



# Statewide Academic Program Review for KCTCS

Approved by Council: January 27, 2023

Effective Date: January 27, 2023

## Overview

The academic program review process is a key responsibility of state coordinating boards like the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE). The process ensures that academic programs are consistent with state priorities and that public resources are used efficiently for the greater good of the Commonwealth.

In Kentucky, CPE's program review authority is outlined in KRS 164.020 (16) which states that CPE can:

*Eliminate, in its discretion, existing programs or make any changes in existing academic programs at the state's postsecondary educational institutions, taking into consideration these criteria: (a) Consistency with the institution's mission and the strategic agenda; (b) Alignment with the priorities in the strategic implementation plan for achieving the strategic agenda; (c) Elimination of unnecessary duplication of programs within and among institutions; and (d) Efforts to create cooperative programs with other institutions through traditional means, or by use of distance learning technology and electronic resources, to achieve effective and efficient program delivery.*

## Purpose of Program Review

There are two types of program review – institutional and statewide. The statewide process is designed to complement and enhance, not supplant, institutional-level program reviews.

Institutional program reviews serve several purposes. They are undertaken to promote continuous improvement. Because there are limited resources, programs must fit with the institution's mission and strategic direction and must be economically viable. Institutional program reviews also focus on academic quality issues, specifically attainment of student learning outcomes as well as distinction of faculty research. And institutional program reviews must meet all the requirements of both institutional and programmatic accreditation.

There is some overlap in purpose between institutional and statewide review. Both focus on continuous improvement and alignment with mission and strategic direction. While institutional review focuses on the viability of individual programs, statewide review looks at efficiency from a broader perspective.

In short, institutional program review is an intensive, micro-level evaluation of programs while statewide review focuses on the macro view, looking across institutional reviews for data patterns, outliers, and opportunities for efficiencies. The combination of these two levels of evaluation – institutional and statewide – provide a thorough framework for academic program review in Kentucky.

## KCTCS Academic Program Review Process

For KCTCS programs undergoing the statewide program review process, CPE will analyze enrollment trends, degree/credential production trends, and market data through Gray Associates to identify any programs with:

- Low enrollment, defined as fewer than 10 students;
- Declining enrollment for the previous four years;
- Declining number of degrees or credentials conferred for the previous four years;
- Low regional student demand, defined as 40th percentile or lower according to Gray Associates data;
- Low regional market demand defined as 40th percentile or lower according to Gray Associates data.

The KCTCS System Office will review each institution's self-assessment and communicate directly with each institution regarding recommendations and/or concerns. More specifically, the KCTCS System Office will work with each institution to recommend whether a program should be classified as grow, sustain, fix, or sunset based on the following definitions:

- Grow – a program with high student and/or demand and/or an area of emerging growth.
- Sustain – a program that is performing well and the outlook is positive.
- Fix – a previously strong program that can be turned around.
- Sunset – small or specialized programs with unfavorable student/market demand and limited growth potential.

While all programs must undergo review and a summary of results evaluated by CPE, programs meeting any of the conditions outlined above (low enrollment, declining enrollment, declining degree/credential production, low student demand, or low market demand) must submit a program improvement plan to the KCTCS system office that proposes efforts to address each area that does not meet these defined standards. KCTCS system office staff will evaluate program improvement plans and summarize these plans for CPE staff. A program that meets any of these criteria but is recommended to sunset does not need to submit a program improvement plan.

The KCTCS System Office will provide CPE with an executive summary containing the following information:

- Recommendation (grow, sustain, fix, or sunset) for the program offered at each institution;
- Description of the strengths and/or opportunities of the program compared to the other similar programs offered across the KCTCS institutions.
- Description of the weakness and/or threats of program compared to the other similar programs offered across the KCTCS institutions.

- Description of the variations (e.g., similarities and/or differences in strengths/opportunities and weaknesses/threats) across institutions offering each program; and
- Any program improvement plans.

CPE staff will evaluate these reports, work with institutions if any information is missing or any questions arise, and determine next steps, if any. Staff will provide a summary report to the Academic and Strategic Initiatives Committee as well as the full Council.

For AY 2022-23, the KCTCS System Office will choose programs in one CIP code to pilot this process. The executive summary is due to CPE on December 31, 2023. In addition, by this date the KCTCS System Office will identify programs to be evaluated in AY 2023-24 (25% of all KCTCS offerings), those to be evaluated in AY 2024-25 (another 25% of all KCTCS offerings), those to be evaluated in AY 2025-26 (another 25% of all KCTCS offerings), and those to be evaluated in AY 2026-27 (all remaining programs).

The above statewide program review process will be followed for each set of academic programs identified by the KCTCS system office to undergo the review process in each academic year. By the end of four years, all KCTCS programs will have undergone this statewide process.

Reports from the KCTCS system office are due annually by July 15th. CPE will review the summary as well as all program improvement plans and provide feedback to the KCTCS System Office.