

**APPROVED**

**SEPTEMBER 14, 2021**

Item #E-2  
September 14, 2021

**NEW UNITS OF INSTRUCTION, PUBLIC SERVICE,  
AND RESEARCH AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**

**Submitted for:** Action.

**Summary:** This item requests approval of three degree programs at two public universities.

**Action Requested:** That the Illinois Board of Higher Education approves the following:

Illinois State University

- Master of Arts and Master of Science in English Education in the Central Region

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

- Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences in Neuroscience in the Prairie Region
- Master of Science in Environmental Geology in the Prairie Region



STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**NEW UNITS OF INSTRUCTION, PUBLIC SERVICE,  
AND RESEARCH AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**

By statute, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) is responsible for approving new on-campus and off-campus units of instruction, organized research, and public service, and units of administration proposed by public university governing boards. The Board's approval criteria, defined in rules adopted for administering the statute, addresses university mission, academic control, faculty and staff, support services, financial resources, student demand, curriculum, statewide need, and congruence with Board policies and priorities. In addition to the approval criteria in rules, each new program was reviewed for its contributions to the goals of *A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth*, which sets forth priorities to guide Illinois higher education. Staff recommendations are based on analyses of application materials and responses to staff questions.

**Executive Summary – Public Institutions**

Illinois State University

- Master of Arts and Master of Science in English Education in the Central Region

Illinois State University (ISU or the University) is seeking authorization to offer the Master of Arts and Master of Science in English Education in the Central Region. The MA and MS in English Education requires 34 credit hours including 15 credit hours of core courses, 15 credit hours of electives at the graduate level in English, and four credit hours of master's thesis. Those students pursuing the MA degree option must also complete the ISU Graduate School's Master of Arts foreign language requirements. Currently, ISU offers a bachelor's degree in English Teacher Education that allows graduates to seek licensure from the Illinois State Board of Education, and 100 percent of graduates from this program obtain full-time teaching positions within six months of graduation. The proposed program is designed for licensed secondary English language arts teachers to extend their learning at the graduate level and advance their professional opportunities. Graduates of the program may use the degree to obtain the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) dual credit endorsement in English Composition or English Literature. This endorsement is an addition to the Professional Educator License and credentials holders to teach dual credit courses for high school students. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The University has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the program.

Approval request summary, including staff conclusion, follows in Attachment A.

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

- Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences in Neuroscience in the Prairie Region

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or University) requests authorization to

offer a Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences in Neuroscience in the Prairie Region. The proposed degree is designed to prepare students for graduate study in neuroscience or related areas, medical school, and other health professions or for a career in industry or governmental agencies. The 120-credit-hour interdisciplinary program allows students to combine the study of molecular and cellular biology with neuroscience, neurophysiology, neurochemistry, and neuropathology to gain novel molecular but integrated perspectives on the study of the brain and its component physical and biological systems. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The University has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the program.

Approval request summary, including staff conclusion, follows in Attachment B.

- Master of Science in Environmental Geology in the Prairie Region

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or University) requests authorization to offer a Master of Science in Environmental Geology in the Prairie Region. The proposed program is designed to accommodate a demographic comprised of nontraditional and working learners by offering online coursework, advising, and capstone research. This is a 32-credit hour, non-thesis program that is focused on environment-related training for applied industry careers, including modeling of groundwater flow, characterization of contaminant migration, groundwater and contaminant geochemistry, as well as environmental geophysics. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The University has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the program.

Approval request summary, including staff conclusion, follows in Attachment C.

The staff recommends adoption of the following resolutions:

*The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby grants to Illinois State University authorization to grant the Master of Arts and Master of Science in English Education in the Central Region, subject to the institution's implementation and maintenance of the conditions that were presented in its application and that form the basis upon which this authorization is granted.*

*The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby grants to University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign authorization to grant the Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences in Neuroscience and the Master of Science in Environmental Geology in the Prairie Region, subject to the institution's implementation and maintenance of the conditions that were presented in its application and that form the basis upon which this authorization is granted.*

**Illinois State University**

**Proposed Degree Title in the Region of Authorization:** Master of Arts and Master of Science in English Education in the Central Region

*Projected Enrollments and Degrees:*

First Year Enrollment	Fifth Year Enrollment	Degrees Awarded Fifth Year
10	30	10

**Background**

Illinois State University (ISU or the University) is seeking authorization to offer the Master of Arts (MA) and Master of Science (MS) in English Education in the Central Region. Currently, ISU offers a bachelor’s degree in English Teacher Education that allows graduates to seek licensure from the Illinois State Board of Education, and 100 percent of graduates from this program obtain full-time teaching positions within six months of graduation. The MA and MS in English Education requires 34 credit hours including 15 credit hours of core courses, 15 credit hours of electives at the graduate level in English, and four credit hours of master's thesis. Those students pursuing the MA degree option must also complete the ISU Graduate School’s Master of Arts foreign language requirements. The proposed program is designed for licensed secondary English language arts (ELA) teachers to extend their learning at the graduate level and advance their professional opportunities. Graduates of the program may apply for ISBE’s dual credit endorsement in English Composition or English Literature. This endorsement is an addition to the Professional Educator License (PEL) and credentials holders to teach dual credit courses for high school students.

