# ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION PLANNING AND COORDINATION ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

**CHAPTER 300-2-1 PROGRAM REVIEW**

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| NOTE: Proposed additions appear red text. The current version of the Administrative Code is available at <http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/hged/300-2-1.pdf> | | |

# 300-2-1-.11 [[NOTE: Sections on for-credit non-degree certificates underlined below will be incorporated into 300-2-1.06 on Extensions and Alterations]]

# [MOVE to 300-2-1.06 Review of For-Credit Non-Degree Programs at Public Postsecondary Institutions

* + - 1. Purpose: The purpose of reviewing for-credit non-degree programs is to ensure that the Commission maintains an accurate and comprehensive list of program offerings in its Academic Program Inventory. In addition, reviewing non-degree offerings helps to ensure proper stewardship of state resources in the delivery of academic programs.
      2. Commission Responsibility: The Commission’s responsibilities for data collection and research necessitate a comprehensive inventory of for-credit program offerings, including non-degree programs. For-credit non-degree programs also fall under the Commission’s responsibility to consider reasonable extensions and alterations of existing programs of study, since it is assumed that institutions will develop and deliver new non-degree programs using existing resources, including personnel, equipment, facilities, and library resources.
      3. Scope and Definitions: The Commission’s purview includes non-degree programs offered for academic credit, specifically certificates at the following degree designations as recognized by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS):
         1. Level 1, Short-term certificate (STC): for-credit program consisting of at least six (6) but no more than twenty-nine (29) semester hours of undergraduate coursework. STCs may be offered by all degree-granting postsecondary institutions.
         2. Level 6, Post-baccalaureate certificate: for-credit program consisting of at least six (6) semester hours of graduate coursework. Post-baccalaureate certificates can only be offered by master’s-granting and doctoral-granting institutions. Most graduate certificates fall into the post-baccalaureate classification.
         3. Level 8, Post-master’s certificate: for-credit program consisting of at least six (6) hours of coursework designed specifically for those already holding master’s degrees. Post-master’s certificates can only be offered by master’s-granting and doctoral-granting institutions, and they are typically seen in nursing or other fields where it is common for master’s degree holders to seek additional specialized training.
      4. Prior Notification of Updates to For-Credit Non-Degree Program Offerings
         1. Except in cases specified below, new for-credit non-degree program offerings will not require Commission approval, only prior notification. Institutions may advertise new non-degree programs once notification is received by ACHE staff, but institutions should not begin delivering the new non-degree programs until after formal notification has been made to the Commission.
         2. Commission approval may be required for new for-credit non-degree programs in the following circumstances:

If a proposed for-credit non-degree program represents a significant departure from existing offerings such that it requires substantive change approval by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), ACHE staff may request a summary of proposed revenue and expenditures to determine whether the proposed non-degree program will require Commission approval as a substantive extension of existing offerings.

~~If an institution seeks to have a for-credit non-degree program designated as a “micro-credential,” that program will need approval from the Commission as meeting the criteria outlined below.~~

If an institution does not comply with prior notification of for-credit non-degree offerings, ACHE staff may recommend that the Commission require approval for all future for-credit non-degree offerings until the institution reestablishes a habit of compliance.

* + - * 1. Changes to existing for-credit non-degree programs also require prior notification. These include changes in program title, CIP code, status, and/or total credits, or other changes that must be reflected in the Academic Program Inventory. Minor changes in curriculum for non-degree programs, including course changes or other changes that are not reflected in the Academic Program Inventory, do not require notification to the Commission. ]

**[NOTE: Proposed new section below on Micro-Credential Designation was the primary focus of the discussion on 12/1/22]**

**300-2-1-.11 Micro-Credential Designation**

* + - 1. Micro-Credential Designation
         1. The designation of “micro-credential” is intended to identify those for-credit non-degree programs that prepare students with skills and competencies that are valued by industry and promote gainful employment.
         2. An institution may request that a new or existing for-credit non-degree program be designated as a micro-credential if it meets all of the following criteria:

The program must consist of ~~or articulate to~~ at least six (6) semester hours of academic credit.

The program must prepare students with industry-validated competencies as demonstrated through an embedded industry-recognized certification, through structured work-based learning, or through alignment with nationally recognized industry standards.

The program’s outcomes must clearly align with an occupation recognized on the Statewide In-Demand Occupations List or with an emerging industry important to state or regional growth.

The program must be delivered in a way that is accessible to working professionals and other non-traditional students.

* + - * 1. Designation as a micro-credential will require approval by the Commission, and once approved, it will be reflected in the award nomenclature associated with the program in the Academic Program Inventory.
        2. If a request for micro-credential designation is not approved, the proposing institution may still deliver the for-credit non-degree program without the designation.

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**Statutory Authority:** Code of Ala. 1975, §§16-5-7 and 16-5-8.

**History: New Rule:** Filed XXX