

KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS



Program Alignment Handbook

★ LEADING HIGHER EDUCATION ★

Program Alignment Process Flowchart

Research **KBOR Staff**
KBOR staff identifies programs for alignment, locates existing college programs and researches program standards and industry credentials

Phase I **Business & Industry (B&I) Committee**
KBOR Staff seeks nominations of business and industry leaders for the committee to:

- define competencies and standards
- recommend appropriate industry-based certifications and accreditation
- identify future projections of specific occupations for graduates
- recommend equipment, facilities, software, instructor qualifications and certifications

Phase II **State Faculty Committee**
Colleges nominate faculty members to serve on the State Faculty Committee to establish:

- Overall program title and description
- common courses
- appropriate courses for potential high school articulation
- program exit points and maximum program length
- criteria for the alignment map

Alignment Map Review **College Presidents**
The alignment map is distributed to College Presidents for a 10-day formal comment period. All comments are reported to the State B&I and Faculty Committees.

Phase III **TEA and KBOR Approval**
• New program structure and curriculum are approved by the Technical Education Authority (TEA) and the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR)

Phase IV **Implementation by Institutions**

- Colleges enter the new program into Kansas Higher Education Database System
- Revisions are made to institutional catalogs
- New program structure and courses are implemented at institutions within 1 year
- Faculty document issues which may require revision

Phase V **Revision**

- Recommended revisions are submitted by various stakeholders – B&I Committee, State Faculty Committee, program accrediting bodies, etc.
- Revisions are subject to program alignment process established in the KBOR policy.

What is Program Alignment?

To enhance technical education in our state, the Post-Secondary Technical Education Authority (TEA) initiated the alignment of specific technical programs. This project is driven by the needs of business and industry in the state. With participation by program advisory committee members from our colleges, business leaders are convened by the Kansas Department of Commerce and the Kansas Board of Regents to define and map a preferred outcome for an occupational category.

The Alignment Process has four (4) primary objectives:

1. Allow business and industry to identify value-added exit points within programs
2. Support student acquisition of nationally recognized third-party industry credentials
3. Identify common courses that can serve as a bridge for articulation opportunities with K-12
4. Decrease the variability in program length

Program Alignment Phases

Phase 1—Research, Business and Industry Engagement

1. Research and compile existing business and industry standards (competency/tasks lists, program certification requirements, industry-endorsed credentials, etc.)
2. Establish state-wide Business and Industry (B&I) committee for each program area to:
 - define competencies and standards for the program area
 - recommend appropriate industry-based certifications and program accreditation
 - identify future projections of specific occupations for the graduates
 - recommend equipment, facilities, software, instructor qualifications, certifications, etc.

State Business and Industry (B&I) committees are established specifically for each program area and include employers representing the industry or occupations and, where appropriate, representatives of trade or professional organizations. The TEA is focused on delivering outcomes to be utilized statewide; therefore, every effort is made to select members that provide for geographic differences within an occupational area.

A list of potential members is generated with input from local postsecondary institutions (representing local advisory committees), members of the TEA, industry member organizations, state staff and other stakeholders. State business and industry committees (B&I) contribute to an overall plan for program improvement.

Business and Industry (B&I) committees:

- Create a commitment to the technical education system by interest groups who organize support
- Provide a working forum for educators and employers to discuss human resource development
- Assist in resolving issues including specific academic and functional work skills
- Contribute to the configuration and validation of existing skill inventories
- Define the level of knowledge and skills required for job entry, retention, or career advancement
- Participate in a viable network to share curriculum information
- Expand the industry and education partnership
- Provide a larger frame of reference by integrating private sector input for local advisory committees

Phase 2—Faculty Engagement and Aligning Curriculum with Certifications

1. Establish State Faculty Committee
2. Utilizing the industry standards, faculty committee reaches consensus on:
 - Overall program title and program description
 - Common courses
 - Appropriate courses for potential high school articulation
 - Maximum program length
 - Potential “value-added” exit points
 - Criteria for the alignment map

Local postsecondary institutions nominate faculty members to serve on the State Faculty Committee, which is charged with aligning the industry standards with course curriculum. Some programs may have a core that is the same for nearly all regions and all institutions, and some program areas may be so regionally specific that a common core may consist of only a few common courses. Aligned programs also include some flexibility for courses to reflect additional regional emphasis in course content and delivery. These differences are determined collaboratively with input from both the state B&I committee and the State Faculty Committee.

