-essential electives from outside the major resulting in fewer credits.

5.3.6 Multidisciplinary and General Studies Bachelor's Degree: A bachelor's degree that encourages specialization in multiple academic disciplines. Institutions may use this degree to facilitate completion. Multidisciplinary degrees typically provide flexibility that allows students to select a combination of disciplines focused on particular or individualized career and academic objectives. Degree requirements must meet institution graduation requirements, be structured to ensure rigor appropriate for a bachelor's degree, and demonstrate the integration of content and learning experiences across the disciplines. Institutions must use a General Studies or Interdisciplinary Studies CIP code. Institutions may offer these degrees as BA, BS, or another designation such as Bachelor of Integrated Studies ("BIS"), Bachelor of General Studies ("BGS"), or Bachelor of University Studies ("BUS").

5.4 Master's Degree: The first level of graduate degree.

5.4.1 Master of Arts ("MA") and Master of Science ("MS") Degrees: Graduate degrees based on academic subjects that require original student research or a creative project and may be designed to lead to a doctoral degree.

5.4.2 Professional Master's Degree: A master's degree that prepares students for entry into a particular occupation and may lead to third-party licensure. Specialty accreditation may dictate coursework and the number of required credits. Programs must meet U. S. Department of Education regulations to notify students whether they meet the educational requirements for licensure.

5.5 Doctoral Degree: A graduate-level degree in an advanced, specialized field of study.

5.5.1 Research Doctoral Degree: A research doctoral degree generally requires study, preparation, and defense of original research or execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement.

5.5.2 Professional Practice or Clinical Doctoral Degree: A professional or clinical doctoral degree provides knowledge and skills for credentials or licenses required for professional practice. It generally does not require the same level of original research as a research doctoral degree and may require extensive clinical practice. Programs must meet U. S. Department of Education regulations to notify students whether they meet the educational requirements for licensure.

R402-6 Award Criteria for Program Approval by Board of Trustees: An institution’s Board of Trustees may approve certificate and degree programs that comport with the parameters of Table 1, so long as they are within the institutional role and service region as outlined in Board policies *R312, Institutional Roles and Missions and Approval of Out-of-Mission Instructional Programs* or *R315, Designation of Service Regions and Approval of Out-of-Region Instructional Programs, Branch Campuses, Instructional Service Centers, and Extension Centers*. Programs that do not meet the parameters in Table 1 require approval by the Board as outlined in those policies.

6.1 Minimum Credits for Technical Certificates: An existing technical certificate program that falls under the three-credit minimum may be counted for performance funding under Board Policy R522, *Annual Performance Goal Setting and Funding Determination* through the 2026-2027 academic year, however, all such programs must either meet the minimum credit requirements or be considered short-term training no later than the end of that time period.

Table 1 – Program Criteria			
Program	Semester Credit Hours	Special Curricular Conditions	Unique Conditions
Technical Certificate	Must be a minimum of 3 credits ² and a maximum of 51 credits.	Under Utah Code sections 53B-1-101.5(8)(b) and 53B-2a-106(2)(b), technical education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May only be offered by institutions with a technical college role.

² Based on the Board’s action of June 6, 2024, Uintah Basin Technical College’s Well Control Workover Operator, Well Control Supervisor, and Oil and Gas Operator Representative Workover programs are exempted from the three credit minimum.

		may provide basic instruction and shall not include general education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must use an appropriate technical CIP Code as outlined in the OCHE table.
Academic Undergraduate Certificate	Must be a minimum of 9 credits and a maximum of 36 credits.	May include general education courses as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May only be offered by degree-granting institutions. • Must use an appropriate academic CIP Code as outlined in the OCHE table.
Applied Associate of Science Degree	Must be a minimum of 60 credits and a maximum of 69 credits.	May include only a portion of the general education requirements (minimum of 9 credits) outlined in Board Policy R470, <i>General Education</i> in keeping with accreditation requirements.	Must use an appropriate academic CIP Code as outlined in the OCHE table.
Transfer Associate Degree	Must be a minimum of 60 credits and a maximum of 63 credits.	Must meet all general education requirements as outlined in Board Policy R470, <i>General Education</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a bachelor's degree exists in the same discipline, there must be at least one articulation agreement with a four-year institution for transfer with junior standing. (<i>See Board Policy R470, General Education.</i>) • Must align with the appropriate lower-division major if a USHE faculty major committee has established one. (<i>See Board Policy R470, General Education.</i>)
Specialized Associate Degree	Must be a minimum of 60 credits and a maximum of 85 credits. Includes a minimum of 28 credit hours of specialized coursework.	May be incomplete prior to transfer, per articulation agreements and transfer baccalaureate major maps.	Formal articulation agreements must be made for affiliated bachelor's degrees.
Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Professional Bachelor Degrees	Must be a minimum of 120 credits and a maximum of 126 credits.	Must meet all general education requirements as outlined in Board Policy R470, <i>General Education</i> .	Must align with the appropriate lower-division major if a USHE faculty major committee has established one. (<i>See Board Policy R470, General Education.</i>)

Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS)/Bachelor of Applied Studies (BAP)	Must be a minimum of 90 and a maximum of 126 credits.	Must meet all general education requirements as outlined in Board Policy R470, <i>General Education</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must align with the appropriate lower-division major if a USHE faculty major committee has established one. • May be designed to build upon AAS or academic or technical certificate programs.
Post-Bachelor's Certificates	Requires less than 30 credits.	Not Applicable	Requires completion of a bachelor's degree.
Master's Degree	Requires 30 to 36 credits. Professional master's programs may require additional coursework or projects to meet accreditation requirements.	Not Applicable	Generally requires completion of a bachelor's degree.
Post-Master's Certificate	Requires less than 30 credits.	Not Applicable	Requires completion of a master's degree.
Doctoral Degree	Determined by disciplinary standards	Not Applicable	Requires completion of a bachelor's degree and may require a master's degree where appropriate for the discipline.

R470, General Education¹

R470-1 Purpose: This policy creates guidelines to assure consistency in the structure and essential learning outcomes of general education requirements for undergraduate degree programs and reciprocity in recognition of general education requirements between Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”) degree-granting institutions.

R470-2 References

- 2.1 Utah Code § 53B-1-101.5(1) and (8), Definitions
- 2.2 Utah Code § 53B-2-106(3)(c), Duties of Degree-granting Presidents
- 2.3 Utah Code § 53B-16-102, Changes in Curriculum
- 2.4 Utah Code § 53B-16-103, Granting of Degrees, Diplomas, or Certificates
- 2.5 Utah Code § 53B-16-105, Common Course Numbering, Transferability, General Education
- 2.6 Board Policy R401, Approval of New Programs, Program Changes, Discontinued Programs, and Program Reports
- 2.7 Board Policy R471, Lower division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits
- 2.8 R470 Appendix, Essential Learning Outcomes
- 2.9 Importance of General Education Issue Brief, General Education Task Force

R470-3 Definitions

- 3.1 **“Basic Instruction”** means instruction offered by technical colleges in areas such as reading, language arts, and mathematics that is necessary for student success in a chosen technical education or job-related program. Basic instruction does not include college-level general education courses or introductory college-level disciplinary courses but may parallel developmental education offered by degree-granting institutions.
- 3.2 **“Competencies”** mean the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that demonstrate accomplishment of learning objectives within a specific course or program.
- 3.3 **“Essential Learning Outcomes”** means the requisite competencies of a course or program, including intellectual ideas, bodies of knowledge, and academic skillsets and mindsets.

