

**NORTH DAKOTA
STATE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Policy Manual**

Policy: 409 Degrees Offered

Effective: January 18, 2024

1. Structure

- a. SBHE shall approve the establishment of all new instructional programs granting academic credit leading to a degree or credential. The SBHE Academic and Student Affairs Committee (ASAC) shall have authority to approve all new academic program requests on behalf of the SBHE as outlined in SBHE Policy 421.
- b. Institutions shall adhere to SBHE Policy 420 Accreditation.
- c. The Chancellor shall adopt procedures to make a recommendation on New Academic Program requests.
- d. An institution may only request a new degree if the following conditions are met:
 - i. There is a documented student and employer demand;
 - ii. Existing programs or degrees at other institutions are not meeting the demand and other institutions authorized to offer the degree are not positioned to meet the demand;
 - iii. The proposed degree includes collaboration with other institutions, if feasible; and
 - iv. The institution seeking the new degree is best positioned to offer a degree program to meet the demand, either collaboratively or separately.

2. Definitions and Institutional Offerings

- a. **Subplan** is a group of courses within an approved academic program which is identified in an institutional catalog. A minimum of 12 undergraduate semester hours or nine graduate semester hours is required for a subplan to appear on a student transcript. Subplans appear on a transcript at the discretion of the institution. SBHE approval is not required for a subplan.
- b. **Certificate of Completion** are awarded upon the completion of an undergraduate course of study of less than nine semester hours, or a graduate course of study of less than eight semester hours. The SBHE authorizes each institution to award Certificates of Completion.
- c. **Certificate** are awarded upon the completion of a minimum of nine semester hours at the undergraduate level or minimum of eight semester hours at the graduate level. The SBHE authorizes each institution to award Certificates.
- d. **Diplomas** are awarded upon the completion of a prescribed program in a technical field with some general education coursework. SBHE authorizes BSC, DCB, LRSC, NDSCS, and WSC to award Diplomas.
- e. **Associate Degrees** are awarded upon the completion of a minimum of 60 semester hours that consist primarily of diverse, introductory-level courses in general education and professional areas. Associate degrees must include a minimum of 36 semester hours of general education courses. Required courses for the A.S. degree place greater emphasis on the sciences than is true of the A.A. Associate degrees are designed to prepare

students for immediate employment or career entry, but also serve as preparatory education for transfer to a related baccalaureate programs. They do not designate a specific program or major. Common degrees include Associate in Arts (A.A.) and Associate in Science (A.S.). SBHE authorizes BSC, DCB, DSU, LRSC, NDSCS, and WSC to award a Associate degree. SBHE authorizes MaSU, MiSU, and VCSU to award specifically approved Associate degrees.

- i. Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degrees are awarded upon the completion of a minimum of 60 semester hours and it may designate a specific field of study. A.A.S. degree is a combination of career-technical and general education coursework. A.A.S. degrees must include 15 semester hours of general education coursework. SBHE authorizes BSC, DCB, DSU, LRSC, NDSCS, and WSC to award A.A.S. degrees.
- f. **Bachelor Degrees** are awarded upon the completion of a minimum of 120 semester hours, comprised of academic courses in general education, major, minor, concentration, and elective areas. Bachelor's degrees must include a minimum of 36 semester hours of general education and a minimum of 30 semester hours of upper division coursework. The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) is designed to give academic breadth in the liberal arts, usually with a major in the humanities or social sciences. The Bachelor of Science (B.S.) prepares students in disciplines such as the sciences and mathematics, or in the professions. Bachelor's degrees are designed primarily as a first professional degree, but which also may serve as preparatory education for transfer to a related graduate degree. Common degrees include B.A. and B.S. SBHE authorizes DSU, MaSU, MiSU, NDSU, UND, and VCSU to award Bachelor degrees.
- i. Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) are awarded upon the completion of a minimum of 120 semester hours, the first 60 of which would typically be in A.A.S. degree and, a minimum of 30 upper division semester hours. B.A.S. degree is a combination of career-technical and general education coursework. B.A.S. degree requires a total of 36 general education semester hours usually through a combination of A.A.S. and B.A.S. level coursework and not all general education credits would necessarily meet the general education transfer agreement requirements. SBHE authorizes BSC, DSU, MaSU, MiSU, and VCSU to award B.A.S. degrees.
- g. **Master Degrees** are awarded upon the completion of a minimum of 30 semester hours of an academic program in a named field of study or area of profession beyond a bachelor's degree. The M.A. is usually in the humanities or social sciences. The M.S. is usually in the sciences, mathematics, or the professions. Common degrees include Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Science (M.S.), Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.), and Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.). SBHE authorizes DSU, MaSU, MiSU, NDSU, UND, and VCSU to award Master degrees.
- h. **Education Specialist (Ed.S.)** are awarded upon the completion of a minimum of 60 semester hours in coursework that carry graduate credit. Ed.S. degree is a professional degree for certification in an educational field. SBHE authorizes MiSU and NDSU to award Ed.S. degrees.
- i. **Specialist's Diploma (Spec.Dip.)** are awarded upon the completion of a minimum of 64 semester hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. It recognizes advanced preparation for practice in the service field. SBHE authorizes UND to award a Spec.Dip. degree.

- j. **Doctoral Degrees** are awarded after a period of study such that the number of semester hours meet the requirements of any institutional or programmatic accreditor and the student has demonstrated appropriate knowledge, skills, and research. Programs are designed to either prepare for an occupation in a professional practice or recognized academic research or other demonstrations of scholarly or artistic achievement. Common degrees include the Doctor of Arts (D.A.), Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Doctor of Musical Arts (D.M.A.), Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.), and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). SBHE authorizes NDSU and UND to award a Doctoral degree.
- k. **First-Professional Degree, Law (J.D.), Medicine (M.D.), and Pharmacy (Pharm. D.)** are awarded after the completion of the academic requirements to begin practice in the profession, at least two years of coursework before entering the program, and a total of at least six academic years of coursework to complete the degree program, including prior required coursework plus the length of the professional program itself. SBHE authorizes NDSU to award First-Professional and Pharm.D. degrees. SBHE authorizes UND to award First-Professional, J.D., and M.D. degrees.

REFERENCE: SBHE Policies 420, 421

HISTORY: New policy, SBHE Meeting minutes, June 25, 1987; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, June 27-28, 1988; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, January 20, 2000; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, April 4, 2000; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, May 30, 2001; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, February 22, 2002; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, April 18, 2002; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, May 8-9, 2003; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, November 20, 2003; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, September 16, 2004; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, September 15, 2005; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, December 15, 2005; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, June 15, 2006; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, September 20, 2007; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, December 18, 2008; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, November 30, 2017; Revised by legal counsel, June 21, 2018; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, January 24, 2019; Amendment, SBHE Meeting minutes, January 18, 2024.