

**COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
Conway, South Carolina**

**Proposal to
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education**

To establish a

Bachelor of Professional Studies

2023

Program Contact:

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Classification

Program Title:	Bachelor of Professional Studies
Designation, type, level of degree:	New baccalaureate degrees, 4-year
Proposed date of implementation:	Fall 2023
CIP Code:	24.0199
Fellows/LIFE Scholarship awards:	No
Delivery mode:	Online

Background Information

State the nature and purpose of the proposed program, including target audience, centrality to institutional mission, and relation to the strategic plan.

Coastal Carolina University (CCU) proposes the Bachelor of Professional Studies (BPS), an online completion program primarily designed for students who have some college but no baccalaureate degree. The BPS degree will allow individuals, many of whom are in the workforce already, to complete their baccalaureate degrees online while remaining in their current professional roles. The BPS degree offers foundational courses focused on professional skills that will augment the course work that students bring to the program. The foundational courses focus on the following areas: professional communication, professional ethics, principles of management, leadership and project management, and personnel management. The BPS degree will also require 18 hours in a minor, certificate, cognate, or 18 hours in a combination of minor, certificate, or cognate. Students will also need to satisfy general education requirements, which ensures that students will have the breadth of knowledge that comes with engagement with the liberal arts and general education components while maintaining flexibility for returning adults and transfers from the South Carolina Technical College System. Achieving an active learning environment is part of the University's mission. To this end, "Coastal Carolina maintains a broad range of contemporary technologies, programming, support services, and innovative course offerings and delivery methods." This call to innovate and maintain contemporary programming and services in the mission statement is met by the BPS degree as it creates a pathway for degree completion for adult learners returning to higher education to complete a four-year degree. The University's current strategic plan is built around key institutional strategies. Under Academic Excellence and Instructional Quality (Strategy 1) is Goal 1.4 which calls the University to "promote a range of diverse learning opportunities, innovative curricula and programs that enhance engagement, assure high-impact credit and noncredit programs, and enable student success." The BPS is an example of a degree that meets this call by innovating programming to meet the needs of the local and state communities. Under Student Excellence (Strategy 2), Goal 2.1 calls on the University to "ensure a supportive, high-quality learning environment that produces knowledgeable and skilled graduates prepared for future success." The BPS will allow CCU to reach adult learners who would not otherwise be able to complete a CCU degree program given that they are in careers and place bound. The BPS degree will allow CCU to reach more students and better satisfy Goal 2.1. Under Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity is Goal 4.1: "Foster a barrier-free environment that increases access to and

effective navigation of institutional opportunities and is informed by a commitment to equitable standards of practice.” Related to that goal is Objective Number 4.1.4: “CCU will assess, enhance and promote initiatives that support effective access to campus programs and processes for all constituents with a focus on underrepresented groups.” The BPS will provide more access to degree completion for those adult learners who are place bound and cannot attend traditional face-to-face degree programs.

Assessment of Need

Provide an assessment of the need for the program for the institution, the state, the region, and beyond, if applicable.

According to the most recent U.S. Census data, 24.3% of adults 25 years and older in Horry County have a baccalaureate degree, while in South Carolina that figure is 29.6%. The national average is 39%. The South Carolina Department of Commerce reports that for Georgetown, Horry, and Williamsburg counties, 15% of adults aged 18 to 64, the prime contributors to the workforce, have a baccalaureate degree. Holders of baccalaureate degrees typically have better lifetime economic and health outcomes than those without such degrees, so expanding access to baccalaureate degrees will improve the health and finances of South Carolina individuals. Baccalaureate degree holders in the workforce offer a broad range of skills to workers, augmenting their technical skills and thereby benefit the South Carolina workforce at large and the state’s economy.

As of 2021, National Student Clearinghouse reported that 472,043 individuals in South Carolina have some college but no degree (SCND students).¹ This is a roughly 6% increase from 2018 which saw 447,228 individuals in South Carolina with some college but no degree.² Many SCND students need the flexibility offered by online learning if they are to build on their existing college credits and complete a baccalaureate degree. Reporting internal to CCU shows that there over 1,800 individuals who started a degree program at CCU since 2002 but stopped out without completing their degree. In addition to SCND students, there are also graduates of two-year programs who have goals of furthering their education by completing baccalaureate degrees. The South Carolina Technical College System (SCTCS) awards over 100,000 associate degrees a year. Some of these graduates aim to earn a baccalaureate degree to enhance their skills and career prospects while working and staying near home. Expanding online degree completion options through this BPS degree would provide additional educational opportunities for the following categories of students: SCND students across the state and beyond, CCU students who have stopped out, associate degree graduates looking for further educational opportunities, and working adults. Through a survey of graduates of our existing online degree completion programs, students cite time to degree and acceptance of transfer credits as two of the main reasons for choosing an online degree completion option at CCU. This is in line with national trends. This program can be an important piece at CCU to meet the Ascent 60X30 goals

