

UTAH COLLEGE OF APPLIED TECHNOLOGY

AGENDA ITEM

UCAT BOARD OF TRUSTEES 14 September 2016

ITEM: II.G

TOPIC: Program/Course Review, and Adjustments to Policies 200 and 205

BACKGROUND

In its January 2016 meeting, the UCAT Board of Trustees directed UCAT administrative staff to complete an internal review of all UCAT courses and programs prior to the September 2016 meeting, assessing the significance of student accomplishments. A report on this review was to be written and presented to the Trustees in their September 2016 meeting when FY 2016 data is submitted for approval.

The Program Review's objectives were drawn from the Trustees' January directives, recommendations of the Legislative Auditor General, and 2016 legislative intent language. The Commissioner's Office reviewed programs, program certificates, and individual courses, using Fiscal Year 2015 data. College Presidents, Instructional Officers, and UCAT staff collaborated in preparing the attached report.

As reported in the Program Review, the significance of completing a certificate at a UCAT college is demonstrated by: (1) the ability of the student to be placed in a high-demand, industry-related job; (2) the approval of all programs by the Council on Occupational Education (COE); (3) the documentation of the relevance, rigor, and quality of each program by regional Occupational Advisory Committees; (4) the comprehensive accountability standards each college must meet for COE accreditation; and (5) the length of the program, which is defined by industry, licensure statutes, accreditors, and curriculum requirements, and is a reflection of the time investment by the student as well as the educational resources of the college provided for the certificate.

The review provided the following recommendations:

- Certificates should be issued for COE-approved programs only. Any other training offered by the colleges falls into the COE-defined category "Continuing Occupational Education".
- Eliminate the Occupational Skills Certificates category. Reserve the term "certificate" for COE-approved programs only.
- Re-name the current "Occupational Upgrade" enrollment category to "Continuing Occupational Education" as a more descriptive term and for consistency with COE reporting.
- Stratify certificate data by certificate length.
- Convene instructional officers to discuss best practices for the structuring and reporting of stand-alone courses.
- Include in the UCAT Annual Report a narrative that demonstrates the impact Continuing Occupational Education courses have on workforce development, meeting employers needs and developing the skills of thousands of Utahns.



The above recommendations require revisions to UCAT Policies 200 and 205. Specifically, UCAT Administration, the Presidents' Cabinet, and college Instructional Officers recommend that Policies 200 and 205 be amended to eliminate all references to Occupational Skills Certificates, such that the term "certificate" is reserved solely for programs approved by the Council on Occupational Education. Additionally, the aforementioned groups recommend that Policies 200 and 205 must be amended to rename non-credentialed training "Continued Occupational Education", bringing UCAT policy into further alignment with COE standards and terminology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Office of the Commissioner recommends that the Trustees: (1) Direct the Commissioner of Technical Education and the UCAT colleges to carry out the Program Review's recommendations as summarized above and included in the attached Program Review; and (2) approve the proposed revisions to UCAT Policies 200 and 205, as recommended in the Program Review.

Attachment: Program Review and Recommended Policy Changes: Policy 200 and 205





UTAH COLLEGE
— of —
APPLIED TECHNOLOGY

Program Review

Prepared for the UCAT Board of Trustees Meeting

September 14, 2016

Final 9/12/2016

Objective and Scope of the Program Review

The objectives of the comprehensive Program Review are three-fold:

1. Fulfill the request made by the Board of Trustees in January, 2016 to the Commissioner's Office to perform a Program Review.
2. This comprehensive review seeks to address and incorporate the recommendations made by the Office of the Legislative Auditor in 2015.
3. Fulfill the intent language in the 2016 House Bill 2.

In their January 2016 meeting, The Utah College of Applied Technology Board of Trustees requested the Commissioner's Office perform a review of all UCAT courses and programs, prior to the September, 2016 meeting, assessing the significance of the accomplishments by students.

Additionally, the Utah Office of Legislative Auditor General recommended that UCAT report completion rates consistent with the significance of the accomplishments. Consequently, program graduates should not be mixed with less significant course completions. Also, program graduates counted in the completion rates should comprise an amount of student hours consistent with other programs. Secondly, the auditors recommended that UCAT ensure that credentials awarded by UCAT colleges represent a significant accomplishment by students.

The 2016 House Bill 2 intent language instructed UCAT to determine and adopt a clear policy to ensure that reporting of student completions, certificates, and upgrades are uniform across all campuses when they are reported to the Legislature. Additionally, House Bill 2 required UCAT to report to the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee separate and segregated data for each of the following categories: (1) certificate-seeking students, (2) occupational upgrade students, (3) other postsecondary students, and (4) secondary students.

