

**MHEC PROGRAM CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS  
AND RELEVANT MHEC AND BOR APPROVAL PROCESSES**

(Questions about the categories, definitions, or processes should be directed to Teri Hollander at 301-445-1909 or [thollander@usmd.edu](mailto:thollander@usmd.edu))  
[http://www.usmd.edu/usm/academicaffairs/academic\\_programs/](http://www.usmd.edu/usm/academicaffairs/academic_programs/)

PROGRAM CATEGORY	PROGRAM DEFINITIONS	USM/BOR PROCESS	MHEC PROCESS
<p><b>New Programs, Degrees, and Stand-Alone Certificates (regardless of delivery method)</b></p>	<p>1. An instructional program leading to a formal award in subject area in which award is not presently authorized.</p> <p>2. An instructional program in subject area in which formal award is offered at a different degree level.</p> <p>3. A new major created by combining course work offered in two or more existing degree programs.</p> <p>4. An award of a different type in a subject matter in which another formal award at the same level is already offered (e.g., MS in Management &amp; MBA).</p>	<p>Early in planning process, submit to USM/OAA letter of intent for distribution to AAAC.</p> <p>Within or slightly before USM program submission window<sup>1</sup>, submit proposal, including budget forms, to USM/OAA for review and preparation of summary for consideration by BOR Committee on Education Policy.</p> <p>USM/BOR is responsible under statute for assuring that proposed new programs are consistent with institutional mission, can be offered within existing resources, and meet standards of quality for academic programs, including demonstrable quality of the faculty; adequacy of facilities and library resources; and adequacy of curriculum design and related learning outcomes, including technology fluency.</p> <p><b>Note: If proposing a baccalaureate degree that requires more than 120 credits, indicate reason(s).</b></p> <p>EPSLC review typically occurs after 30-day period for objections. BOR approval must occur within 60 days of submission.</p> <p><b>See</b> <a href="http://www.mhec.state.md.us/higherEd/acadAff/AcadProgInstitApprovals/AcadProgProposalInfo/NewAcademicProgramProposals.asp">http://www.mhec.state.md.us/higherEd/acadAff/AcadProgInstitApprovals/AcadProgProposalInfo/NewAcademicProgramProposals.asp</a> for new program proposal guidelines.</p>	<p>Submit complete proposal to MHEC within USM program submission window. Within 10 days of receipt, MHEC will review and determine if the proposal is complete. If complete, it will be distributed to other segments.</p> <p>MHEC's and other institutions' reviews of new USM proposals are limited in statute to filing objections (within 30 days of submission of a complete proposal and fee) based upon:</p> <p>(1) Inconsistency of the proposed program with the institution's approved mission;</p> <p>(2) Unreasonable program duplication which would cause demonstrable harm to another institution; or</p> <p>(3) Violation of the State's equal educational opportunity obligations under State and federal law.</p> <p>Absent objection, MHEC will approve the program within 31 to 35 days and is limited to a decision within 60 days of submission. MHEC and BOR review and approval occur concurrently, but are independent.</p> <p><b>See</b> <a href="http://www.mhec.state.md.us/higherEd/acadAff/AcadProgInstitApprovals/AcadProgProposalInfo/NewAcademicProgramProposals.asp">http://www.mhec.state.md.us/higherEd/acadAff/AcadProgInstitApprovals/AcadProgProposalInfo/NewAcademicProgramProposals.asp</a> for new program proposal guidelines.</p> <p><b>Note: If proposing a baccalaureate degree that requires more than 120 credits, indicate reason(s).</b></p>

<sup>1</sup> The USM "window" is the period of time in which a program proposal should be submitted to MHEC so that its transmittal from MHEC to segments will permit the proposal to be out for comment for 30 days prior to the meeting of the BOR Education Policy Committee while not exceeding the 60-day review period prior to its formal approval at the next scheduled meeting of the full Board.

PROGRAM CATEGORY	PROGRAM DEFINITIONS	USM/BOR PROCESS	MHEC PROCESS
<p><b>Substantial Expansion or Modification of Existing Program</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A change of more than 33 percent of an existing programs course work;</li> <li>2. Conversion of more than 50 percent of a program previously approved for offering in a distance education format to a classroom or site-based learning format, or conversion of more than 50 percent of a program previously approved for offering in a classroom or site-based learning format to a distance education format;</li> <li>3. A new program title within an approved program.</li> <li>4. A new area of concentration within an existing program:</li> </ol> <p>Area of concentration = a sequential arrangement of courses within a program which at the</p> <p>Undergraduate level = at least 24 semester credit hours</p> <p>Master's level = at least 12 semester hours; and</p> <p>Doctoral level = at least 18 semester hours.</p>	<p>Submit to USM/OAA one-page notification of change, description, and rationale, requesting Chancellor's approval.</p>	<p>Submit complete proposal to MHEC. Within 10 days of receipt, MHEC will review and determine if the proposal is complete. If complete, it will be distributed to other segments.</p> <p>MHEC's and other institutions' reviews of new USM proposals are limited in statute to filing objections (within 30 days of submission of a complete proposal and fee based upon:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Inconsistency of the proposed program with the institution's approved mission;</li> <li>(2) Unreasonable program duplication which would cause demonstrable harm to another institution; or</li> <li>(3) Violation of the State's equal educational opportunity obligations under State and federal law.</li> </ol> <p>Absent objection, MHEC will approve the program within 31 to 35 days and is limited to a decision within 60 days of submission.</p> <p><b>For programs to be offered via distance education, see:</b>  <a href="http://www.mhec.state.md.us/higherEd/acadAff/AcadProgInstitApprovals/AcadProgProposallInfo/DistanceEdPrograms.asp">http://www.mhec.state.md.us/higherEd/acadAff/AcadProgInstitApprovals/AcadProgProposallInfo/DistanceEdPrograms.asp</a></p>