¹ *Approved August 19, 2005. Replaces R463, Credit by Examination; R465, General Education; R467, Lower Division Major Requirements; R471, Transfer of Credit and R472, Course Numbering. Amended March 25, 2011; September 16, 2016; and March 31, 2017. Repealed and replaced December 1, 2023; amended June 6, 2024.*

3.4 “General Education” means a required set of shared essential learning outcomes, the foundational subject areas required within the general education program, and the individual courses and disciplines that comprise those subject areas. These include written communications, quantitative literacy or mathematics, American Institutions, humanities, fine arts, social sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences.

R470-4 General Education Guidelines

4.1 Undergraduate degrees within USHE should be structured to prepare students for both professional competence in a particular discipline and cross-disciplinary general education to develop critical thinking, analytical and ethical skills, and the broad-based academic knowledge necessary for an adaptable 21st century workforce and an educated citizenry. *See Reference 2.8.* All undergraduate degrees must meet the shared USHE General Education requirements. An institution must seek approval from the Board for an exemption as outlined in *Board Policy R401, Approval of New Programs, Program Changes, Discontinued Programs, and Program Reports.*

4.2 USHE degree-granting institutions shall construct their general education programs in alignment with their institutional roles as outlined in *Board Policy R312, Institutional Roles and Missions*, and their unique institutional missions and faculty specialties, but institutional general education programs shall have consistent core and breadth requirements, essential learning outcomes, minimum grade requirements, and credit structures and shall be fully transferable across the system. Technical education programs may not provide general education but may offer basic instruction.

4.3 General education essential learning outcomes are informed by USHE faculty through area work groups and faculty major committees outlined in section 8, disciplinary standards, and nationally recognized expectations as reflected in professional organizations such as the American Association of Colleges and Universities, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, and accrediting bodies.

4.4 General Education courses shall be designed to actively engage students in the disciplinary subject, support the learning and success of all students, and make interdisciplinary connections to help students understand the value of the program.

R407-5 General Education Credit Requirements: To assure consistency and transferability across USHE and timely completion for students, each institutional general education program shall require 27-30 semester credits to build student competence in the core and breadth general education areas. These include:

5.1 12 credits in the core requirements of written communications (six credits of which three credits are at the 2000-level or higher), three credits Quantitative Literacy, and three credits American Institutions.

5.2 Three credits from each of the five breadth area requirements of arts, humanities, life sciences, physical sciences, and social and behavioral sciences.

5.3 Up to three credits of unique institutional coursework to address gaps in meeting shared general education program-level essential learning outcomes, not to exceed an institutional requirement for 30 general education credits. Because each USHE degree-granting institution structures its general education program around its unique faculty specialties and academic departments and serves students of differing backgrounds and levels of academic preparation, some institutions may need to specify this unique institutional coursework to ensure students achieve the expected system-level general education program outcomes.

5.4 Institutions may develop integrative courses or programs rather than structuring general education around one course per general education area requirement, not to exceed 30 credits except as allowed in subsection 5.5.

5.5 Courses with embedded co-requisite developmental education, instructional supports, or lab or other high impact pedagogical strategies may have more than three credits and may bring individual students' general education credit count above the 30-credit range.

5.6 In some cases, students majoring in a particular discipline may be required to take a two-course sequence in the major rather than a traditional single introductory course to meet a general education requirement served by that discipline. Two-course sequences may be given the appropriate general education requirement attribute for students in the major without affecting the institution's base general education credit count.

R470-6 Essential Learning Outcomes: USHE's shared general education essential learning outcomes should inform institutions' design of their general education programs at the program, area (core and breadth), and course level to offer an appropriate breadth, depth, and sequencing of learning.

6.1 Program-Level Essential Learning Outcomes: Program-level design shall ensure student demonstration of specific understanding and application of the following general education competencies:

6.1.1 Intellectual and Practical Skills: These skills include inquiry and analysis,

critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, information literacy, teamwork and problem-solving, and practical skills such as visual, kinesthetic, design, and aural forms of artistic communication.

6.1.2 Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural Worlds:

Engagement with “big questions”—both contemporary and enduring—in the sciences, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts.

6.1.3 Personal and Social Responsibility:

Development of personal and social responsibilities, including ethical reasoning and actions, foundations and skills for lifelong learning, community and civic knowledge and engagement, involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges, and local and global intercultural knowledge and competence.

6.1.4 Integrative Learning:

Demonstration of synthesis of learning and advanced accomplishment across coherent general and specialized studies and the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.

6.2 General Education Core Requirements: General education core essential learning outcomes address foundational competencies to promote student success across the curriculum and prepare students for subsequent coursework. The essential learning outcomes for the core areas are not exhaustive, and other outcomes may also be addressed at each institution’s discretion.

6.2.1 Written Communication (Six Credits):

Students may satisfy this requirement by completing at least two institutionally approved courses focused on the development of academic composition and communication skills to serve as a foundation for continued writing experiences across the curriculum, in professional settings, and as a tool for democratic and civic engagement. Students must demonstrate an ability to evaluate and synthesize credible information and effectively organize and deliver well-reasoned arguments appropriate to an intended audience. Courses receiving this designation should emphasize critical thinking, analysis, logical reasoning, and appropriate context and shall meet the essential learning outcomes defined by the Written Communication Area Work Group in *R470 Appendix, Essential Learning Outcomes*. Requirements can be met by taking these courses: (1) ENGL or WRTG 1010 Introduction to Writing, and (2) ENGL 2010 Intermediate Writing or ENGL 2100 Technical Writing, or other institution-approved courses.

6.2.2 Quantitative Literacy (Three Credits): Students satisfy this requirement by demonstrating familiarity with fundamental quantitative methods and concepts, formal reasoning, the ability to apply quantitative skills in an appropriate context, and the ability to evaluate arguments based on quantitative reasoning. Courses receiving this designation should meet the essential learning outcomes defined by the Quantitative Literacy Area Work group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*. Requirements can be met by taking MATH 1030 Quantitative Reasoning, MATH or STAT 1040 Statistics, MATH 1050 College Algebra, or other institution-approved courses.

6.2.3 American Institutions (Three Credits): Consistent with Utah Code section 53B-16-103(1)(b), to satisfy this requirement students must “demonstrate a reasonable understanding of the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States.” Approved courses should include the use of disciplinary methods from history, political science, or economics to come to an understanding of the history, principles, multi-cultural populations, form of government, and economic system of the United States. Approved courses shall meet the essential learning outcomes defined by the American Institutions Area Work group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*. Requirements can be met by taking ECON 1740 Economic History of the United States, HIST 1700 American Civilization, HIST 2700 United States History to 1877/HIST 2710 United States History 1877 to Present (for History majors), POLS 1100 American/US National Government, or other institution-approved courses.

6.3 General Education Breadth Areas: Students are required to complete requirements within five different breadth areas to cultivate the exposure to a range of subjects, analytical skills, and to develop the intellectual agility required to navigate a variety of perspectives and participate effectively in professional life and a diverse democracy. Courses that meet general education requirements may also fulfill lower division major requirements.

6.3.1 Arts (Three Credits): Students shall demonstrate an understanding of the scope and variety of the fine arts, explain the aesthetic standards used in making critical judgments in various artistic fields, and demonstrate knowledge of the range of values, beliefs, ideas, and practices embodied in artistic expression. Courses receiving this designation shall meet the essential learning outcomes established by the Arts Area Work Group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*.

