|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  | **SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS**  ACADEMIC AFFAIRS FORMS |
| New Site Request |
|  |  |

Use this form to request authorization to deliver an entire existing degree program (graduate program, undergraduate major or minor, certificate, or specialization) at a new site or by distance delivery (including online delivery). Board of Regents approval is required for a university to offer programs off-campus and through distance delivery. The Board of Regents, Executive Director, and/or their designees may request additional information about the proposal. After the university President approves the proposal, submit a signed copy to the Executive Director through the system Chief Academic Officer. Only post the New Site Request Form to the university website for review by other universities after approval by the Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **UNIVERSITY:** | **DSU** |
| **DEGREE(S) AND PROGRAM:** | **Computer Science, Ph.D.** |
| **NEW SITE(S):**  *Include address of new physical locations.*  *Delivery methods are defined in AAC Guideline* [*2.4.3.B*](https://public.powerdms.com/SDRegents/tree/documents/1677940)*.* | **Online** |
| **INTENDED DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:** | **Spring 2026** |
| **CIP CODE:** | **11.0101** |
| **UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT:** | **Beacom College of Computing & Cyber Sciences** |
| **BANNER DEPARTMENT CODE:** | **DCOC** |
| **UNIVERSITY DIVISION:** | **Computer Science** |
| **BANNER DIVISION CODE:** | **DCSC** |

**Please check this box to confirm that:**

* The individual preparing this request has read [AAC Guideline 2.3.2.4.A](https://public.powerdms.com/SDRegents/documents/1677075), which pertains to new site requests, and that this request meets the requirements outlined in the guidelines.
* This request will not be posted to the university website for review of the Academic Affairs Committee until it is approved by the Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer.

**University Approval**

*To the Board of Regents and the Executive Director: I certify that I have read this proposal, that I believe it to be accurate, and that it has been evaluated and approved as provided by university policy.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Click here to enter a date. |
| President of the University |  | Date |

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Note: In the responses below, references to external sources, including data sources, should be documented with a footnote (including web addresses where applicable).

1. **What is the need for offering the program at the new physical site or through distance delivery?**

There is a clear and growing demand for high-quality, accessible doctoral education in computer science that supports working professionals, non-traditional students, and geographically dispersed learners. Offering the Computer Science (CSC) Ph.D. program online addresses this demand by eliminating geographic and scheduling barriers that might otherwise prevent students from pursuing advanced education.

Dakota State University has demonstrated success in delivering rigorous and impactful online doctoral programs. The Ph.D. programs in Cyber Operations and Cyber Defense, both offered primarily via distance delivery, are thriving and serve as strong benchmarks. For instance, during the Spring 2025 term, the Ph.D. in Cyber Operations enrolled 64 online students and had no on-campus students, while the Ph.D. in Cyber Defense enrolled 110 online students and only 2 on-campus students. These enrollment trends underscore a pronounced student preference for online doctoral study, as well as the university’s proven capacity to deliver complex, research-intensive curricula in a virtual format.

Expanding the CSC Ph.D. program to an online modality will align with these established trends, allowing Dakota State University to better serve a diverse and expanding population of learners who require flexibility without compromising academic rigor or research engagement.

1. **Are any other Regental universities authorized to offer a similar program at the proposed site(s) or through distance delivery? If “yes,” identify the institutions and programs and explain why authorization is requested.**

Currently, the only CSC Ph.D. program in South Dakota is offered on-campus through a joint offering through DSU and SDSU, leaving a need for an online offering.

The only university to offer an online CSC Ph.D. program in the region is the University of North Dakota.

While universities in neighboring states (ND, MN, IA, NE, WY, MT) all offer on-campus CSC Ph.D. programs, there are no other online CSC Ph.D. programs aside from UND.

1. **Are students enrolling in the program expected to be new to the university or redirected from other existing programs at the university? Complete the table below and explain the methodology used in developing the estimates (*replace “XX” in the table with the appropriate year*).**

Students enrolling in the online Computer Science (CSC) Ph.D. program are primarily expected to be new to Dakota State University. However, a small number of current students enrolled in existing on-campus doctoral programs may elect to transition into the online format, especially those whose research or life circumstances make online learning more accessible or desirable.

The enrollment and graduation projections are based on historical trends from DSU's successful online Ph.D. programs in Cyber Operations and Cyber Defense. These programs have shown that once established, online doctoral offerings can grow steadily each year and attract a significant number of new students. We also recognize that the typical time to degree completion in our Ph.D. programs is approximately 3.5 to 4 years. Therefore, the earliest projected graduates in this table are assumed to be students redirected from existing programs who are already well into their coursework and research.