This following summary addresses the recommendations and requirements of the Trustees, the Legislature and legislative auditors.

Program Review Process

The Office of the UCAT Commissioner thoroughly reviewed the programs, program certificates and courses offered by the eight colleges. The data from fiscal year 2015 was analyzed and stratified to provide a clear picture of the length of programs, certificates, job placement and industry validations of certificates.

The program review team visited colleges and met individually with college officers to solicit their input and recommendations on how to assess programs and courses. An Instructional Officer's workshop was convened to provide a collaborative and unified discussion on the consistent collection of data and the factors that determine the significance of the achievement by students. Specifically, the program review team analyzed the criteria that uniformly define a program certificate.

In addition to reviewing programs and program certificates, the Commissioner's Office analyzed a database of over 5,000 stand alone courses offered at the eight colleges. These courses meet a broad spectrum of occupational training from a day-long workshop for medical coders to a new course on solar technology for residential water-heaters. The review sought to validate that these course offerings met state statutes, UCAT policies and were mission-related.

Collaboratively, college Presidents, Instructional Officers, college administrators and the Commissioner's Office worked to perform the review, develop recommendations and fashion practices and policies that conform to legislative, audit and trustees recommendations.

Summary

Define the Significance of the Accomplishment by Students

The significance of completing a certificate at a UCAT college is demonstrated by:

- 1.) The ability of the student to be placed in a high-demand, industry-related job
- 2.) All programs are approved by the Council on Occupational Education
- 3.) The relevance, rigor and quality of each program is documented and validated by an Occupational Advisory Committees
- 4.) The comprehensive accountability standards each college must meet for COE accreditation.
- 5.) The length of the program; which is defined by industry, licensure statutes, accreditors and curriculum requirements, is a reflection of the time investment by the student as well as the educational resources of the college provided for the certificate

Job Placement

The best measurement of the significance of earning a certificate is **Job Placement**. Employment in high demand, good paying jobs is evidence of how the certificate is valued by industry. Each of the 8 colleges maintains strong relationships with industry representatives and regional employers. Managers, instructors and placement coordinators are active in industry associations, trade groups and have detailed knowledge of job opportunities in their regions. This industry participation directly results in a high percentage of UCAT students being placed in jobs

Council on Occupational Education Accreditation – Rigor and Relevance to Industry

Each program is required by COE to be validated by an Occupational Advisory Committee. Once a program has been endorsed by local industry, reviewed for compliance to required accreditation criteria, and vetted by the Board of Directors it is submitted to COE for approval.

All UCAT programs, by definition, are approved by the Council on Occupational Education (COE), which defines a program as:

“A combination of courses and related activities (e.g. laboratory activities and/or work-based learning activities) that lead to a credential and are offered by an institutions to develop competencies required for a specific occupation”.

Council on Occupational Education Policies Manual Amended June 30, 2016.

<http://www8.spinen.net/council-org/files/downloads/2016/07/2016-PR-Manual-AMENDED-6-30-2016b-w-Covers.pdf>

The completion, placement and licensure standards required by COE are rigorous and sanctioned by the U.S. Department of Education. The significance of the accomplishment of earning a certificate at one of the eight UCAT colleges is validated by:

1. Programs are evaluated semi-annually by the Occupational Advisory Committees (OAC). Employers insure the rigor and relevance of the curriculum, assessments and learning activities with recommendations for equipment, materials and hands-on skills acquisition necessary for job readiness.
2. Certificates reflect the most current, specific skills/requirements of regional employers. The value of certificates is validated by employers and consequently results in employment.
3. COE, in consultation with the US Department of Education, has set the placement benchmark at 70%. The following areas constitute placement under this benchmark: related employment, continued education, and military service. The eight UCAT colleges routinely exceed this benchmark, often with placement rates of 80-95%.
4. COE accountability standards require colleges to demonstrate appropriate admissions requirements; compliance with publication criteria; evidence of student advisement; collection of student data; distance education and work-based learning criteria; evidence of sufficient practice; supporting policies, procedures, plans, and evaluations; and competencies in health and safety, workplace relations, and academic competencies.

Program Length (Hours)

The program length is one of the measurements in assessing the significance of completing a certificate; *however it is not the primary factor*. Many components define the number of hours necessary to complete a certificate.

The number of hours required to complete a certificate is defined by instructional components: employers, curriculum, clinical hours, externship requirements, competency demonstrations and lab experience.