6.3.2 Humanities (Three Credits): Students shall demonstrate proficiency in analyzing primary sources regarding the complexities and changes in human experience through analytical reading and critical thought and shall be able to analyze how human

experience is shaped by social, cultural, linguistic, and/or historical circumstances. Courses receiving this designation shall meet the essential learning outcomes established by the Humanities Area Work Group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*.

6.3.3 Life Sciences (Three Credits): Students shall demonstrate an understanding of science as a way of knowing about the natural world and living organisms. Life Science proficiency requires an understanding of the scientific method in conducting research and subjecting empirical evidence analysis to scientific models. Proficiency also entails an understanding of how the life sciences have shaped and been shaped by historical, ethical, cultural, and social contexts. Courses receiving this designation shall meet the essential learning outcomes outlined by the Life Sciences Area Work Group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*.

6.3.4 Physical Sciences (Three Credits): Students shall demonstrate familiarity with scientific methods and modeling to understand forces in the physical world and an understanding of how the physical sciences have shaped and been shaped by historical, ethical, cultural, and social contexts. Courses receiving this designation shall meet the essential learning outcomes outlined by the Physical Sciences Area Work Group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*.

6.3.5 Social and Behavioral Sciences (Three Credits): Students shall demonstrate an understanding of social and behavioral science methodology, concepts, and theories, and demonstrate a critically reasoned understanding of human cultures, value systems, institutions, economic structures, social patterns, and individual variation. Courses receiving this designation shall meet the essential learning outcomes defined by the Social and Behavioral Sciences Area Work Group in R470 Appendix, *Essential Learning Outcomes*.

6.3.6 Faculty from disciplines that offer general education courses within the breadth areas shall actively engage in reaching out to similar disciplines at other USHE institutions to further establish and articulate specific course learning outcomes and objectives for commonly numbered courses.

6.3.7 Institutions shall develop rules to assure that student course selection in the breadth area reflects exposure to a broad range of disciplines.

6.3.8 Breadth course learning outcomes may also support students acquiring relevant career information and professional, civic, and personal skills.

R470-7 General Education Sequencing and Completion: Institutions shall implement strategies to facilitate student completion of general education requirements.

7.1 Lower Division Sequential Numbering: Some lower division courses with general education attributes are intended to prepare students for advanced work across the curriculum or within an intended major. Expectations that these requirements should be completed early in a student's academic career shall be reflected through the appropriate use of the common course numbering sequences outlined in *Board Policy R475, Common Course Numbering*.

7.2 Upper Division Coursework in General Education: General education courses should be numbered at the 1000- and 2000-level, allowing students to fulfill all general education requirements through lower division coursework. However, in rare cases, courses that receive general education designations may have upper division numbering in alignment with the standards of *Board Policy R475, Common Course Numbering* and justified as being in the students' best interests.

7.3 Institutional Upper Division Non-major, Non-general Education

Requirements: Institutions that implement specific requirements for upper division courses outside of a major and outside of the USHE standardized general education program shall not refer to those requirements as general education and should carefully consider the possible negative effects of those requirements on transfer students and completion in general.

7.4 Early engagement with General Education: Institutions shall structure general education programs so that students begin general education work during their first year of enrollment, particularly in core requirements that are foundational to subsequent coursework.

7.5 Clear Communication of General Education Sequencing and Requirements:

Degree plans and advising materials should encourage students to complete general education requirements early and through the most effective curricular and pedagogical means possible, i.e., co-requisite rather than developmental course entry points where possible.

7.6 Completion within First Two Years: Depending on a student's intended major and transfer plans, general education may be completed within the first 60 credit hours or spread across multiple semesters to accommodate major requirements and facilitate completion.

7.7 Certificate of General Education Completion: Institutions shall mark completion of the general education program with a certificate to ensure transferability of the entire program within USHE or to non-USHE institutions.

7.8 Credit for Prior Learning: In support of timely completion, institutions shall allow students to obtain general education credit by other means, such as prior learning assessments as outlined in Board Policy R472, *Credit for Prior Learning*.

7.8.1 Allowable Credit: Institutions shall not impose limits on the amount of general education credit that a student may earn by means other than taking courses directly from the institution only in alignment with accreditation requirements and Board Policy R472, *Credit for Prior Learning*.

7.9 Substitution of Courses in General Education to Accommodate Major

Requirements: Institutions may allow students with declared majors in breadth areas listed in subsection 6.3 to substitute study and achievement in lower division major courses for the general education requirement and to achieve the required number of total general education credits by completing additional coursework in other general education areas. The receiving institution shall allow a USHE transfer student who retains the major to maintain the substitution at the receiving institution and shall not require the student to complete additional general education coursework.

R470-8 Designated Responsibilities for General Education Procedures: To implement this policy, the following committees are established:

8.1 Board’s General Education Task Force (“Task Force”): The Task Force will be comprised of one representative from each USHE degree-granting institution who: oversees General Education at their institution, is nominated by the institution’s Chief Academic Officer, and is appointed by the President. Non-voting or ex officio members may also attend as needed to provide expertise on particular issues. The Task Force will select a chair and vice chair, who must be approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education. These officers’ terms of office are three years, and they are eligible for reelection. Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (“OCHE”) staff will provide administrative support to the Task Force and may serve as ex officio participants. The Task Force shall:

8.1.1 Establish general education program-level essential learning outcomes and goals and essential learning outcomes in the core and breadth areas of general education, based on the most current recommendations of the general education area work groups and with input from general education faculty, faculty major committees, and accrediting bodies, national associations, and academic societies that are considered leaders in general education;

8.1.2 Propose methods to assess student learning outcomes in general education and submit those recommendations to the Chief Academic Officers and USHE institutions;

8.1.3 Coordinate with groups working on related tasks by appointing members of the Task Force to assist other USHE committees, such as the USHE Transfer Council, as requested and appropriate;

8.1.4 Address disagreements about general education attributes for courses across USHE as they arise; and

8.1.5 Recommend policy updates to OCHE, which must be vetted and endorsed by the Council of Chief Academic Officers before being forwarded to the Council of Presidents and then to the Board.

8.2 General Education Area Work Groups: The general education area work groups (“work groups”) include Arts, Humanities, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Written Communication, Quantitative Literacy, and American Institutions. These work groups are comprised of two faculty representatives from each USHE degree-granting institution nominated by the institution’s general education committee and approved by the Chief Academic Officer. Non-voting or ex officio members may also attend as needed to provide expertise on particular issues. Each work group shall be chaired by a member of the Task Force or a faculty member appointed by the Task Force. The work groups shall:

8.2.1 Meet annually during the annual professional development conference organized by the Task Force each fall, and at least once during the spring semester, to review the general education competencies and learning goals in each area and discuss and compare programs; and

8.2.2 Provide recommendations on changes to the competencies and essential learning outcomes underlying each general education area and suggestions on methods used to assess student learning outcomes in relation to the learning outcomes to the General Education Task Force.

8.3 Institutional General Education Committees: Institutions shall establish policies, practices, and appropriate faculty curriculum committees to assess identified learning outcomes at program, area, and course-levels and shall ensure that courses receiving general education designations adequately assess shared essential learning outcomes. This assessment may be augmented with cumulative and integrative learning experiences in which students can demonstrate intellectual skills and specialized knowledge, as designed by faculty subject-matter experts, for the institution’s general education program.

8.4 USHE Faculty Major Committees: As outlined in Board Policy Board Policy R475, *Common Course Numbering*, institutional faculty representatives serving on USHE faculty major committees shall review commonly numbered and lower division major courses to assure they fulfill general education requirements and essential learning outcomes and the proper sequencing of general education requirements within the major. Faculty should design course content and pedagogical strategies that strive to include students all cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, and viewpoints. Major committees shall identify assessment of general education program and area-level essential learning outcomes in their expectations for commonly numbered courses.

