

R401, Approval of New Programs, Program Changes, Discontinued Programs, and Program Reports¹

R401-1 Purpose. To establish criteria and procedures for new programs of instruction that ensure rigorous scrutiny—beginning at the institutional level and then by an institution’s peers—and encourage a range of sustainable degrees and other credentials within each institution’s mission and that meet or exceed national standards. This policy also creates procedures for approving or discontinuing programs and notifying the Board of Higher Education of changes to academic program and administrative units.

R401-2 References.

- 2.1** [Utah Code § 53B-16-102](#), Changes in Curriculum
- 2.2** [Board Policy R220](#), Delegation of Responsibilities to the President and Board of Trustees
- 2.3** [Board Policy R312](#), Configuration of the Utah System of Higher Education and Institutional Missions and Roles
- 2.4** [Board Policy R315](#), Service Area Designations and Coordination of Off-Campus Courses and Programs
- 2.5** [Board Policy R411](#), Cyclical Institutional Program Reviews
- 2.6** [Board Policy R470](#), General Education, Common Course Numbering, Lower-Division Pre-Major Requirements, Transfer of Credits, and Credit by Examination

R401-3 Definitions.

3.1 Academic Awards. Academic awards range from certificates to doctoral degrees. The following definitions describe common characteristics of each award. In compliance with accreditation, institutions may establish additional requirements and course work.

3.1.1 Certificate of Proficiency. A program of study that prepares students for an occupation. It does not require, but may include, general education courses. The certificate requires 16 to 29 semester credit hours or 600 to 899 clock hours. It consists entirely of undergraduate courses but does not require prerequisite courses, conditions, or degrees for admission to the program.

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3.1.1.1 CTE Certificate of Proficiency. A certificate of proficiency that prepares students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation, meets Perkins eligibility requirements and federal financial aid requirements, and consists entirely of lower division courses.

NOTE: Institutional certificates of proficiency require less than 30 semester credit hours, or 900 clock hours) and are not eligible for federal financial aid. Institutions may establish institutional certificates without notifying the Board. Institutions may use these certificates to address varying needs, including workforce preparation, bridging student pathways from high school, avocational interests, or development of specialized skills.

3.1.2 Certificate of Completion. A program of study that prepares students for an occupation. It requires a recognizable general education core in communication, computation, and human relations. The general education core may be embedded within program courses. The certificate requires a minimum of 30 semester credit hours or 900 clock hours and typically does not exceed 33 semester credit hours or 990 clock hours. It consists entirely of undergraduate courses and has no prerequisite courses, conditions, or degrees required for admission to the program. Institutions should demonstrate how certificates requiring more than 36 semester credit hours or more than 1,080 clock hours can lead to an associate's and/or bachelor's degree within the normal credit hour requirements for that degree. When appropriate, institutions should include transfer agreements in the program proposal.

3.1.2.1 CTE Certificate of Completion. A certificate of completion that prepares students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation, meets Perkins eligibility requirements and federal financial aid requirements, and consists entirely of lower division courses.

3.1.3 Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degrees. Programs of study that include limited general education, course work in a subject, and are intended to prepare students for entry-level careers. These degrees require a minimum of 63 and a maximum of 69 semester credit hours. General education requirements are typically less extensive than in AA or AS degrees, and include composition, computation, and human relations. General education learning outcomes may be embedded in discipline courses, and the institution documents how and where the learning outcomes are embedded. Institutions structure AAS degrees to enable students to complete requirements and electives without upper-division coursework.

3.1.4 Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) Degrees. Programs of study primarily intended to encourage exploration of academic options that provide a strong general education component and prepare students for upper-division work in baccalaureate programs or for employment and responsible citizenship. The degree requires a minimum of 60 and a maximum of 63 semester credit hours, which include 30 to 39 semester credit hours of general education course work. Institutions structure associate degrees to enable students to complete requirements and electives without upper-division coursework.

