

## Fall 2024 Report on Review of Programs with Low-Completion Rates

December 10, 2024

The following report summarizes the strategic decisions and their anticipated impact on the institution's academic portfolio based on the examination by schools and colleges of programs identified by a calculated numeric threshold by degree level. Deans, in collaboration with faculty from the relevant units, reviewed the program completion data and made decisions about the status of each program, including continuation without change, continuation with modifications, suspension, or closure.

### Program Status

Programs offered by the university hold one of three statuses at any given time.

- An **active program** refers to an academic program that is officially approved by the university and relevant accrediting bodies, currently open to student enrollment, and operational in delivering its curriculum. This is the normal status for the majority of programs, which are actively recruiting, admitting, and educating students, with sufficient faculty, resources, and infrastructure to support the objectives of the program.
- A **suspended program** is an academic program that is temporarily paused, meaning it no longer accepts new students. The goal while a program is suspended is to take actions that will support future reinstatement, or to provide time for a thoughtful evaluation that may result in permanent closure. Suspension allows the academic unit to reevaluate the program's viability, curriculum, resource needs (e.g., faculty, facilities, technology or materials), or alignment with institutional goals and workforce needs.
- A **closed program** is an academic program that will be permanently discontinued by the institution. Programs are fully closed only after teach-out plans for currently enrolled students have been completed. Closure typically results from strategic decisions based on factors such as low enrollment, financial considerations, lack of student demand, or misalignment with the current scholarly, societal, or employment landscape.

### Evaluation Review Process for Programs with Low-Completion Rates

Deans were tasked with leading the evaluation of programs with low-completion rates within each school and college, collaborating with relevant academic unit leaders and other faculty. A **program with low-completion rates** was defined as one with completions at or below a specified threshold over the five-year period from AY 2018–19 to AY 2022–23. The five-year threshold used to determine low-completion programs was 100 or fewer undergraduate degree completers, 25 or fewer graduate certificate completers, 50 or fewer master's degree completers, or 10 or fewer doctoral degree completers.

Relevant academic leaders and faculty with expertise in each program were asked to undertake an evaluation of each program, including but not limited to:

- program enrollment and graduation/completion trends
- student interest and demand,
- impact on course enrollments,
- workforce and market demand,
- implementation cost and financial viability,
- academic quality and student outcomes,
- competition for the program,
- redundancy of offering when compared to other local or regional universities,
- the potential for curricular improvements through revising, restructuring, or consolidations, and
- the potential impact of enhanced recruitment and marketing efforts.

Considering these factors helps ensure that decisions about programs with low-completion rates are data-informed, transparent, and aligned with the university’s priorities, including the efficient and effective use of university resources (human, fiscal, and capital).

Based on the evaluation, deans determine whether each academic program should be continued as it is, continued with modifications, suspended, or closed. For programs with low-completion rates slated to continue, the academic unit submitted an evaluation report detailing one of the following: 1) action steps to enhance enrollment (and accordingly completions) and address program challenges or 2) evidence demonstrating that the program’s continued operation does not require additional university resources.

### Preliminary Outcomes of the Low-Completion Evaluation Process

The outcomes outlined below reflect the status of the low-completion evaluation analysis as provided by the relevant dean at the time of this report. Appendix A includes the list of programs identified for closure or suspension.

*Table 1. Summary of Evaluation Reports as Submitted by School/College Deans*

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Total (includes some program concentrations)</b>
Consolidate	8
Continue	173
Close*	4
Suspend	12
Other (includes obtaining finalizing evaluation reports from deans)	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>213**</b>

*Note: \*The review process identified 22 programs that had already been closed or were in the process of being closed prior to the beginning of the Fall 2024 evaluation process. They were incomplete or had not been formally documented in the university's official records. \*\*This total includes concentrations within degree programs; bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs; graduate certificates; and sixth-year certificates.*

The programs identified for continuation fall into the following additional categories:

- **Master's within a PhD program (22 programs):**

A master's degree awarded as part of a doctoral degree pathway or awarded to students who exit a doctoral degree but have meet the requirements to earn a master's degree require no additional resources for implementation, as students enrolled in these master's program take the same courses as those pursuing the doctoral program. These programs will not require further review or discussion.

- **Programs that operate concurrently with one or more other programs (71 programs):**

These are programs where the courses required for the program overlap substantially. Usually, this applies to every course in the program, as they are a subset of a larger curriculum. This category includes graduate or post-master's certificates that overlap with master's degrees or other graduate programs, reportable graduate program concentrations (e.g., the use of graduate certificates within the JD program), and undergraduate degrees that combine courses from other majors (e.g., interdisciplinary programs designed to bring together two different fields into a single major). Typically, these programs require limited additional resources other than those required for the programs with which they overlap. In many cases, no further review or discussion will be necessary. However, instances where the academic unit proposed plans to enhance recruitment, undertake curricular revisions in coordination with other programs, or implement other modifications may warrant ongoing monitoring.

- **Cohort or classes limited by accreditation or other requirements (7 programs):**

Some of the programs identified as low-completion are specifically designed to limit cohorts so that these will always fall under the low-completion threshold. Typically, this relates to programs with accreditation requirements that limit faculty-to-student ratios or class size in specific courses. This type of program usually leads to some form of professional practice.