8.5 Individual Faculty

8.5.1 Faculty Design of General Education Courses: Faculty teaching general education courses shall address and assess competencies and learning outcomes identified by designated faculty major committees and work groups within USHE. Faculty shall design course content and pedagogical strategies that strive to include students from all cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, and viewpoints, and structure pedagogy and assessments to actively address gaps in course success rates. Courses should include assessment of general education program and area-level essential learning outcomes.

8.5.2 Communication and Assessment of Essential Learning Outcomes: Faculty teaching courses in each general education area shall include relevant course expectations and assignments based on the shared essential learning outcomes and reflect those expected outcomes in the class syllabus.

R470-9 Transfer of Credit in Fulfillment of General Education Requirements

9.1 Within USHE: USHE degree-granting institutions shall facilitate transfer of general education credits, partially completed requirements, and full program completion from institution to institution within the system, as outlined in Board Policy R471, *Lower Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits*.

9.1.1 Similar Names, Common Numbers, and Equal Credits for General Education Courses: Institutions shall assure that all courses satisfying general education requirements at any USHE institution are articulated to the fullest extent possible to satisfy comparable general education requirements at receiving USHE institutions as outlined in Board Policy R471, *Lower Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits*. General education courses at USHE institutions having similar

learning goals, content, rigor, and standards shall have similar names, common numbers, and credits in compliance with Board Policy R475, *Common Course Numbering*.

9.1.2 Transfer of Partially Completed General Education Credits: For USHE students who have not fully satisfied all general education requirements at the sending institution prior to transfer, the receiving institution shall accept the credit hours and area designation of all general education coursework earned with a passing grade approved by the sending institution for general education purposes. A minimum grade for general education may not satisfy a major or prerequisite requirement in a particular discipline. The receiving institution may change a transfer course's general education area designation, with the student's consent, if it aids the student in fulfilling the receiving institution's remaining requirements. The receiving institution shall only require transfer students to complete any additional coursework needed to satisfy the unmet requirements of the receiving institution.

9.2 Students Entering with Associate Degrees from Accredited Non-USHE Institutions: The receiving institution shall review the transcripts of a student who enters a USHE institution with an associate degree from an appropriately-accredited non-USHE institution to assure the student has successfully completed relevant courses in the three core areas required of USHE students: written communication, quantitative literacy, and American Institutions. While USHE will honor associate degrees, institutions must address deficiencies found in one or more of the three core areas.

9.2.1 Where possible, articulation agreements to accept transfer of a sending institution's entire general education program in fulfillment of the USHE general education program should be vetted by the Task Force and the USHE Transfer Council and conducted at the system level rather than between individual institutions. Where the Task Force and Transfer Council agree on a program-to-program general education articulation, the receiving institution shall accept a transfer student's entire lower division general education program without the student having to repeat or add courses, except American Institutions as required by Utah Code section 53B-16-103(1)(b).

9.3 Students Entering without Associate Degrees from Accredited Non-USHE Institutions: The receiving institution shall evaluate the transcript of a student who enters USHE from an appropriately-accredited institution without an associate degree to determine if additional general education coursework will be required for the student to meet USHE

institutional requirements.

R470 Appendix, Essential Learning Outcomes¹

1. Written Communication: Over the course of six credit hours, students will demonstrate skill with the following:

1.2 Context and Purpose for Writing: Includes consideration of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s);

1.3 Content Development: Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work;

1.4 Genre and Disciplinary Conventions: Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices;

1.5 Sources and Evidence: Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing;

1.6 Control of Syntax and Usage: Uses language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency; and

1.7 Revision and Feedback: Shapes texts through the process of revision and feedback. Traditionally, this requirement has been fulfilled by completion of both ENGL 1010 Introduction to Writing, and either ENGL 2010 Intermediate Writing or ENGL 2100 Technical Writing.

2. Quantitative Literacy: Students may satisfy this requirement by completing at least one institution-approved Quantitative Literacy course that clearly demonstrates quantitative reasoning skills beyond those found within required high school courses and that is at an appropriate introductory university level. Approved courses will significantly focus on the following:

¹ Adopted December 1, 2023.

2.1 Interpretation: Explain information presented in mathematical forms, e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, and tables;

2.2 Representation: Convert relevant information into various mathematical forms, e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, and tables;

2.3 Calculation: Demonstrate the ability to successfully complete basic calculations to solve problems;

2.4 Application/Analysis: Make judgments and draw appropriate conclusions based on quantitative analysis of data, recognizing the limits of this analysis;

2.5 Assumption: Make and evaluate important assumptions in estimation, modeling, and data analysis;

2.6 Communication: Express quantitative evidence in support of the argument or purpose of the work (in terms of what evidence is used and how it is formatted, presented, and contextualized); and

2.7 Creation: Demonstrate the ability to problem solve using quantitative literacy across multiple disciplines. Traditionally, this requirement has been fulfilled by completion of MATH 1030 Quantitative Reasoning, MATH or STAT 1040 Statistics, MATH 1050 College Algebra, or another institutionally approved course.

3. American Institutions: Approved courses will address the following:

3.1 Use of Primary Documents: Analyze, contextualize, and use primary source documents to understand the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States;

3.2 Interpretation: Explain and use historically, politically, and economically relevant information;

3.3 Communication: Communicate effectively about the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States;

3.4 Diversity: Engage a diversity of viewpoints in a constructive manner that contributes to a dialogue about the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States; and

3.5 Integration: Use historical, political, and economic methods to come to an understanding of the United States that integrates those viewpoints. This requirement may be fulfilled by a discrete course, a multidisciplinary integrated course, or multiple courses. Traditionally, this requirement has been fulfilled by completion of ECON 1740 Economic History of the United States, HIST 1700 American Civilization, HIST 2700 United States to 1877, HIST 2710 United States 1877 to Present, POLS 1100 American/US National Government, or another institutionally approved course.

4. General Education Breadth Areas

4.1 Arts: Courses with the GE Arts designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.1.1 Discuss the scope and variety of the fine arts, e.g., art, music, theatre, or dance;

4.1.2 Recognize the aesthetic standards used in making critical judgments in various artistic fields;

4.1.3 Analyze and articulate understanding of a range of artistic processes;

4.1.4 Participate in and/or appreciate an introductory performance, production, or design experience in the arts; or

4.1.5 Demonstrate how the creative process is informed and limited by social and historical contexts.

4.2 Humanities: Courses with the GE Humanities designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.2.1 Derive evidence from primary sources regarding the complexities and changes in human experience through analytical reading and critical thought;

4.2.2 Describe how human experience is shaped by social, cultural, linguistic, and/or historical circumstances;

4.2.3 Demonstrate attentiveness to linguistic, visual, and/or audio texts when communicating meaning; or

4.2.4 Use appropriate verbal, perceptual, or imaginative skills when organizing meanings, developing a sense of self, and balancing potentially disparate values.