State licensing boards such as the Utah Bureau of Emergency Medical Services (U/BEMS) and the Department of Occupational and Professional Licensing (DOPL) dictate program length, for example: Emergency Medical Technician, Nursing, Real Estate Licensure, Cosmetology or Electrical Apprentice. National organizations such as the Commission on Accreditation for Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) or the Accreditation Commission on Education in Nursing (ACEN) prescribe both curriculum and clinical experience required for successful completion of a program.

The lengths of individual UCAT programs vary widely and can change from year-to-year, reflecting industry trends, updated technology or eliminating obsolete curriculum. The industry-prescribed

content, student outcomes, licensure, accreditation and state regulations equally contribute to determine the number of hours a student needs to successfully achieve competency.

To provide clarity and uniformity on the wide span of program lengths, the Program Review working group recommended that the certificate count be stratified in three categories:

Certificate Length Stratification

1. 900 Hours or More (Approximately 12 months or more to complete)
2. 600 Hours up to 899 Hours (Approximately 7 – 12 months to complete)
3. 599 Hours and Less (Less than 6 months to complete, approximately)

Summary of 2015 Certificates						
Length of Program In Hours	Adult Certificate Seekers	Secondary Students	Occupational Upgrade Students	Other Students	Total Number of Certificates	
900 Hours and Above	1420	40	22	21	1503	
600 Hours up to 899	806	140	14	7	967	
Less than 600 Hours	<u>3412</u>	<u>1236</u>	<u>395</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>5112</u>	
	<u>5,638</u>	<u>1,416</u>	<u>431</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>7,582</u>	

Review of Individual, Stand Alone Courses Offered at UCAT Colleges

In addition to reviewing UCAT programs, the Program Review team analyzed other course offerings at the eight campuses. Historical UCAT databases were utilized to review over 5,000 individual courses offered at UCAT colleges for the past 6 years.

In summary, this review revealed that stand alone courses provide high school students, adults and employers, specific, efficient and cost-effective training across all industry sectors. Stand alone courses are often components of larger COE-approved programs. Stand alone courses met both statutory and policy guidelines.

Observations and Recommendations of the Program Review Team

The significance of earning any UCAT certificate is that it leads to employment in a high demand field with improved wages. One key element to certificates is they are employer-driven and provide hands-on, industry relevant training. If employers value a certificate and hire graduates, then the significance of the accomplishment is that it leads directly to employment.

COE requires each member institution to have regular discussions with employers to validate the need for a program. This discussion frequently takes place in Occupational Advisory Committee meetings. Employers routinely hire UCAT graduates, effectively validating the value and relevance of the certificate.

Colleges Issue Certificates for COE-Approved Programs Only

The Program Review Team recommends that certificates should only be issued and reported for COE-approved programs. Any other training offered by a college should fall into the COE-defined category termed *Continuing Occupational Education*.

Policy Change: Policies 200 and 205 should be updated to reflect this change

Eliminate Occupational Skills Certificates Category

In FY 2015, UCAT added the new definition of Occupational Skills Certificates in Policy 200.

200.4 Definitions

4.4 Occupational Skills Certificate: An official credential issued to a student by a college registrar documenting that the student has completed a pre-defined course or set of courses approved as an Occupational Skills Certificate by the college board of directors in accordance with this policy. An Occupational Skills Certificate shall provide mastery of a set of competencies that are documented as needed by one or more Utah employers as specified in 200.6.6, and that are not already provided as or substantially similar to an approved college program certificate defined in 200.4.3.

<http://ucat.edu/site/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/200-2016-06-08-Edition-1.pdf>

It is the recommendation of the Program Review team that the category *Occupational Skills Certificates* be eliminated. The category leads to confusion; the term “certificate” should be reserved only for COE-approved programs.

Courses that are not a part of a COE-approved program fall under the COE definition of:

Continuing Occupational Education — Educational activities or experiences designed to assist in the development of knowledge and skills with the goal of maintaining one’s current professional occupation (as opposed to advancing one’s career). Participants in continuing education are assumed to have previously attained a basic level of education, training, or experience in the occupational area in which they are enrolling. These activities are not included in the institutional self-study, FTE calculation, or student achievement data collection, and are not required to be included on the COE approved program list. (See definition for Job Upgrade Training.)

Council on Occupational Education Policies Manual, page 66, Amended June 30, 2016.

<http://www8.spinenet/council-org/files/downloads/2016/07/2016-PR-Manual-AMENDED-6-30-2016b-w-Covers.pdf>

Continuing Occupational Education is included in aggregate UCAT enrollment data, but is not reported to COE.

