

**ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS
POLICY MANUAL**

2-223 Academic Degree Programs, Locations, and Organizational Units

Revision Dates

4/16/2026, 9/27/2024, 6/15/2023 (effective 7/1/2023), 2/12/2021, 9/20/2019, 9/27/2018, 4/6/2018 (effective 7/1/2018), 2/9/2018, 11/17/2017, 2/8/2013 (adopted)

Arizona’s public universities offer hundreds of degree programs across a wide breadth of fields. The portfolio of programs is dynamic, evolving as new fields and student interests emerge, as others adapt, and as some conclude.

Academic units such as departments or schools typically manage multiple programs and share faculty, facilities, and resources across units and institutional levels. Program changes may range from simple realignments of existing courses that need no new resources to initiatives requiring new faculty, facilities, or partnerships. Accordingly, academic program decisions must balance unit-level innovation with university-wide strategy and the Board’s oversight of the system portfolio.

This policy establishes the approval and consultation framework for creating, modifying, moving, or discontinuing academic programs, locations, and organizational units within Arizona’s public university system.

A. Board-Level Actions

Board approval is required for new or substantially expanded academic initiatives that materially affect institutional mission, scale, or enterprise resources, as specified below. The University Governance and Operations (UGO) Committee reviews such requests and recommends action to the Board. Requests will use standard forms developed by the Board office and must include but are not limited to the details specified.

1. New Academic Degree Programs

- a. Requests must include program description, delivery modality/location, three-year enrollment projections, labor-market analysis and employment outlook, credit-hour requirements, anticipated fees, required resources, learning outcomes and assessment methods, and a list of similar degrees at other Arizona public universities.
- b. The notice and consultation process (Section C.4) is required.

2. New Academic Locations (In or Outside Arizona)

- a. A new physical academic location is defined as a campus, statewide learning center, site, or discrete locality where students may complete 50 percent or more of a degree program.
 - b. Requests must include an analysis of the prospective student market, projected enrollment for the first three years, description of any partnerships and agreement terms, opening timeline, and a financial plan detailing institutional costs and benefits.
 - c. The notice and consultation process (Section C.4) is required for new academic locations in Arizona.
 - d. This location policy does not apply to solely online programs or academic program offerings as part of a limited enrollment partnership. The latter is an agreement between a university and another organization focused on specific initiatives that include an academic program with enrollment limited to partnership participants (e.g., onsite delivery of a degree at a company or agency for its employees only).
3. New Academic Organizational Units
- a. Academic organizational units (e.g., colleges, departments, research centers and institutes) are defined in ABOR policy 2-222.
 - b. Requests must include rationale and alignment with institutional mission and enterprise goals, expected student population, required faculty and staffing, and a funding plan.

B. Executive Director-Level Actions

Actions of limited scope or internal significance may be approved by the Board Executive Director, as specified below. The Executive Director may deem any such request as being of major significance and refer it to the UGO Committee and Board for action. Upon request of the Chair of the UGO Committee, the Board Executive Director will report to the committee for any specified timeframe the changes authorized under this section of the policy.

1. New Academic Minor Programs

- a. A university may offer a minor program without review if the new minor has the same name as an existing major program and the courses constituting the minor are drawn from approved courses for that major. All other new or renamed minors require Executive Director approval.

- b. Requests must include title, description, location, credit hours, delivery modality, and anticipated fees.
2. Novel Combination of an Existing Degree and Existing Location
 - a. Requests must include details as specified for new academic degree programs and new academic locations.
 - b. The notice and consultation process (Section C.4) is required.
3. Material Revisions to Program Credit Requirements
 - a. A university may request a revision to require more than 120 credits for an undergraduate degree program.
 - b. A university may request a revision to change more than 25 percent of required courses in the degree requirements for a specific major.
 - c. Requests must include title, description, location, credit hours, delivery modality, enrollment for past three years, revision details and rationale.
4. Merger, Transfer, or Renaming of an Academic Degree Program or Organizational Unit
 - a. Requests must include title, description, rationale, financial benefits or costs, and impacts on students, faculty, and staff.
5. Disestablishment of an Academic Degree Program or Organizational Unit
 - a. A university may disestablish an academic degree program or academic organizational unit without review but must notify the Board Executive Director at the time the decision is made.
 - b. Notifications must include title, description, location, timing, rationale, and redistribution plans for students and personnel.
6. Early Announcement
 - a. A university may request permission for an early announcement of a proposed academic degree program, academic organizational unit, or location before formal approval by the Board.