4.3 Life Sciences: Courses with the GE Life Sciences designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.3.1 Demonstrate understanding of science as a way of knowing about the natural world;

4.3.2 Demonstrate a basic understanding of how organisms live, grow, respond to their environment, and reproduce;

4.3.3 Discuss the organization and flow of matter and energy through biological systems;

4.3.4 Explain from evidence patterns of inheritance, structural unity, adaptation, and diversity of life on Earth; or

4.3.5 Describe how the life sciences have shaped and been shaped by historical, ethical, and social contexts.

4.4 Physical Sciences: Courses with the GE Physical Sciences designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.4.1 Demonstrate understanding of science as a way of knowing about the physical world;

4.4.2 Demonstrate understanding of forces in the physical world; Discuss the flow of matter and energy through systems (in large and small scales);

4.4.3 Develop evidence-based arguments regarding the effect of human activity on the Earth; or

4.4.4 Describe how the physical sciences have shaped and been shaped by historical, ethical, and social contexts.

4.5 Social and Behavioral Sciences: Courses with the GE Social and Behavioral Sciences designation will generally reflect criteria such as:

4.5.1 Demonstrate understanding of social and behavioral science methods, concepts, and theories;

4.5.2 Formulate basic questions about social behavior and phenomena through interpretive and systematic analyses;

4.5.3 Develop empirically-derived and theoretically-informed explanations of human behavior in both its individual and collective dimensions; or

4.5.4 Demonstrate a critically-reasoned understanding of social patterns and individual variation congruent with and divergent from those patterns.

R471, Lower Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits¹

R471-1 Purpose: This policy assists students in completing certificates and degrees efficiently and affordably by ensuring that earned credits will seamlessly transfer between Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”) institutions.

R471-2 References

- 2.1 Utah Code § 53B-2-106(2)(c), Duties and Responsibilities of a Degree-Granting President
- 2.2 Utah Code § 53B-16-102, Changes in Curriculum
- 2.3 Utah Code § 53B-16-107, Credit for Military Service and Training – Notification – Transferability – Reporting
- 2.4 Utah Code § 53B-16-105, Common Course Numbering – Transferability of Credits – Agreement with Competency-Based Gen ed Provider
- 2.5 Board Policy R470, General Education
- 2.6 Board Policy R472, Prior Learning Assessment

R471-3 Definitions

3.1 “Accredited Institution” means an institution recognized by an accreditation agency that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Education. An accredited institution has gone through rigorous evaluation to assure that benchmarks are met that enable the institution to teach students academic content and utilize pedagogies deemed as rigorous and engaging by curriculum experts.

3.2 “Common Course Number Designation” (“CCN”) means common numbers assigned to courses the USHE faculty majors committees have identified as having the same course quality, content, competencies, and credit earned at all USHE institutions. CCN designated courses transfer as equivalent credit.

3.3 “General Education” means a required set of shared essential learning outcomes, the foundational subject areas required within the general education program, and the individual courses and disciplines that comprise those subject areas. These include written communications, quantitative literacy or mathematics, American Institutions, humanities, fine arts, social sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences.

¹ This policy was part of R470 until December 2023 when it was separated. Adopted December 1, 2023.

3.4 “Lower Division Major” means a program of study designed to prepare lower division students for upper study in a specific major. Lower division major courses are aligned across degree-granting institutions by the USHE faculty majors committees to assure seamless transfer and timely completion of a four-year degree.

3.5 “Prior Learning Assessment” (“PLA”) means a validated process through which faculty subject matter experts evaluate a student’s previously learned competencies in a particular field and grant college credit when appropriate. PLA may include national exam equivalencies, portfolio completion, challenge exams (oral or written), or other appropriate forms of assessment used to determine student mastery of course content.

3.6 “System Articulation Agreement” means an agreement among USHE institutions that details a common set of curricular program requirements. These agreements are made to facilitate seamless transfer of credits in general education (“gen ed”), lower division major, transfer of work completed by students at technical colleges to degree-granting institutions, and national examination/course equivalencies such as AP, CLEP, DSST, and IB exams.

3.7 “Third-Party Provider” means a non-accredited entity that maintains training programs, particularly in technical education areas. These programs may include formal instruction, apprenticeships, technical certifications, and student assessment/testing.

3.8 “USHE Faculty Majors Committee” means a committee comprised of faculty from specific disciplines that meet annually to articulate and align lower division courses and lower division major requirements for seamless transferability between USHE institutions.

3.9 “USHE Transfer Council” (“Transfer Council”) means a standing committee under the Utah Board of Higher Education (“Board”) that works to improve and advance post-secondary transfer for USHE students. As required by [Utah Code section 53B-16-105\(2\)](#) and (3), the Transfer Council focuses primarily on identifying transfer obstacles and developing transfer policies, best practices, and directives to remove transfer obstacles. These may include recommending better alignment of courses and programs of study, establishing transfer pathways, and adjudicating transfer difficulties between institutions where needed.

3.10 “Utah Transfer Guide” means a USHE-licensed, online portal that enables students to determine the transferability of their earned and planned credit to and between USHE institutions.

R471-4 Course Credit Transfer and Program Articulation Principles and Procedures

4.1 System Integrity: Each institution is responsible for developing its own transfer policies and procedures consistent with Board policy to ensure credits transfer seamlessly within the system.

4.2 Minimum Standards: To transfer as equivalent credit, course quality, content, competency level, and amount of credit earned at one institution must be comparable to those qualities of the same courses at the receiving institution.

4.3 Academic Department Evaluation: Academic departments evaluate credit that has not been previously designated as CCN credit, to determine if it meets institutional and departmental standards and to articulate to departmental courses when there is an appropriate course.

4.4 Course Numbering: An essential element of a transparent, seamless transfer system is uniform course numbering. USHE institutions shall number courses using the guidelines in Board Policy R475, *Common Course Numbering*.

4.5 Lower Division Requirements: The faculty majors committees shall establish common lower division major requirements that allow students who transfer to receive full value for their academic work. For a very competitive program, an institution may not be able to admit a transfer student to a program because of enrollment limits and the need for applicants to meet certain academic requirements such as an established grade point average.

4.6 Lower Division Numbered Courses: Only lower division courses should be required during the first two years of any major. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Transfer Council.

4.7 Institutional Transfer Procedures: Institutions must provide students with clear, comprehensive, and accurate transfer procedures to avoid confusion and possible unfairness to individual applicants. Institutions shall, at minimum, provide accurate, current information about program and course requirements, including transfer and articulation agreements between specific institutions in the Utah Transfer Guide and ensure that their transfer profile is up to date for both Fall and Spring semester.

4.8 System-Wide Standards and Practices

4.8.1 Annual Faculty Majors Committee Evaluation: Faculty majors committees meet at least annually to review institutional policies and practices for awarding credit to ensure consistent system-wide practices for evaluating and awarding credit.

4.8.2 Credit for Common Course Numbered Courses: CCN tables, once approved by Faculty majors committees, shall be available in the Utah Transfer Guide. OCHE shall publish common course tables approved by the faculty major committees.

4.8.3 Evaluation of Courses That Meet Gen ed Requirements: When a student with completed courses in gen ed transfers from a USHE institution, the receiving USHE institution will honor the sending institution's determination of the type of gen ed credit awarded. *See Board Policy R470, General Education.*

4.8.4 Pre-Transfer Advisement: Institutions should advise students to establish educational goals early in their educational program. Institutions shall communicate with the transferring student how to request assistance from an academic advisor to assure the student's educational goals fit with the program at the institution to which they intend to transfer. Transfer policies and practices should facilitate transfer when the student has been accepted to the anticipated program and should ensure information on the transferability of credits is available to students in a timely manner.

