



**Low Enrollment Course and Program and Duplicate Program Report**  
**Ohio Department of Higher Education Guidance**  
**Due September 1, 2025**

**Background:** Section 3345.35 of the Ohio Revised Code requires that the boards of trustees of each state institution of higher education evaluate all courses and programs based on enrollment and duplication with other state institutions of higher education.

**Section 3345.35:** *Not later than September 1, 2022, and by the first day of September of every third year thereafter, the board of trustees of each state institution of higher education, as defined in section [3345.011](#) of the Revised Code, shall evaluate all courses and programs the institution offers based on enrollment and duplication of its courses and programs with those of other state institutions of higher education within a geographic region, as determined by the chancellor of higher education. For courses and programs with low enrollment, as defined by the chancellor, the board of trustees shall provide a summary of recommended actions, including consideration of collaboration with other state institutions of higher education. For duplicative programs, as defined by the chancellor, the board of trustees shall evaluate the benefits of collaboration with other institutions of higher education to deliver the program.*

*Each board of trustees shall submit its findings under this section to the chancellor not later than thirty days after the completion of the evaluations or as part of submitting the annual efficiency report required pursuant to section [3333.95](#) of the Revised Code.*

To comply with the legislation, the Chancellor provides a definition of low-enrollment courses and programs and the Department of Higher Education provides a list of duplicative programs within each region of the state, with particular attention to co-located campuses.

The board of trustees of each state college and university must submit a report that includes:

- a description of the process and data used to identify courses and programs that meet the Chancellor's definition of low enrollment;
- a summary of recommended actions for each identified low enrollment course (e.g., no action, course elimination, reduction in the number of sections or the timing of sections, change in course delivery modality, targeted as a candidate for course sharing);

- a summary of recommended actions for each low enrollment program (e.g., no action, close program, merge with other programs in the institution, collaborate with other state institutions);
- for each duplicative program not targeted for action, a rationale for continuing the program in its current form; and
- for each duplicative program considered for action, the recommended action (e.g., close program, collaborate with other state institutions).

The reports shall be approved by the boards of trustees and submitted along with the board resolution by September 1, 2025.

### **Institutional Follow-Up: 2028 Report**

The **2028** Low Enrollment Course and Program and Duplicate Program Report will include an evaluation of the strategies and actions identified in this report to increase enrollment and/or reduce cost in low enrollment courses and programs. The Department of Higher Education will provide guidance and an optional template for reporting these outcomes.

### **Defining Low-Enrollment Courses and Programs**

A single numerical definition of **low-enrollment courses** is problematic because courses contribute to institutions in different ways (e.g., institutional quality, service to multiple majors, student need), and because courses have widely varying contexts and costs. That being said, most colleges and universities have set **thresholds** below which courses will not be offered. These thresholds often differ within and across institutions based on pedagogical factors related to discipline (professional courses vs. general education courses), course level (lower division vs. upper division or undergraduate vs. graduate), or resources (cost, availability of faculty or practicum supervisors, availability of facilities).

Likewise, a single numerical definition for **low-enrollment programs** is difficult because programs also contribute to institutions in multiple ways (e.g., institutional reputation, service to multiple student majors, regional need), and because programs themselves have widely varying contexts (accreditation and licensure requirements, pedagogical requirements) and costs (faculty, facility and equipment needs). Again, however, most colleges and universities have defined a minimum number of students required for each of their programs, with this minimum **threshold** differing within and across institutions based on institutional mission, student demand and availability of resources.

To comply with the legislation, the Chancellor defines **low-enrollment courses** as course sections that fall below 20% above the institutionally defined threshold for that course section over two or more semesters. The Chancellor defines **low-enrollment programs** as programs that fall below 20% above the institutionally defined criteria for students in a program.

## **Determining Thresholds for Course and Program Enrollment and Recommended Actions for Courses That Fall Below the Chancellor's Definition of Low Enrollment**

The following six factors should be considered by trustees in their determination of course and program thresholds and in their consideration of recommended actions for courses that fall below the Chancellor's definition of low enrollment. The bulleted points following each factor are examples of data points that could be used in the analysis and may be augmented by other evaluative tools.

