Act on RCBD Policy Element Recommendations & Amendments to Board Policy

Background

In response to national conversations around degree affordability, workforce alignment, and time to completion, the Kansas Board of Regents has been exploring the development of Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degrees (RCBDs). These programs are designed to maintain the academic rigor and learning outcomes of a traditional bachelor's degree while offering a more efficient pathway for students.

To support this work, the Board Academic Affairs Standing Committee (BAASC) charged the RCBD Work Group with developing policy element recommendations to inform a potential pilot. The work group, composed of representatives from two-year and four-year institutions, met regularly from Fall 2025 through Spring 2026 and served in an advisory capacity to develop actionable, system-aligned recommendations grounded in Higher Learning Commission (HLC) guidance and informed by national best practices.

Throughout this process, the work group focused on balancing institutional flexibility with clear expectations to ensure academic quality, transparency, and alignment with workforce needs. The group also considered implications for transfer, accreditation, student communication, and systemwide consistency.

Discussion

The proposed policy elements are intended to establish a structured pilot framework that allows institutions to explore innovative degree design while maintaining alignment with Board policy, accreditation expectations, and the Systemwide General Education Framework. The recommendations reflect a comprehensive approach, addressing key areas such as total credit hours, general education, institutional requirements, approval processes, student pathways, and annual reporting.

Importantly, the proposed framework positions the Board to monitor implementation and outcomes over time through a provisional approval period and required annual reporting. This approach allows for thoughtful evaluation of program effectiveness and informs future Board decisions regarding continuation, expansion, or modification of RCBD offerings.

The RCBD Work Group's recommendations were developed through a collaborative process and reflect broad institutional input. The recommendations are presented for BAASC consideration to inform next steps in advancing a potential pilot policy.

Recommendation

Board staff recommends approval of the RCBD recommendations and the updated policy, as revised to align with the RCBD pilot recommendations.

Policy Element Recommendation for BAASC

The RCBD Work Group was charged by BAASC to thoughtfully develop policy elements to inform a Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree (RCBD) pilot policy. Serving in an advisory capacity, the work group focused on developing strong, actionable policy options grounded in Higher Learning Commission guidance and informed by the national landscape for BAASC's consideration.

As part of this work, Dr. Trey Hill developed a RCBD Dashboard (https://ksrcbd.netlify.app/) to ensure institutions across the state remain informed of key national and state developments related to RCBD programs. The RCBD Work Group met regularly from October 2025 through April 2026 to develop the recommendations presented below.

General Policy Framework

The RCBD Work Group recommends that Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree proposals meet the following expectations, which give ample room for institutional innovation:

- Maintain the same rigorous standards for academic quality, student learning outcomes, and alignment with the institution's mission as required of traditional bachelor's degree programs.
- Include clearly defined student learning outcomes and a curriculum map demonstrating how those outcomes will be achieved within the proposed program structure.
- Align with relevant disciplinary accreditation standards, where applicable.
- Demonstrate compliance with federal financial aid regulations applicable to bachelor's degree programs.
- Provide clear evidence of workforce demand, including documentation of support from Kansas and regional employers where appropriate, or admission into graduate programs.

Vote: 10 in favor

Approval Process

The RCBD Work Group recommends that all Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree proposals be considered through the KBOR's standard program approval process for baccalaureate degrees.

For proposals submitted by two-year institutions, the work group recommends that the System Council of Chief Academic Officers (SCOCAO) replace the Council of Chief Academic Officers (COCAO) in the review process, and the System Council of Presidents (SCOP) replace the Council of Presidents (COP).

This approach maintains alignment with the existing KBOR program approval procedures while ensuring that proposals from two-year institutions are reviewed by groups that include two-year representation.

Vote: 10 in favor, 1 abstention

Provisional Approval Period

The RCBD Work Group recommends that Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree proposals be granted provisional approval for a three-year period. Institutions may enroll new students in the program during each year of the provisional approval period, unless otherwise specified through the annual review process.

Vote: 11 in favor

Total Credit Hours

The RCBD Work Group recommends that total credit hours for Reduced Credit Bachelor's Degrees follow the guidance outlined in the Higher Learning Commission Assumed Practice B.1.a, which states:
"The institution conforms to commonly accepted minimum program length: … 120 semester credits for bachelor's degrees. Any variations from these minima must be explained and justified."