**Institutional Data**

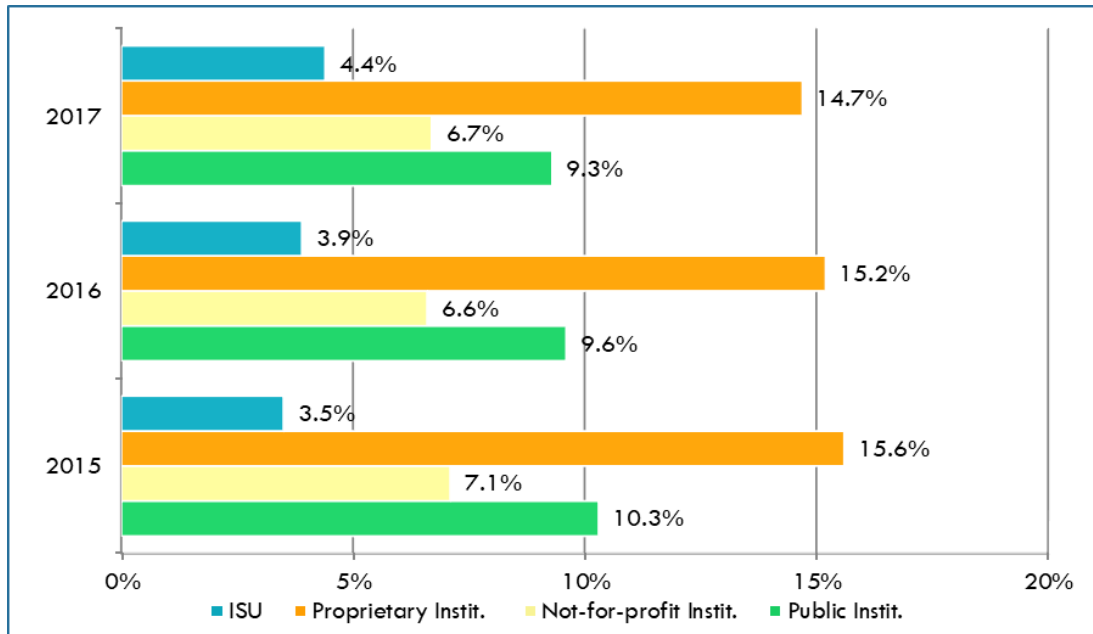
*1050.30(b)(1)(H): Success in student progression and graduation rates across all existing approved programs, and success rates in programs preparing students for certification and licensure, shall be consistent with expectations in higher education and the appropriate related field of study. At a minimum, the Board shall consider these factors based on results for similar institutions. (i) Graduation rates, certificate and degree completion rates, retention rates, and pass rates for licensure and certification aligned with thresholds set by State nor national regulatory bodies. (ii) The success rate shall be, at a minimum, higher than those of the lowest quartile of these measures for similar Illinois institutions defined as open versus competitive enrollment institutions and primarily associate versus primarily baccalaureate granting institutions. Exceptions may be made to the lowest quartile if an institution is above the national average for these measures using the same comparison categories of institutions.*

This section includes information about institutional and student success measures for each institution seeking program approval. The institution’s rates will be compared to Illinois institutions from within a select comparison group and against the national standards or averages. For a proposed undergraduate program, this section will include undergraduate graduation rates, first to second year retention rates, student loan default rates, and any applicable licensure passage rates. For a proposed graduate program, this section will primarily focus on student loan default data since this measure also includes graduate students in the calculation.



Undergraduate success measures are not provided because the University is requesting a graduate level degree program.

Three-Year Cohort Student Loan Default Rate



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education

Note: The national cohort default rate for fiscal year 2017 was 9.7 percent.

A lower number is a positive indicator.

The three-year cohort student loan default rate is the percentage of a school's borrowers who enter repayment on certain Federal Family Education Loan Program or William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program loans during a particular federal fiscal year, October 1 to September 30, and default or meet other specified conditions prior to the end of the second following fiscal year.

## Need

1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois. B) The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.

The proposed program supports the career advancement of in-service (already licensed and practicing) ELA teachers who teach in middle or high school settings. According to the American Association for Employment in Education, nationally, there has been a recent decrease in graduates from English/ELA teacher preparation programs that include initial licensure for teaching. While Illinois State University's English Teacher Education undergraduate program is growing, the proposed master's degree program will allow greater opportunity to more specifically respond to needs within Illinois schools. Graduates of the program may use the degree to obtain the Illinois State Board of Education dual credit endorsement in English Composition or English Literature as an addition to their existing Professional Educator License (PEL), which would credential them to teach dual credit courses for high school students.

In the 2020 Illinois Educator Shortage Survey, conducted by the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS), Illinois school superintendents reported ELA as a high-need subject area. In addition, English Literature and English Composition are two of the dual credit endorsement areas, as designated in 100 ILCS 27/Dual Credit Quality Act, that can be added to the Professional Educator License. According to the Illinois Community College Board's Dual Credit in the Illinois Community College System – Fiscal Year 2020 report, Writing (English Composition) was the top dual credit course with the most enrollments in the state. With the goal of expanding equitable access, support, and success in rigorous and strategic early college coursework, more dual credit teachers will be needed in rural and low-income school districts.

Finally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics also projects a 3.8 percent growth in positions for secondary school teachers, 3.6 percent growth for middle school teachers, 7.4 percent growth for tutors and other related teachers and instructors, and 5.9 percent growth for instructional coordinators from 2019 to 2029. The average median income for high school teaching occupations was 39.9 percent higher at \$62,870, for middle school teachers was \$60,810, and for instructional coordinators was \$66,970, all well above the U.S. median annual wage across all occupations of \$41,950.

### **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth**

The proposed program supports Goal 1, Equity of A Thriving Illinois *to close equity gaps for students who have historically been left behind*. The program plans to do this through its efforts to recruit teachers (graduate students) who work in the state's high-need schools: those serving students of color, students from low-income families, and students in rural communities. The program's framework and learning objectives center on strategies to increase the educational attainment of students, including especially those historically underserved and underrepresented in higher education, thus allowing teachers to use their new pedagogical knowledge to narrow equity gaps in educational pathways into higher education for these students. In addition, through its pathway for the ISBE dual credit endorsement, the program will ensure Illinois high school teachers earn the credentials to teach dual credit coursework and, thus, contributing to making higher education more accessible to rural and low-income students.

The proposed program will also address Goal 2, Sustainability, *to build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions*. The flexible mode of instruction makes the program more accessible and affordable for Illinois English teachers. Additionally, the students admitted into the program through the accelerated pipeline will be able to count 12 credit hours of required graduate coursework toward their undergraduate degree. These credits will also count toward the fulfillment of their graduate degree. Consequently, the cost of their overall graduate degree will be reduced, making it more affordable.

Finally, the proposed degree program will contribute to Goal 3, Growth, *to increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth*. Teachers who complete the proposed degree program are working directly on the ground and their ability to improve their teaching and increase students' academic achievement in literacy areas (e.g., reading and writing) will potentially lead to more students enrolling in higher education and support Illinois's long-term economic viability and growth. Also, the program makes use of online, hybrid, adaptive learning to support flexible course scheduling and delivery methods, so that more students can pursue a master's degree, which will make the program more accessible to more working educators.

## Comparable Colleges in Illinois

Several programs that focus on helping students obtain a license to teach ELA exist within the state. In those existing graduate programs, coursework fulfills initial or post-baccalaureate licensure requirements. Examples of those programs include DePaul University, Loyola University, National Lewis University, Relay Graduate School of Education, Rockford University, and the University of St. Francis which target people whose undergraduate degrees do not qualify them to teach ELA in secondary schools. Distinct from those programs, the proposed program is focused on teachers who have already obtained their initial licensure and wish to deepen their content and pedagogical knowledge in the discipline they teach.