In summary, UCAT colleges are uniquely suited to provide specialized occupational training. Utah employers require a broad spectrum of Continuing Occupational Education, such as Forklift Operator, QuickBooks or Hazardous Materials handling. UCAT colleges will continue to provide this critical mission-related training to serve the regional needs of students and employers.

Policy Change: Policies 200 and 205 should be updated to reflect this change

Using “Continuing Occupational Education” To Replace Occupational Upgrade Enrollment Category

UCAT policy defines an Occupational Upgrade Student in Policy 205:

205.5 Classification and Conditions of Student Enrollment

5.3 Occupational Upgrade Student: An individual enrolled at a UCAT college who is not a Secondary Student or Certificate-Seeking Student, is employed at the time of enrollment, and has indicated intent to upgrade job skills, increase job security, or receive training at the request of an employer. The enrollment period for an Occupational Upgrade Student shall be the duration of the course or courses in which he or she is scheduled, beginning with the first day of enrollment in a course and ending on the date of completion or withdrawal as defined in 205.6.1.3.

<http://ucat.edu/site/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/205-2016-06-08-Edition-1.pdf>

The team recommended using the COE term *Continuing Occupational Education* to describe mission-related training that meets industry needs, but is not part of a COE-approved program.

Policy Change: Policy 200 and Policy 205 should be updated to reflect this change

Program Certificate Seekers and Occupational Upgrade Certificate Seekers

Per the certificate chart on page 5, it was noted by the Program Review Team that certificates were awarded to some students in the Occupational Upgrade and Other categories. The team recommends that colleges should carefully consider how new students are coded, to alleviate this issue.

The team reaffirmed the language in UCAT Policy 205 regarding certificate seekers. Under the COE definition, adults enrolled in a COE-approved program are indeed *certificate-seekers*; thus they fall under the umbrella of a COE-approved program and follow COE accountability standards.

Annual Reporting Continuing Occupational Education

The Program Review team recommended that UCAT Annual Report should include a narrative section describing the importance of Continuing Occupational Education (without quantitative data) in workforce development across the State of Utah. The UCAT Annual Report could acknowledge that UCAT colleges provide diverse kinds of skills training for all industry sectors. This narrative section could refer to the mission-related Central Processing Technical, electrical code classes for Journeyman Electricians, test-prep classes, re-certification classes, Microsoft Office Suite, QuickBooks and spotlight courses that serve a cross-section of learners.

In summary, the Program Review team made the recommendation that UCAT Policies 200 and 205 be modified to reflect the clearly defined COE categories of Program Certificates and Continuing Occupational Education. The team further suggested that the Instructional Officers from the eight colleges continue discussions on best practices of individual courses.

Exhibit A

Request from the UCAT Board of Trustees

Advice from the Utah Office of the Legislative Auditor

2016 Utah House Bill 2 Intent Language

1. Request from January 2016 UCAT Board of Trustees meeting:

1) I move that we direct President Brems, the UCAT administrative staff, and the campus presidents, to increase emphasis on reporting specific completion rates as specified in our Policy 205 with the express goal of achieving a higher level of employer and student understanding of the significance of completions, and where applicable, the certificates awarded in each of our four enrollment categories.

2) I move that we direct President Brems and the UCAT administrative staff to complete an internal review of all UCAT courses and programs prior to the September, 2016 meeting assessing the significance of the accomplishments by students AND that a report be made to the Trustees in the September, 2016 meeting when FY 2016 data is submitted for approval.

3) I move that we direct President Brems, the UCAT administrative staff, and the campus presidents to develop a comprehensive UCAT placement policy for approval in the June, 2016 meeting to be used for assessing student placements beginning with Fiscal Year 2017. The new policy should include guidance to the campuses to enhance the independence and data validity concerns expressed in the legislative audit. The policy will provide for checks and balances currently available or attainable within existing financial constraints.

<http://ucat.edu/site/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/1.14.16-BOT-Meeting-Minutes-1.pdf>

2. Recommendations from November 2015 Legislative Audit Report:

We recommend that UCAT report completion rates consistent with the significance of the accomplishments. Consequently, program graduates should not be mixed with less significant course completions. Also, program graduates counted in the completion rates should comprise an amount of student hours consistent with other programs.

http://www.le.state.ut.us/AUDIT/15_11rpt.pdf; pg 28. Office of the Utah Legislative Auditor General)

We recommend that the UCAT Board of Trustees ensure that credentials awarded by UCAT campuses represent a significant accomplishment by students.

http://www.le.state.ut.us/AUDIT/15_11rpt.pdf; pg 29. Office of the Utah Legislative Auditor General)

3. 2016 House Bill 2 Intent Language:

The Legislature intends that the Utah College of Applied Technology determines and adopts a clear policy to ensure that reporting of student completions, certificates, and upgrades are uniform across all campuses when they are reported to the Legislature. The Legislature further intends that for the 2017 General Session, the Utah College of Applied Technology reports to the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee separate and segregated data for each of the following categories: (1) certificate-seeking students, (2) occupational upgrade students, (3) other postsecondary students, and (4) secondary students.