Consistent with this guidance, the work group recommends that KBOR policy for the RCBD pilot similarly require that any variation from the standard 120-credit-hour bachelor's degree be clearly explained and justified by the

proposing institution. Additionally, the work group recommends that RCBD programs approved under the pilot require at least 90 total semester credit hours.

This approach maintains alignment with HLC expectations while providing institutions with flexibility to develop innovative degree structures within clearly defined parameters.

Vote: 11 in favor

General Education Framework

The RCBD Work Group recommends that general education requirements for Reduced Credit Bachelor's Degrees align with the Systemwide General Education 7-Bucket Framework, which consists of 34–35 credit hours of approved general education coursework.

Aligning RCBD programs with the Systemwide General Education Framework ensures consistency with existing KBOR policy, supports transfer and articulation across institutions, and maintains the foundational learning outcomes expected of all undergraduate students in the Kansas system.

Vote: 10 in favor, 1 abstention

Institutional Hours Requirement

The RCBD Work Group recommends that institutional credit hour requirements for Reduced Credit Bachelor's Degrees follow the guidance outlined in the Higher Learning Commission Assumed Practice B.1.b, which states: "Typically institutions will require that at minimum 30 of 120 credits earned for the bachelor's degree… be credits earned at the institution itself, through arrangement with other accredited institutions, or through contractual relationships approved by HLC. Any variation from the typical minima must be explained and justified."

Consistent with this guidance, the work group recommends that institutions proposing an RCBD clearly document how institutional credit hour requirements will be met and provide justification if the proposed structure varies from the typical expectations outlined by HLC.

This approach maintains alignment with HLC expectations while allowing institutions appropriate flexibility to design innovative program structures within clearly defined accreditation parameters.

Vote: 11 in favor

Scenarios

The Higher Learning Commission identifies three scenarios in which institutions may propose Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degrees:

1. An institution is offering a new bachelor's degree program that it has never offered before and is doing so in a reduced-credit format.
2. An institution currently offers a bachelor's degree program at the typical length of 120 credits and is now also offering the same program in a reduced-credit format.
3. An institution currently offers a bachelor's degree program at the typical length of 120 credits and is now going to cease offering that program and only offer the program in a reduced-credit format.

The RCBD Work Group recommends aligning with HLC guidance and, accordingly, allowing institutions to submit Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree proposals under all three identified scenarios.

Vote: 10 in favor, 1 opposed

Discipline (Subject Area)

The RCBD Work Group recommends allowing institutions to submit Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree proposals in any discipline where the program can demonstrate sufficient market demand and where the proposed curriculum can support the expected student learning outcomes for a bachelor's degree.

Determinations regarding whether a discipline is appropriate for a reduced-credit format should be informed by faculty expertise within the relevant academic field, ensuring that academic rigor and disciplinary standards are maintained.

This approach provides institutions with flexibility to pursue innovative program design while ensuring that program quality and workforce relevance remain central considerations.

Vote: 11 in favor

Upper Division Hours

The RCBD Work Group recommends maintaining consistency with the existing KBOR policy regarding upper-division coursework in bachelor's degree programs. Under current KBOR policy, bachelor's degrees require 45 upper-division credit hours within a 120-credit-hour program, representing 37.5% of the total credit hours.

To maintain this proportional expectation within a Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree structure, the work group recommends that RCBD programs include at least 34 upper-division credit hours within a 90-credit-hour degree.

Maintaining this proportional requirement ensures that RCBD programs preserve the depth and rigor associated with upper-division coursework while allowing institutions flexibility to design reduced-credit program structures.

Vote: 11 in favor

Naming Convention

The RCBD Work Group discussed the importance of clearly distinguishing Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degrees from traditional 120-credit-hour bachelor's degrees to ensure transparency for students, employers, and other stakeholders.

The work group recommends the following:

1. The term *"Accelerated"* should not be used in the degree name, as it does not accurately reflect the reduced-credit structure.
2. The designation *Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree (RCBD)* should be used for programs approved under the pilot phase.
3. Institutions will communicate to students how the degree will be noted on the transcript and the diploma.
4. The work group, or a similar representative body, should be reconvened near the conclusion of the pilot to revisit naming conventions should these degrees be considered for broader implementation beyond the pilot phase.

Vote: 9 in favor, 1 opposed

Public Disclosures

The RCBD Work Group recommends that institutions submitting Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree proposals include information describing how they will clearly communicate the structure and nature of the degree to prospective and current students. This may include a general description of the institution's communication approach or examples of how this information will be conveyed.