Alignment Map Review by College Presidents

The alignment map is distributed to College Presidents for a 10-day formal comment period. All comments are reported to the State B&I and Faculty Committees. If the alignment map receives no comments, the alignment proceeds to the TEA and KBOR approval process.

Phase 3—Approval of the New Program Structure and Curriculum

- The alignment undergoes the TEA and KBOR approval process as established in KBOR policy.

Phase 4—Implementation by Institutions

- Colleges enter the new program structure and courses into Kansas Higher Education Database System (KHEDS)
- Revisions are made to institutional catalogs
- New program structure and courses are implemented at institutions within 1 year
- Faculty document issues which may require revision—structure, content, etc.

As soon as the alignment is approved, the colleges complete local activities necessary to implement any program modification and changes in existing programs to meet the agreed upon requirements of the newly aligned technical program. During the implementation year, instructors note and document any issues or difficulties with the content and/or delivery of the aligned program.

Phase 5— Revision Process

- Recommended revisions are submitted by various stakeholders – B&I Committee, State Faculty Committee, program accrediting bodies, etc.
- Revisions are subject to program alignment process established in the KBOR policy.

What is Aligned in a Technical Education Program?

1. Overall program title and program description
2. Program Common Courses
 - Course title
 - Course credit hours
 - Course description
 - Course competencies
3. Program length – maximum total credit hours
4. “Value-added” exit points
5. Accrediting bodies and/or certifications (as identified by the B&I Committee)

What is NOT Aligned in a Technical Education Program?

1. Configuration of credit hours (lecture/lab) may vary to meet the needs of the individual colleges, if the competencies are met, and the credit value is the same
2. Delivery modes (online, face-to-face, 8-week sessions, 16-week sessions, etc.)
3. Course order (the college must meet the established requirements within each certificate level)
4. Course numbers
5. Order of addressing competencies within a course
6. General education courses
7. Institutional flexibility courses
8. Learning and assessment activities
9. Textbooks

Specific Alignment Guidelines

Associate of Applied Science Degree Program – An A.A.S. program, according to Kansas Board of Regents policy, will be a credit hour range of 60-68 credit hours, unless otherwise determined by accrediting bodies or the alignment process.

Certificate Programs – Technical education certificate programs can include any of the following to meet industry request for multiple exit points:

- Certificate A – 16-29 credit hours
- Certificate B – 30-44 credit hours
- Certificate C – 45-59 credit hours

At each certificate level, a determination will be made as to whether there is “value-added” in allowing for additional certificate levels. The framework for “value-added” exit points includes:

- An initial exit point is established based on the best estimate of the amount of instruction required for a student to acquire the competencies necessary to attain entry-level employment, where no credential exists.
- Other agreed upon program exit points are then identified based on additional certifications and/or competencies (beyond the entry-level) valued and identified by business and industry (additional certification/nice to have skills that increase employment opportunity/security).

Common courses are common to all institutions offering the program with the total number of credit hours in the core being the same and will transfer among all institutions offering the program. **Common courses ARE required to have the same course title, description, competencies, and objectives** at each of the affiliated institutions where the aligned program is offered. Institutional course syllabi for these courses will include all four components. Institutions may include additional competencies and/or objectives for these courses.

For example – College A course syllabus for “Brakes 1” will include the same information (course title, description, competencies, and objectives) as College B uses in their “Brakes 1” course syllabus. However, College A’s syllabus may also include additional competencies and objectives that are not identical to the additional competencies and objectives that College B uses in their syllabus.

Support Courses – Agreed upon support courses are **NOT required to have the same identical title, description and objectives** at each of the affiliated institutions. Only the agreed upon **competencies** (which may be worded differently at the local level) **need to be included** along with any already established institutional competencies for each of the support courses.

For example: “Safety Orientation (OSHA 10)” (for a program going through alignment) may have two competencies identified by the State Faculty Committee. Institutions with the aligned program will need to assure that these two competencies are covered in the “Safety Orientation (OSHA 10)” (titles may differ), but do not need to use this specific wording.

KBOR must be able to look at a course syllabus from any of the aligned programs at the affiliated institutions and determine that it meets the competency requirements.