### Mission and Objectives

*1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university. B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

The program is consistent with the purpose, goals, objectives, and mission of the University. The requested degree title reflects the program's objectives and curriculum.

### Curriculum and Assessment

*1050.30(b)(1) [applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The caliber and content of the curriculum must assure that the objectives of the unit of instruction will be achieved. B) The breadth and depth of the curriculum must be consistent with what the title of the unit of instruction implies. C) The admission and graduation requirements for the unit of instruction must be consistent with the stated objectives of the unit of instruction. D) Institutions must show the capacity to develop, deliver and support academic programs. Procedures and policies that will assure the effective design, conduct and evaluation of the degree programs under the academic control of the institution must be developed. Assessment plans must demonstrate that the institution has identified clear and appropriate program and student learning goals and has defined appropriate outcomes. Appropriate data must be collected and may be requested by the Board to show the level of student learning that has occurred as a result of participation in the institution's programs of study.*

*1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.*

### Admission Requirements

To be admitted to the proposed program, an applicant must meet requirements for admission to graduate studies at Illinois State University as well as program-specific requirements. Students will apply either to the Master of Arts or Master of Science degree in English Education. General admission requirements include obtaining a bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university that is accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting association, or its equivalent with at least a 2.8 Grade Point Average (GPA); submission of examinations or standardized tests, interviews, auditions, examples of work, and letters of recommendation. In specific cases, a department or school may petition the Graduate School for permission to use undergraduate courses taken while the student is classified as a graduate student (either as a visiting student or a degree student in another graduate program) in calculating the GPA for the

last 60 undergraduate hours. Program specific requirements for admission include the following:

- An existing or pending state certification to teach English language arts (ELA);
- Graduate admissions application, including a two-page statement articulating the applicant's professional goals and how this graduate degree will help achieve those goals;
- Two letters of recommendation; and
- A sample lesson plan or other instructional artifact that evidences the applicant's commitment to or eagerness to learn more about ELA teaching.

## Curriculum

The MA and MS in English Education requires 34 credit hours. The curriculum includes 15 credit hours of core courses, 15 credit hours of electives at the graduate level in English, and four credit hours of master's thesis. The MA and MS in English Education is designed for certified ELA teachers who wish to deepen their knowledge of ELA content, pedagogy, and research. The only distinction in program requirements for students who choose to pursue the MA option versus the MS option is their need to fulfill the ISU Graduate School's Master of Arts foreign language requirements. Students may take 18 credit hours to obtain the ISBE dual credit endorsements in English Composition or English Literature.

## Assessment of Student Learning

Student learning will be assessed through a combination of direct and indirect methods. Direct measures include midterm and final exams, reports, response papers, independent and group projects, and presentations. As a culminating project, a thesis will be required of all students, which will include original research that contributes significantly to the field of English Education. Each of the program objectives will also be indirectly assessed using at least two different measures that allow for program triangulation of data across students, time, and courses. These indirect measures include annual program surveys of program students, faculty, and alumni; program graduates exit survey; alumni and student acceptance to present research at professional conferences or publish in peer-reviewed journals; and time to degree.

## Program Assessment

The proposed program will be administratively housed in the Department of English in the College of Arts and Sciences and the program faculty will be responsible for assessing the proposed program. Through an annual report generated by the Office of Planning, Research, and Policy Analysis, areas of improvement will be identified and shared with the program and department. Along with the annual review of the student learning outcomes assessment, the faculty members will review the report and will submit their findings in an annual assessment update to the University Assessment Services. Depending on the rating assigned to the program, the University will require progress reports or enter the program into the standard reporting cycle required by IBHE's Administrative Code.

## Facilities (space, equipment, instructional materials)

*1050.30(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support the high-quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained. B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service. C)*



*Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

Existing facilities at the University are sufficient for implementing the proposed program. The University possesses adequate library resources, including textbooks, electronic journals, and database resources to support teaching and scholarly work. Faculty, staff, and students will have access to these resources, as well as curriculum and technology support services.

### **Faculty and Staff**

*1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met. B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation. E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

The University has identified institutional policies that ensure individuals hired possess the training, credentials, and other related qualifications. Faculty teaching in the proposed programs will have the appropriate qualifications. A formal faculty evaluation process is in place.

### **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained. B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.*

The University has adequate faculty, staff, and other instructional resources to support the program. Existing faculty will teach the proposed curricula.

### **Accreditation and Licensure**

*1050.30(b)(3)[applicable only to units of instruction]: Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

No specialized accreditation is required for the proposed program. Graduates of the program may apply for ISBE's dual credit endorsement in English Composition or English Literature

as an addition to their existing Professional Educator License (PEL), which would credential them to teach dual credit courses for high school students.

### **Program Information**

*1050.30(b)(2)[applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The information which the institution provides for students and the public shall include the following: i) An accurate description of the unit of instruction, including its objectives, length, and residency requirements if any; ii) Schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the unit of instruction, cancellation and refund policies; iii) Student rights and responsibilities; iv) A statement regarding the transferability of college credits, including the fact that the decision to accept transfer credits is determined by the receiving institutions; v) A statement as to how the institution will advise students on the nature of the transfer process, including the importance of consulting with institutions to which the student may seek to transfer; vi) Evidence of arrangements for the transfer of courses or credits or both to institutional counterparts, when these arrangements exist; these arrangements are also known as articulation agreements; vii) A statement of the institution's most recent graduation rates and the number of graduates and enrollments as provided by the institution to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and any submission of data to satisfy Board reporting requirements; and viii) Other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. B) The information listed in subsection (b)(2)(A) shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment and shall be included in the institution's catalog of programs.*

Detailed information about the proposed program, including description of the admission policies, university policies, tuition, fees, and curriculum are provided in the proposal and will be published on the University's website.

### **Staff Conclusion**

The staff concludes that the Master of Arts and Master of Science in English Education proposed by the Illinois State University meet the criteria to implement the Board of Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/et.seq.) as set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Ch. II, Section 1050.30, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation or licensure.