In the general description, institutions should outline how key program information, including the nature of the degree and any federal financial aid implications, will be communicated through program webpages, advising resources, and recruitment materials. These communications should ensure that students understand the reduced-credit structure and how it differs from a traditional 120 credit hour bachelor's degree.

This recommendation aligns with expectations from the Higher Learning Commission that institutions provide clear and accurate public information about academic programs, particularly when programs differ from

commonly accepted credit hour expectations. Clear disclosures will support informed student decision making and promote transparency for employers, transfer institutions, and other stakeholders.

Vote: 10 in favor

SWADs & RCBDs

The RCBD Work Group recommends that four-year institutions submitting Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree proposals in disciplines with existing Systemwide Transfer Associate Degrees (SWADs), currently Business Administration, Management, and Operations; Computer Science; Elementary Education; Nursing; and Social Work, be required to accept the full 60 credit hours from SWADs offered by Kansas community colleges approved to deliver these degrees
(https://www.kansasregents.gov/academic_affairs/systemwide-transfer-degrees).

To maintain alignment with the reduced-credit structure of RCBD programs, institutions may adjust the upper-division credit hour requirement from 34 to 30 to accommodate the full transfer of SWAD coursework. Such adjustments are permissible but not required. Institutions should clearly communicate the total number of credit hours and upper-division requirements within RCBD programs in SWAD disciplines.

This recommendation ensures that existing systemwide transfer pathways remain intact and that students who complete a SWAD at a Kansas community college can transition into a Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree program without loss of credit. It also supports the Board's commitment to transfer efficiency, transparency, and equitable access to bachelor's degree pathways for Kansas students.

Vote: 8 in favor; 2 abstentions

Student Pathways and Transitions

The RCBD Work Group recommends that institutions develop clear, transparent processes to support students who choose to transition between Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree programs and traditional 120-credit-hour programs in the same or a related field.

Consistent with HLC expectations, institutions should:

- *Ensure transparency* by clearly communicating to prospective and enrolled students all aspects of the program, including admissions requirements, prerequisites, program requirements, learning outcomes, and available transfer or transition pathways
- *Provide clear guidance* on options for students to move between reduced-credit and traditional programs, including any implications for credit applicability, time to degree, and additional requirements
- *Establish formal admissions policies* that define requirements for RCBD programs, identify any differences between program formats, and outline processes for students seeking to transition between them

These elements should be incorporated into institutional RCBD proposals to ensure alignment with HLC expectations and to support student success and informed decision-making.

Vote: 10 in favor

Annual Reporting

The RCBD Work Group recommends that institutions submitting Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree proposals provide an annual status report to the Board Academic Affairs Standing Committee on the progress and outcomes of each program.

At a minimum, the annual report should include the following:

- **RCBD enrollment:** Total number of students enrolled in the RCBD program, disaggregated by year in the program

- **Program retention:** Fall to Spring and Fall to Fall retention rates for students enrolled in RCBD programs and compared to the average institutional rates for the same time period.
- **Transfer credit hours:** Number of credit hours transferred into the program per student, as applicable.
- **Program completion:** As data becomes available, institutions should report on the number of students completing the program as well as on the number of students who exit prior to completion.
- **Employment or other postsecondary outcomes:** As data become available, institutions should report on job placement and, where feasible, earnings outcomes for program completers. It is recognized that employment and earnings data will not be available during the early years of the pilot. In the absence of longitudinal outcomes data, institutions should report on interim indicators such as internship placement rates, employer partnership agreements, and advisory board engagement. These interim measures will support ongoing program monitoring while longer-term outcome data develop.

These reporting elements will support the Board's ability to monitor implementation, assess program effectiveness, and inform future decisions regarding the continuation or expansion of Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree programs.

Vote: 10 in favor

Limiting Applications

The RCBD Work Group does not recommend establishing a cap on the number of Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree proposals during the pilot phase. The work group believes institutions are best positioned to determine whether there is sufficient student demand, workforce need, and curricular opportunity to support the development of these programs. This approach provides flexibility for institutions to respond to local and regional needs while preserving the Board's ability to maintain appropriate oversight and ensure a thoughtful and manageable pilot phase.

