



Campus Administrative Policy

Policy Title: Creating or Renaming Degree or Certificate Programs

Policy Number: 1038A Functional Area: Academic & Faculty Affairs

Effective: September 1, 2026

Approved by: Laura Borgelt
 Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

Applies to: CU Anschutz

A. Introduction

Article 4 of Regent Law requires the Board of Regents to approve new degree programs. [Regent Policy 4.B.3, Academic Planning and Accountability](#), requires each campus to have processes for the development of new degree program proposals, as well as processes for name changes of degree programs. [Administrative Policy Statement \(APS\) 1038: New Degree Program Approval](#) establishes requirements for campus procedures. This campus policy was developed in accordance with the requirements of Regent Policy 4.B.3 and APS 1038. It also provides processes for initiating certificate programs, which are not prescribed by regent or system-level policies.

The discontinuance of a degree program should follow the requirements of [APS 1015: Implementing Academic Unit or Degree Program Discontinuance](#) and [Campus Administrative Policy 1025: Academic Program Discontinuance](#).

B. Policy Statement

1. Degree Programs

- a. New Programs. A new degree program is subject to approval by the Board of Regents. Before the Board of Regents will consider a new degree program, the proposal must receive a positive recommendation from the campus chancellor.
 - 1) As stated in Article 4B of Regent Law, a degree program may only be offered by an academic unit or program within an academic unit.¹
 - b. Name Changes. Approval of degree program name changes has been delegated to the chancellor but must be communicated to the Board of Regents through the vice president for academic affairs (VPAA).
2. Certificate Programs
- a. New Programs. Approval of a new certificate program is delegated to the dean of the school or college offering the certificate.
 - b. Name Changes. Approval of certificate program name changes is delegated to the dean of the school or college offering the certificate.

C. Procedures

An academic unit seeking to offer a new degree or certificate must prepare and submit a proposal consistent with the procedures outlined in this policy.

1. Creating a New Degree Program
 - a. Faculty and administrators who are developing a proposal should work with the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs (EVC-ASA) and the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance in preparing the narrative, budget model, and supporting documentation. A proposal must adequately address the

¹ Regent Law ([Article 4, Part A](#)), defines academic units as schools, colleges, and departments that roster tenured and/or tenure track faculty and offer at least one degree program.

information outlined in APS 1038 (reproduced in Appendix A of this campus policy).

- b. If the degree program will not be subject to review by a specialized accreditor, the program must be administered through the Graduate School. In such cases, the Graduate School dean should be consulted as the proposal is developed to ensure the program aligns with Graduate School policies and procedures.
- c. The faculty member(s) developing the proposal must notify their department chair and dean's office of the intent to develop a new program and receive preliminary support to pursue the idea.
- d. A member of the dean's office (e.g. dean or associate dean) is responsible for notifying faculty within the school/college, through its shared governance body, of the proposed program. For programs administered through the Graduate School, the Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) should also be notified. Notification must occur at least 60 days prior to the proposal being formally submitted for review and approval at the campus level (see C.1.g).
- e. A new degree proposal may be subject to review and approval by a faculty committee (e.g. curriculum committee), in accordance with school/college policy or faculty bylaws.
- f. Proposals for degree programs that will be administered through the Graduate School will be reviewed by the Graduate Faculty Council, which must issue a positive recommendation for the proposal to move forward in the approval process.
- g. Proposals are subject to approval by the dean of the school/college offering the program. If the program is to be administered through the Graduate School, the proposal is subject to approval by the Graduate School dean as well as the dean of the school/college primarily responsible for the curriculum and instruction. Following approval by the dean(s), the proposal is submitted to the EVC-ASA and the executive vice chancellor for administration and finance. The executive vice chancellors issue a joint recommendation to the chancellor.