¹ <https://nscresearchcenter.org/some-college-no-credential/>

² https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/SCND_Report_2019.pdf

of increasing the percentage of South Carolinians with a high-quality post-secondary credential to 60% and thereby closing achievement gaps in higher education. One major strategy to hitting this benchmark according to CHE is “to engage with adults who are near the completion of a credential. In South Carolina there are nearly 450,000 people who have some college credits but no credential. The CHE assists near completers in their pursuit of postsecondary credentials by creating and sharing a clearinghouse of best practice strategies for initiatives that support the needs of adult learners.” This degree will help those now over 450,000 individuals across the state who have some college but no degree finish what they started.

The BPS degree will be CCU’s third online degree completion program. The B.S. in Health Administration is an online degree completion program. The B.S. in Nursing is a completion program that can be completed online. Additionally, there are traditional degrees that can be completed online as well (BSBA in Marketing, BSBA in Hospitality, Resort, and Tourism Management, and BS in Information Technology). The BPS degree will be an important addition to these offerings as it will greatly improve access to the 472,043 individuals in the state that have some college, but no degree. It also will serve as a flexible generalist degree that AAS graduates from the SC Technical College system can pursue online as they remain in the workforce. To be eligible for entry into the Professional Studies degree, a student must satisfy one of the following requirements: be 25 years of age, hold an associate degree, or have 45 previous college credits. With these admission requirements and the fact that it is full online, the BPS degree will not be in direct competition with existing, traditional CCU degrees.

Transfer and Articulation

Identify any special articulation agreements for the proposed program. Provide the articulation agreement or Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding.

Articulation agreements are already in place both at the state-level with the South Carolina Technical College System and between individual institutions through the network of 16 technical colleges in the state. New articulation agreements can help promote the degree and create unique pathways for transfer students.

Employment Opportunities

Occupation	State		National		Data Type and Source
	Expected Number of Jobs	Employment Projection	Expected Number of Jobs	Employment Projection	
Project Management Specialist	24	N/A	781,400	7% (2021-31)	SC Works Online; US Bureau of Labor Statistics
Human Resources Specialist	164	N/A	782,800	8% (2021-31)	SC Works Online; US Bureau of Labor Statistics
Administrative Services Managers	71	N/A	348,100	7% (2021-31)	SC Works Online; US Bureau of Labor Statistics
Purchasing Managers	63	N/A	532,500	-6% (2021-31)	SC Works Online; US Bureau of Labor Statistics
Training and Development Specialists	72	N/A	354,800	8% (2021-31)	SC Works Online; US Bureau of Labor Statistics
Human Resources Manager	98	N/A	174,200	7% (2021-31)	SC Works Online; US Bureau of Labor Statistics
Social and Community Service Managers	30	N/A	173,700	12% (2021-31)	SC Works Online; US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Supporting Evidence of Anticipated Employment Opportunities

Provide supporting evidence of anticipated employment opportunities for graduates

The American Association of Colleges and Universities surveyed employers and found rising employer value in a college degree. They found “63 percent of employers had “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in higher education. That number has now risen to 67 percent. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of employers value the college degree itself. Almost nine in ten (87 percent) believe that getting a college degree or credential is “definitely” or “probably” worth the investment of time and money. In fact, the percentage who believe college completion is “definitely” worthwhile rose by seven points between 2018 and 2020.”³ Beyond this positive perception, a baccalaureate degree increases one’s lifetime earning potential. A 2021 report published by The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce concludes that more education typically pays off. They write, “At the median, those with some college education but no degree earn \$1.9 million during a career, averaging \$47,500 per year.” They note that this contrasts with baccalaureate degree holders who earn “\$2.8 million during a lifetime, which translates into average annual earnings of about \$70,000.”⁴ For those who have begun college but not completed a degree, finishing their degree means on average \$22,500 more in annual income. Employers clearly value college degrees in terms of their perceptions, and this is supported by the average increase in wages as well.