3.1.4.1 Specialized Associate's Degrees. Associate's degrees that include extensive specialized course work—such as the Associate of Pre-Engineering—and are intended to prepare students to initiate upper-division work in a particular baccalaureate program. These degrees require a minimum of 68 and a maximum of 85 semester credit hours, which include a minimum of 28 semester credit hours of preparatory, specialized course work, and general education requirements that may be less extensive than in AA or AS degrees. Because students may not fully complete an institution's general education requirements while completing a specialized associate's degree, they are expected to satisfy remaining general education requirements in addition to upper-division baccalaureate requirements at the receiving institution. Specialized associate's degree programs have formal, written, articulation agreements for the courses transferring. In some cases, articulation may be system-wide.

3.1.4.2 Pre-Major. Associate's degrees that include a set of courses designed to prepare students for upper-division work in a specific major. Pre-major courses in an AA or AS degree should be the same or similar to courses offered at four-year institutions as determined by the USHE major committees. Pre-majors must follow statewide articulation agreements where such agreements have been formulated. When a pre-major affects students transferring from two-year institutions, sponsoring institutions should pursue formal articulation agreements and students should be clearly informed of the transferability of the courses taken in the pre-major at the two-year institution. Upon transfer, students should generally be able to complete the baccalaureate degree in two additional years of full-time study.

3.1.5 Baccalaureate Degrees: Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BS), and Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS). Programs of study that include general education and

major course work, and that prepare students for employment in a career field and responsible citizenship. Students can typically complete these degrees in four years of full-time study. Baccalaureate degrees require a minimum of 120 and maximum of 126 semester credit hours.

3.1.5.1 Professional Bachelor's Degrees. A professional degree that prepares students for a particular profession by emphasizing skills and practical analysis built upon theory and research and, most often, has specialized accreditation that sets acceptable practice standards. It may exceed the maximum of 126 credit hours to meet accreditation requirements. Professional degrees often lead to third-party licensure.

3.1.5.2 Baccalaureate Pre-Major. At four-year institutions not offering an AA or AS degree, the term “pre-major” applies to preparatory, lower-division courses required for acceptance into a major. Pre-major course work is not sufficient to admit the student to the major in cases where the institution has admission requirements for the major and a limit on the number of students who may pursue the major. Courses in a baccalaureate pre-major should be the same or similar to those offered by the two-year programs as determined by the USHE major committees.

3.1.5.3 General Studies Bachelor's Degrees. See *General Studies Bachelor's Degrees Guidelines, Appendix A*, for conditions that should be met in the design of general studies degrees.

3.1.5.4 Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) Degrees. Programs of study typically designed as completion programs that build upon a prerequisite core of learning acquired from previous educational attainment that may have occurred through a variety of programs, higher education institutions, or applied learning contexts. The degree focuses on workforce or other specific applied preparation, and links to industry or organizations where opportunities for applied learning are available to students and are integrated into program requirements. When a BAS program is designed to receive an AAS program as a stackable credential, students can typically complete the BAS within two years of full-time study beyond the AAS degree.

3.1.5.5 Minor. A grouping of related courses that are deemed to be a student's secondary field of academic concentration or specialization during undergraduate studies.

3.1.5.6 K-12 Teaching Endorsement. A collection of courses, built upon an approved teacher education program that prepares K-12 teachers or teacher candidates to meet specific area certification as established by the Utah State Board of Education.

3.1.6 Post-baccalaureate Certificate. A program of study requiring less than 30 semester credit hours and composed of undergraduate and/or graduate courses. The program requires a bachelor's degree for admission.

3.1.7 Post-master's Certificate. A program of study less than 30 semester credit hours and composed entirely of graduate-level courses. The program requires a master's degree for admission.

3.1.8 Master of Arts (MA) and Master of Science (MS) Degrees. Graduate-level programs of study beyond the bachelor's degree. A master's degree requires a minimum of 30 and maximum of 36 semester credit hours of course work.

