

1007.331 Site-determined associate in applied science and associate in science degree access.—

- (1) Any career center that offers one or more associate in applied science or associate in science degree programs must maintain an open-door admission policy for associate-level degree programs and workforce education programs.
- (2) A career center may not terminate its existing programs as a result of being authorized to offer one or more associate in applied science or associate in science degree programs.
- (3) A career center may:
 - (a) Offer associate in applied science or associate in science degree programs through formal agreements between the local Florida College System institution and other accredited postsecondary educational institutions pursuant to s. 1007.22.
 - (b) Establish an associate in applied science or associate in science degree program for purposes of meeting district, regional, or statewide workforce needs if approved by the State Board of Education under this section, beginning July 1, 2024.
- (4) The approval process for associate in applied science or associate in science degree programs must require:
 - (a) Each career center to submit a notice of its intent to propose an associate in applied science or associate in science degree program to the Division of Career and Adult Education at least 100 days before the submission of its proposal under paragraph (d). The notice must include a brief description of the program, the workforce demand and unmet need for graduates of the program to include evidence from entities independent of the institution, the geographic region to be served, and an estimated timeframe for implementation. Notices of intent may be submitted by a career center at any time throughout the year. The notice must also include evidence that the career center engaged in need, demand, and impact discussions with one or more Florida College System institutions and other accredited postsecondary education providers in its service district.
 - (b) The Division of Career and Adult Education to forward the notice of intent to the Chancellor of the Florida College System within 10 business days after receiving such notice. State colleges shall have 60 days following receipt of the notice by the Chancellor of the Florida College System to submit objections to the proposed new program or submit an alternative proposal to offer the associate in applied science or associate in science degree program. Objections or alternative proposals must be submitted to the Division of Career and Adult Education and must be considered by the State Board of Education in making its decision to approve or deny a career center's proposal.

(c) An alternative proposal submitted by a Florida College System institution or private college to address all of the following:

1. The extent to which the workforce demand and unmet need described in the notice of intent will be met.
2. The extent to which students will be able to complete the degree in the geographic region proposed to be served by the career center.
3. The level of financial commitment of the Florida College System institution to the development, implementation, and maintenance of the specified degree program, including timelines.
4. The extent to which faculty at both the career center and the Florida College System institution will collaborate in the development and offering of the curriculum.
5. The ability of the career center and the Florida College System institution to develop and approve the curriculum for the specified degree program within 6 months after an agreement between the career center and Florida College System institution is signed.
6. The extent to which the student may incur additional costs above what the student would expect to incur if the program were offered by the career center.

(d) Each proposal submitted by a career center to, at a minimum, include all of the following:

1. A description of the planning process and timeline for implementation.
2. An analysis of workforce demand and unmet need for graduates of the program on a district, regional, or statewide basis, as appropriate, including evidence from entities independent of the institution.
3. Identification of the facilities, equipment, and library and academic resources that will be used to deliver the program.
4. The program cost analysis of creating a new associate in applied science or associate in science degree when compared to alternative proposals and other program delivery options.
5. The program's admission requirements, academic content, curriculum, faculty credentials, student-to-teacher ratios, and accreditation plan.
6. The program's enrollment projections and funding requirements.
7. A plan of action if the program is terminated.

(e) The Division of Career and Adult Education to review the proposal, notify the career center in writing of any deficiencies within 30 days following receipt of the proposal, and provide the career center with an opportunity to correct the deficiencies. Within 45 days following receipt of a completed proposal by the Division of Career and Adult Education, the Commissioner of Education shall recommend approval or disapproval of the proposal to the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education shall consider such recommendation, the proposal, and any objections or alternative proposals at its next meeting. If the State Board of Education rejects the career center's proposal, it must provide the career center with written reasons for that determination.

(f) The career center to obtain from the Council on Occupational Education accreditation as an associate in applied science or associate in science degree-granting institution if approved by the State Board of Education to offer its first associate in applied science or associate in science degree program.

(g) The career center to notify the Council on Occupational Education of any subsequent degree programs that are approved by the State Board of Education and to comply with the council's required substantive change protocols for accreditation purposes.

(h) The career center to annually, and upon request of the State Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, the Chancellor of the Division of Career and Adult Education, or the Legislature, report its status using the following performance and compliance indicators:

1. Obtaining and maintaining Council on Occupational Education accreditation;
2. Maintaining qualified faculty and institutional resources;
3. Maintaining enrollment in previously approved programs;
4. Managing fiscal resources appropriately;
5. Complying with the primary mission and responsibility requirements in subsections (2) and (3); and
6. Other indicators of success, including program completions, placements, and surveys of graduates and employers.

The State Board of Education may, upon review of the performance and compliance indicators, require a career center to modify or terminate an associate in applied science or associate in science degree program authorized under this section.

(5) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to prescribe format and content requirements and submission procedures for notices of intent, proposals, alternative proposals, and compliance reviews under subsection (4).

History.—s. 28, ch. 2023-81.