**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 the certificate consists of 60 or more 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 certificate programs that are fewer than 30 credit hours and is **required** for such programs that are 30 credit hours to 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.

**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.*