1. Quality
  - Student retention and completion within the program
  - Student employment outcomes
  - Successful student transfer or placement in graduate/professional school
  - Scholarly productivity of faculty and students
  - Attainment of specialized accreditation
  - Program reputation/ranking
  - Performance of students in subsequent courses
2. Centrality to the Institution's Mission
  - Relevance of the course or program to the institution's strategic plan
  - Importance of the course or program to the institution's reputation or recruiting efforts
  - Need for the course within the curriculum (e.g., gateway, service, critical for completion)
3. Cost-Effectiveness of the Course or Program
  - Revenue sufficiency to support the course or program
  - Ratio of number of graduates to FTE faculty
4. Demand for the Programs or Courses
  - Program enrollment patterns over time
    - Students enrolled
    - Degrees/certificates awarded
    - Understanding reasons for low enrollment
      - Duplication and competition?
      - Lack of related jobs?
      - Lack of marketing?
  - Course enrollment patterns over time
    - Understanding reason for low enrollment
      - Too many sections?
      - Sections offered at inconvenient times?
      - New course?
      - Faculty member identified/scheduled too late?

- Elective with little demand?
  - Data-driven market analysis of employer need
5. Potential for Collaboration with Other Institutions
    - Programs with low enrollment at one institution and need for a range of highly specialized faculty (e.g., BFA or MFA)
    - Courses with low enrollment at one institution but greater need across the state (e.g., certain foreign languages, highly specialized courses within a major)
  6. Potential for Restructuring
    - Programs with high administrative costs per graduate
    - Courses with high administrative cost per course completion
    - Optimizing the number of course sections when multiple sections with low enrollments are noted

### **ODHE Data Regarding Duplicate Programs**

The Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) identified duplicative programs within each region of the state, with particular attention to co-located campuses. The following steps were used to construct the attached spreadsheets:

- Using data reported to the Higher Education Information (HEI) system, ODHE classified degrees awarded in the academic years 2021, 2022, 2023 as a program within an institution using its six-digit CIP Code, resulting in a list of programs offered at each public college and university in the state.
- Each public college and university was then assigned to one of six regions across the state; these regions are mainly aligned to the six JobsOhio regions associated with the main campus.
  - NEOMED is not included due to its medical program focus.
  - Southern State Community College was placed in the Southwest Region.
- Information on programs at institutions in each region was then used to create spreadsheets indicating:
  - Duplicate programs (highlighted in red) at universities in each region;
  - Duplicate programs (highlighted in red) at community colleges in each region; and
  - Duplicate programs (highlighted in red) at co-located campuses.
- Data on the number of program graduates is included for the same three years and the average cost per graduate of the program was calculated using HEI cost data.

- The HEI cost data for each course completed by the graduate was summed (please note that costs were summed for all courses taken prior to graduation, whether or not the course was required for the student's program)
- This summed cost was averaged across all program completers over the three-year period
- Because Ohio State University reports all bachelor's degrees as earned at its Columbus campus, students who earned bachelor degrees from regional campuses are not identified in HEI. To identify degrees earned from OSU's regional campuses, students who received a bachelor's degree that is available at a regional campus and who earned the majority of their course credits from the regional campus were determined to have been earned from that regional campus.

These spreadsheets will help faculty, administrators, and trustees identify programs that are duplicated in their region and will help them as they evaluate duplicate program fit within the institution (e.g., reasonable duplication or unreasonable duplication that should be targeted for action, such as elimination or regional collaboration).

### **Determining Recommended Actions for Duplicate Programs**

Duplication of many programs is to be expected. For instance, essentially all colleges will have programs in majors that are needed by students throughout the state (e.g., English, psychology, engineering, business, mathematics, history, nursing). Therefore, cases of duplication will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine whether the duplication is appropriate. Factors to be considered in this analysis would include dynamics such as the number of students enrolled in the program, the number of graduates from the program, costs of the program (including staffing, facilities, pedagogical requirements, and accreditation requirements), quality or reputation of the program, etc.

The following factors can be used during the consideration of recommended actions for duplicate programs. The bulleted points following each factor are examples of data points that could be assessed in the analysis and may be augmented by other evaluative tools.