## University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

**Proposed Degree Title in the Region of Authorization:** Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences in Neuroscience in the Prairie Region

### *Projected Enrollments and Degrees:*

First Year Enrollment	Fifth Year Enrollment	Degrees Awarded Fifth Year
50	200	50

## Background

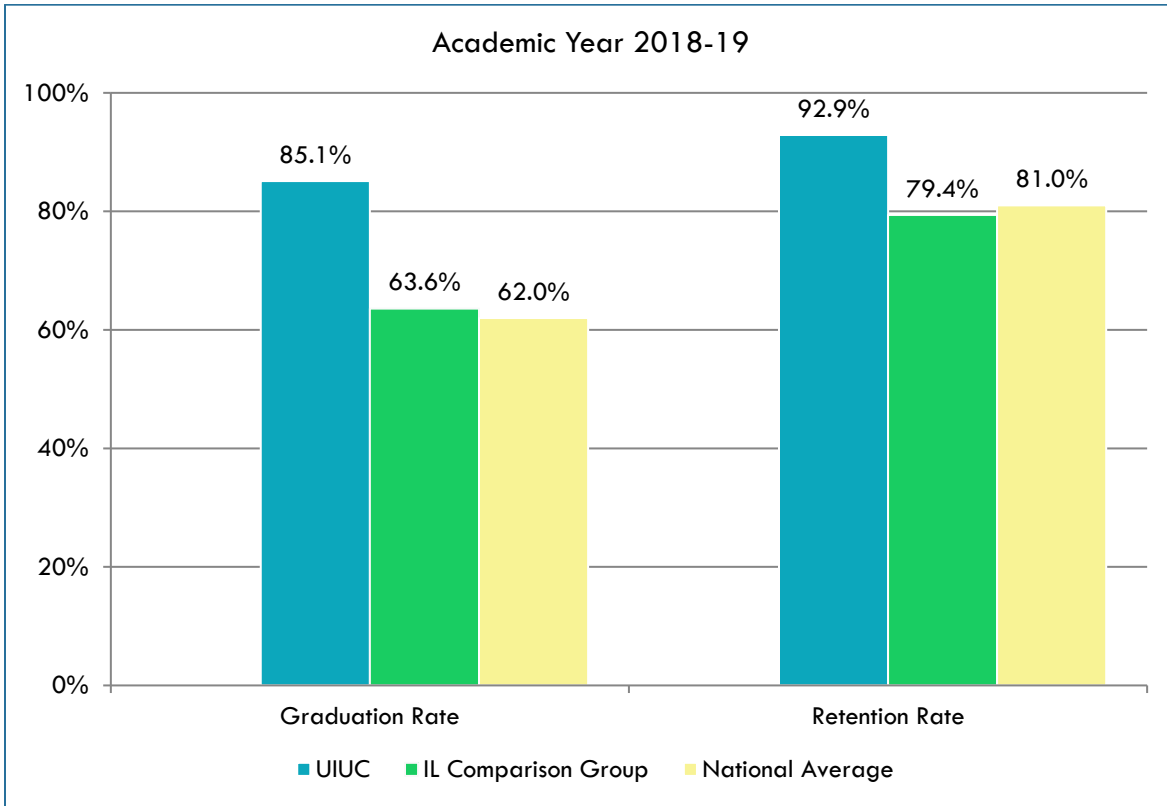
The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (University or UIUC) is seeking authorization to offer a Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences (BSLAS) in Neuroscience in the Prairie Region. The graduate Neuroscience program at the University was originally partnered with the School of Molecular and Cellular Biology before shifting to a stand-alone unit in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences several years ago. By offering the proposed undergraduate program, a particular niche of neuroscience will be filled that complements the two concentrations in Behavioral Neuroscience and Cognitive Neuroscience offered by the Department of Psychology. Together, these degree programs or concentrations will offer the fullest possible range of options for UIUC's undergraduates in neuroscience, while making full use of current and future faculty expertise and existing course offerings, as well as adding new opportunities for students. This degree can serve students in many ways, including strengthening their competitiveness for admission to more advanced neuroscience or related studies in graduate or professional programs, and enhancing their competitiveness for employment in skilled workforce areas.

## Institutional Data

*1050.30(b)(1)(H): Success in student progression and graduation rates across all existing approved programs, and success rates in programs preparing students for certification and licensure, shall be consistent with expectations in higher education and the appropriate related field of study. At a minimum, the Board shall consider these factors based on results for similar institutions. (i) Graduation rates, certificate and degree completion rates, retention rates, and pass rates for licensure and certification aligned with thresholds set by State nor national regulatory bodies. (ii) The success rate shall be, at a minimum, higher than those of the lowest quartile of these measures for similar Illinois institutions defined as open versus competitive enrollment institutions and primarily associate versus primarily baccalaureate granting institutions. Exceptions may be made to the lowest quartile if an institution is above the national average for these measures using the same comparison categories of institutions.*

This section includes information about institutional and student success measures for each institution seeking program approval. The institution's rates will be compared to Illinois institutions from within a select comparison group and against the national standards or averages. For a proposed undergraduate program, this section will include undergraduate graduation rates, first to second year retention rates, student loan default rates, and any applicable licensure passage rates. For a proposed graduate program, this section will primarily focus on student loan default data since this measure also includes graduate students in the calculation.

## Undergraduate Graduation Rates and Retention



*Source: National System for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education*

*Note: University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is in the four-year, selective Illinois comparison group. Higher percentages are positive indicators.*

### Undergraduate Graduation Rate

The graduation rate measures the rate at which entering freshmen graduate within 150 percent of normal program length. Data are provided for six-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time bachelor’s degree-seeking students and three-year graduation rates for full-time associate degree-seeking students. The national standard for graduation rates is reported annually by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

