

Granting Authority for Programs

The 1991 legislation reorganizing public education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts established the Higher Education Coordinating Council (HECC) as the successor agency to the Board of Regents of Higher Education and continued among its responsibilities statewide planning and coordination, including oversight of academic programs at the public institutions of higher education. In 1996, the legislature changed the name of the Council to the Department of Higher Education (DHE). The academic program approval authority of the Department of Higher Education is the same as that of the Higher Education Coordinating Council. Under Massachusetts General Laws, chapter 15A, the DHE is responsible for authorizing all programs and degrees in the public system:

Section 9. The board shall have the following duties and powers: (a) confer upon the boards of trustees the power to offer degree programs after taking into account, among other things, the need, resources and mission of the institution. The board shall confer the authority to award degrees to persons who have satisfactorily completed degree requirements: (b) in addition to the degrees authorized to be awarded under clause (a), the board may approve the awarding of certain other degrees and may define and authorize new functions or new programs, or consolidate, discontinue or transfer existing functions, educational activities and programs. The board shall act in writing on requests for program approval from boards of trustees within six months of said request, or said program shall be considered. (DHE approved June 1992; amended July 1997; amended March 2008)