
Guidance for Institutions Preparing Proposals to offer Baccalaureate Degrees of Fewer than 120 Credits

1. **Naming requirement:** The name of the degree is important and must clearly distinguish by means of a prefix – to potential students and the public at large – that what is proposed is not a traditional baccalaureate degree with a minimum degree requirement of 120 semester credits.
2. **Transparency requirement:** Institutions need to develop a required language provision that they will prominently include in their marketing material. This would include a provision that some graduate programs, professional schools, and employers might not accept a baccalaureate degree of fewer than 120 credits. This language will also provide students with a pathway to a four-year degree. The expectation is that this language provision will be made known to potential students and their families in all marketing and admissions material, including web site descriptions of the program.
3. **Assessment requirement:** Institutions need to develop an assessment plan that measures student outcomes, including, but not limited to (a) retention and persistence, (b) student attainment of general education and subject area learning outcomes, (c) student graduation rates, (d) the ability for graduates to obtain employment in their field; and (e) the ability for graduates to gain admission to graduate programs. Institutions are further required to develop plans for remediation when assessment results reveal that students are not meeting outcomes.

As with all substantive changes and per the Policy on Innovation, a site visit will be required.

4. **Curricular requirements:** Curriculum must include an appropriate mix of credits in the major, in general education, and electives. The program of study should: have a focused educational orientation; be at least 90 credits, with at least 30 credits, including substantial advanced work in the major, awarded by the institution; and include a pathway to a four-year degree.
5. **Intersection with Standards Review:** Institutions submitting or re-submitting proposals should be aware of the upcoming/ongoing Standards review process and timeline, including the Commission’s expectation that the minimum degree requirements under Standard 4, Paragraph 4.33, will be a substantial area of focus in that review. It is unknown at this time what revisions, if any, may be proposed to that Standard and/or the response and input of member institutions nor what shape the final Standard may take at the end of the process (anticipated to be July 1, 2026). It will be important for institutions to understand that while a proposal may be approved under the Policy on Innovation during this review period, and the experience of any institutions conducting approved programs under that Policy will inform the Standards review, what is expected and required of institutions could change as the result of the review process.