3.1.8.1 Professional Master's Degrees. Professional master's degrees, such as the Master of Business Administration or Master of Social Work, may require additional course work or projects. May exceed the maximum of 36 semester credit hours to meet accreditation requirements. Professional degrees often lead to third-party licensure.

3.1.9 Doctoral Degrees. Graduate-level programs beyond the master's degree in an advanced, specialized field of study requiring competence in independent research and an understanding of related subjects. Doctoral degrees generally require three to six years of study, preparation and defense of a dissertation based on original research, or planning or execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement.

3.1.9.1 Professional Practice Doctoral Degrees. Provide knowledge and skills for credentials or licenses required for professional practice. Pre-professional and professional preparation for degrees such as the juris doctorate and medical doctorate requires at least six years of full-time study.

3.2 Articulation Agreement. A formal agreement between two or more institutions documenting the transfer policies for a specific academic program or degree. Agreements may cover any course of study, including certificates and/or degree programs. Institutions shall address transfer and articulation agreements between lower and upper-division programs at the annual USHE major committee meetings. Institutions may enter into additional transfer and

articulation agreements, such as those in Career and Technical Education (CTE). If the CTE agreements affect general education transfer and articulation, the sponsoring institution shall inform other USHE institutions through the USHE majors committee.

3.3 Branch Campus/Extension Center. For the purposes of this policy, a location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus and is permanent in nature.

3.4 Career and Technical Education (CTE). Designation given to certain programs consistent with state and national career and technical education definitions.

3.5 Centers, Institutes, or Bureaus. Administrative entities that primarily perform research, instructional, or technology transfer functions and are intended to provide services to students, the community, businesses, or other external audiences, or to obtain external funds.

3.6 Chief Academic Officer (CAO). The institution's chief academic officer responsible for the institution's academic affairs.

3.7 Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code. The code associated with a particular program of study as specified by the USHE institution and informed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) taxonomy of programs.

3.8 College or Professional School. An academic unit within a Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) institution that is headed by an academic dean.

3.9 Council of Chief Academic Officers. The CAOs of all USHE institutions.

3.10 Emphasis. A collection of courses within an associate of applied science, baccalaureate, or graduate degree that gives students a specific focus in a particular sub-area related to the identifiable core of courses required for the degree. Emphases must be clearly within the major field of study specified for the degree.

3.11 Institution of higher education/Institution. An institution that is part of the Utah System of Higher Education described in Utah Code 53B-1-102(1)(a)-(i).

3.12 Major. The discipline in which the degree resides.

3.13 Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). The Utah Commissioner of Higher Education and his/her staff.

3.14 Peer Review Committee: The Council of Chief Academic Officers or designees who review programs of instruction, new colleges or schools.

3.15 Program. A program of curriculum that leads to the completion of a degree, certificate, or other credential.

R401-4 Authority for Program Approval and Mission Alignment.

4.1 An institution may, with the approval of its Board of Trustees, establish a new program of instruction that is within the institution's primary role as established in Board Policy R312 and Utah Code Section 53B-16-102(4)(b).

4.2 An institution may not establish the following without Board of Higher Education approval:

4.2.1 A branch, extension center, college, or professional school;

4.2.2 A new program of instruction that is outside of the institution's primary role.

4.3 This chart shows the program levels for which institutions are authorized to offer programs without Board of Higher Education approval.

4.3.1 Institutions unsure whether a proposed program is within their mission may consult the Office of the Commissioner for a determination from the Board.

4.3.2 Programs determined to be outside an institution's mission may be approved under the process described in R401-5.

R401-5 Notification of New Programs, Credentials, Reviews and Other Changes.