The estimates below reflect a conservative ramp-up in enrollment, taking into account program visibility, marketing efforts, and DSU’s proven ability to deliver high-quality doctoral education online. Program credit hours were calculated using anticipated student headcount and a conservative average course load, while graduation figures reflect realistic completion timelines based on both new and redirected student pathways.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Fiscal Years**\* | | | |
|  | **1st** | **2nd** | **3rd** | **4th** |
| ***Estimates*** | FY 26 | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 |
| Students new to the university | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 |
| Students from other university programs | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| =Total students in the program at the site | 8 | 18 | 33 | 53 |
| Program credit hours (major courses)\*\* | 90 | 129 | 195 | 261 |
| Graduates | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7 |

\*Do not include current fiscal year.

\*\*This is the total number of credit hours generated by students in the program in the required or elective program courses. Use the same numbers in Appendix B – Budget.

1. **What is the perceived impact of this request on existing programs in the Regental system?**

Since the only CSC Ph.D. program in the Regental system is housed in a joint venture with DSU and SDSU, the impact will be rapid growth in overall enrollment, with on-campus enrollment likely to maintain and grow at a slower rate. The reason that the CSC Ph.D. program will likely maintain more on-campus students than DSU’s other technical Ph.D. programs is that many CSC Ph.D. students will likely pursue careers in academia and will be looking for teaching assistantships. The Cyber Defense and Cyber Operations students are typically working professionals with less focus on pursuing careers in teaching and academic research.

There is no anticipated negative impact to SDSU’s PhD in Computer Science. Their students already intentionally choose their onsite option. SDSU’s courses are not required by DSU’s program, and therefore they should experience no unintended consequences to their course sizes.

1. **Complete the table and explain any special circumstances. Attach a copy of the program as it appears in the current catalog. If there are corresponding program modifications requested, please attach the associated form. Explain the delivery of the new courses and attach any associated new course request forms.**

As a collaborative effort with SDSU, their course offerings are listed as “this university” along with those offered by DSU. While all courses are offered at DSU, SDSU does not offer several. Also, regarding the table headings, we assume the meaning of ‘this site’ refers to the online offering we’re proposing in this document. Currently all coursework is available online already, with exams and defenses required to be on-campus.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Computer Science, Ph.D.** | Credit hours | Credit hours currently available from this university at this site (online) | Credit hours currently available from other universities available at this site | Credit hours currently available via distance | Credit hours new to this university |
| System General Education Requirements | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Subtotal, Degree Requirements* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Major Requirements | 18 | 18 | 0 | 18 | 0 |
| Major Electives or Minor | 24-30 | 24-30 | 0 | 24-30 | 0 |
| Dissertation Credits | 27-30 | 27-30 | 0 | 27-30 | 0 |
| *Subtotal, Requirements of the Proposed Major* | 72 | 72 | 0 | 72 | 0 |
| Free Electives | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Total, Degree with Proposed Major* | 72 | 72 | 0 | 72 | 0 |

\*If the major will be available in more than one degree (e.g., BA, BS, BS Ed) at the new site(s) and the number or distribution of credits will vary with the degree, provide a separate table for each degree.

1. **How will the university provide student services comparable to those available for students on the main campus?**

Our online coursework has been long established and shown to be successful. The primary difference will be in online exams and defenses. A framework from our other technical programs has shown success with a required residency week held yearly where students are required to visit campus to give these exams and defenses. Holding them online via Microsoft Teams or Zoom is also a viable option that has been successfully utilized for several years. Communication between students and their dissertation committees over email and video conferencing has proven to be effective.

As for academic resources, the Karl Mundt Library grants online access to several relevant journal portals, such as IEEE, ACM, and more. Computing resources, such as the PowerCyber Lab (PCL) and other computing resources for simulations and studies are also available remotely to students.

1. **Is this program accredited by a specialized accrediting body? If so, address any program accreditation issues and costs related to offering the program at the new site(s).**

No. There are currently no standard accreditation entities for CSC Ph.D. programs.

1. **Does the university request any exceptions to Board policy for delivery at the new site(s)? Explain requests for exceptions to Board policy.**  
     
   No.
2. **Cost, Budget, and Resources related to new courses at the site: Explain the amount and source(s) of any one-time and continuing investments in personnel, professional development, release time, time redirected from other assignments, instructional technology & software, other operations and maintenance, facilities, etc., needed to implement the proposed minor.** *Complete Appendix B – Budget using the system form.*

No extra resources are needed since all courses are currently offered online, and video conferencing software and hardware are readily available. Adjuncts will be used to cover additional courses until the program is financially sufficient due to increased numbers of students to hire new faculty.

1. **Additional Information:** *Additional information is optional. Use this space to provide pertinent information not requested above. Limit the number and length of additional attachments. Identify all attachments with capital letters. Letters of support are not necessary and are rarely included with Board materials. The University may include responses to questions from the Board or the Executive Director as appendices to the original proposal where applicable. Delete this item if not used.*