

Establishing Workforce Need for a New Baccalaureate Degree Program: An Overview

If your college wants to offer a new baccalaureate degree, you will need to show that the program addresses an unmet workforce need in the region. Here is a checklist of the required steps.

Step 1: Labor Market Assessment

To start, request a labor market assessment from your regional Center of Excellence (COE) **at least 90 days before your application is due**. This report will provide workforce data and information about the jobs your program prepares students to enter. It must include the following:

A. State Data Analysis

- Summarize the education, licenses, or certifications required for target occupations.
- Detail the typical work experience expected for these jobs.
- Analyze whether your proposed degree meets the educational requirements for these occupations.
- Show that employers prefer candidates with a bachelor's degree in the proposed field.
- Compare salaries for entry-level workers with a bachelor's degree vs. those with an associate degree or no degree.
- Provide a 10-year job projection and annual average job openings for the target occupations across California.

B. Regional Data Analysis

- Show past employment trends for the target occupations in your region.
- Include 10-year job projections and annual openings in your region.
- Show projected supply of graduates who are currently entering the field from similar programs and estimate how many graduates your new program will add.
- Compare entry-level wages for the target jobs against the living wage for both single adults and single parents in your region.

Your COE report **MUST include a summary letter signed by the COE director** that certifies this assessment was conducted specifically for the proposed baccalaureate degree program using COE BDP Labor Market Assessment protocols.

Step 2: Regional Consultation

Provide evidence that regional interest holders were consulted regarding their workforce needs related to your proposed program. It must include the following:

A. Consultation with Employers:

- Option 1: Advisory Board:* Engage an advisory board or working group of regional employers. Document their insights on workforce needs, skills gaps, and the value of a bachelor's degree. Submit a summary of these discussions, including details on the employers involved.
- Option 2: Employer Survey:* Conduct a survey with local employers to gather data on hiring needs, qualifications, wages, and challenges in finding candidates. Submit the survey results, including the methodology and a copy of the survey.

B. Consultation with Workforce Development Boards:

- Show evidence of discussions with regional workforce boards on workforce needs and skill gaps. Submit meeting minutes, correspondence, or statements confirming their support or feedback.

C. Regional Consortium Recommendation:

- Provide evidence that your regional consortium has reviewed and/or recommended the program. Submit meeting minutes, screenshots, or other official documentation showing the program was approved.