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<p><b>Off-Campus Delivery of Existing Program</b> (live instruction only, or partially offered electronically)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An existing degree or certificate program that offers more than 1/3 of required course work for the major or certificate at non-campus site during any 12-month period; or</li> <li>2. An existing degree or certificate program for which an institution advertises that course work at an off-campus site will lead to award of certificate or degree, regardless of portion of program offered at off-campus site.</li> </ol>	<p>Submit to USM/OAA for information copy of materials submitted to MHEC.</p>	<p>Submit a proposal for substantial modification to MHEC requesting approval of off-campus program. The proposal shall contain the following information regarding need and demand for extending the program and the impact the program may have on similar programs that may exist in the region:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The title of the program and the degree or certificate to be awarded;</li> <li>2. The resource requirements for the program and the source of funds to support the program for the first 2 years of program implementation;</li> <li>3. The need and demand for the program in terms of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Specific local, regional and State need for graduates;</li> <li>b. Job opportunities available to those who complete the program; and</li> <li>c. Evidence of market demand through supporting data, including results of surveys that have recently been conducted;</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. A description of the following, if a similar program is offered within the same geographical region of the State: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Similarities or differences in the degree to be awarded;</li> <li>b. Area of specialization; and</li> <li>c. Specific academic content of the program;</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. A description of the method of instructional delivery, including distance education, on-site faculty, and the mix of full-time and part-time instructors;</li> <li>6. A brief description of the academic oversight, quality control, and student services to be provided.</li> <li>7. Provision for adequate and appropriate library resources within reasonable distance of the instructional site or through institution-sponsored electronic collections and databases.</li> </ol>

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<p><b>Certificate Program at Undergrad/Grad Level Exclusively Within Existing Degree Program</b></p>	<p>Lower-Division Certificate = 12 or more credit hours at the freshman or sophomore level, or both.</p> <p>Upper-Division Certificate = 12 or more credit hours at junior or senior level, or both.</p> <p>Post-Baccalaureate Certificate = 12 or more credits of college-level work, the majority of which are at the master's level.</p> <p>Post-Master's Certificate = 12 credits beyond the master's degree.</p> <p>Certificate of Advanced Study = 30 credits beyond the master's degree.</p> <p>Professional Certificate = the number of courses required by the appropriate National association.</p>	<p>Submit to USM/OAA one-page notification of change, description, and rationale, requesting Chancellor's approval.</p>	<p>Submit a program proposal for a new certificate in an existing degree program in the form of a brief, one-page document that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains the centrality of the proposed certificate program to the mission of the institution;</li> <li>Provides evidence of the market demand for the proposed certificate program;</li> <li>Sets out the curriculum design; and</li> <li>Shows that adequate faculty resources exist for the proposed certificate program.</li> </ol> <p>If the proposed program requires new resources, submit <a href="#">Finance data (pdf)</a>, to include completed tables of <a href="#">Table 1: Resources (pdf)</a> and <a href="#">Table 2: Expenditure (pdf)</a> along with a narrative discussing the resource requirements and sources of funds to support the program.</p>
<p><b>Directed Technology Certificate</b></p>	<p>Certificate for completion of a specialized learning program developed by the institution specifically for employer training needs at a closed site. A directed technology certificate is designed as a sequence of courses that meets specific training objectives. Its purpose is to dramatically shorten the start-up time for credit training programs and to provide a useful credentialing function for those desiring a formal award. The certificate may be awarded for successfully earning at least 12 semester credit hours, but no more than 24 semester credit hours.</p>	<p>No approval required; notify USM/OAA concurrently with MHEC.</p>	<p>Submit a copy of the curriculum and a letter from the president of the institution that responds to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The curriculum for the certificate has been developed in consultation with a specific employer or employers to meet specific training needs;</li> <li>The curriculum has been reviewed by the appropriate curriculum approval bodies at the institution;</li> <li>A content specialist will be assigned to ensure high standards and maintain written documentation about the curriculum; and</li> <li>Financial resources are adequate to support the curriculum.</li> </ol>