4.9 Institution Responsibilities: USHE institutions shall:

4.9.1 Provide current and accurate course, program, and credit equivalency information to the Utah Transfer Guide. Institutions shall meet Transfer Guide annual deadlines for the submission of finalized data;

4.9.2 Participate in faculty majors committees to share syllabi, course descriptions, expected learning outcomes and competencies, and course sequencing to establish credit equivalencies;

4.9.3 Assure that all courses satisfying gen ed requirements are articulated to the fullest extent possible to satisfy comparable gen ed requirements at all other USHE institutions;

4.9.4 Furnish transcripts and course descriptions vital to determining transferability of earned credit;

4.9.5 Make clear and prompt decisions on credit acceptance and application; and

4.9.6 Maintain a designated webpage to disseminate transfer information including:

4.9.6.1 Where students can seek assistance regarding transfer;

4.9.6.2 The types of documentation needed to evaluate credit transfer, such as transcripts from all previously attended institutions, course descriptions, syllabi, and coursework;

4.9.6.3 How transfer credit applies to minimum institutional degree requirements including minimum grades;

4.9.6.4 A student's right to request an explanation on transfer credit decisions and the process to appeal a transfer credit decision with the institution and, after exhausting institutional remedies, through the USHE Transfer Council; and

4.9.6.5 a link to the Utah Transfer Guide.

R471-5 General Transfer of Credits Principles

5.1 Transfer of Gen Ed Credits

5.1.1 Transfer of Partially-Completed Gen Ed Requirements: An institution that receives from another USHE institution a transfer student who has not fully satisfied the gen ed requirements of Board Policy R470, *General Education* shall accept as equivalent all gen ed coursework approved by the sending institution, provided the coursework meets the minimum letter grades accepted by the receiving institution. A receiving institution may change a sending institution's gen ed course attribute if it is in the student's interest in fulfilling the receiving institution's gen ed outcomes and the student is notified and agrees to the change. An institution with a gen ed requirement that is in addition to the USHE core and breadth requirements shall accept a sending institution's completed gen ed requirement that is in addition to USHE core and breadth requirements. A receiving institution shall only require transfer students to complete any additional coursework needed to satisfy their unmet gen ed requirements.

5.1.2 Transfer of Completed Gen Ed Requirements: A student who has earned an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science ("AA/AS") or higher degree at a USHE institution will meet the gen ed requirements of all USHE institutions. If a

student has completed all gen ed requirements at a USHE institution but not an associate degree, the institution shall issue a certificate or letter signifying that the student has met the gen ed requirements at any receiving USHE institution.

5.1.2.1 Special Associate Degree Programs That do not Require

Gen Ed Completion: In some specialized associate degree programs, students may not have completed all gen ed requirements and will need to complete those requirements prior to graduating with a bachelor's degree.

5.1.3 Gen Ed Certificate Using Non-USHE Credits/Courses: Students who enter a USHE institution with most of their gen ed credits earned from an accredited non-USHE institution and who want a certificate designating gen ed completion from the USHE institution must complete at least nine credit hours or meet the minimum residency and grade point average requirements of the USHE institution from which the certificate is requested.

5.1.4 Substitution of Courses in Lower Division Major Area for Gen Ed

Requirements: Institutions may allow students to substitute study and achievement in their lower division major area for gen ed requirements. USHE transfer students who retain the same lower division major area will be allowed to maintain the substitution at the receiving institution and will not be required to complete additional gen ed coursework after transfer.

5.1.5 Substitution of Gen Ed Courses as an Accommodation: USHE transfer students who were provided, as an accommodation, alternative courses to complete gen ed requirements will be allowed to maintain the substitution at the receiving institution and will not be required to complete additional gen ed coursework after transfer.

5.2 Transfer of Non-gen Ed Credits: Credit for courses numbered 1000 or above earned at a USHE institution is transferable within the system—regardless of whether the course is a gen ed course or not—and will be recorded on the student's transcript at the receiving institution.

5.3 Transfer of Credits Awarded through PLA: When transferring in credits, institutions shall treat credits awarded through an assessment of prior learning the same as credits earned in a traditional classroom-based course.

5.4 Transfer of Credits from USHE Technical Colleges: A USHE degree-granting institution may award credit for completion of courses at a USHE technical college after curriculum specialists at the receiving institution review courses to ensure that:

5.4.1 Course content, learning outcomes, course procedures, and student assessment are comparable and applicable to the institution's program(s) to which the credit is applied;

5.4.2 A student who completes a certificate program at a USHE technical college can transfer stackable course credits to a USHE degree-granting institution associate degree program as appropriate;

5.4.3 A student who has completed coursework and transferred from a USHE technical college in a specific discipline can be awarded up to 30 credits towards the completion of an applied associate degree in that field at a degree-granting institution as determined by a curriculum specialist at the receiving institution; and

5.4.4 A student who has completed coursework and transferred from a USHE technical college in a non-specific discipline may be awarded up to 30 credits towards the completion of an applied associate degree in general technology at a degree-granting institution as determined by a curriculum specialist at the receiving institution.

5.5 Transfer of Credits from Third-Party Providers: USHE degree-granting institutions and technical colleges may award credit for completion of non-credit courses from third-party providers after curriculum specialists review courses to ensure that:

5.5.1 Course content, learning outcomes, course procedures, and student assessment are compatible and applicable to the institution's program(s) to which the credit is applied;

5.5.2 A student who completes a certificate program through a third-party provider can transfer stackable course credits to a USHE technical college or degree-granting institution's degree program as appropriate; and

5.5.3 A student who transfers from a third-party provider and has completed coursework may be awarded credits toward the completion of a certificate or degree program as determined by a curriculum specialist at the receiving institution. Where they exist, faculty major committees should make this determination to enhance transfer across the system. Degree-granting institutions may award up to 30 transfer credits.

R471-6 Application of Transfer Credit

6.1 Transfer with Upper Division Status: Institutions shall allow students who complete AA/AS degrees in a lower division major with requirements established by the faculty majors

committee to transfer with upper status to any USHE four-year institution without taking any lower division major courses at the receiving institution.

6.1.1 Exceptions to Applying Lower Division Major Coursework Credit:

Exceptions may apply when mandated by accreditation, licensing, extra-departmental professional requirements, as agreed upon by the faculty majors committees, or as directed by the Transfer Council. In such cases, the transfer student will be expected to complete lower division coursework required at the four-year institution.

6.2 Admission to Upper Division Major Program: Institutions should clearly communicate to prospective transfer students that completing required lower division major coursework at USHE community colleges or institutions serving a community college role does not assure they will be admitted into a specific major program at a USHE four-year institution. Institutions must inform students when a particular program has a limited number of openings and highly competitive admissions to the program.

6.3 Disclosure of Partial Program: If an institution does not have the faculty or resources to offer, as part of its curriculum, all of the agreed-upon lower division major courses in a given discipline and emphasis, it will inform prospective students interested in that lower division major area that the institution does not offer all of the needed lower division major courses so that students may consider attending another institution offering the required coursework or enroll in online courses offered elsewhere in USHE.

6.4 Allowable Credit: Institutions may not impose limits on the number of gen ed credits students may earn by means other than taking courses directly from the institution unless limited by the accreditation standards of a specific academic program.

6.5 Length of Time for Acceptance and Applicability of Credit: Institutions must accept credit transferred from other institutions within the system. An institution's colleges and departments may review courses taken over the prior 15 years and make a determination of applicability to current requirements of a credential or degree based on the appropriateness of course content, rigor, and standards. Students wanting transfer credits that were earned more than 15 years earlier may be asked to demonstrate competencies in the learning outcomes expected in gen ed courses they have completed by using portfolios, challenge examinations, or other forms of PLA.