- b. Such requests are expected to be infrequent and shall include a justification for why the announcement needs to occur earlier than the next regularly scheduled board meeting.
- c. Requests must include all relevant materials for the proposal including results of the notice and consultation process if applicable.
- d. If approved, communications with prospective students and stakeholders must clearly state that the proposed program or unit is pending approval by the Arizona Board of Regents and, for a proposed program, is not yet recruiting or enrolling students.

C. Procedures

To ensure coordination and consistency across the Arizona public university system, the following procedures apply to all proposals under this policy unless otherwise stated below.

1. **Timing and Alignment with Tuition and Fee Process**
 - a. Program and location proposals that will use tuition and fee rates (including college fees) already approved by the board may be requested during the year. The bulk of each university's anticipated proposals for each year should be requested at one regularly scheduled UGO Committee meeting annually and the specific meeting for each university shall be coordinated with the Board office, recognizing that a limited number of proposals from each university may be requested at other meetings during the year.
 - b. Program and location proposals that will require the approval of new tuition or fee rates must be requested in accordance with the calendar and procedure for setting tuition and fees in ABOR Policy 4-104, which specifies limited dates to minimize the need for required hearings. The due date for tuition and fee requests will likely be different than the university-specific dates referenced above for programs and locations with approved tuition and fees.
2. **Marketing, Recruiting, and Program Delivery**
 - a. A university may share preliminary information about a planned or changed program or unit with counselors and partners while developing a proposal but must refrain from public announcement before formal approval by the Board unless early announcement is specifically approved (Section B.6).

- b. No active recruitment or enrollment into a new or changed program, or delivery of that program, may occur before formal approval.
 - 3. Catalog and Information Conformity
 - a. All academic degree program and academic organizational unit information included in university catalogs, websites, and marketing materials must be consistent with board actions taken in accordance with this policy.
 - 4. Notice and Consultation Process
 - a. Certain proposals noted above (Sections A and B) require a university to provide written notice and opportunity for comment to the Academic Council as part of the submission process. Written notice and comment may be provided electronically.
 - b. The Board office establishes notice criteria and format and has discretion as to whether a proposing university has submitted proper written notice.
 - c. A university must provide notice to the Academic Council at least fourteen days before the deadline for submitting UGO Committee materials.
 - d. A university's Chief Academic Officer has seven days to provide a written comment or objection to the proposing university and the Academic Council. The objection may be shared with the UGO Committee as part of the committee materials. Lack of timely response constitutes assent. The proposing university must make good-faith efforts to resolve any objections prior to committee consideration.
- D. Additional Provisions
- 1. Academic Program Inventories
 - a. Each university will maintain a current inventory of all academic programs.
 - b. Each university will submit to the Board office annually the enrollment, location, delivery method, modality, tuition and fees, well as other requested information for each academic program listed in the inventory.

- c. The Board office will develop and maintain a common format for submissions.
 - 2. Academic Council
 - a. A four-member Academic Council collaborates on and coordinates academic programming across the enterprise and advises the Enterprise Executive Committee and Board office.
 - b. Academic Council membership comprises the universities' Chief Academic Officers and one ABOR designee. The council is a managerial working group and not an ABOR subcommittee. It meets at least once prior to each UGO Committee meeting.
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Policy History

- 2/8/2013 Adopted by the Board on second reading.
- 11/17/2017 Policy revision approved by the Board on first reading with immediate implementation.
- 2/9/2018 Policy revision approved by the Board on second reading.
- 4/6/2018 Policy revision approved by the Board to be effective 7/1/2018.
- 9/27/2018 Policy revised to reflect "Executive Director" of the Board in place of "President."
- 9/20/2019 Policy revision approved by the Board on second reading.
- 2/12/2021 Policy revision approved by the Board on second reading.
- 6/15/2023 Policy revision approved by the Board on second reading, effective 7/1/2023.
- 9/27/2024 Policy revision approved by the Board on second reading.
- 4/16/2026 Policy revision approved by the Board on second reading.

Related Information