### Undergraduate Retention Rate

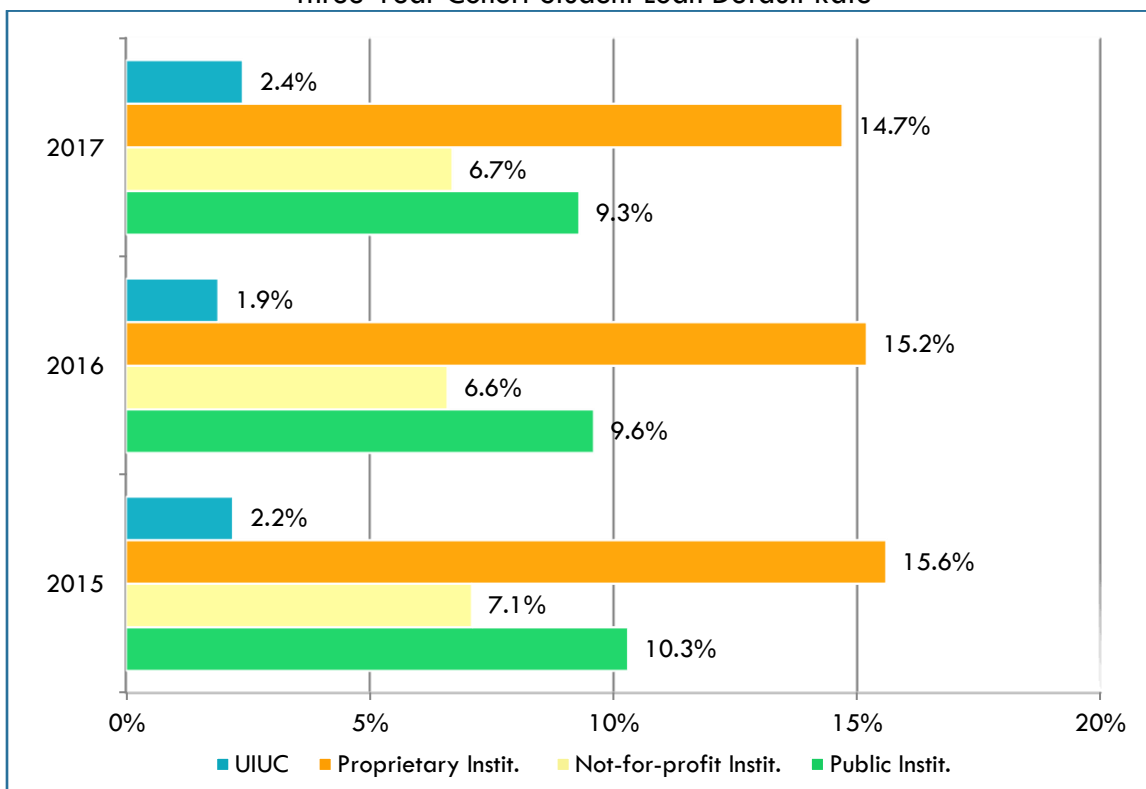
Retention rates examine the percentage of first-time degree seeking students enrolled in the fall of the prior year that are still enrolled in the fall of the current year. The national standard for retention rates is reported annually by NCES.

### Undergraduate Completions per 100 FTE

Academic Year 2018-19	<b>University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign</b>	<b>Comparable Illinois Institutions</b>
	N/A	24.3

The full-time equivalent (FTE) data is a unit of measurement intended to represent one student enrolled full-time for one academic year. The calculation is based upon credit/contact hours offered at an institution divided by a standard minimum (12 credit hour) full-time course load. For the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the undergraduate completion per 100 FTE is not an accurate indicator. The majority of students at the University are full-time, and substantial numbers double major and take more than 12 (up to 18) credit hours, and the standard calculation does not account for these factors.

Three-Year Cohort Student Loan Default Rate



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education

Note: The national cohort default rate for fiscal year 2017 is 9.7%.

A lower number is a positive indicator.

The three-year cohort student loan default rate is the percentage of a school's borrowers who enter repayment on certain Federal Family Education Loan Program or William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program loans during a particular federal fiscal year, October 1 to September 30, and default or meet other specified conditions prior to the end of the second following fiscal year.

### Need

1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois. B) The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.

The field of neuroscience is a young and highly interdisciplinary area that is growing at an exponential rate. Because neuroscience is at the crux of understanding the biology of how the brain works, it will be the key to researching the causes of and developing the biomedical solutions to the

ongoing mental health crisis. Disorders ranging from autism, anorexia, and Alzheimer's disease to substance abuse, epilepsy, schizophrenia, Parkinson's disease, and many more are on the rise and pose large societal burden. It is critical that students who wish to meet this urgent need through their future neuroscience-based educational and professional career choices, have a solid foundation in neuroscience, and this proposed program will provide the means for them to achieve their goals.

The demand for this program has been demonstrated for quite some time in that students began formulating their own neuroscience program by majoring in Molecular and Cellular Biology with a minor in psychology or reverse, or by double majoring in Molecular and Cellular Biology and psychology. In 2016, the School of Molecular and Cellular Biology (the School) began offering a non-transcripted certificate in Neuroscience with a recommended course sequence and selections that are similar to those of the proposed curriculum. Since its inception, the certificate has grown in popularity and the School has issued 40-50 certificates to graduating Molecular and Cellular Biology students each year. The majority of students pursuing a BSLAS in Neuroscience will be preparing for graduate or professional studies in medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, or law. At the bachelor's level, potential careers include pharmaceutical sales or management, laboratory technician, health educator, medical and healthcare manager, clinical research assistant, and public policy or governmental work. As one example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects a 31.5 percent change from 2019 to 2029 for medical and health service managers with a bachelor's degree with a median annual wage of \$104,280.

### **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth**

The proposed BSLAS in Neuroscience supports Goal 1, Equity of A Thriving Illinois to *close the equity gaps for students who have historically been left behind*. The School of Molecular and Cellular Biology demonstrates commitment to the principle of Equity in Education by assuring that every student has access to the resources and educational support they need during their undergraduate education. To accomplish this, the School employs an array of strategies that include first year and transfer courses, first generation and transfer mentor activities, initiatives that encourage and acquaint students with research, and a merit scholarship program. The merit scholarship program serves students from a population that has been historically underrepresented in sciences and research-focused careers, including students from smaller rural high schools with fewer resources.

The proposed program will also address Goal 2, Sustainability, to *build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions* by finding ways to reduce the financial burden of education on students and their families. Through an array of scholarships and fellowships, the School of Molecular and Cellular Biology provides financial assistance to students so that participating in education and research does not lead to financial hardship. Every scholarship and fellowship include support for students who are from a population that has been historically underrepresented in the sciences and research-focused careers.

The proposed degree program will contribute to Goal 3, Growth, to *increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth*. The BSLAS will prepare graduates for high-wage and high need jobs within the state of Illinois or for advanced study in health-related graduate or professional fields as indicated above. The School of Molecular and Cellular Biology is forming partnerships with industry, government, and others to provide opportunities for all of students who do not choose to pursue advanced academic degrees in graduate or professional school. Additionally, for those graduates interested in teaching at the postsecondary level, the BLS projects a 20.5 growth rate from 2019-2029 in health specialties teachers (i.e., dentistry, clinical

laboratory, pharmacology, or public health).