R471-7 Transfer of Credit from Institutions Outside USHE

7.1 Evaluating Credit from non-USHE Institutions: A receiving institution should have reasonable confidence that students from non-USHE accredited institutions are qualified to undertake its educational program. In cases where students are attempting to

transfer credit from non-accredited institutions and foreign institutions, additional evaluation may be necessary before assigning credit to a student's transcript.

7.1.1 Students Entering with Associate Degrees: A student who enters a USHE institution with an AA/AS degree from an accredited institution will have their transcript reviewed to assure they have successfully completed relevant courses in the three gen ed core areas required of USHE students: Written Communication, Quantitative Literacy, and American Institutions. While USHE will honor associate degrees, deficiencies found in one or more of the three gen ed core areas may need to be addressed. A student who enters a USHE institution with an AA/AS degree but deficient in lower division prerequisite courses required for their major course of study will be required to successfully complete such courses.

7.1.2 Students Entering from Accredited Institutions without Associate Degrees: Students who enter USHE without having completed an associate degree must have their transcripts evaluated by the receiving institution to determine if additional lower division major and/or gen ed coursework will be required to meet USHE requirements.

7.1.3 Students Entering from Non-accredited Institutions and Foreign Institutions: Receiving institutions should evaluate on a case-by-case basis any credits earned at unaccredited or foreign institutions. The evaluation may include information provided by or about the unaccredited or foreign institution, such as a catalog covering the years the student attended, a description of courses the student completed, course syllabi, faculty credentials, and library facilities. An assessment will be made to determine if additional lower division major and/or gen ed coursework will be required to meet institutional requirements.

7.1.3.1 Institutions may require verification of competency attainment through assessments or examinations.

7.1.3.2 A USHE institution that makes a determination of equivalency in transferring in credit will share their findings with the appropriate technical college or degree-granting faculty major committee. The faculty major committee will determine whether the credit equivalency should be treated as equivalent for transfer by all USHE institutions.

7.1.3.3 Institutions may bring requests for exceptions to the Transfer Council.

R471-8 Committees to Facilitate Articulation and Transfer: In establishing policies and procedures to support ease of transfer and timely completion for USHE students, the Board recognizes that lower division majors and emphases may differ because of USHE institutions' unique missions. The Board therefore establishes faculty majors committees and procedures to provide common lower division major requirements that allow transfer students who apply for upper majors to receive full value for their academic work.

8.1 USHE Faculty Majors Committees: To achieve these objectives, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education ("OCHE") shall organize USHE faculty majors committees in each academic discipline. Major departments at the universities shall work closely with the faculty majors committees to effectively articulate and align lower division major emphases at community colleges and four-year institutions with a community college role and lower division major requirements at four-year institutions.

8.1.1 The Chief Academic Officer of each institution shall nominate a faculty representative in each discipline area to serve on a faculty majors committee. If appropriate, the Chief Academic Officer may also nominate additional faculty or staff in major areas within a discipline to attend faculty majors committee meetings.

8.1.2 OCHE shall convene faculty majors committees meetings at least annually.

8.1.3 The Board's Gen Ed Task Force ("Task Force") and OCHE staff will collaborate to develop an agenda for faculty majors committees meetings. Chief Academic Officers and faculty majors committees will review agendas and provide additional agenda items as needed.

8.2 Faculty Majors committees Responsibilities: Each faculty majors committee shall be responsible to:

8.2.1 Reach agreement on specific required lower division major courses that are common at all USHE institutions. Equivalencies are based on content and mastery of subject matter, not only course level. Not all institutions offer all or the same lower division courses, and in such cases, equivalencies for individual courses may not exist at some institutions.

8.2.2 Continually review course learning outcomes and expected competency levels and content matter that should be satisfied in required lower division major area courses to assure that students who complete the coursework will be fully prepared to successfully complete upper coursework.

8.2.3 Community colleges shall not offer courses at the lower division that the faculty majors committees agree should be taught at the upper level. Individual faculty major committees and affected institutions will address exceptions. When agreement cannot be reached, the Transfer Council may adjudicate.

8.2.4 Review lower division CCN courses to assure they fulfill gen ed and lower division major requirements at all USHE degree-granting institutions. Additional lower division courses may be considered for common numbering if they are similar in content, standard, and rigor.

8.2.5 Maximum Credits: Each faculty major committee will establish a maximum number of credits, in keeping with institutional practices, for lower division major coursework required in each discipline.

8.2.6 Minimum Credits: Each faculty major committee will establish at least 15 credits of lower division major coursework in each discipline. If a faculty major committee determines that fewer than 15 credits of coursework are appropriate for a particular lower division major, they will seek approval of the lower division major from the Transfer Council.

8.2.6.1 The number of credits required for a lower division major should not prevent students from completing required gen ed coursework within the number of credits allowed for an AA/AS degree.

8.2.6.2 Exceptions may be made when mandated by accreditation, licensing, extra-departmental professional, or other institutional requirements. When exceptions are made, students may not be able to complete required gen ed coursework within the number of credits allowed for an AA/AS degree. Such exceptions must be approved by the Transfer Council.

8.2.6.3 If faculty majors committees determine additional lower division credits are needed for students to successfully complete upper coursework, a committee may recommend the delay of some gen ed requirements until after transfer or acceptance to an upper major program. Such exceptions must be approved by the Transfer Council.

8.3 Transfer Council Membership and Responsibilities

8.3.1 Transfer Council Membership: Transfer Council membership includes the following:

8.3.1.1 The Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs. The Associate Commissioner or a designee serves as chair of the Transfer Council;

8.3.1.2 A transfer expert from each USHE institution, such as a president, Chief Academic Officer, transfer advisor, or registrar, as recommended by the institution's president;

8.3.1.3 One academic faculty senate leader regularly rotated among institutions; and

8.3.1.4 The chair of the Task Force

8.3.2 Transfer Council Responsibilities: The Transfer Council shall engage in the following on behalf of and with authority of the Board.

8.3.2.1 Annually ascertain and assess system transfer data and identify transfer and articulation obstacles, develop policies and practices needed to address specific obstacles and to improve system-wide transfer and articulation in general, which will include lower division major alignment, transfer pathways, and transfer outreach and communication to current and incoming students.

8.3.2.2 Require regular follow-up from institutions on implementing the Transfer Council's directives and transfer and articulation policies.

8.3.2.3 Establish an appeals process and serve as the final appeal level for students and institutions on contested decisions on transfer and articulation.

8.3.2.3.1 An appeal to the Transfer Council will be available to a student or institution only after they have exhausted all available administrative remedies at the institution level.

8.3.2.3.2 Annually report the Transfer Council's activities, directives, recommendations, and priorities to the Board.

R475, Common Course Numbering¹

R475-1 Purpose: This policy provides a lower and upper division course numbering code for the Utah System of Higher Education (“USHE”).

R475-2 References

- 2.1 Utah Code § 53B-16-105, Common Course Numbering
- 2.2 Board Policy R471, Lower Division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits

R475-3 Definition

3.1 “Common Course Number Designation” (“CCN means common numbers assigned to courses the USHE faculty majors committees have identified as having the same course quality, content, competencies, and credit earned at all USHE institutions. CCN designated courses transfer as equivalent credit.

3.2 “General Education” means a required set of shared essential learning outcomes, the foundational subject areas required within the general education program, and the individual courses and disciplines that comprise those subject areas. These include written communications, quantitative literacy or mathematics, American Institutions, humanities, fine arts, social sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences.

R475-4 Principles of Course Numbering: Course numbers provide a guide to the key learning outcomes for courses.