Description of the Program

For the target population of the 472,043 South Carolinians with some college but no degree, the BPS will be an attractive option, especially those who have 75 credit hours or more. Additionally, there are many of the 100,000 annual graduates from the technical college system who are looking to enter the work force and further their education online at the same time. In Fall 20, College of Charleston had 49 students enrolled in their Professional Studies degree. Winthrop had enrollment numbers of 19 and 24 in Fall 20 and Fall 21, respectively. The projected enrollment for CCU is in a chart below. CCU currently offers Health Administration as an online completion program as well as some traditional, face-to-face degrees that can be completed online (Information Technology; Marketing; and Hospitality, Resort, and Tourism Management). The Bachelor of Professional Studies will be a more general degree than these offerings, and in some instances, it is better suited to those who are returning to college with substantial transfer credits.

The table below is based on enrollment of 5 new students each fall and 5 new students each spring. For, years one through four total, the headcounts are based on 90% returning fall to spring and 90% returning spring to fall. Year five headcount additionally based on 40% graduation rate of returning students.

³ <https://www.aacu.org/research/how-college-contributes-to-workforce-success>

⁴ <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/the-college-payoff/>

Projected Enrollment			
Year	Fall Headcount	Spring Headcount	Summer Headcount
	Total	Total	Total
2023-2024	10	14	0
2024-2025	17	20	0
2025-2026	23	25	0
2026-2027	27	29	0
2027-2028	29	29	0

Explain how the enrollment projections were calculated.

The model estimates that 2 students will complete each semester in the initial years of the program. This would begin in Spring 2025, so from the years on the table above, there would be 14 completers, with 4 annual completions per year.

Curriculum

New Courses

List and provide course descriptions for new courses

PRST 454: Professional Studies Capstone (3 credits): This seminar offers a platform for Professional Studies majors to reflect on and synthesize previously mastered educational content (courses for the major, general education courses, and coursework prior to Coastal Carolina University). This culminating course requires students to apply previous knowledge and experience to practical cases, projects, and challenges encountered in the professional sphere. Students work on a variety of projects that anticipate real-world issues across various professions. There is heavy emphasis on practical application of knowledge, concepts, and skills gained in the program. The course work includes a final project that draws on and integrates the knowledge, concepts, and skills learned as a Professional Studies major.

Program Description

Degree title: **Bachelor of Professional Studies (BPS)**

Sponsoring Department: **Office of the Dean of Graduate and Continuing Studies**

The Bachelor of Professional Studies major is designed to prepare graduates to further their careers in the workplace. Returning students with college coursework take general education

courses, foundational courses for the major, and satisfy a minor, certificate, and cognate requirement of 18 credit hours. This body of coursework gives them a grounding in both the liberal arts and knowledge and skills related to the professional sphere as well as a more focused area of study with the minor, certificate, and cognate requirement.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students who complete the requirements for the degree will be able to:

- Effectively communicate ideas in a professional setting in both speech and writing
- Employ leadership and project management principles in a professional setting to enhance their role in teams
- Apply personnel management principles in a professional setting to enhance teams and offices
- Make complex, strategic decisions informed by data and research in a professional setting
- Demonstrate knowledge of a liberal arts education and understand how to apply this knowledge in a professional setting
- Enact principles of diversity at work to make workplaces more equitable

Degree Requirements (120 credits)

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I. General Education requirements (30 credits)

Students who earn a bachelor's degree are expected to demonstrate a breadth of knowledge and skills appropriate to an undergraduate degree. The general education requirements ensure this breadth of knowledge. Students must complete the following:

- ENGL 101 and ENGL 102, or equivalents.
- One MATH or STATS course at the 132 level or higher. Discipline-specific statistics classes are also acceptable;
- One science class with a lab experience;
- Two courses from two different disciplines from the following: Anthropology, Geography, Political Science, Psychology or Sociology;
- Two courses from two different disciplines from the following: Art History, Art Studio, English, History, Language, Music, Philosophy, Theater, or Visual Arts;
- Additional courses from the above lists totaling 30 credits.

Acceptable courses from other disciplines will be considered and approved on a case-by-case basis.⁵

⁵ Assessment for the general education requirement will take place in the BPS capstone course (PRST 454).

II. Graduation Requirements (3 credits)

Minimum grades of C are required.