- **Programs slated for consolidation with other programs (8 programs):**

For these programs, the program faculty will engage in a process to consolidate the targeted program with other academic programs to streamline resources, eliminate redundancy, and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the academic offerings. Academic units will be asked to identify a timeline for completing the consolidation process if it has not already been provided. The dean will monitor the provided timeline to ensure that the consolidation occurs in a timely manner. The dean will report on the status of these efforts as part of a yearly review of programs with low-completion rates.

- **Programs continuing with monitoring (65 Programs):**

In these cases, the dean has decided to continue these programs to provide faculty time to engage in efforts to increase enrollments in programs that are currently identified as programs

with low-completion rates. Activities in which the academic unit may engage include, but are not limited to:

- enhancing outreach efforts through targeted advertising, partnerships with schools or industry, or other efforts to promote the program and generate interest in the field;
- updating the curriculum to align with current industry trends, workforce demands, or interdisciplinary opportunities;
- collaborating with businesses, government agencies, or other entities to create pipelines for student enrollment; or
- introducing additional course or program modality options to accommodate diverse student needs and interests.

The outcomes related to these efforts will be actively monitored as part of an annual evaluation of programs with low-completion rates.

## Next Steps

Following this initial step, which summarizes the outcomes of the evaluation process as determined by the school/college deans, we will engage in the following activities:

1. **Formalize suspensions and closures.** Academic units that have identified programs for closure or suspension will adhere to the university's guidelines for formally closing or suspending these programs as outlined in the [Guidelines for Archiving/Suspending, Closing/Terminating, or Reactivating Academic Courses or Programs](#). To ensure these programs are excluded from the university catalog for the AY25–26 academic year, the Provost's Office will follow up with the units to ensure all required paperwork is completed and submitted in a timely manner. A teach-out plan will be created for programs with currently enrolled students. This plan will outline the university's efforts to ensure students have the opportunity to complete their program successfully.
2. **Engage in evaluation report clarifications and program review meetings (as needed).** The Provost's Office will review the programs identified for continuation and as needed, engage in further discussions with deans and program representatives (e.g., department heads and faculty) to gather additional insights and ensure alignment with UConn's priorities. For example, we will work with deans to identify appropriate timelines to review action steps, such as curricular revisions. If questions or concerns arise regarding the viability of a program identified for continuation, the Provost will convene a review meeting during the spring 2025 semester. The academic unit will be notified in advance of the specific issues to be addressed during the meeting. The dean and other appropriate representatives, as determined by the dean, will participate in the program review meeting. The final outcome for each review meeting will be discussed and decided collaboratively by the Provost and the relevant dean.
3. **Data tracking for Programs with Cohort Sizes Determined by Evidence-based Criteria.** The Provost's Office has implemented a data tracking initiative to ensure that programs with appropriately small, evidence-justified cohort sizes are excluded from future low-completion reviews. For example, tracking may include CourseLeaf tags for some programs, such as master's degrees earned only en route to a doctoral degree.

4. **Annual Review of Suspended Programs.** Suspended programs will undergo a yearly review to allow academic units to evaluate their status and determine their future (e.g., reactivation, continued suspension, or closure). Programs that remain suspended for more than two years without clear actionable steps toward reactivation will be formally closed.
  
5. **Annual review of Program Completion Rates.** As a normative practice, we will review programs with low completion rates yearly to ensure that academic offerings align with institutional priorities, resource efficiency, and student and market demands. This process will help identify program improvements, consolidation, and strategic investments while ensuring we maintain a high-quality portfolio of program offerings.

## Appendix A. Programs Targeted for Closure or Suspension

*Table 1. Planned Closures as a Result of Fall 2024 Review*

Program Level	Program Title
<b>College of Liberal Arts and Sciences</b>	
Master's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Politics and Popular Culture, MA</li> </ul>
<b>School of Business</b>	
Graduate Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Risk Management</li> </ul>
<b>The Graduate School (Interdisciplinary Programs)</b>	
Graduate Certificates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Health</li> <li>• Obesity Prevention and Weight Management</li> </ul>

*Table 2. Planned Program Suspensions as a Result of Fall 2024 Review*

Program Level	Program Title
<b>College of Liberal Arts and Sciences</b>	
Graduate Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey Research</li> </ul>
Master's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Studies, MA</li> <li>• Medieval Studies, MA</li> <li>• Survey Research, MA</li> </ul>
Doctoral Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medieval Studies, PhD</li> </ul>
<b>Neag School of Education</b>	
Graduate Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Learning</li> <li>• Literacy Supports</li> </ul>
Sixth-year Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational Technology</li> </ul>
Master's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational Technology, MA</li> </ul>
<b>School of Fine Arts</b>	
Graduate Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital Media and Design</li> </ul>
<b>School of Nursing</b>	
Graduate Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dementia Care Certificate</li> <li>• Life Story Practice Research</li> </ul>
<b>UConn Health</b>	
Graduate Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addiction Science</li> </ul>