



**Department of  
Higher Education**

John R. Kasich, Governor  
John Carey, Chancellor

## **INITIAL INQUIRY REQUEST TO OFFER A NEW PROGRAM**

**Date of submission:** *Date to come*

**Name of institution:** Kent State University

**Primary institutional contact for this request:**

Name: Therese E. Tillett  
Title: Executive Director of Curriculum Services  
Office of the Provost  
Phone: 330-672-8558  
E-mail: tillet1@kent.edu

**Name of new program:** Information Technology major within the  
Bachelor of Science in Information Technology degree

- New degree designation
- New program within an existing degree (e.g., major, minor, concentration)
- New technical certificate program
- New licensure/endorsement area (educator preparation)

**Delivery options (check all that apply):**

- Campus-based
- Online/hybrid delivery
- Flexible or accelerated delivery
- Offering the program at a new offsite location
- Offering the program at an existing offsite location
- Program contains off-campus experiences (e.g., internship, clinical, practicum, student teaching)

**The institution will be seeking specialized accreditation for the program:**

- No       Yes

**Provide a brief description of the request.**

Kent State University proposes establishing a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT) degree, to be offered fully online, in addition to hybrid online/on-ground at all Kent State's seven regional campuses—Ashtabula, East Liverpool, Gauga, Salem, Stark, Trumbull and Tuscarawas—and at the university's Regional Academic Center in Twinsburg. The fully online program will be administered by the Trumbull Campus.

Presently, Kent State offers this program as concentrations within the Technical and Applied Studies major in the Bachelor of Technical and Applied Studies (BTAS) degree. This proposal elevates the concentrations to a stand-alone degree program.

### **Explain the academic unit's rationale for making the request.**

The existing Computer Technology concentrations within the BTAS degree have seen strong enrollment growth since their inception in fall 2011:

#### **Fall Semester Enrollment in the BTAS Degree Computer Technology Concentrations (15<sup>th</sup> Day Census)**

<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
55	158	239	253	284	294

Enrollment numbers demonstrate its feasibility. However, marketing efforts for the program prove challenging as computer technology is not readily visible as concentrations within the Technical and Applied Studies major; prospective students cannot find the program easily on the university's website or on the admission application. These students are seeking an information technology program, not a technical and applied studies one.

As concentrations, the computer technology program is also limited in curriculum advancement as it must share a full major core with other concentrations within the Technical and Applied Studies major. Per the Ohio Department of Higher Education, concentrations must include a minimum of 50 percent of the curriculum within the major. Presently, the concentrations do not comply with that mandate, and one goal with the proposed degree is to create a new core curriculum to bring more depth and breadth in the information technology field.

In addition to providing better marketing and product differentiation, revising the name of the program, from computer technology to information technology, will align the proposed degree program with similar programs at other institutions in the state and nationwide. Information technology is a recognized sub-discipline of computing that prepares graduates as IT support for a variety of workplace settings, including schools, businesses, healthcare and any other organizations that require technical support for computer systems and computer-related problems.

What differentiates information technology from other fields, such as computer science or computer engineering, is the applied approach with a focus on supporting end users in a variety of workplace settings utilizing a range of computing technologies. The program provides graduates with the background to support computing infrastructures and the needs of individuals and organizations, write programs necessary to help them render their tasks more efficiently on their desktop or mobile devices, utilize databases and write the web-based interfaces to pull the data, and code and deploy applications across the cloud. Graduates are qualified to work primarily in small to mid-size installations with local area networks and are employed in all types of organizations using computing systems, working in such positions as network technicians, technical support specialist, help desk manager, LAN manager, project manager and database administrator.

The proposed Information Technology major will comprise the following optional concentrations:

- Application Development (existing)
- Applied Computer Security and Forensics (existing)
- Health Information Technology Support (new)
- Internet/Multimedia (existing)
- Networking (existing)

Students may also select the major without choosing a concentration.

In addition to the option of completing the entire program at Kent State University, the proposed BSIT degree will serve as a completer pathway for students who hold an associate degree or have completed some college-level coursework in information technology or related technical fields. Kent State's Associate of Applied Business degree in Computer Technology will articulate fully into the proposed degree. The courses offered in the proposed degree at the baccalaureate level offer advanced, in-depth topics and integrate the technical and/or applied skills developed within applied associate degree programs with the professional skills in a bachelor's degree program.

Elevation from concentrations to major and revision of the name will resolve the lack of visibility for prospective students, provide more clarity to graduates and employers on the program's objectives and outcomes in terms of marketing and product differentiation and be in compliance with the Ohio Department of Higher Education mandate. The changes also will provide an environment to allow the program area to continue to grow with applied technical options targeting contemporary information technology needs in a variety of organizations.

**Indicate whether additional faculty and staff will be needed to support the proposed request.**

It is anticipated that additional faculty will be not be required at this time. Approximately 14 full-time and 22 part-time faculty teach in the existing computer technology programs (AAB and BTAS degrees) on all seven regional campuses.