5.1 Institutions shall notify OCHE for the following new programs, credentials or changes:

5.1.1 All programs considered for peer review under section 6.1.

5.1.2 New Certificates of Proficiency (except Institutional Certificates of Proficiency);

5.1.3 New Certificates of Completion;

5.1.4 New Post-baccalaureate and Post-masters Certificates;

5.1.5 New Minors;

5.1.6 New Emphases within an –approved degree;

5.1.7 New K-12 Endorsements;

5.1.8 Existing Program Changes including:

5.1.8.1 Program Transfer;

- 5.1.8.2** Program Restructure;
- 5.1.8.3** Program Consolidation;
- 5.1.8.4** Program Suspension;
- 5.1.8.5** Program Discontinuation;
- 5.1.8.6** Program Name Change;
- 5.1.8.7** Out-of-Service Area Delivery of a Program; and
- 5.1.8.8** Reinstatement of a Previously Suspended Program.

5.1.9 Program Reports including:

- 5.1.9.1** Three-Year Follow Up Reports; and
- 5.1.9.2** Cyclical Institution Program Reviews (R411).

5.1.10 Administrative Unit Changes including:

- 5.1.10.1** New Administrative Units;
- 5.1.10.2** Administrative Unit Transfer;
- 5.1.10.3** Administrative Unit Restructure;
- 5.1.10.4** Administrative Unit Consolidation; and
- 5.1.10.5** Reinstatement of Previously Suspended Administrative Units.

5.1.11 Creation of Non-Administrative Units including:

- 5.1.11.1** New Centers;
- 5.1.11.2** New Institutes;
- 5.1.11.3** New Bureaus.

5.2 Institutions shall follow R401-7, *Proposal and Notification Submission Procedures*, and appropriate template instructions. Notification items will be posted to the OCHE database and will appear as an information item on the Board of Higher Education agenda. Notification items do not require Board approval but may be examined to ensure they are congruent with the institution's mission under R401-4.

5.3 Notification Guidelines.

5.3.1 Out-of-Service-Area Delivery of Programs. Institutions that offer programs outside their designated service area must seek approval (see R315, *Geographic Service Regions*; R312, *Institutional Mission and Roles*).

5.3.2 Discontinuing or Suspending Programs. An institution discontinues a program when it removes the program from the institution's and the Board's list of approved programs, but only after current students have an opportunity to complete. An institution suspends a program when it temporarily prohibits students from enrolling in the program. The program remains on the Board's list of approved programs and may, at the institution's discretion, remain in the online and/or printed catalog until fully discontinued.

5.3.2.1 Student Completion in Discontinued or Suspended Programs. Students currently admitted to the program must be provided a path to complete the program in a reasonable period of time compatible with accreditation standards. This may require: (1) enrolling students at other institutions of higher education; or (2) offering courses for a maximum of two years after discontinuing the program or until there are no other admitted students who are entitled to complete the program, whichever comes first.

5.3.2.2 System Coordination. Institutions should consider the statewide impact of discontinuing the program and identify opportunities for establishing the program at another USHE institution. Institutions should consider discontinuing unnecessary duplicative programs within the USHE, particularly programs that may be high cost and/or low producing.

5.3.3 Reinstatement of Previously Suspended Program or Administrative Unit. If circumstances change and an institution plans to restart a suspended program or an administrative unit, the institution shall notify the Board of Higher Education using the notification template. Notice should include a statement verifying the program name, administrative unit structure and/or the curricular content that are identical to the original program. If either the name or curricular content of the program have changed, the institution will submit the program as a new program and discontinue the suspended program.

R401-6 Peer Review for New Proposed Programs.

6.1 The following Programs Require Peer Review before being approved by either the Board of Trustees or the Board of Higher Education:

6.1.1 Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degrees.

6.1.2 Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) Degrees.

6.1.3 Baccalaureate Degrees.

6.1.4 Master's Degrees.

6.1.5 Doctoral Degrees.

6.1.6 New colleges or professional schools.

6.2 Peer Review Process. The Commissioner's staff will coordinate the peer review process.

6.2.1 Review by the Commissioner's Staff. Institutions shall submit full program proposals, including financial and budget analyses, to the Commissioner's staff for review and comment.