- h. New degree proposals with support from the chancellor are submitted to the VPAA for the CU System. Revisions may be requested based on feedback from the VPAA. The proposal will then be submitted to the Board of Regents' University Affairs Committee.
 - i. If recommended by the University Affairs Committee, the proposal is considered by the full board at the next scheduled meeting. The Board of Regents may request changes to the proposal, approve it, or deny it. If the proposal is approved by the Board of Regents, the VPAA notifies the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE). CDHE confirms the new degree program is consistent with the campus statutory role and mission.
 - j. Following approval of a new degree, the Office of the EVC-ASA notifies those involved in preparing the proposal and several administrative offices within the university, including Institutional Research and Effectiveness, Registrar, Bursar, Financial Aid, and the Strauss Health Sciences Library. These offices may contact the initiator of the proposal for additional information to implement the degree program.
 - k. Degree program outcomes and a learning assessment plan must be submitted to the Office of the EVC-ASA. (See [Campus Administrative Policy 1024A](#).)
 - l. In rare cases, degree programs are subject to approval by the university's institutional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission, *before* students can enroll in the program. See Appendix B. The Office of the EVC-ASA will lead efforts to obtain HLC approval.
2. Creating New Degree Programs from Existing Degree Tracks
- a. Existing degree programs that have distinct tracks or specializations with sufficient enrollment may request Board of Regents approval to "split" some or all tracks into separate degrees. This can occur through a simplified track conversion process (see Appendix C).

- b. Although less documentation is typically required in a proposal for a track conversion relative to a completely new degree program, the approval process is the same as that outlined in section C.1.
 - c. Individuals seeking to split an existing degree should consult with the Office of the EVC-ASA prior to developing a proposal.
- 3. Renaming a Degree Program
 - a. A proposal for renaming a degree program must be submitted by the dean of the school/college administering the degree and include:
 - 1) justification for the name change;
 - 2) impact on students and faculty;
 - 3) any reorganization of personnel and implications on budget;
 - 4) any approvals from school or college committees (in accordance with school or college rules); and
 - 5) any additional input from faculty and students currently enrolled in the degree program, or other constituents.
 - b. The proposal must be submitted to the Office of the EVC-ASA.
 - c. If the proposal receives a positive recommendation by the EVC-ASA, it is forwarded to the campus chancellor for approval.
 - d. Following approval by the chancellor, the Office of the EVC-ASA sends the documents supporting the name change to the VPAA for the University of Colorado who coordinates notification of the change to the University Affairs Committee of the Board of Regents.
- 4. Creating a New Certificate Program
 - a. For-credit certificate programs
 - 1) For-credit certificate programs must be approved by the dean of the school or college offering the certificate. The Office of the EVC-ASA should be notified when a certificate program is in development.

- a) A graduate certificate can be created within the home school/college or in affiliation with the Graduate School. Programs affiliated with the Graduate School are subject to review and approval by the Graduate School dean and Graduate Faculty Council.
 - b) In some cases, for-credit certificates are subject to approval by the university's institutional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission, before students can enroll. See Appendix B. The Office of the EVC-ASA will lead efforts to obtain HLC approval.
- 2) Certificate program outcomes and a learning assessment plan must be submitted to the Office of the EVC-ASA. (See [Campus Administrative Policy 1024A.](#))
- 3) For-credit certificate programs that are open to non-degree students (those not enrolled in a degree program at CU Anschutz or CU Denver), and are financial aid eligible, may be subject to specific reporting requirements as determined by the U.S. Department of Education.
- b. Non-credit certificate programs (Certificates of Achievement)
 - 1) Non-credit certificate programs should be approved by the dean (or dean's designee) of the school or college offering the program.
 - 2) Non-credit certificates are not financial aid eligible and are not entered into CU-SIS or the academic catalog. They are not reflected on an academic transcript but may be recognized by a digital badge.
 - 3) Non-credit certificate programs should be reported to the Office of EVC-ASA.
- 5. Renaming Certificate Programs
 - a. Deans may approve the renaming of a certificate program.
 - b. Name changes for for-credit programs must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar for entry into CU-SIS.
 - c. Name changes for non-credit certificate programs should be reported to the Office of the EVC-ASA.

D. Reporting on New Degree Programs

The VPAA must report to the Board of Regents on new degree programs that have completed their fifth year of operation. This report is based on information submitted by the campus through the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs. Requirements are detailed in section II.B of [APS 1038](#).

E. Dual Degree Programs

Dual degree programs created from existing degree programs do not require approval beyond the level of the dean, unless they involve programs outside the University of Colorado system. In such cases, the agreement is subject to review by the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs (EVC-ASA). In all cases, the EVC-ASA must be notified of new dual degree programs and provided with a copy of the written agreement.

Notes

1. History

- June 12, 2023: This new campus policy was developed in accordance with the requirement that each campus develop processes for creating and naming Academic Programs as outlined in Regent Policy 4.B.3 and APS 1038.
- Previous guidance on new degree program approval was provided in a supplement to Campus Administrative Policy 1001. Procedures for the approval of degree name changes were previously captured in Campus Administrative Policy 1001.
- August 26, 2024: Appendix B updated.
- September 1, 2026: Revised to align with changes to APS 1038, clarify the role of the Graduate School in program approval, and provide information on new degree reporting requirements and dual degree program approval.

