**Section 1050.30 Criteria for Approval**

The Board of Higher Education will evaluate new units of instruction, research or public service by applying the following criteria:

a) Criteria Applicable to All Units of Instruction, Research and Public Service

1) Mission and Objectives

A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university.

B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.

2) Academic Control

The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.

3) Faculty and Staff

A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met.

B) The academic preparation and experience of the faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed.

i) Faculty providing undergraduate general education coursework shall possess, at a minimum, a master's degree with 18 graduate hours appropriate to the academic field or discipline in which they are teaching.

ii) Faculty engaged in providing technical and career coursework at the associate degree level shall possess, at a minimum, at least 2,000 hours of work experience and the appropriate recognized credential depending on the specific field.

iii) Faculty teaching in a baccalaureate degree program shall have, at a minimum, a master's degree in the field of instruction.

iv) Faculty teaching in a graduate program shall have a doctorate or terminal degree in the field of instruction.

v) Exceptions may be made by the Board for professional experience, equivalent training and other qualifications; however, except in extraordinary circumstances, these should prove the exception and not the rule in meeting faculty qualification requirements.

C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation.

D) Faculty to student ratios and full time faculty to part time faculty ratios shall be factors in determining appropriate provision of qualified faculty. Institutions shall have policies in place that serve to ensure equivalency of instruction and program delivery across faculty members, including methods of measuring equivalency of student learning outcomes across faculty.

E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.

4) Support Services

A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support high quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained.

B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service.

C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.

5) Financial

A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained.

B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based upon supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.

6) Statewide Needs and Priorities

A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois.

B) The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.

b) Criteria Applicable Only to Units of Instruction

1) Curriculum

A) The caliber and content of the curriculum must assure that the objectives of the unit of instruction will be achieved.

B) The breadth and depth of the curriculum must be consistent with what the title of the unit of instruction implies.

C) The admission and graduation requirements for the unit of instruction must be consistent with the stated objectives of the unit of instruction.

D) Institutions must show the capacity to develop, deliver and support academic programs. Procedures and policies that will assure the effective design, conduct and evaluation of the degree program under the academic control of the institution must be developed. Assessment plans must demonstrate that the institution has identified clear and appropriate program and student learning goals and has defined appropriate outcomes. Appropriate data must be collected and may be requested by the Board to show the level of student learning that has occurred as a result of participation in the institution's programs of study.

E) Appropriate steps shall be taken to ensure that programmatic accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit will be sought in a reasonable amount of time and will be maintained throughout the life of the program.

F) Degree programs must meet the following credit hour requirements:

i) Associate degree requires at least 60 semester credit hours or 90 quarter credit hours.

ii) Baccalaureate degree requires at least 120 semester credit hours or 180 quarter credit hours and at least 40 semester credit hours (60 quarter credit hours) in upper-division courses.

iii) Master's degree requires at least 30 semester credit hours or 45 quarter credit hours of appropriate post-baccalaureate coursework.

iv) Doctor's degree – Professional Practice requires the completion of a program providing the knowledge and skills for the recognition, credential or license required for professional practice; at least 60 semester hours of postsecondary credit required for admission to the program; and a total of at least six academic years of college work to complete the degree program, including prior required postsecondary work plus the length of the professional program itself.

v) Doctor's degree – Research and Scholarship requires the completion of an organized program of study beyond the master's level. The program shall demonstrate full understanding of the level and range of doctoral scholarship; the function of a dissertation and its defense based on original research, or the planning and execution of an original project demonstrating substantial artistic or scholarly achievement; the nature of comprehensive examination; and other standards commonly held for these degrees; at least 2 full time years of advanced academic coursework beyond the master's degree; and an independent performance of basic or applied research at the level of the professional scholar, typically a dissertation, or to perform independently the work of a profession that involves the highest levels of knowledge and expertise.

G) Provision must be made for guidance and counseling of students, evaluations of student performance, continuous monitoring of progress of students toward their degree objectives and appropriate academic record keeping.

H) Success in student progression and graduation across all existing approved programs, and success rates in programs preparing students for certification and licensure, shall be consistent with expectations in higher education and the appropriate related field of study. At a minimum the Board shall consider these factors based on results for similar institutions.

i) Graduation rates, certificate and degree completion rates, retention rates, and pass rates for licensure and certification aligned with thresholds set by State or national regulatory bodies.

ii) The success rate shall be, at a minimum, higher than those of the lowest quartile of these measures for similar Illinois institutions defined as open versus competitive enrollment institutions, and primarily associate versus primarily baccalaureate granting institutions. Exceptions may be made to the lowest quartile if an institution is above the national average for these measures using the same comparison categories of institutions.