<https://le.utah.gov/~2016/bills/static/HB0002.html>



Subject:	Program/Course Approval and Reporting
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POLICY 200 RECOMMENDED CHANGES

~~4.4 — **Occupational Skills Certificate:** An official credential issued to a student by a college registrar documenting that the student has completed a pre-defined course or set of courses approved as an Occupational Skills Certificate by the college board of directors in accordance with this policy. An Occupational Skills Certificate shall provide mastery of a set of competencies that are documented as needed by one or more Utah employers as specified in 200.6.6, and that are not already provided as or substantially similar to an approved college program certificate defined in 200.4.3.~~

~~5.2.1 — **College Board of Directors Approval:** College programs and Occupational Skills Certificates, and substantive changes (as defined in 200.4.5) to approved programs and Occupational Skills Certificates, shall be approved by the college board of directors based on the requirements of 200.6. For programs that are less than 900 hours and are not eligible for federal financial aid, and for Occupational Skills Certificates, final approval is delegated to the college board, and the programs or Occupational Skills Certificates may be implemented immediately upon college board and any required accreditation approval.~~

5.2.1 College Board Approval Documentation: For programs, Occupational Skills Certificates, and substantive changes approved by the college board of directors, documentation specified in 200.7 shall be forwarded to the UCAT Commissioner for review and inclusion in UCAT program inventories.

6.10 Program/Certificate Information: The program certificate, **Occupational Skills Certificate**, and/or accompanying transcript for each program/certificate shall include a program/certificate title and sufficient detail such that a prospective employer or others viewing it will understand what the student accomplished in earning the certificate. Certificates and transcripts shall also include the college affiliation as a UCAT college.



Subject:	Student Enrollment and Completion Reporting
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POLICY 205 RECOMMENDED CHANGES

205.5 Classification and Conditions of Student Enrollment

~~5.3 — **Occupational Upgrade Student:** An individual enrolled at a UCAT college who is not a Secondary Student or Certificate Seeking Student, is employed at the time of enrollment, and has indicated intent to upgrade job skills, increase job security, or receive training at the request of an employer. The enrollment period for an Occupational Upgrade Student shall be the duration of the course or courses in which he or she is scheduled, beginning with the first day of enrollment in a course and ending on the date of completion or withdrawal as defined in 205.6.1.3.~~

5.3 Continuing Occupational Education Student: An individual enrolled at a UCAT College in courses, approved by college Instructional Officer, providing career and technical training that do not lead to a credential (as defined in the Council on Occupational Education, Policies Manual, updated 06-30-2016). Participants in continuing education may have previously attained a basic level of education, training, or experience in the occupational area in which they are enrolling. These activities are not included in the institutional self-study, FTE calculation, or student achievement data collection, and are not required to be included on the COE approved program list. Continuing Occupational Education courses are offered in response to industry demand, evidenced by correspondence of one or more regional employers. Colleges may choose to acknowledge the course completion in a student's transcript or through written documentation of recognition of technical training.

7.1 Program Certificate: A Program Certificate as defined in Policy 200.4.3 may be issued to any student in any enrollment category specified in 205.5 who qualifies for the certificate. For students issued more than one Program Certificate, each award shall be reported for the qualifying student. ~~A credential awarded for a program that has been approved in accordance with 200.4.1 and is reported as an occupational upgrade program for accreditation purposes is considered a Program Certificate.~~

~~7.2 — **Occupational Skills Certificate:** An Occupational Skills Certificate as defined in Policy 200.4.4 may be issued to any Secondary, Occupational Upgrade, or Other Post-secondary student who qualifies for the certificate.~~

~~7.3 — **Utah Certificate Attainment Reporting:** Program Certificates and Occupational Skills Certificates 60 hours or more in length shall each be identified and reported for the Utah goal set forth in Senate Concurrent Resolution 5 (SCR 5), 2013 General Legislative Session, that 66% of Utah's adults will hold a postsecondary degree or certificate by the year 2020.~~