2. Cross References/Appendices

- Regent Law Article 4, Part A: Academic Organizations and Program Planning
- Regent Policy 4.B.3: Academic Planning and Accountability
- APS 1038: New Degree Program Approval
- APS 1015: Implementing Academic Unit or Degree Program Discontinuance
- Campus Administrative Policy 1025: Academic Program Discontinuance.
- Appendix A: New Degree Proposal Requirements
- Appendix B: Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Approval Requirements
- Appendix C: Proposal Requirements for Converting a Track in an Existing Degree to a New Degree

3. Responsible Office

- Reviewed and approved by the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
- Prepared by the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic and Faculty Affairs

Appendix A: New Degree Proposal Expectations and Guidance

1. Program Description

- a. Describe the basic design of the proposed degree program, including the degree level (baccalaureate, postbaccalaureate, masters, doctoral, professional), field of study, and whether it is an interdisciplinary degree program.
 - i. If the degree program will subsume or supplant an existing degree program, the proposal for the new degree program must address the need for the discontinuance of the existing degree program.
- b. Explicitly state the outcomes for students of this degree program, i.e., what can a student expect to learn during the course of the degree program and what skills will a student have after completing it?

2. Workforce and Student Demand

- a. Workforce Demand: Supply evidence of the opportunities available to graduates of this degree program.
- b. Student Demand: Describe the target market and demonstrate evidence of student demand for this degree program.
 - i. Provide realistic enrollment and degree completion projections for the degree program for the first five years (template provided below).

Explain the methodology and assumptions used to project enrollment and completion data. Relevant information might include national or regional enrollment trends in similar degree programs and projected new demand from industry in the service area.
 - ii. If applicable, explain how the design of the degree program will address the needs of part-time, working students.
 - iii. Discuss plans or the potential for full or hybrid online delivery.

3. Role and Mission Criteria

Describe how the degree program supports the campus mission and fits with the applicable academic or campus strategic plan. Identify institutional strengths in the proposed degree program area.

4. Duplication

Address duplication issues with other institutions in the CU system or elsewhere in the state of Colorado. Describe any unique characteristics or features of this degree program that are not duplicated elsewhere in the state that would justify the degree. Address the impact of duplication on student demand.

5. Statutory Requirements

- a. Describe how the proposed degree program conforms to statutory requirements, such as the 120-credit hour limit for undergraduate degrees, GT Pathways and the Student Bill of Rights (C.R.S. § 23-1-125 (2022)).
- b. Provide the anticipated [Classification of Instructional Programs \(CIP\)](#) code for the proposed program, which is required for state and federal reporting.

6. Curriculum Description

- a. Describe the degree requirements, including total credit hours, credit hour distribution, methods of delivering the degree program, field experience, and other pertinent aspects of the curriculum. Explain how this curriculum is like or unlike the usual curriculum in this field.
- b. Provide the required curriculum for the degree program and explicitly identify all new courses being created for it.

7. Professional Requirements or Evaluations

- a. Where pertinent, describe any regional or professional accrediting association or licensing requirements that helped shape the curriculum of the proposed degree program. Specify the effect of these requirements on the length of the degree program, restrictions on degree program content or mode of delivery, and any budgetary requirements, such as minimum staffing levels, and equipment needs.
- b. Identify timetables, if needed, that have been established to meet the professional requirements.
- c. Describe qualifications of the proposed degree program's faculty.

8. Institutional Factors

- a. Explain how the implementation of this degree program will affect other instructional, research, or service programs on campus. Describe the impact on existing resources, including libraries, educational spaces, and computer and laboratory resources. Explain how the implementation will affect other CU campuses.
- b. When a new degree program fundamentally depends on a department in a different school/college, include a letter of support from that school/college's dean.
- c. Describe formal relationships with other parties that are anticipated, such as inter-institutional arrangements, resource sharing, cooperative programs, clinical affiliations, etc. Describe and explain the type and extent of the relationship and the resources that the affiliating institution will provide. A copy of any draft contracts or agreements shall be included as appendices.