1. Quality
  - Student retention and completion within the program
  - Student employment outcomes
  - Successful student transfer or placement in graduate/professional school
  - Scholarly productivity of faculty and students
  - Attainment of specialized accreditation
  - Program reputation/ranking
  - Areas of specialization within the program that differentiate it from other programs in the same discipline offered in the region
2. Centrality to the Institution's Mission

- Relevance of the program to the institution’s strategic plan
  - Importance of the program to the institution’s reputation or recruiting efforts
  - Need for the program based on data for “in-demand” jobs
3. Cost-Effectiveness
- Revenue sufficiency to support the program
  - Ratio of number of graduates to FTE faculty/administrators
4. Demand
- Program enrollment patterns over time
    - Students enrolled
    - Degrees/certificates awarded
    - Understanding reasons for low enrollment in the program
      - Duplication and competition
      - Lack of jobs?
      - Marketing?
  - Data-driven market analysis of employer need
5. Potential for Collaboration with Other Institutions
- Programs with low enrollment at one or more institutions and a need for a range of highly specialized faculty (e.g., BFA or MFA)
  - Programs with low enrollment at one or more institutions but where there is a need for graduates within the region or the state (e.g., certain foreign languages, highly specialized majors)
  - Programs with low to moderate enrollment at one or more institutions that are costly to offer
6. Potential for Elimination
- Programs with persistent low enrollment where collaboration doesn’t make sense
  - Programs with persistent low enrollment and little or no employer demand

### **Report Format**

The following is suggested for reporting:

#### **I. Low-enrollment thresholds**

Narrative describing institutional definitions of low-enrollment course and program thresholds and the process by which these thresholds have been developed.

#### **II. Low-enrollment course identification**

Narrative summarizing the identification of low-enrollment courses (e.g., process for identifying courses, number of courses evaluated, number of courses determined to meet the chancellor’s definition of low enrollment).

**III. Low-enrollment course analysis**

Chart summarizing the recommended actions for low-enrollment courses (e.g., no action, elimination, reduction in the number of sections, changes to timing of course offerings, collaboration with other institutions) and the rationale for the recommended actions.

Course name/number	Number of sections/average enrollment	Recommendation <sup>1</sup>	Rationale
IV.		No Action; Course elimination; Reduction in number of sections; Change in course delivery modality; Targeted candidate for sharing; ... (other categories as needed)	Pedagogically appropriate course size; Course needed for on-time graduation; low enrollment elective; ... (other rationale as appropriate)

**Low-enrollment program analysis**

Chart summarizing the recommended actions for low-enrollment programs (e.g., no action, close program, merge with other programs in the institution, collaborate with other state institutions) and the rationale for the recommended actions.

Program Name	Number of Annual Graduates	Recommendation	Rationale
		No action; Program elimination; Collaboration with partner IHE; ...	Area of institutional specialty; Merge with other program in the institution;

<sup>1</sup> The recommended actions listed are examples only...please modify the chart to best fit campus categories/needs

		(other categories as needed)	... (other rationale as appropriate)
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**V. Duplicate program analysis**

Chart identifying each program identified as a regional duplicate program or co-located campus duplicate program that is not targeted for action and the rationale for the decision (e.g., robust enrollment and program completion, program central to institutional mission and/or reputation, program specialized and therefore not duplicative, program shares a large proportion of classes with other programs on campus).

<b>CIP code</b>	<b>Institutions with duplicate programs</b>	<b>Program names</b>	<b>Rationale for No Action</b>
			Robust enrollment; Specialized program; ... (other rationale as appropriate)

Chart identifying each program identified as a regional duplicate program or co-located campus duplicate program that is targeted for action and the recommended action (e.g., close program, collaborate with other state institutions).

<b>CIP code</b>	<b>Institutions with duplicate programs</b>	<b>Program names</b>	<b>Recommended Action</b>
			Close program;



			Collaborate with other institution (describe proposed collaboration);  ...  (other rationale as appropriate)
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**VI. Program Portfolio Changes (optional)**

Provide a listing of additions and deletions to the portfolio of programs offered since the previous Low Enrollment Course and Program and Duplicate Program Report with a rationale for the change.