### Comparable Programs in Illinois

There are 11 private institutions and two public institutions that offer a comparable program. Most of these programs are located in the Chicago metropolitan area and Western region of the state. They offer a traditional neuroscience curriculum as a combination of cognitive and behavioral psychology, biology, and neuroscience, with limited molecular, cellular and systems emphasis. The proposed BSLAS in Neuroscience program is focused on neuroscience with the inclusion of a few psychology courses and would be the second BS in Neuroscience offered in the Prairie Region.

Institution	Program Name	Sector
Augustana College	BA in Neuroscience	Private Not-For-Profit
DePaul University	BS in Neuroscience	Private Not-For-Profit
Dominican University	BS in Neuroscience	Private Not-For-Profit
Eastern Illinois University	BS in Neuroscience	Public
Illinois Wesleyan University	BA in Neuroscience	Private Not-For-Profit
Knox College	BA/BS in Neuroscience	Private Not-For-Profit
Lake Forest College	BA in Neuroscience	Private Not-For-Profit
Loyola University of Chicago	BS in Neuroscience	Private Not-For-Profit
Monmouth College	BA in Neuroscience	Private Not-For-Profit
North Central College	BA in Neuroscience	Private Not-For-Profit
Northwestern University	BA in Cognitive Sciences	Private Not-For-Profit
University of Chicago	BA/BS in Neuroscience	Private Not-For-Profit
University of Illinois Chicago	BS in Neuroscience	Public

### Mission and Objectives

*1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university. B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

The program is consistent with the purpose, goals, objectives, and mission of the University. The requested degree title reflects the programs objectives and curriculum.

### Curriculum and Assessment

*1050.30(b)(1) [applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The caliber and content of the curriculum must assure that the objectives of the unit of instruction will be achieved. B) The breadth and depth of the curriculum must be consistent with what the title of the unit of instruction implies. C) The admission and graduation requirements for the unit of instruction must be consistent with the stated objectives of the unit of instruction. D) Institutions must show the capacity to develop, deliver and support academic programs. Procedures and policies that will assure the effective design, conduct and evaluation of the degree programs under the academic control of the institution must be developed. Assessment plans must demonstrate that the institution has identified clear and appropriate program and student learning goals and has defined appropriate outcomes. Appropriate data must be collected and may be*

requested by the Board to show the level of student learning that has occurred as a result of participation in the institution's programs of study.

1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.

### Admission Requirements

Applicants interested in the BSLAS in Neuroscience will be admitted to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign through the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Four years are recommended for all courses below, but the minimum high school course requirements for admission are:

- 4 years of English
- 3-3.5 years of Math
- 2 years each of Social Sciences, Lab Sciences, and Language other than English
- 2 years of flexible academic units

### Curriculum

The Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences in Neuroscience is an interdisciplinary program that requires a minimum of 120-credit-hours of which 40 hours must be upper division. The BSLAS in Neuroscience provides foundational knowledge and concepts in molecular and cellular biology, genetics, psychology, chemistry, physics, math, and statistics. The curriculum will cover a breadth of areas in the discipline of neuroscience, from brain, behavior, and information processing to cellular and molecular neuroscience and integrative neurosystems. Students will gain laboratory skills through core laboratory courses in addition to an advanced cell biology or neuroanatomy laboratory course and have the opportunity for research experience in the laboratories of neuroscience faculty. Graduation requirements for the degree include:

- General Education coursework – 31 hours
- Classes at the 100-400-levels in the following rubrics: MCB, CHEM, MATH, PHYS, PSYC - 83-84 hours

### Assessment of Student Learning

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has established processes to measure and analyze student learning outcomes. The School of Molecular and Cellular Biology will produce a learning objectives map that will identify which courses support each learning objective. Direct measures include assignments, exams, classroom interactions and discussions, with mastery at 75 percent and above. Throughout the semester, assessment of the learning outcomes will be collected within each course as well as evidence of content and skills mastery in undergraduate research and experiential opportunities through written research documents. Indirect measures of student learning outcomes include focus groups to better understand the student experience in the program. Modifications will be made to teaching and learning as needed so that students are supported to meet objectives and learning outcomes.



## Program Assessment

The program will be evaluated annually at multiple levels and involve key faculty, curriculum committee, and stakeholder groups. Based on the results, the School of Molecular and Cellular Biology will evaluate the need for adjustment of the program and will make changes accordingly. The following metrics will aid in program assessment:

- Course selection and sequence
- Student and employer survey results
- Academic performance
- Graduate school acceptance rates
- Quality and nature of graduate institutions
- Job placement

## Facilities (space, equipment, instructional materials)

*1050.30(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support the high quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained. B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service. C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

Existing facilities are sufficient for implementing the proposed program. The University possesses appropriate library resources with access to books and journal holdings to support teaching and scholarly work.

## Faculty and Staff

*1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met. B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation. E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

The University has identified institutional policies that ensure faculty and staff possess the training, credentials, and other related qualifications to provide instruction at the institution. Faculty teaching in the proposed program will have the appropriate qualifications. A formal faculty evaluation process is in place.

## **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained. B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.*

The University has adequate faculty, staff, and other instructional resources to administer the proposed program. Existing faculty will teach the proposed curricula. There are plans to hire a non-tenure specialized faculty member to teach the new laboratory science course and an academic advisor for this degree program.

## **Accreditation and Licensure**

*1050.30(b)(3)[applicable only to units of instruction]: Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

No specialized accreditation or licensure is required.

## **Program Information**

*1050.30(b)(2)[applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The information which the institution provides for students and the public shall include the following: i) An accurate description of the unit of instruction, including its objectives, length, and residency requirements if any; ii) Schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the unit of instruction, cancellation and refund policies; iii) Student rights and responsibilities; iv) A statement regarding the transferability of college credits, including the fact that the decision to accept transfer credits is determined by the receiving institutions; v) A statement as to how the institution will advise students on the nature of the transfer process, including the importance of consulting with institutions to which the student may seek to transfer; vi) Evidence of arrangements for the transfer of courses or credits or both to institutional counterparts, when these arrangements exist; these arrangements are also known as articulation agreements; vii) A statement of the institution's most recent graduation rates and the number of graduates and enrollments as provided by the institution to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and any submission of data to satisfy Board reporting requirements; and viii) Other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. B) The information listed in subsection (b)(2)(A) shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment and shall be included in the institution's catalog of programs.*

Detailed information about the proposed program, including description of the admission policies, university policies, tuition, fees, and curriculum are provided in the proposal and will be published on the University's website.

## **Staff Conclusion**

The staff concludes that the Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences in Neuroscience proposed by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign meets the criteria to implement the Board of Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/et.seq.) as set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Ch.