Vote: 10 in favor

Program Review at the Conclusion of the Pilot

The RCBD Work Group recommends that at the conclusion of the three-year pilot period, the Board will review the pilot program to assess its viability and effectiveness. Following this review, the Board may elect to:

1. Terminate the program (with appropriate teach out plans in place)
2. Extend provisional approval for an additional year
3. Grant full approval and allow the program to continue without provisional status

This pilot structure provides institutions with the opportunity to test innovative program models while allowing the Board to monitor outcomes and ensure alignment with system goals and academic quality expectations.

Vote: 8 in favor

Work Group Members

Marc Malone, Butler Community College
Brent Thomas, Emporia State University
Jennifer Brown, Fort Hays Tech North Central
Jill Arensdorf, Fort Hays State University
Jesse Mendez, Kansas State University
Jason Sharp, Labette Community College
Brian Inbody, Neosho County Community College
Sarah Robb, Neosho County Community College
Susan Bon, Pittsburg State University
Jennifer Roberts, University of Kansas
John Fritch, Washburn University
Monica Lounsbery, Wichita State University
Jennifer Seymour, WSU Tech
Jenn Bonds-Raacke, KBOR, Ex Officio
Regent Alysia Johnston, KBOR, Ex Officio

Footnotes:

- This pilot policy would apply to any institution submitting an RCBD proposal, except for Washburn University. Board Policy Ch.III.A.7 shall be used to determine the approval process for Washburn University RCBDs.
- While the pilot program is in effect, the Private Postsecondary Education unit will deny requests for approval of reduced-credit programs, as minimum-hour requirements are set by the Private and Out-of-State Postsecondary Educational Institution Act. It should be noted that out-of-state institutions authorized under SARA are not subject to KBOR approval and may therefore offer reduced-credit programs to Kansas residents.
- If Work Group Members were unable to attend a meeting, a delegate was permitted to do so.
- Minor variations in total vote counts reflect that a small number of work group members departed prior to the conclusion of the meeting and were not present for all votes.

DRAFT POLICY AMENDMENT
CHAPTERS II.A.7 AND III.A.9

CHAPTER II: GOVERNANCE – STATE UNIVERSITIES

A ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

. . .

7 NEW ACADEMIC UNITS AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

. . .

i Requests for reduced credit baccalaureate degree programs

i State universities' academic program proposals to offer reduced credit baccalaureate degree programs shall be subject to subsection II.A.7.c above, shall comply with subsections II.A.7.d and e above, and shall additionally:

(1) provide a clear explanation and justification for deviation from the 120-credit-hour minimum that is generally applicable to baccalaureate degrees.

(2) document how institutional credit hour requirements will be met or contain the institution's justification for any deviations therefrom;

(3) demonstrate sufficient market demand for the degree;

(4) document that the curriculum can support the expected student learning outcomes for a baccalaureate degree;

(5) document how the university will clearly communicate the structure and nature of the degree to prospective students; and

(6) contain any other items that may be required by the Board Vice President for Academic Affairs.

ii Approval for reduced credit baccalaureate degree programs will be limited to three academic years.

~~i~~j Associate Degree Programs:

. . .

~~j~~k Program Discontinuance and Merger

. . .

~~k~~l Accreditation

. . .

ł<u>m</u> Reciprocal agreements

. . .

CHAPTER III: COORDINATION

A ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

. . .

5 APPROVAL OF PROGRAMS FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES, TECHNICAL COLLEGES AND WASHBURN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

. . .

d Board staff shall compile, analyze and make recommendations to the Board on the information provided. The recommendations and information provided shall be reviewed by the Kansas Postsecondary Technical Education Authority to determine whether the program represents unnecessary program duplication before approval will be granted.

. . .

ii Procedures for Approval of Special Programs

<u>(1)</u> Business and Industry Service Program

The purpose of this program is to allow community colleges, technical colleges, and the Washburn Institute of Technology to design and implement training activities to meet expressed needs of Kansas business and industry. Instructional activities will be approved for a one-year period with an option for reapplication. Forms to be submitted are available on the Kansas Board of Regents website.