- a. Choose one from the following.....3 credits
- HIST 201 History of the United States (3 credits)
 - POLI 201 Introduction to American Government (3 credits)

III. Professional Studies Foundation Courses (18 credits)

Complete the following courses:

- COMM 140: Communication and Public Speaking [3 credit hours]
- CBAD 301: Management and Organizations [3 credit hours]
- PHIL 318: Business Ethics [3 credit hours]

Leadership and Project Management Course (choose one course from the following):

- MGMT 480: Leadership in Project Management
- MGMT 306: Organizational Theory & Behavior
- MGMT 309: Leading High Performance Teams
- MGMT 320: Entrepreneurial Leadership
- MGMT 350: Managing Diversity and Inclusion in Organizations
- MGMT 362: Global Leadership Development
- MGMT 461: Cross-Cultural Management
- or disciplinary-specific course focused on leadership

Communication and Personnel Management for Professional Organizations Course (choose one course from the following):

- COMM 350: Interpersonal Communication Foundations
- COMM 372: Organizational Communication
- COMM 374: Organizational Communication Simulation
- COMM 470: Communication and Conflict Management
- PSYC 470: Industrial/Organizational Psychology
- ENG 390: Business and Professional Communication
- or disciplinary-specific course focused on communication and personnel management

Capstone Course

- PRST 454: Bachelor of Professional Studies Capstone

IV. Major Requirements (18-36 credits)

This requirement is designed to encourage students to focus on an area or areas of study that will complement their Professional Studies foundation courses and general education courses. Students must complete at least 18 credit hours in a minor, cognate, or certificate. Combinations of minors, cognates or certificates can be paired to satisfy the 18-credit hour requirement. Students may earn up to 36 hours in a combination of minors, cognates, and certificates. Minors and certificates are established in the CCU Catalog and have existing credit-hour requirements. Cognates, which require at least 12 credit hours for this degree, will be established for individual students in consultation with the Office of the Dean of Graduate and Continuing Studies.

V. Electives (33-51 credits)

Similar Programs in South Carolina offered by Public and Independent Institutions

Identify the similar programs offered and describe the similarities and differences for each

While many institutions in the state offer online degrees, College of Charleston, Charleston Southern University, and Winthrop University are the other universities that offer degrees specifically in Professional Studies. The Professional Studies degree at College of Charleston requires 50 to 52 credit hours of specific coursework to complete. That respective figure for Charleston Southern is 30 credit hours for the professional studies requirement, but the credit hours for their general education requirement is 47. And for Winthrop, the general education requirement is 42 credit hours, 18 credit hours for their professional studies core, and 24 credit hours for the concentration. CCU's BPS will have 36 required credit hours for the major and 30 required credit hours for the general education requirement. The elective requirement for CCU's BPS will be set at 51 credits for CCU's BPS. Compared to the existing degrees in South Carolina, CCU's BPS will be uniquely placed to offer degree completion to individuals who transfer in with 75 credit hours or more. These individuals need to complete 30 hours at CCU per academic regulations. In the cases of returning CCU students, they may have satisfied the 30-hour requirement already and may be able to finish by taking the professional studies foundational courses. In the end, students with sufficient transfer credits can complete the BPS in one academic year (36 credit hours). As noted, the timeline may be quicker for returning CCU students who already have earned 90 or more credit hours at CCU. Additionally, recent versions of the *Online College Students Report* note that most students enroll in online programs within 100 miles of their residence.⁶ We would expect students from Horry, Georgetown, Marion, Dillon, Florence, and Darlington County to be particularly interested in the degree.

Faculty, Staff, and Administrative Personnel

⁶ <https://insights.educationdynamics.com/2022OnlineCollegeStudentsReport.html>

Discuss the Faculty, Staff, and Administrative Personnel needs of the program.

The program is housed in the College of Graduate and Continuing Studies. The capstone course will be taught by Dr. Casey Woodling initially who is currently Director of Academic Outreach and Continuing Education. The other courses are existing CCU courses that are taught regularly online. In the initial phases, there will not be a need for new faculty. Trisha Walker is Online Programs Advisement Coordinator and will work with Admissions, Advising, and Department chairs to support students from prospect to graduate.

Resources

Library and Learning Resource

Explain how current library/learning collections, databases, resources, and services specific to the discipline, including those provided by PASCAL, can support the proposed program. Identify additional library resources needed.

Because the coursework is primarily based on existing courses, the library is currently offering resources to support the program. There may be a need to work with the library to secure additional texts, especially electronic texts for the capstone course.

Student Support Services

Explain how current academic support services will support the proposed program. Identify new services needed and provide any estimated costs associated with these services.

The newly established position of Online Programs Advisement Coordinator can work with students to make sure that they are accessing and benefiting from on campus services, such as Library services, Academic Technology services, Counseling Services, and Accessibility and Disability services.

Physical Resources/Facilities

Identify the physical facilities needed to support the program and the institution's plan for meeting the requirements.

As the degree is fully online, there will be no additional physical resources or facilities needed to support the program.

Equipment

Identify new instructional equipment needed for the proposed program.

No new instructional equipment will be required.