II, Section 1050.30, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation or licensure.

**Proposed Degree Title in the Region of Authorization:** Master of Science in Environmental Geology in the Prairie Region

*Projected Enrollments and Degrees:*

First Year Enrollment	Fifth Year Enrollment (or when fully implemented)	Degrees Awarded Fifth Year (or when fully implemented)
5	15	15

**Background**

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or University) is seeking authorization to offer a Master of Science in Environmental Geology in the Prairie Region. The proposed program is a collaborative effort between the Departments of Atmospheric Sciences, Geology, and Geography and Geographic Information Science, within the School of Earth, Society and Environment that was submitted and awarded funding in Fiscal Year 2020 through the University’s “Investment for Growth” initiative. The online degree provides educational advancement for distant-learning students in each of the three core disciplines, while taking advantage of the strengths of each department’s expertise in computational and data sciences and geospatial analysis. Environment-related careers are the dominant area of employment in geology, and include environmental consulting, government regulatory jobs, non-profit organizations, and government research jobs. A master’s degree is required to advance in the profession, and the new program is designed to satisfy demand from working professionals and non-traditional students who cannot attend an on-campus program.

**Institutional Data**

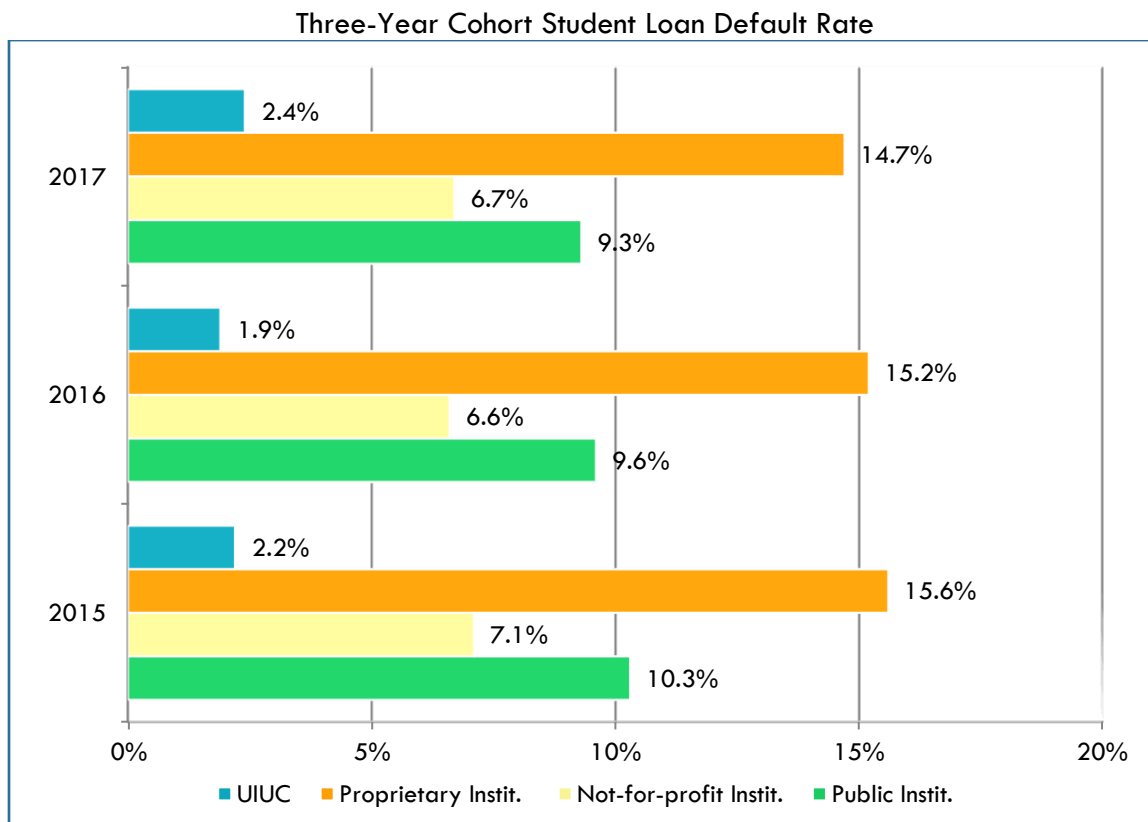
*1050.30(b)(1)(H): Success in student progression and graduation rates across all existing approved programs, and success rates in programs preparing students for certification and licensure, shall be consistent with expectations in higher education and the appropriate related field of study. At a minimum, the Board shall consider these factors based on results for similar institutions. (i) Graduation rates, certificate and degree completion rates, retention rates, and pass rates for licensure and certification aligned with thresholds set by State nor national regulatory bodies. (ii) The success rate shall be, at a minimum, higher than those of the lowest quartile of these measures for similar Illinois institutions defined as open versus competitive enrollment institutions and primarily associate versus primarily baccalaureate granting institutions. Exceptions may be made to the lowest quartile if an institution is above the national average for these measures using the same comparison categories of institutions.*

This section includes information about institutional and student success measures for each institution seeking program approval. The institution’s rates will be compared to Illinois institutions from within a select comparison group and against the national standards or averages. For a proposed undergraduate program, this section will include undergraduate graduation rates, first to second year retention rates, student loan default rates, and any applicable licensure passage rates. For a proposed graduate program, this section will primarily focus on student loan default



data since this measure also includes graduate students in the calculation.

Undergraduate success measures are not provided because the University is requesting a graduate level degree program.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education

Note: The national cohort default rate for fiscal year 2017 is 9.7%.

A lower number is a positive indicator.

The three-year cohort student loan default rate is the percentage of a school's borrowers who enter repayment on certain Federal Family Education Loan Program or William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program loans during a particular federal fiscal year, October 1 to September 30, and default or meet other specified conditions prior to the end of the second following fiscal year.

## Need

*1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois. B) The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.*

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for geoscientists is projected to grow 5 percent from 2019 to 2029, faster than average for all occupations with a median annual wage of \$93,580 for a bachelor's degree. The need for energy, environmental protection, and responsible land and resource management is expected to drive demand for geoscientists in the future. The MS in Environmental Geology is designed to meet high demand for advanced geology expertise. The environmental consulting sector is the most productive for employment of geologists

and will remain a consistent area of employment for decades.

