



Tab 9

## Comprehensive Review Process Update

Coordinating Board for Higher Education  
June 16, 2021

### BACKGROUND

Currently, department staff use a three-tiered approach for review of new academic program proposals, which includes a comprehensive review path for institutions to propose programs outside their traditional scope. Following two cycles of comprehensive review, department staff met with a chief academic officer (CAO) work team during fall 2020 and spring 2021 to evaluate the comprehensive review process. The purpose of this information item is to update the Coordinating Board on adjustments to the comprehensive review process implemented in response to the CAO recommendations.

### CURRENT STATUS

Institutions submit a Phase I proposal by July 1 each year for consideration. The Phase I proposal is comprised of forms detailing specific information and a narrative regarding evidence the proposal meets the criteria for consideration. The CBHE, in its sole discretion and in consultation with DHEWD staff, will determine at the September meeting which proposals to approve for a full comprehensive review. Institutions whose programs are selected will submit a complete (Phase II) proposal for public comment and evaluation by the department. The Coordinating Board may take action on these proposals in March each year.

The 2021-2022 review cycle commences on July 1, 2021, and institutions must submit Phase I proposals for comprehensive review by that date. Proposals will have a public comment period and institutions will have an opportunity to provide additional supporting documentation, after which the Department will either deny the proposal or will recommend the CBHE accept the proposal for Phase II at the September 2021 meeting.

#### Preliminary Proposals

A key component of the administrative rule for comprehensive review is the requirement to determine the feasibility of collaboration in offering the degree. As discussion around collaboration could take significant time, department staff and the work team agreed that such feasibility must be determined before a Phase I proposal is submitted. As a consequence, DHEWD is requesting institutions notify the department by March 1 of the intent to apply for comprehensive review. This is to ensure institutions have adequate time to explore collaboration before investing the resources to develop and submit a proposal.

#### Timeline for Conducting Comprehensive Reviews

March 1	DHEWD staff highly encourage proposing institution(s) notify the department of intent to propose a comprehensive review program. Department staff will set regular meetings with institution(s) to discuss and provide early feedback on proposals and to identify potential partner institutions with whom the proposing institution must consider for collaboration.
July 1	Phase I proposals for new academic programs requiring comprehensive review due to the DHEWD (department staff will provide Phase I forms to complete).
July-September	DHEWD staff will review submitted proposals and will recommend no more than five to the CBHE to be evaluated fully through the comprehensive review process.
September-February	DHEWD staff will work with each institution undergoing a comprehensive review to confirm the CBHE has all the information and data necessary to approve or disapprove the proposed program. There will be an additional public comment period to ensure all stakeholders have the opportunity to offer feedback on the proposal(s).

March

The CBHE will take action on proposals considered through comprehensive review.

### **Elements of a Complete Proposal for Comprehensive Review**

Each institution seeking approval for a program requiring comprehensive review will submit a complete proposal for the Coordinating Board's approval. A complete proposal will be submitted and reviewed over two phases, a preliminary phase (Phase I) and final phase (Phase II).

#### **Phase I**

An institution seeking approval for an academic program requiring a comprehensive review will first submit a Phase I proposal to DHEWD staff by July 1. DHEWD will provide forms for this initial step. The Phase I proposal will include the following:

- A. Evidence the statutory criteria to trigger the proposal are met.
- B. Evidence that the proposing institution has explored the feasibility of collaboration with other institutions whose mission or service region encompasses the proposed program. Along with the necessary forms, the proposing institution will include a letter from the chief academic officer of the institutions involved in exploring collaboration. Such letter should explain why collaboration is not feasible.
- C. The proposal must provide clear and compelling evidence that the proposed program is needed. Evidence includes:
  1. Explanation with supporting documentation demonstrating the program does not unnecessarily duplicate other programs in the applicable geographic area, as described in subsection (10)(C) of the administrative rule;
  2. The proposing institution will present an analysis demonstrating a strong and compelling workforce need for the program, which will include one of the following: data from a credible source, an analysis of changing program requirements, the current and future workforce and other needs of the state, and letters of support from local or regional businesses indicating a genuine need for the program.

#### **Phase II**

If the proposal is recommended to and approved by the CBHE for further evaluation, the institution will be asked to prepare materials for a complete Phase II proposal.

- A. The proposal must identify and explain in detail which of the [Blueprint for Higher Education](#) goals the new program will advance.
- B. The proposal must include evidence the institution has the capacity to launch the program in a high-quality manner. This will include:
  1. An assessment of the institution's capacity to offer the new program in terms of general, academic, and student service support, including faculty resources that are appropriate for the program being proposed (e.g. faculty credentials, use of adjunct faculty, and faculty teaching workloads);
    - i. The proposing institution will consult with MDHEWD staff to identify faculty, administrators, and/or industry experts to conduct an external review of the program to be offered. The exact size of the external review team may vary depending on the nature of the proposed program but generally will consist of five

to nine individuals. The proposing institution will bear all costs associated with the external review.

2. A complete cost/revenue analysis summarizing the estimated costs for implementation of the program and information about how the institution intends to fund and sustain the program;
3. Evidence indicating there is sufficient student interest and capacity to support the program, and, where applicable, sufficient capacity for students to participate in clinical or other external learning requirements, including library resources, physical facilities and instruction equipment; and
4. Where applicable, a description of accreditation requirements for the new program and the institution's plans for seeking accreditation.

C. The proposal must provide clear and compelling evidence that the proposed program is needed. This will include:

1. A clear plan to meet the articulated workforce need, including:
  - a. Aligning curriculum with specific knowledge and competencies needed to work in the field(s) or occupation(s) described in the workforce need analysis;
  - b. Providing students with external learning experiences to increase the probability they will remain in the applicable geographic area after graduation; and
  - c. Assessing the extent to which the new program meets that need when implemented.

After Phase II proposals are submitted, department staff will work with the proposing institution to address any questions, issues, or concerns about the proposal. Once all issues are resolved, the department will submit the proposal to the CBHE with a recommendation to provisionally approve for a period of five years. It is anticipated full Phase II proposals will be submitted to the CBHE for the March meeting, but there may be delays based on individual proposals.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The department will research other states' comprehensive review processes and survey Missouri institutions to begin the next iteration of potential process improvements.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

This is an information item only.

## **NO ATTACHMENTS**