Impact on Existing Programs

Will the proposed program impact existing degree programs or services at the institution (e.g., course offerings or enrollment)? If yes, explain.

Yes, online sections of courses in the curriculum will see BPS students enrolled. The impact should not be great and Graduate and Continuing Studies will work with department chairs and the Registrar's Office to ensure that students get online seats in these courses.

Financial Support

Sources of Financing for the Program by Year

Category	1 st		2 nd		3 rd		4 th		5 th		Grand Total	
	New	Total	New	Total	New	Total	New	Total	New	Total	New	Total
Tuition Funding	\$234,204	\$234,204	\$358,332	\$358,332	\$487,332	\$487,332	\$579,925	\$579,925	\$612,649	\$612,649	\$2,272,442	\$2,272,442
Program-Specific Fees											\$0	\$0
Special State Appropriation											\$0	\$0
Reallocation of Existing Funds											\$0	\$0
Federal, Grant or Other Funding											\$0	\$0
Total	\$234,204	\$234,204	\$358,332	\$358,332	\$487,332	\$487,332	\$579,925	\$579,925	\$612,649	\$612,649	\$2,272,442	\$2,272,442

Estimated Costs Associated with Implementing the Program by Year

Category	1 st		2 nd		3 rd		4 th		5 th		Grand Total	
	New	Total	New	Total	New	Total	New	Total	New	Total	New	Total
Program Administration and Faculty/Staff Salaries	\$104,192	\$104,192	\$106,276	\$106,276	\$108,401	\$108,401	\$110,569	\$110,569	\$112,781	\$112,781	\$542,219	\$542,219
Facilities, Equipment, Supplies, and Materials		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0	\$0	\$0
Library Resources		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0		\$0	\$0	\$0
Other												
Total	\$104,192	\$104,192	\$106,276	\$106,276	\$108,401	\$108,401	\$110,569	\$110,569	\$112,781	\$112,781	\$542,219	\$542,219
Net Total (Sources of Financing Minus Estimated Costs)	\$130,012	\$130,012	\$252,056	\$252,056	\$378,930	\$378,930	\$469,355	\$469,355	\$499,868	\$499,868	\$1,730,222	\$1,730,222

Note on estimated cost section: New costs are costs incurred solely as a result of implementing this program. Total costs are new costs, program's share of costs of existing resources used to support the program, and any other costs redirected to the program.

Budget justification

Program cost-effectiveness and return-on-investment are evaluated institutionally using an induced revenue/expense model. As shown in the Financial Support table, tuition revenues are based on a 15-credit course load for each student projected to enroll in the program. These revenues represent course revenues derived from all courses taken by the student, including both departmental-fielded courses and cross-department electives. The expenses shown in the Financial Support table represent only direct expenses necessary for delivering program courses and administration. The university uses a 50% gross academic margin assessment to ensure that new graduate and certificate programs will provide sufficient revenues to support their expense impact on institutional operations.

To derive gross academic margin, total induced revenue (\$2,272,442 for the period) is calculated minus total direct expenses (\$542,219 for the period) divided by total induced revenue (\$2,272,442 for the period). [(Revenue-Expenses)/Revenue]

For a program to be considered cost-effective, the University looks for undergraduate and certificate programs to produce a gross academic margin of 50% or better. This program's gross academic margin is 76.14% for the period, which indicates that this program has a high likelihood of producing sustainable revenues.

Evaluation and Assessment

Explain how the proposed program, including all program objectives, will be evaluated, along with plans to track employment. Describe how assessment data will be used.

Objective 1: General education knowledge

Knowledge gained through the general education requirement will be assessed in the capstone course as part of one of the student individual projects. Students' performance on this project will be assessed against their demonstration of general education knowledge earlier in the program.

Objective 2: Knowledge and skills related to professional studies foundations

Knowledge gained about professional ethics, project management, leadership, personnel management, professional communication, and other key elements of professional studies will be assessed in the capstone course as one of the student group projects.

Objective 3: Knowledge and skills related to specialization in minor, certificate, or cognate

Knowledge gained through the specialization in the minor, certificate, or cognate requirement will be assessed in the capstone course as part of one of the student individual projects.

Accreditation and Licensure/Certification

Will the institution seek program-specific accreditation (e.g., CAEP, ABET, NASM, etc.)? If yes, describe the institution's plans to seek accreditation, including the expected timeline.

No

Will the proposed program lead to licensure or certification? If yes, identify the licensure or certification.

No

If the program is an Educator Preparation Program, does the proposed certification area require national recognition from a Specialized Professional Association (SPA)? If yes, describe the institution's plans to seek national recognition, including the expected timeline.

No