4.1 Course numbers shall be comprised of a uniform prefix indicating a discipline plus four digits or four digits and one letter, e.g., HIST 1700.

4.2 In most cases, increasing course numbers indicate more challenging content and higher-order learning outcomes.

4.3 Course numbering indicates the sequence in which courses should be completed. Prerequisite courses should have lower first digits, e.g., 1000- or 2000-level digits than subsequent courses.

¹ This policy was part of R470 until December 2023 when it was separated. Adopted December 1, 2023.

4.4 Under Utah Code § 53B-16-105(4)(a), to ensure transferability, institutions and departments should use uniform prefixes across the system and standardized course numbers when established by faculty major committees.

R475-5 Course Numbering by Levels: Courses of similar level shall be given numbers in accordance with the following:

5.1 Precollege or Developmental Courses (0001-0999): These courses carry no credit applicable to a postsecondary certificate or degree, develop basic precollege concepts and principles related to an area of study, and are designed to lead to mastery of precollege learning outcomes.

5.2 Lower Division Courses (1000-2999): These courses are for students beginning in the study of a discipline. Lower division courses offer breadth, foundation, general education, preparation for employment, or preparation for continued study and may serve as prerequisites for upper division courses. Within the same institution, a lower division course may not be cross listed with an upper division course.

5.2.1 Special Lower Division Course Number Designations (1900-1999 and 2900-2999): Lower division special course designations, e.g., directed reading, individual projects, seminars, special topics, workshops, and tutoring.

5.2.2 1000-Level Course Outcomes: Examples of outcomes typical of first-year courses include:

5.2.2.1 Display an introductory understanding of disciplinary content;

5.2.2.2 Demonstrate a beginning ability to present, interpret, and evaluate data in order to develop arguments and make sound judgments; and

5.2.2.3 Develop a beginning ability to evaluate approaches for problem solving within the context of the course's subject matter.

5.2.3 2000-Level Course Outcomes: Examples of outcomes typical of second-year courses include:

5.2.3.1 Display knowledge and critical understanding of established concepts and principles related to the area of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret them;

5.2.3.2 Demonstrate an understanding of how concepts and principles have developed within the field;

5.2.3.3 Display an ability to apply concepts from the course within and outside the field;

5.2.3.4 Demonstrate a developing knowledge of the key methods of inquiry related to the field;

5.2.3.5 Articulate a developing understanding of the limitations of students' knowledge and understanding, and how this can influence their own thinking;

5.2.3.6 Demonstrate an increasing ability to present, interpret, and evaluate data in order to develop arguments and make sound judgments within the area of study;

5.2.3.7 Display an ability to undertake a critical analysis of information and propose solutions to problems; and

5.2.3.8 Show an ability to communicate effectively to different audiences in a way that is relevant to the discipline.

5.3 Upper Division Courses (3000-4999): These courses are for students usually beyond their first two years of study in college and integrate and build upon learning outcomes from earlier studies. In general, upper division courses offer specialized learning outcomes for a specific degree and provide depth, specialization, refinement, and preparation for employment or graduate study. Upper division courses are directed toward the more central concepts of a discipline. Most 4000-level courses are more concentrated, narrower in scope, and involve more independent study, research, and projects outside of class than 3000-level courses. 4000-level courses may also be designed as capstone courses that integrate a broad array of learning outcomes from previous courses.

5.3.1 Special Upper Division Course Number Designations

5.3.1.1 4800-4999: Upper division special course designations, e.g., directed reading, individual projects, festivals, institutes, workshops, and seminars.

5.3.1.2 4800: Individual research courses (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.3 4830: Directed reading courses (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.4 4860: Practicum courses (1-12 credits)

5.3.1.5 4890: Internship courses (1-12 credits)

5.3.1.6 4920: Workshops, festivals, and institutes (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.7 4950: Field trips (1-6 credits)

5.3.1.8 4990: Seminars (1-6 credits)

5.3.2 Upper Division Course Outcomes: Examples of outcomes typical of 3000- and 4000-level courses include:

5.3.2.1 Integrate and build upon concepts introduced in earlier course work to develop a deeper understanding of the subject at hand;

5.3.2.2 Demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of specialized terminology, ideas, and practices related to a specific topic within an area of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret them;

5.3.2.3 Display a developing understanding of the integrated and convergent nature of learning goals within a discipline, and an ability to demonstrate that learning, e.g., writing a computer program to solve a particular problem;

5.3.2.4 Articulate the ways in which disciplinary concepts are applied within and outside of the field, as well as to employment situations;

5.3.2.5 Display an understanding of the key methods of inquiry related to the field, and an ability to demonstrate these through inquiry-based activities;

5.3.2.6 Demonstrate an ability to present, interpret, and evaluate in order to develop arguments and make sound judgments within a narrowly-defined area of the field of study;

5.3.2.7 Complete a critical analysis of information, interpret findings, and propose solutions to problems; and

5.3.2.8 Communicate effectively to different audiences in a way that is relevant to the discipline.

5.4 Honors Program Courses: Honors courses will be clearly designated in institutional catalogs and meet the institution's expectations for honors designation.

5.5 Advanced Upper Division Courses (5000-5999): These courses allow for extension beyond bachelor's degree requirements, preparation for a graduate degree, or a natural connection between the two. Content requires significant independent thinking on the student's part and offers opportunity for specialized seminars, directed reading, independent study, and research.

5.5.1 Special 5000-Level Course Number Designations (5800-5999): Advanced upper division special course designations, e.g., directed reading, individual projects, festivals, institutes, workshops, and seminars.

5.5.2 Conditions for 5000-Level Course Designations

5.5.2.1 Courses should meet one or both of the following criteria:

5.5.2.1.1 Have specific prerequisites at the 4000 level;

5.5.2.1.2 Be supported by a substantial body of 3000-4000-level course offerings from which a student could normally be expected to gain adequate background for a 5000-level course.

5.5.2.2 Credit from 5000-level course work shall not be used to fulfill master's degree or graduate certificate requirements, except for specific and unusual 5000-level courses identified and approved by the institution for such purposes, e.g., courses offered by education units for the professional development of K-12 teachers.

4.5.2.3 For purposes of efficiency, an institution may offer a 5000-level course concurrently with a 6000-level graduate course, with the two sections meeting together under the same instructor. In such cases, students enrolled in the 6000-level course shall be required to complete additional and substantive learning objectives and assignments approved for graduate-level work beyond those required of students enrolled at the 5000 level.

4.6 Graduate Courses (6000-7999): These courses are limited to graduate students and graduate degrees and certificates. Graduate courses may only be offered at USHE institutions with a Board-approved mission to offer graduate-level programs.

4.6.1 Special Graduate Course Number Designations: The following designation of graduate course numbers guide, but do not constrain, institutional course numbering policies.

4.6.1.1 6800-6899: Graduate seminars, including methodology and research seminars;

4.6.1.2 6900-6999: Directed reading, individual projects, thesis, etc.;

4.6.1.3 6970-6979: Master's thesis research;

4.6.1.4 6980-6989: Master's thesis faculty research consultation;

4.6.1.5 6990: Master's thesis continuing registration;

4.6.1.6 7600-7899: Advanced graduate seminars;

4.6.1.7 7900-7969: Doctoral independent study, special topics, etc.;

4.6.1.8 7970-7979: Doctoral dissertation and project research;

4.6.1.9 7980-7989: Doctoral dissertation faculty research consultation; and

4.5.1.10 7990: Doctoral dissertation continuing registration.