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<b>Cooperative Degree Program</b>	<p>1. Joint Degree Program = students receive single diploma that bears names and seals of both institutions. Planning and delivery of course work by representatives of all institutions.</p> <p>2. Primary Degree Program = Diploma granted by primary institution, which offers at least 2/3 of course work and plans program in consultation with partners.</p>	Follow process for new programs. Include with proposal submission copy of MOU among participating institutions. For Joint Degree Programs, submit single proposal with appropriate signatures from all participants.	Follow process for new programs. Include with proposal submission copy of MOU among participating institutions. For Joint Degree Programs, MHEC requires one proposal be submitted with appropriate signatures from all participants.
<b>Closed Site Program</b>	A previously approved program offered at the request of a sponsoring agent at a business, industry or governmental site solely for its own employees. (If program is open to general public, institution must follow off-campus approval process.)	Notification not required.	Submit a letter of notification to MHEC describing the program and affirm that there is access to library and faculty resources consistent with the scope and nature of the offerings. Include documentation of sponsoring agent request.
<b>Bachelor of Technical Studies, Bachelor Professional Studies</b>	An articulated program in a related, specialized area of concentration at a four-year institution for students with an AAS degree. MOU between community college and institution identifies admissions, registration, advising, student services, financial aid, tuition, faculty resources, and programmatic and degree requirements. Program includes minimum 3-credit internship. The BTPS program structure has been coordinated collaboratively across relevant segments.	Submit MOU and budget tables to USM/OAA for review and action by the Chancellor.	Submit MOU to MHEC for approval. Budget tables are not required.
<b>Program Suspension</b>	Temporary suspension of program to examine future direction; time not to exceed two years. No new students admitted during suspension, but currently enrolled students must be given opportunity to satisfy degree requirements.	Notify USM/OAA of suspension with brief rationale.	Notify MHEC of suspension with brief rationale.

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<b>Program Discontinuance</b>	Termination of program.	See USM Policy on the Review and Abolition of Existing Academic Programs ( <a href="http://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionIII/III702.html">http://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionIII/III702.html</a> ). Submit required documentation to USM/OAA for review and approval by the Chancellor.	Submit documentation in support of program discontinuance to MHEC for approval.
<b>Reactivate Program</b>	Reactivate a program within three years of suspension.	Notify USM/OAA of intent to reactivate.	Notify MHEC of intent to reactivate.
<b>Title Change of an Approved Program</b>	Title change of program with no revision of curricular content.	Submit a brief letter of request for title change indicating the existing and proposed titles and a justification for the change to USM/OAA for review and approval by the Chancellor.	Submit a brief letter of request for title change indicating the existing and proposed titles and a justification for the change to MHEC for review and administrative approval. This will <u>not</u> be disseminated for review and comment.
<b>Articulation Agreement with Maryland Secondary Schools and Non-Degree Institutions</b>	Proposal for articulation of transfer credit of specific courses or programs offered by Maryland Secondary Schools and Non-Degree Institutions.	No approval required; notify USM/OAA concurrently with submission of proposal to MHEC.	A written proposal for articulation or transfer of credit of specific courses or programs shall be submitted by the chief executive officer of the school system or the non-degree granting institution to the chief executive officer of the degree granting institution. The proposal shall include, but is not limited to, a complete description of course/program content, instructional/experimental learning hours, expected competencies, and assessment measures used. The proposal shall also indicate whether the intention is for transfer of credit for courses within an articulated program or for transfer of credit for individual courses. Agreements must be approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission. Agreements must be signed by the chief executive officers of the two institutions entering into the agreement to be valid and considered by the Commission.

**MHEC Program Review Fee Schedule**

Category	Actions Covered	Fee
No Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Articulation Agreement</li> <li>-Code Change</li> <li>-Request for Proposal from Community College</li> </ul>	\$0
Nominal Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discontinue Program</li> <li>-Suspend Program</li> <li>- Reactivate Program</li> <li>- Change Program Title</li> <li>- Non-Substantial Program Change</li> <li>- Substantial Change to Area of Concentration</li> <li>- Substantial Change to Certificate Program</li> </ul>	\$50
Modest Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Area of Concentration</li> <li>- New Certificate Program Within an Existing Program</li> <li>- Closed Site Approval</li> <li>- Statewide and Health Manpower Designations</li> <li>- Substantial Change to Degree Program</li> <li>- Off-Campus Program</li> </ul>	\$250
Substantial Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Stand-Alone Certificate Program</li> <li>- New Academic Program</li> <li>- BTPS Program</li> <li>- Cooperative Degree Program</li> <li>- New Academic Program at Approved Out-of-State Institution Within a Non-Renewal Year</li> </ul>	\$850
New Degree Level Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Degree Level Approval</li> </ul>	\$5,000 for up to two degree programs plus \$1,000 for each degree program over two programs

NOTE: An institution of higher education requesting a program review action related to a program offered at a regional higher education center is exempt from payment of an academic program review fee.

**Revised September, 2014**