<u>(2) Reduced credit baccalaureate degree programs</u>

<u>(a) New academic program proposals to offer reduced credit baccalaureate degree programs shall be subject to subsection III.A.5.c above, shall comply with subsection III.A.5.b above and this subsection III.A.5.d (except as provided in subsection III.A.5.d.(c) below), and shall additionally:</u>

<u>(i) provide a clear explanation and justification for deviation from the 120-credit-hour minimum that is generally applicable to baccalaureate degrees;</u>

<u>(ii) document how institutional credit hour requirements will be met or contain the institution's justification for any deviations therefrom;</u>

(iii) demonstrate sufficient market demand for the degree;

(iv) document that the curriculum can support the expected student learning outcomes for a baccalaureate degree;

(v) document how the institution will clearly communicate the structure and nature of the degree to prospective students; and

(vi) contain any other items that may be required by the Board Vice President for Academic Affairs.

(b) Approval for reduced credit baccalaureate degree programs will be limited to three academic years.

(c) Proposals to offer reduced credit baccalaureate degree programs:

(i) shall not be reviewed by the Kansas Postsecondary Technical Authority, and subsections III.A.5.i.(1).(b) and (c) shall not apply to proposals to offer reduced credit baccalaureate degrees; and

(ii) shall be reviewed and approved by the System Council of Chief Academic Officers, the System Council of Presidents, the Board Academic Affairs Standing Committee, and the Board of Regents in a like manner as state university program approval under subsection II.A.7.d.ii.

. . .

7 APPROVAL OF PROGRAMS FOR WASHBURN UNIVERSITY

The state university process for approval of new academic program proposals, chapter II.A.7.~~c~~d., shall apply to the review and approval of all graduate programs, and specialized professional baccalaureate degree programs (e.g., engineering, architecture), and specialized professional reduced credit baccalaureate degree programs for Washburn University, except that in lieu of Council of Chief Academic Officers and Council of Presidents review and approval, such programs shall be reviewed by the System Council of Chief Academic Officers and the System Council of Presidents, on the same day, for informational purposes only, and the programs will then be reviewed by the Board's Academic Affairs Standing Committee prior to being placed on the Board agenda for approval. Specialized professional reduced credit baccalaureate degree program proposals shall be subject to the additional requirements of chapter II.A.7.i.

The state university expedited program review process, chapter II.A.7.e~~f~~., shall apply to the review and approval of Washburn University programs that meet the criteria for expedited review, except that in lieu of Council of Chief Academic Officers and Council of Presidents review and approval, such programs shall be reviewed by the System Council of Chief Academic Officers and the System Council of Presidents.

. . .

9 DEGREES

The following applies to all institutions governed, supervised, or coordinated by the Board of Regents:

a Definitions of Terms

i "Office" means the Office of the Kansas Board of Regents, as represented by the administrator or designated agent.

ii "Program" means an academic plan that is approved by the appropriate governing board and leads to an award, for example, a degree or a career/technical certificate.

iii "Graduate degree program" or "post-baccalaureate degree program" means a program leading to a master's or doctor's degree conferred upon completion of a course of study for which admission can be gained only through possession of a bachelor's degree satisfactory to the university offering the graduate instruction.

iv "Professional practice degree program" means a program leading to a master's or doctor's degree conferred on completion of a course of study for which admission into some schools may be gained with less than a baccalaureate, but for which pre-admission and professional study together invariably require more time than is required for a bachelor's degree alone, regardless of how many matriculants already have a bachelor's degree. While these degrees may contain doctorate in the title, they are not considered research doctoral degrees.

v "Lower-division instruction" means course content and teaching at a level appropriate for first and second-year postsecondary students generally, but available to more advanced students who have no prior experience in the subject, and "upper-division instruction" means course content and teaching appropriate for third and fourth-year students or others with a strong background in the subject.

vi "Full-time student" means a student who is engaged in academic study as the primary occupation, thus ordinarily requiring 36 to 48 hours per week divided between interaction with teachers and independent preparation. A full-time student receives "full-time instruction," ordinarily 12 to 18 teacher hours weekly.

vii "Part-time student" means a student who is not engaged in academic study as the primary occupation, thus ordinarily requiring less than 36 hours per week divided between interaction with teachers and independent preparation. A part-time student receives "part-time instruction," ordinarily less than 12 teacher hours per week.

viii "Academic Year" means a period of time approximately 9 months in length commencing with the fall term during which full-term instruction is provided. An academic year is generally divided into two equal length semesters.

b Standards

In order to receive and hold authorization to offer a given degree, an institution must remain open to inspection at all times and continuously satisfy each of the following standard requirements as written, except where the Office approves modification in writing.

i Quality

(1) All institutions shall justify a degree offer by assuring the quality of all attendant teaching, learning, and faculty-student interaction.