9. Physical Capacity and Needs

- a. Provide estimates for space and equipment required to deliver the degree program. Base the projections on existing and five-year space planning assumptions and program size data from curriculum and student load projections and projected use of special or dedicated facilities, such as laboratories.
- b. When significant capital construction or equipment needs are identified in 9.a, provide additional information and explanations.

10. Cost Description and Source of Funds

- a. Provide costs and revenues for a five-year period and describe sources of funds beyond tuition for the degree program, using the prescribed template. All cost and revenue projections must be given in constant dollars, i.e., do not include an inflation factor. Include and clearly identify institutional overhead costs. Specifically, when tuition is shown as a source of revenue, any component of tuition returned to campus must be shown as an expense. Proposal developers should work with the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration to prepare the budget in the prescribed format.

- b. Include operating, faculty start-up, and capital start-up needs in estimates of degree program costs. Base estimates of operating costs on the delivery of the courses and services defined for the degree program. Factor in administrative costs. Calculate degree program budgets in a realistic manner. For example, do not claim that additional work generated by the operation, management, and oversight of a new degree program will be absorbed into the workload of existing staff and faculty without an explanation of what other work will be reassigned or discontinued to make room for the new workload.
- c. Include a written statement from the dean verifying that the program's cost description and source of funds are reasonable and adequate to support the new degree program.

11. Other Relevant Information

Include any other information deemed relevant to support the new degree program proposal requested by the Board of Regents during their examination of a new degree proposal.

Table to be Included in Proposal (See section 2 above.)

Estimated Enrollment and Degree Completions

Student Type	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Full Implementation
Resident Headcount						
Nonresident Headcount						
Total Headcount						
Resident FTE						
Nonresident FTE						
Total FTE						
Degrees Awarded						

Appendix B: Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Approval Requirements

Proposal developers should work with the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs to obtain HLC approval.

The following new programs *require* prior approval by the HLC:

- A new academic program at a degree or credential level not previously included in the institution's accreditation (CU Denver|Anschutz is approved to award Bachelor's, Master's, Specialist, and Doctoral degrees. In specific circumstances, the Denver Campus may also award an Associate's of General Studies);
- The addition of academic program(s), including certificate programs not related to existing degree programs that represent a significant departure from programs previously included in the institution's accreditation;
- The addition of a direct assessment program or the addition of competency-based programs wherein the academic program is organized around competencies; and
- The addition of academic programs that require allocation of substantial financial investment or resources.

Additionally, a partnership with a third-party entity to offer a program or a plan to offer a new program through a consortial arrangement *may require* HCL approval or notification

Appendix C: Proposal requirements for Converting a Track in an Existing Degree into a New Degree

(Note: This outline and may not apply to all track conversions. Please discuss your plan with the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs prior to preparing the documentation.)

A proposal for converting a track to a standalone degree must be approved by the dean of the school/college offering the degree. If the degree will be administered by the Graduate School, the Graduate School dean and Graduate Faculty Council must also approve the proposal. The proposal should be submitted in memo form to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs (EVC-ASA) and should be addressed to both the EVC-ASA and Chancellor.

The contents of the memo should include:

1. A history of the degree – when it started and when tracks were added to the existing degree program, etc.
2. A description of the degree – a brief description of the curriculum; the delivery mode (face-to-face, online or hybrid); what students learn and what type of employment it prepares students for. What is the job market for program graduates? Does it also attract working professionals looking to enhance their skills and potentially their career? If it is a popular program for working professionals, does the scheduling of the course offerings cater to them?
3. The extent of overlap, including shared courses, with the other tracks currently part of the degree program.
4. Enrollment data for the past 5 years (if the track has existed that long).
5. A brief rationale why the track should be converted to an independent degree: What is the benefit to converting the track to a degree (e.g. enhance visibility, improve marketing etc.)? Will making it an independent degree adversely affect other tracks in the program?
6. An explanation of any change in tuition or fees if this track were converted to a new degree. (Any change would trigger an analysis by the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance).

7. An overview of the review and approval process within the department and/or school/college, including administrative and faculty review and approval process, and discussions with students. Indicate the level of support or opposition to the proposal.
8. Describe any new resources (e.g. faculty, space, administrative support) that would be required to convert the track to an independent degree. If new resources are required, the memo should indicate how these needs will be met. Depending on whether new resources are required, this may trigger an analysis by the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance. If no new additional resources are required, include a sentence stating that.
9. A suggested [Classification of Instructional Programs \(CIP\)](#) code used for reporting purposes to state and federal agencies.
10. Concluding paragraph summarizing the request.