General Education Courses are required for an A.A.S. degree with a minimum of 15 credit hours – if an individual college requires more than 15 credits, the extra credit hours can be part of that college’s institutional flexibility component.

Institutional Flexibility Courses can be added to an individual college’s program up to the aligned maximum program length.

Sample Program Alignment Map – Kansas Board of Regents

CIP: ##.####

Year

KBOR Approval Date

Prerequisites

Will be aligned if required for program

Exit Point + Industry Credential

(if one exists)

Certificate Level

Maximum # Credit Hours

Additional “Value Added”) Exit Point

(if one exists)

Certificate Level

Maximum # Credit Hours

Additional Levels (if they exist)

Additional General Education

(Minimum – 15 credit hours)

A.A.S. Degree

Maximum # Credit Hours + Industry Credentials for State Funding

Required Courses within Program

| <u>Common Courses</u> | <u># credits</u> |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Course Title | # credits |
| Course Title | # credits |
| Course Title | # credits |
| Etc. | |

Course list sequence has no implication on course scheduling by colleges.

Institutions may add additional competencies based on local demand.

Notes

Specifics pertaining to “Sample” program:

Terms & Definitions Associated with Program Alignment

| <i>Term</i> | <i>Definition</i> |
|---|---|
| Articulation Agreement | An articulation agreement is an officially approved agreement that allows for a smooth transition of coursework between schools. It provides students with a non-duplicative sequence of progressive achievement leading to technical skill proficiency, a credential, a certificate or a degree and is linked through credit transfer agreements between the institutions. |
| Certificate Levels | Community and technical colleges may offer three types of certificates based upon the number of credit hours required of the student. A Career and Technical Education Certificate may be granted for programs of instruction that are less than 60 semester hours in length but more than 15 semester hours. All certificate programs require approval by the Kansas Board of Regents and require the following credit hour limits: Certificate A – 16-29 credit hours, Certificate B – 30-44 credit hours, and Certificate C – 45-59 credit hours. |
| Common Courses | Common courses in an aligned program offer the same content and level of instruction as a course offered by another institution. Common courses have a common title, credit hours, description and competencies. |
| Core Competencies | Core competencies are a set of non-negotiable skills for each aligned program. These competencies are determined by the B&I committee and approved by KBOR. Obtaining core competencies in a program of study ensures employability of the program’s completers and sets a universal standard across all colleges. |
| Credit Hour | Credit for lecture, laboratory, and other classes. Each college shall record one (1) semester hour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture - if a student made satisfactory progress in the class of at least 750 minutes of class instruction, plus time allocated for a final exam. • Laboratory - if a student made satisfactory progress in the class of at least 1,125 minutes. • On-the-job training, internship, or clinical experience in health occupations – if a student completes a minimum of 2,700 minutes of training. • Distance education semester hours are assigned by the college based on the amount of time needed to achieve the course objectives in a face-to-face format. |
| Industry-Recognized Third-Party Credential | An industry-recognized credential represents a declaration that an individual has met nationally recognized standards in a particular industry and culminates in the awarding of a certification or other credential commonly recognized in that industry. |
| Industry Standard | A voluntary, industry-developed document that establishes requirements for products, practices, or operations. |
| Programmatic Accreditation | Programmatic accreditation normally applies to programs, departments, or schools that are parts of an institution. Programmatic accrediting agencies review units within an institution of higher education that is accredited by one of the regional accrediting agencies. However, certain accrediting agencies also accredit professional schools and other specialized or vocational institutions of higher education that are freestanding in their operations. |
| Support Courses | Support courses ARE NOT required to have the same identical title, description, competencies and objectives at each of the affiliated institutions. Only the agreed upon competencies (which may be worded differently at the local level) need to be included along with any already established institutional competencies for each of the support courses. KBOR staff must be able to look at a course syllabus from any of the aligned programs at the affiliated institutions and determine that it meets the competency requirements for the agreed upon support courses. |
| Value-Added Exit Point | An initial exit point is established based on the best estimate of the amount of instruction required for a student to acquire the competencies necessary to attain entry-level employment, where no credential exists. Other agreed upon program exit points are then identified based on additional certifications and/or competencies (beyond the entry-level) valued and identified by business and industry (additional certification/nice to have skills that increase employment opportunity/security). |