(2) The quality and content of each course or program of instruction, training, or study shall be such as may reasonably and adequately achieve the stated objective for which the course or program is offered.

ii Curriculum

The curriculum shall have a structure that reflects acceptance of responsibility by the faculty at the degree-granting institution for what is to be learned overall, as well as in each course, and thus for the logical sequence and increasing difficulty of subjects and instructional levels. The curriculum shall reflect the distinction between the liberal disciplines and the occupations and professions, the nature of specialization in study and work, the contribution of liberal arts and sciences, and the relationship between teaching and faculty creativity. A graduate curriculum shall reflect a concept of the graduate school as a group of scholars, the faculty members of which have had extensive collegiate teaching experience and are engaged in the advancement of knowledge. Periods of study and other fundamental requirements for the five levels of academic degree are as follows:

(1) "Associate degree" means a degree consisting of courses totaling a minimum of 60 semester credit hours. Additional requirements for specific types of associate degrees follow:

(a) "Associate in arts degree" means a transfer-oriented degree:

(i) Granted to those who successfully complete programs equivalent to the freshman and sophomore level requirements for a bachelor of arts degree; and

(ii) In which not less than 30 semester credit hours in general education are required.

(b) "Associate in science degree" means a transfer- or professional-oriented degree:

(i) Granted to those who successfully complete programs equivalent to the freshman and sophomore level requirements for a bachelor of science degree: and

(ii) In which not less than 30 semester credit hours in general education are required.

(c) “Associate in applied science degree” means a degree:

(i) Granted to those who successfully complete programs which emphasize preparation in the applied arts and sciences for careers, typically at the technical or semi-professional level; and

(ii) Consisting of a minimum of 60 semester credit hours and a maximum of 68 semester credit hours, in which not less than 15 semester credit hours in general education and not less than 30 semester credit hours in the area of specialized preparation are required. An exception/waiver to the 68 semester credit hour limit may be granted to meet specific criteria such as external program accreditations or other special requirements. Selected courses may transfer to a college or university upon validation of applicable coursework.

(d) “Associate in general studies” means a degree:

(i) Granted to those who successfully complete programs with an emphasis on a broad range of knowledge; and

(ii) In which not less than 24 semester credit hours in general education and not less than 36 semester credit hours in a program of college-level work are required.

(e) “Associate in fine arts degree” means a transfer-oriented degree:

(i) Granted to those who successfully complete programs equivalent to the freshman and sophomore level requirements for a bachelor of fine arts degree; and

(ii) in which not less than 30 semester credit hours in general education are required.

(f) Other specific types of associate degrees may be offered upon approval by the Board office.

(2) “Baccalaureate degree” means a degree:

(a) Requiring the equivalent of at least four academic years of full-time postsecondary study consisting of courses totaling 120 semester credit hours in the liberal arts, sciences or professional fields. Any baccalaureate degree offered at a state university that exceeds 120 semester credit hours shall require approval by the Board of Academic Affairs Standing Committee.

(b) Incorporating in its program design a minimum of 45 semester credit hours in upper division courses. Institutions are not permitted to make programmatic exceptions.

(c) ~~The degree shall require~~Requiring distinct specialization, i.e., a "major," which should entail approximately the equivalent of one academic year of work in the main subject plus one academic year in related subjects, or two academic years in closely related subjects within a liberal arts interdisciplinary program.

(3) "Reduced credit baccalaureate degree" means a degree that:

(a) Requires the equivalent of at least three academic years of full-time postsecondary study consisting of courses totaling at least 90 semester credit hours in the liberal arts, sciences or professional fields.

(b) Incorporates in its program design a minimum of 34 semester credit hours of approved general education coursework, and at least 34 credit hours in upper division courses. Institutions are not permitted to make programmatic exceptions; provided, however, that a reduced credit baccalaureate degree offered by a four-year institution in a discipline with a Systemwide Transfer Associate Degree may incorporate fewer than 34 credit hours in upper division courses, but not less than 30.

(c) Requires distinct specialization, i.e., a "major" which should entail approximately the equivalent of one academic year of work in the main subject plus one academic year in related subjects.

(d) Is notated on the student's transcript and diploma. The Board will determine the notation.