6.2.2 Peer Review by Council of Chief Academic Officers. After the Commissioner's staff has determined the proposal is ready for peer review, they will forward the proposal to the CAOs. The CAOs will review the proposal and may submit comments or questions for response from the other CAOs. The Peer Review Committee will meet with the Commissioner's staff to discuss the proposal, the peer institutions' comments or questions, external reviews (if applicable), and the Commissioner's staff's evaluation. Feedback from the CAOs may be included in the Peer Review Report.

6.2.3 Report on Peer Review. The Commissioner's staff shall issue a report with the results of the peer review to the board of trustees for its consideration when determining whether to approve the proposed program. The Commissioner will convey the final report to the Board of Higher Education. If the proposed program is within the institution's mission, the report will be an information item for the Board of Higher Education. If the proposed program is outside of the institution's mission, the institution and its board of trustees shall determine whether they wish pursue the program by seeking Board of Higher Education approval as outlined in section 7.1.

6.2.3.1 Budgetary Considerations Separate From Approval. Program approval by the Board consists only of authorization to offer a program. Budget requests necessary to fund the program, such as differential tuition or building appropriations, shall be submitted separately through the regular budget procedure.

6.3 Review by Specialized Groups. Review by specialized groups may be conducted concurrently with peer review. The following types of programs require specialized review as noted.

6.3.1 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs. CTE programs shall go through the regional career and technical education planning process, as implemented in the proposing institution's region, which has the primary purposes of: (1) planning CTE certificate and

associate's degree programs that are responsive to the needs of business/industry and the citizens of the region, and providing a transition for secondary students into postsecondary programs; and (2) avoiding unnecessary duplication of CTE certificate and degree programs among higher education institutions in a region. Results of the review process shall be provided to the Board when a CTE program proposal is submitted for notification.

R401-7 Board's Review, Approval, or Elimination of Programs.

7.1 Proposed New Programs Outside an Institution's Mission. An institution may submit a program determined to be outside of its mission to the Board of Higher Education for consideration as follows:

7.1.1 Institutions shall first submit their proposal in accordance with the *Proposal and Notification Submission Procedures* established in section 9.

7.1.2 The institution's CAO will forward full program proposals to the Commissioner's Office for review and comment.

7.1.3 The Commissioner's Office will conduct a detailed review and analysis of the proposed program to assess labor market demand, the feasibility of partnerships with other USHE institutions with similar programs, regional need, and whether there is an adequate level of support for the new program.

7.1.4 As part of its review, the Commissioner's Office will also analyze:

7.1.4.1 How well the institution proposing the new program is performing in its primary institutional role as measured by: accreditation reviews, the financial feasibility of both the institution and the proposed program, USHE's performance metrics, and other metrics determined by the Board;

7.1.4.2 Whether the institution has an existing, well-performing program at a lower award level that can be built upon for the out-of-mission award;

7.1.4.3 Whether the newly proposed program involves transforming a well-performing program that has experienced a shift in the occupational or licensure demands for a higher-level credential requiring the existing program to be scaled up to remain relevant;

7.1.4.4 Whether existing programs at other USHE institutions can be made available online to students within the requesting institution's service region and/or whether additional seats are needed in existing programs to meet state needs; and

7.1.4.5 Whether the requesting institution has thoroughly explored partnership with a USHE institution authorized to provide the program and a partnership has been determined to be infeasible.

7.1.5 Once they have reviewed the proposed program, the Commissioner's Office will submit the full program proposal and all attendant issues to the Board for review. The Board will review the program proposal and request additional information or consultation as appropriate.

7.1.5.1 The Board may request more information or consultation.

7.1.5.2 When determining whether to approve a proposed program, the Board shall consider:

7.1.5.2.1 Whether such a program is the best use of state resources;

7.1.5.2.2 Whether the program would duplicate existing program(s); and

7.1.5.2.3 Whether all possibilities of partnership have been exhausted.

7.1.5.3 It is within the Board's discretion to ask another institution with the appropriate mission to develop a new program in partnership with the requesting institution instead of approving a new out-of-mission program.