The American Geoscience Institute reports that nearly 30 percent of geology bachelor's degree graduates were hired by environmental consulting firms in 2017, while others have entered similar environment-related federal government jobs. As such, these environmental geology positions represent the largest sector of employment for recent geology graduates nationwide. Additionally, the department has observed that BS graduates from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign discover that advanced skills and certification obtained through an MS degree in geology are required to migrate into project management and leadership positions.

Through the creation of a fully online MS degree in Environmental Geology, the department will be able to expand the geographic reach of the department's teaching mission and expand course offerings to provide optimal training for environmental geology careers. As such, the proposed program satisfies demand from an under-served educational community.

### **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth**

The proposed MS in Environmental Geology supports Goal 1, Equity, to *close the equity gaps for students who have historically been left behind*. The program will benefit non-traditional students and support a more diverse student cohort through the more flexible and affordable nature of online education. Similarly, because students living in any location, nationally or internationally, can obtain this new degree, overall diversity will be increased. Fostering safe and welcoming working environments will be a continuing focus in advising and round-table discussions as part of the online MS degree program.

The proposed program will also address Goal 2, Sustainability, to *build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions* by providing state-of-the-art knowledge and skills in environmental geology. This new degree will be able to satisfy demand from non-traditional students seeking to obtain an advanced degree in applied Geology, and from working professionals whose employers may contribute to the cost of tuition.

Finally, the proposed degree program will contribute to Goal 3, Growth, to *increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth* by providing an innovative master's degree while targeting a more diverse cross-section of learners previously unable to complete this degree program on campus. The proposed MS in Environmental Geology is designed to accommodate a demographic comprised of nontraditional and working learners by offering online coursework, advising, and capstone research. The primary target is the environmental consulting sector, which is the most productive sector for employment of geologists and will remain a consistent area of employment for decades. The program will provide students with an array of applied and experiential opportunities through initiatives aligned with the Discovery Partners Institute and connections to the Illinois State Water Survey, the Illinois State Geologic Survey, and private-sector environmental consulting firms.

### **Comparable Programs in Illinois**

Currently, Illinois State University is the only public university that offers a comparable program, a Master of Science in Hydrogeology. However, the MS in Environmental Geology distinguishes itself as the only full-online program designed to accommodate remotely located learners and working professionals. The program will provide graduates with Geology expertise used in applied industry sectors, including groundwater modeling and contaminant migration

characterization, geophysics, and “big data” analysis.

### **Mission and Objectives**

*1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university. B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

The program is consistent with the purpose, goals, objectives, and mission of the University. The requested degree title reflects the programs objectives and curriculum.

### **Curriculum and Assessment**

*1050.30(b)(1) [applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The caliber and content of the curriculum must assure that the objectives of the unit of instruction will be achieved. B) The breadth and depth of the curriculum must be consistent with what the title of the unit of instruction implies. C) The admission and graduation requirements for the unit of instruction must be consistent with the stated objectives of the unit of instruction. D) Institutions must show the capacity to develop, deliver and support academic programs. Procedures and policies that will assure the effective design, conduct and evaluation of the degree programs under the academic control of the institution must be developed. Assessment plans must demonstrate that the institution has identified clear and appropriate program and student learning goals and has defined appropriate outcomes. Appropriate data must be collected and may be requested by the Board to show the level of student learning that has occurred as a result of participation in the institution’s programs of study.*

*1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution’s established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.*

### **Admission Requirements**

Applicants interested in the Master of Science in Environmental Geology program must meet the minimum requirements set by the Graduate College. To be considered for admission to the program, applicants are required to have:

- Completed a bachelor’s degree
- Earned a minimum GPA of 3.0/4.0
- Submitted three letters of reference
- TOEFL or IELTS scores if native language is not English

### **Curriculum**

To earn the Master of Science in Environmental Geology, students will complete 32 credit hours of coursework consisting of a minimum of 24 hours of formal coursework in geodata science, analysis, and advanced topics, at least 4 hours of capstone, and the remaining hours of elective 400-500 level courses to reach total hours required for degree. At least 12 of the 32 required hours must be in geology, eight of those courses at the 500-level. Additionally, a minimum of 12 of the 32 required credit hours must be in 500-level courses. A final component of the curriculum ends with a capstone course that requires a research project evaluated by the faculty.

## Assessment of Student Learning

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has established processes to measure and analyze student learning outcomes. Direct measures include projects, essays, tests, and homework demonstrated by passing grades in required courses. Assessment of the learning outcomes within each course takes place throughout each semester. Indirect measures include self-evaluation, advisor evaluation, satisfaction survey, and alumni career change and advancement tracking. A written reflection of self-evaluation will serve as a direct measure of assessment. Assessment results will be presented by the Graduate Studies Committee to faculty and students. Recommendations for improvement will be collected and implemented. Alumni career updates are entered into a database annually.

## Program Assessment

The program will be evaluated and improved through the department's external review and associated self-study. Methods of evaluation used to improve the curriculum, instruction, and overall quality of the program will include:

- Enrollment trends
- Specific comments and scores from course evaluations
- Input and recommendations from external reviewers
- Feedback and information gathered by the Alumni Advisory Board

## Facilities (space, equipment, instructional materials)

*1050.30(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support the high quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained. B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service. C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

Existing facilities and space are sufficient for implementing the proposed program. The University possesses adequate library resources with sufficient access to books, electronic journals, and database resources to support teaching and scholarly work.

## Faculty and Staff

*1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met. B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation. E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and*



*technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

The University has identified institutional policies that ensure individuals hired possess the training, credentials, and other related qualifications. A formal faculty evaluation process is in place. A program coordinator will be hired to assist with operations of new programs in Atmospheric Sciences, Geology, and Geography and Geographical Information Science.

### **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained. B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.*

The University has adequate faculty, staff, and other instructional resources in place to administer the proposed program.

### **Accreditation and Licensure**

*1050.30(b)(3)[applicable only to units of instruction]: Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

No specialized accreditation is required. There is a Professional Geologist (PG) license program in Illinois, however it is not required for practicing geologists. Many state-based Professional Geology certification programs credit advanced degree time toward the minimum time required for PG certification and licensing, making the proposed program desirable for entry-level employees seeking graduate degrees remotely.

### **Program Information**

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Detailed information about the proposed program, including description of the admission policies, university policies, tuition, fees, and curriculum are provided in the proposal and will be published on the University's website.

### **Staff Conclusion**

The staff concludes that the Master of Science in Environmental Geology proposed by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign meets the criteria to implement the Board of Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/et.seq.) as set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Ch. II, Section 1050.30, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation or licensure.