

R. Wes Hayes, Jr.
Chairman

Rusty L. Monhollon, Ph.D.
President & Executive Director



Policy and Procedures for Professional Doctorate University Status

BACKGROUND:

South Carolina law, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-103-15 (2021), categorizes public institutions of higher learning (IHL) into four sectors: 1) Research institutions, 2) Four-year colleges and universities, 3) Two-year institutions-branches of the University of South Carolina, and 4) State technical and comprehensive colleges. Except for five doctoral degrees and two engineering related bachelor's degrees authorized by the General Assembly, four-year colleges and institutions in South Carolina may only offer baccalaureate and master's degrees with approval from the Commission on Higher Education (CHE).

Proviso 11.20 of the General Appropriations Act of fiscal year 2021-22 directed the CHE to study and implement a new classification system for South Carolina public senior institutions no later than June 30, 2022. With appropriate approvals from the CHE, institutions under this classification will be allowed to offer no more than five terminal professional or Ph.D. degrees

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE UNIVERSITY STATUS:

The Professional Doctorate University classification is defined as follows:

A South Carolina public senior institution with a mission or focus to advance the postsecondary educational opportunities for South Carolina citizens and offer baccalaureate, master's, and no more than a combined five professional doctorate or Ph.D. degrees that lead to continued education or employment.

(Pending approval by the SC General Assembly)

PROCEDURE:

Institutions seeking a Professional Doctorate University classification shall emphasize professional doctorate programs on allied health related degrees (including but not limited to: Nursing Practice, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Optometry, Speech Language Pathology, Veterinary Medicine,



and Pharmacy) and Education (EdD) and other high demand areas. CHE shall give higher consideration to these programs over Ph.D. programs.

Comprehensive Teaching Colleges and Universities seeking to transition to the *Professional Doctorate University* classification must seek reclassification from the CHE. Institutions seeking this reclassification should have an approved doctoral program in place or submit a Professional Doctorate or Ph.D. program proposal for approval concurrent with the reclassification.

The CHE will not approve a reclassification unless the institution demonstrates a strong commitment to successful graduate education and to the successful implementation of the proposed doctoral program. The CHE will publish any other criteria it deems necessary in agency policy and/or regulation when it reviews an institution's request for reclassification.