I) Additional student success measures shall be considered in the review of applications for authorization. The Board shall establish minimum rates of success based on results for similar institutions.

i) At a minimum, these data shall include student loan default rates, student indebtedness rates, job placement rates, student learning measures and other success indicators.

ii) The success rate shall be, at a minimum, higher than those of the lowest quartile of these measures for similar Illinois institutions defined as open versus competitive enrollment institutions, and primarily associate versus primarily baccalaureate granting institutions. Exceptions may be made to the lowest quartile if an institution is above the national average for these measures using the same comparison categories of institutions.

J) Requirements for Technologically Mediated Instruction Offered at a Distance. In addition to meeting other requirements in this Part, programs offered through electronically mediated distance learning must, at a minimum, meet the following requirements:

i) The institution assures adequacy of technical and physical plant facilities, including appropriate staffing and technical assistance, to support its electronically offered programs.

ii) The institution provides students, faculty and staff with effective technical support and training for each educational technology hardware, software and delivery system required in a program. The institution provides adequate technical support to ensure students are able to complete coursework and make steady progress in their programs.

iii) Appropriate measures for security of systems and adequacy of support are maintained. The selection of technologies is based on appropriateness for the students, faculty and curriculum.

iv) Faculty are full participants in decisions regarding curricula and program oversight.

v) Demonstration of student learning and program outcomes are appropriate to the field and degree level and consistent regardless of program delivery method.

vi) Appropriate admission processes, policies and assessments are used to ensure that students are capable of succeeding in an on-line learning environment. Students shall be adequately informed of the nature and expectations of on-line learning.

vii) Assessments of student learning, especially exams, take place in circumstances that include definite student identification and assurance of the integrity of student work.

viii) Assessment of electronically offered programs by the institution occurs in the context of the regular evaluation of all academic programs.

2) Program Information

A) The information the institution provides for students and the public shall include the following:

i) An accurate description of the unit of instruction, including its objectives, length and residency requirements if any;

ii) Schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the unit of instruction, and cancellation and refund policies;

iii) Student rights and responsibilities;

iv) A statement regarding the transferability of college credits, including the fact that the decision to accept transfer credits is determined by the receiving institutions;

v) A statement as to how the institution will advise students on the nature of the transfer process, including the importance of consulting with institutions to which the student may seek to transfer;

vi) Evidence of arrangements for the transfer of courses or credits or both to institutional counterparts, when these arrangements exist; these arrangements are also known as articulation agreements;

vii) A statement of the institution's most recent graduation rates and the number of graduates and enrollments as provided by the institution to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and any submissions of data to satisfy Board reporting requirements; and

viii) Other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll.

B) The information listed in subsection (b)(2)(A) shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment and shall be included in the institution's catalog of programs.

3) Accreditation and Licensure

Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.

c) Institutions Exempt from Approval

1) Institutions offering a Board approved degree program at another site within the same region shall not be required to apply for additional Board approval.

2) Institutions offering a degree program at the University Center of Lake County or the Quad-Cities Graduate Center shall not be required to apply for additional Board approval when offering degree programs approved for their home campus. For these institutions, center approval is required and the center shall be treated as part of their home campus, provided the center has notified the Board of its approval of the new degree program.

3) Institutions offering a Board approved degree program through mediated instruction shall not be required to apply for additional Board approval.

4) Institutions offering temporary programs meeting the following criteria shall not be required to apply for Board approval:

A) The unit of instruction is approved for offering in-region, and the academic standards of the in-region unit are maintained at the out-of-region site; and

B) The out-of-region unit of instruction is offered under contract to a single business, service organization, or government agency and enrollment is restricted to employees of the contracting business, employees or members of the organization or agency, or, in the case of a regional office of education, to the employees of public school districts within the region; and

C) The contractual arrangement assures that the out-of-region unit of instruction is self-supporting; that is, no State resources are required to support it; and

D) The out-of-region unit of instruction is offered to a single group of entering students for a single cycle not to exceed three years. Should the institution wish to continue the unit of instruction at the out-of-region site beyond the single cycle, the institution must submit an application for Board of Higher Education approval.

5) Additional Board approval is not required for Board approved institutions offering:

A) Programs or courses on federal military bases exclusively to base personnel and their family members;

B) Clinical or practice sites that are utilized as a part of Board approved degree programs;

C) Dual credit courses to Illinois high school students. This does not exclude institutions from annual reporting and evidence of compliance with the Dual Credit Quality Act [110 ILCS 27]; or

D) Programs or courses inside public correctional facilities.

(Source: Amended at 42 Ill. Reg. 120, effective December 19, 2017)