7.2 Board Review and Termination of a Program Outside an Institution's Mission.

7.2.1 If the Board of Higher Education determines a Board of Trustees has approved a program that is outside the institution's mission, the Board of Higher Education may call for review of that program.

7.2.2 The Commissioner shall notify the institution's President and Board of Trustees Chair in writing that the Board will review the program.

7.2.3 Within 30 days of notification, the institution shall submit to the Commissioner's Office the materials the Board of Trustees reviewed in approving the program.

7.2.4 The Commissioner's Office will review the materials, request additional information or documentation as necessary, conduct a hearing in which the institution may participate, and make a recommendation to the Board of Higher Education for final action.

R401-8 Reports. Within three years of implementation, institutions shall submit a report on all programs that require a peer review under R401. Institutions shall submit reports using the appropriate USHE report template.

8.1 Cyclical Institutional Program Reviews. Institutions submit five- and seven-year reviews of programs approved under R401 (See Board Policy R411, *Cyclical Program Reviews*).

8.1.1 List of Scheduled Program Reviews. The annual list of scheduled reviews as defined in R411, *Review of Existing Programs*, including date of review, is due at the beginning of each September.

R401-9 Proposal and Notification Procedures.

9.1 Proposal Templates. Proposals for new programs, administrative units, changes to existing programs and administrative units, out-of-service area delivery, or program reports are submitted to the Commissioner's office using the designated USHE Full Template, Abbreviated Template, or Notification Template (see R401-7 and R401-8). Current versions of all proposal and report templates are available online. Institutions must follow the template's instructions.

9.1.1 Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Codes. When preparing the Full, Abbreviated, or Notification Template, the institution must choose an appropriate CIP code. For CIP code classifications, see nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/. The CIP code is a critical data element and will be recorded by the OCHE and used for data requests, reporting, and tracking.

9.1.2 Transmission of Proposals. The Chief Academic Officer will submit proposals to the Academic and Student Affairs Staff (academicaffairs@ushe.edu).

9.1.3 Records. The institution is responsible for maintaining a record of proposal. OCHE is not responsible for storing electronic copies of submitted proposals.

R401, Appendices

Appendix A: General Studies Bachelor's Degree Guidelines

A General Studies Bachelor's Degree proposal must:

1. Define the purpose of the degree and the institution's rationale for offering the program. Explain how the proposed degree differs from other multidisciplinary degrees (such as university studies, integrated studies, etc.) that may be offered by the institution. Compare the General Studies degree proposal to others around the country.
2. Define the audiences for this degree including types and needs of students.
3. Discuss the value of the degree to graduates of this program.
4. Set admission requirements for entry into the degree program and require students to petition for admission by explaining why they want the degree and what they intend to study. (Discussion of appropriate GPA and accumulated credits at entry in a concentration is ongoing.)
5. Provide evidence that intentionality of student learning is expected and built into the course of study.

6. Show how the proposed degree will require and evaluate curricular coherence.
7. Show how the degree program will require and facilitate student intellectual engagement with relevant academic content.
8. State the institution's procedure for incorporating learning goals with demonstrable learning outcomes.
9. Show how students will demonstrate integration of content and learning experiences through reflective activities, such as capstones, research projects, responding to critical questions, and/or portfolios, during their programs.
10. Require a curricular concentration.
11. Clarify how academic oversight will be provided by faculty.
12. State graduation standards.

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-16-105, Common Course Numbering, Transferability, General Education
- 2.5 Board Policy R401, Approval of New Programs, Program Changes, Discontinued Programs, and Program Reports
- 2.6 Board Policy R471, Lower division Major Requirements and Transfer of Credits
- 2.7 R470 Appendix, Essential Learning Outcomes
- 2.8 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.
- 3.4 **“General Education”** means a required set of shared essential learning outcomes, the

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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, address equity gaps in course success, 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 diversity 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 inclusive of students from a diversity of 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 inclusive of students from a diversity of cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, and viewpoints, and structure pedagogy and assessments to actively address equity 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.

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.