APPLIED BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS

As part of the 2010 System Design Plan legislation ([SSB 6355](#)), applied baccalaureate degrees offered by Washington state's community and technical colleges were changed from pilot to regular status. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) approves all proposals for applied baccalaureate degrees submitted by the community and technical colleges. These programs are intended to accomplish the following:

A. Serve professional and technical degree-holding students who have limited access to bachelor degree programs after completing their associate of applied science degree or its equivalent.

B. Provide opportunities for working adults who are place-bound to a specific geographic region and want to earn a baccalaureate degree.

C. Fill skills and credentials gaps and needs in specific occupations, particularly specific professional and technical fields requiring applied knowledge and skills.

In July 2012, SBCTC retained sole approval authority for applied baccalaureates degrees. The following describes the process for community and technical colleges seeking to acquire state approval to offer applied bachelor's degree programs. The SBCTC may make future revisions to the selection process and criteria as needed.

Step 1

Institutions notify SBCTC and higher education partners of their intent to offer an applied bachelor degree program by placing the program title and anticipated date of enrollment on the higher education Inter-institutional Committee on Academic Program Planning (ICAPP) Grid.

The grid is used to informally notify higher education partners (colleges, universities, the Washington Student Achievement Council, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges) of a college's intent to offer a program. This informal notice allows concerns to be addressed between colleges prior to the official notice to higher education partners.

- Institutions simply send an email to the SBCTC staff responsible for reviewing applied baccalaureate degree program proposals. The body of the email must include the working title of the degree program and the anticipated enrollment date.

- SBCTC staff will place the program information on the ICAPP grid for notice to the higher education community.

- SBCTC staff members will provide quarterly updates to State Board members regarding potential upcoming applied baccalaureate programs being considered by colleges.

Step 2

Institutions submit a [Statement of Need](#) to SBCTC staff, and SBCTC staff will conduct brief analysis of the content, areas of strength, areas needing improvement, and capacity for the applied bachelor degree.

Institutions can download the Statement of Need form, including the cover sheet, and the required applied baccalaureate degree supply/demand gap rubric from the SBCTC website. Institutions must complete all sections of the form and the rubric and submit the completed materials to SBCTC staff within the specified period of time.

- The Statement of Need will be reviewed by SBCTC staff to ensure that all criteria have been met. SBCTC staff will forward feedback regarding the strengths of the plan and areas needing improvement to the college with the goal of strengthening the proposal to ensure required criteria are met. The college may submit revised documents as many times as appropriate.

- Once criteria are met, staff from the SBCTC will send out a notice to universities and community and technical colleges officially informing them of the proposed program. Questions or concerns about the proposal must be submitted to the SBCTC within 30 days. Concerns will be forwarded to the submitting college.

Step 3

SBCTC staff forward the Statement of Need to SBCTC board members and schedule a "conceptual discussion" between board members and the lead administrator of the proposed applied baccalaureate degree program.

- The conceptual discussion will focus on the unmet need for the program in the region.

- The Statement of Need will also address the relationship of the proposal to the institutional role, mission, and program priorities; employer and community unmet need; evidence of the baccalaureate degree building on an existing professional and technical degree program; student demand for the program; and efforts to maximize state resources for place-bound students through collaboration with similar CTC associate degree and applied bachelor's degree programs and the CTC Centers of Excellence.

Step 4

Institutions submit program approval application to the SBCTC. The cover sheet and [New Degree Program Proposal document](#) can be downloaded from the SBCTC website.

- A committee of higher education representatives will review the application. The committee will be comprised of community and technical college vice presidents of instruction, student services, and finance/business, and others as appropriate. The committee will make recommendations to the SBCTC staff.

- A peer review is not required for colleges that are already accredited as bachelor degree granting institutions through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

(NWCCU). However, the review is highly recommended. SBCTC staff will continue to review all college Applied Baccalaureate proposals and make recommendations to the SBCTC.

- The New Degree Program Proposal should clearly address concerns raised by the State Board during the Statement of Need phase of the process.

- In addition to demonstrating sustainability, rigor, and appropriate student support services, the New Degree Program Proposal should reflect collaboration with CTC's and neighboring baccalaureate institutions when applicable and foster pathway options among the various institutions.

Step 5

The State Board for Community and Technical College board members officially vote on the program proposal. A college representative will participate in the Board meeting and provide oral support for the proposal and respond to Board members' questions. Revision and amendment history

Description	Revision Date
State Board Resolution 14-09-59	09/10/2014

Appendix A: Distribution Requirements for Bachelor of Applied Science Degrees Guidelines

Consistent with its mission, each institution establishes, across all bachelor level programs, core competencies that include, but are not limited to, effective communication skills, global awareness, cultural sensitivity, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and/or information literacy.

Colleges are encouraged to tailor their distribution requirements to support the outcomes of each specific Bachelor of Applied Science Degree.

To fulfill most distribution requirements for transfer to graduate degree programs, the Bachelor of Applied Science degree should possess the following characteristics. The following recommendations are based on 180 quarter hours

I.   Students must earn a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.00, as calculated by the degree awarding institution.

II.   The distribution courses will include courses earned at either/both the associate degree and/or applied bachelor's degree level, based on the total required 180 quarter hours of credits.

III. A minimum of 50 quarter hours of distribution credits will be required a minimum of five distribution areas.

  a. Basic Requirements (15 credits)

     i. Communication Skills (10 credits)

        1. A minimum of five (5) credits of English composition.

        2. Remaining credits may be an additional composition course or designated writing courses or courses in basic speaking skills (e.g., speech, rhetoric, or debate).

     ii. Quantitative/Symbolic Reasoning Skills (5 credits)

        1. Achieved through one of the following college-level courses: symbolic reasoning or a quantitative reasoning course in computer science, statistics, or mathematics.

  2. Distribution Requirements (35 credits)

     i.   Social Sciences (5 credits)

     ii. Humanities (5 credits)

     iii. Natural Science with a lab component(5 credits)

     iv. An additional 20 credits of 300/400 level distribution coursework or electives from the ICRC Handbook generally transferable list of courses

(https://www.wa-council.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020-Final-Revised-ICRC-Handbook-12.20.pdf)

IV.   300 and 400 level distribution courses

In addition to the 100/200 level courses, colleges may elect to develop 300/400 level distribution courses that best suit the curriculum needs of the baccalaureate degree. These courses must be selected from distribution areas 1 and 2 above.

For each 300/400 level distribution course, appropriate faculty shall have a major role in the design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum, keeping in mind the requirements of each general education discipline and in accordance with local curriculum approval processes.

Bachelor of Applied Science degrees meeting the distribution system in these Guidelines represent but one model for valid general education programs. Community and technical college bachelor of applied science programs are encouraged to develop models, including interdisciplinary core requirements or vertical general education requirements with courses at the graduate division level. Institutions using such alternative approaches are further encouraged to develop individual inter-institutional transfer agreements.

It should be clearly understood that agreements based upon these Guidelines in no way alter admission criteria established by graduate degree programs.

Appendix approved by Instruction Commission

5/20/2022