(~~3~~4) "Master's degree" means a degree:

(a) Granted to those who successfully complete an educational program in the liberal arts and sciences or a professional field; and

(b) Requiring not less than one year of academic work or the equivalent in part-time attendance beyond the baccalaureate degree.

(c) The curriculum shall specialize in a single discipline or single occupational or professional area and culminate in a demonstration of mastery such as a research thesis, a work of art, or the solution of a practical professional problem.

(d) A professional practice master's degree may be authorized for study beyond fulfillment of undergraduate requirements approved by the Office if the total period of study is at least five academic years.

(4~~5~~) "Educational specialist degree" means a degree granted to those who successfully complete an educational program requiring not less than one year of academic work or the equivalent in part-time attendance beyond the master's degree in the field of education.

(5~~6~~) "Doctor's degree" means a degree:

(a) Granted to those who successfully complete an educational program requiring three or more academic years of full-time study or the equivalent in part-time attendance beyond the baccalaureate degree and may be either a research degree or a professional practice degree. For the research degree and the professional practice degree:

(i) Study for a closely related master's degree may be counted toward doctoral requirements.

(ii) The doctor's degree shall represent a student's ability to perform independently basic or applied research at the level of the professional scholar or to perform independently the work of a profession that involves the highest levels of knowledge and expertise.

(iii) Requirements for the degree shall include demonstration of mastery of a significant body of knowledge through comprehensive examination, unless a graduate must pass a similar examination in order to be admitted to professional practice in Kansas.

(b) In addition, for the research degree:

(i) Evidence of competence in independent research, usually in the form of a doctoral dissertation, is required.

(ii) The curricular program shall be appropriately broad and shall manifest full understanding of the level and range of doctoral scholarship, the function of a dissertation and its defense, the nature of comprehensive examination, and the distinction between matriculation and degree candidacy.

(~~6~~7) "Honorary degree" is a degree that is awarded as an exceptional honor bestowed upon a person without the fulfillment of the usual requirements. State universities may award honorary degrees upon approval by the Kansas Board of Regents and only in accordance with the following:

(a) Criteria

(i) Honorary degrees may be conferred only upon persons of notable intellectual, scholarly, professional, or creative achievement, or service to humanity. A candidate's qualifications must be deeply grounded in a career of scholarship, research, creative activity, service to humanity or other profession consistent with the academic endeavors of the University awarding the degree.

(ii) Honorary degrees will be awarded only to exceptional candidates. Awarding this degree need not be considered an annual occurrence.

(iii) An honorary degree shall not be awarded for philanthropic activity or service to the University or the State of Kansas.

(iv) An honorary degree shall not be conferred upon any faculty member, administrator, or other official associated with the University until at least five years after such individual has been separated from the institution.

(v) An honorary degree shall not be conferred upon any holder of a Kansas elected or appointed public office until at least five years after such individual has vacated office.

(b) Process

The chief executive officer of the state university shall nominate to the Board for consideration, in accordance with K.S.A. 76-716, the name of any candidate for an honorary degree at least two months before the commencement or other event at which the degree is to be conferred. The nomination shall include such statements or materials demonstrating that:

(i) the nominee's achievements and/or service are of such exceptional character as to merit the award of an honorary degree.

(ii) the honorary degree is not sought to recognize the nominee's philanthropic activity or service to the University or the State of Kansas.

(iii) the nominee has not been a faculty member, administrator, or other official associated with the University, or has been separated at least five years from the institution.

(iv) the nominee has not held a Kansas elected or appointed public office for at least five years.

(c) At the time the agenda item is submitted, the name shall not be included; however, the state university shall send the proposed nomination, statement and materials individually to Regents and the Board President and Chief Executive Officer at least four weeks before the state university sends its agenda material requests to the Board office for the Board meeting at which the nomination is to be considered. No public communication of a proposed nomination shall be made until the name is presented for consideration to the open meeting of the Board. No candidate for nomination shall be promised an honorary degree before the Board has acted on the nomination.

(~~7~~8) "Posthumous degree" is a degree that is awarded after the death of a person when the usual requirements have not been completed. Individual institutions may award posthumous degrees consistent with an institution's degree granting authority (e.g., a regional institution normally will not award doctoral degrees). It is the responsibility of each institution may to establish procedures that will identify and evaluate persons nominated for a posthumous degree. The only systemwide requirement is that,

normally, the local procedures shall ascertain that the deceased was a degree-seeking student (e.g., declared major, filed plan of study).

. . .