**Process for the Approval of New Certificate Programs**

Each university has campus-level policies and procedures for reviewing and approving new certificate programs. Therefore, it is always advised to communicate with your respective department-, college- and university-level academic leaders prior to initiating this process, as they may have additional requirements. For instance, some universities require proposal documents to be routed through a specific program/course management system. **The below information is specific to the system-level review process** **that occurs after initial campus-level approvals have been obtained.**

**Approval Steps**

* **Program Change/Certificate Request.** The first step is to complete a Program Change/Certificate Request form. This form requests basic information about the request and should be completed in coordination with your institution’s Provost’s Office. In Section 2 of the form, indicate whether the certificate program has a parent degree. A parent degree may be required for some programs (see Box 1, below).
  + **Required Documentation:** A copy of the certificate program’s curriculum, a letter of approval from the provost, and completion of the Program Change/Certificate Request template. If an undergraduate certificate consists of 60or more credit hours   
    OR a graduate certificate consists of more than 15 credit hours, the Academic   
    Program Proposal for Routine Review template should also be completed. Both   
    forms are available on our webpage (<https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/aa/academic-programs-and-guidelines>).

The term “parent degree” can often cause confusion. **In short, this refers to whether the coursework for a proposed certificate program is predominantly (≥ 50%) associated with an existing academic program offered by the institution.**

Example. A proposed 15-credit-hour certificate in Biostatistics includes 3 courses (9 credits) of Biological Sciences coursework already offered by the institution. In this case, it would be logical to indicate that the program has a parent degree (e.g., BS in Biology.)

These designations have **no effect** on who can and cannot enroll in a certificate program. For instance, using the example above, indicating that the Biostatistics has a parent degree (BS in Biology) does **not** mean that only BS in Biology students can complete the certificate.

Indicating a parent degree program is optional for undergraduate certificates that are fewer than 30 credit hours and is **required** for programs that are 30-59 credit hours in length. Undergraduate certificates that are 60 or more credit hours must be submitted as a new degree program. Parent degree programs are also **required** for new graduate certificates and post-master’s certificates that require more than 15 credit hours. Graduate and post-master’s certificates without a parent degree must be submitted with an Academic Program Proposal for Routine Review form.

**Box 1. Understanding “Parent Degrees”**

* **Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development / Coordinating Board for Higher Education Approval.** Following Office of Academic Affairs review, the proposal will be submitted to MDHEWD. A proposal submitted in Month A (e.g., January) will be reviewed in Month B (e.g., February), with approval typically granted on or around the first business day of Month C (e.g., March).

*Note: In addition to the steps above, each university manages its own processes and procedures for receiving approval from the Higher Learning Commission.*