THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

UT Health Science Center:
AA107-H Curricular Changes Relating to Academic Programs – Academic Affairs

No./Title: AA107 – CURRICULAR CHANGES RELATING TO ACADEMIC PROGRAMS	Resp. Office: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS Approval Body: CASA	Effective Date: 06/07/2016
Category: Academic	Last Review: 2/01/2022	Next Review: 02/01/2025
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Related Policies:	SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy THEC A 1.0 New Academic Programs Approval Process THEC A.1.1 Academic Programs Modifications Program Elimination Policy (Faculty Handbook)	

POLICY

Proposals for curricular change to existing academic programs or courses, or creation of new academic programs to be offered at The University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC), must be reviewed and approved by the relevant college committees and the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) or designee prior to submission to UT System and THEC.

RATIONALE AND EXPLANATION

The University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) is committed to the delivery of high-quality academic programs that prepare healthcare professionals for the challenging and ever-changing healthcare landscape.

The UTHSC Faculty Handbook states: "The UTHSC faculty has the specifically reserved and sole authority to plan and develop the curricula for instructional programs. For the purpose of this *Faculty Handbook*, the terms *curricula* and *curricular* refer to the subject matter, method of instruction, and grading policy in all courses offered at UTHSC; the sets of courses required to degrees offered by UTHSC; and the aspects of student life that relate to the instructional process." (UTHSC Faculty Handbook, Section 2.3.7.1, August 2018)

It is essential that the campus balance the need for new programs with the necessary resources to support these programs. Faculty oversight ensures that new programs, revised curricula, and courses meet the mission of UTHSC.

This policy provides the processes for:
- New programs
- Major curricular revisions

- Course revisions, including additions and deletions
- Academic program modifications
- Academic actions notifications
- Program elimination

PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS

The processes are detailed below.

New Programs

UTHSC's approval process for new programs proceeds in the following order.

Development of the Letter of Notification (LON) and New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP)
1. The dean and faculty of the educational unit seeking the new academic program should confer with the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) 18-24 months prior to the proposed implementation date of the new program to review the process and determine what external approvals are necessary.
2. A draft letter of notification is prepared by the appropriate college body and submitted to the dean of the college and from the dean or designee to the CAO.
3. The dean and CAO will confer with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and the Chief Operating Officer (COO) to evaluate the required resources needed. The CAO or designee will confer with relevant agencies to determine the applicable policies of the UT System Administration (UTSA), Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).
4. If the LON is deemed viable, the CAO submits the LON to the Chancellor for review and approval. If approved, the CAO submits the completed Letter of Notification (LON) to the Vice President for Academic Affairs at the UTSA who submits it to THEC.
5. After the Letter of Notification is approved by THEC, the New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) is developed by the department, reviewed by the dean and the CAO or designee, and submitted to UTSA for their submission to THEC.
6. If the new program is a substantive change as defined by SACSCOC, the CAO communicates this to the dean. The dean or designee and program faculty, with the assistance of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Decision Support will prepare the prospectus for SACSCOC (if necessary). Refer to the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy.
7. Once approved by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Decision Support, the CAO submits the NAPP to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) at the UTSA. The VPAA submits the NAPP to THEC.
8. THEC requires an external review of the proposed program. The college selects several potential external reviewers and THEC staff selects the reviewer from the list of potential reviewers. A range of possible site visit dates are submitted to THEC along with the names of the potential reviewers. THEC selects the date of the site visit.
9. Once THEC staff provides preliminary approval of the NAPP (following the external review) the UTSA VPAA submits the NAPP to the UT Board of Trustees for approval.

10. Following UT Board of Trustees approval, the VPAA submits the NAPP to the UT President for submission to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission for final approval.
11. Following THEC approval, information about the new program is provided to the Registrar and other affected offices on campus.

Course & Curriculum Changes

MAJOR CURRICULUM CHANGES
A major curriculum change should be reviewed to determine that all internal and external components and reporting requirements are met. A major change includes any of the following:
- significant increase or decrease (+/- 20%) in student credit hours in a program;
- need for new space (classroom, laboratory, or office) to deliver a curriculum; or
- significant increase in other resources (i.e., simulation, library, student academic support).

Process
- The program faculty/program committee chair/program director submits curricular changes to the dean or designee who reviewsand approves the changes.
- The CAO or designee is consulted to verify the need for notification to THEC and/or SACSCOC.
- The COO and CFOmay be consulted if new resources are needed.
- Approved changes are forwarded to the Registrar and other affected offices on campus.

COURSE CHANGES
Individual course changes are processed during the *Bulletin* editing periods.

Process
- The program faculty/program director submits changes in the software processing system
- The changes are approved by the academic dean of the college.
- Credentialing of teaching faculty is completed in AFSA.
- Final approval of minor courses changes is made by the CAO, or designee.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS (THEC A 1.1)

THEC requires that the campus seek approval for program modifications to currently approved programs. Approval is needed for the following changes:

- Change or add a program degree designation when this change involves a significant curriculum shift in redefining the program's purpose or a change of degree designation for an existing academic program or concentration per recommendation of a disciplinary accreditation body. These requested modifications may be subject to external reviews.
- Establish a free-standing academic program from an existing concentration with steady enrollment and degrees awarded within both the degree designation and all concentrations under that degree for a period of the last three years. This program modification may be considered only if the establishment of the concentration as a free-standing academic unit does not compromise the remaining program and does not require new faculty resources.

ACADEMIC ACTIONS NOTIFICATIONS (THEC Policy A 1.5)

THEC requires notification of academic actions to maintain the accuracy of the state's Academic Program Inventory (API). The academic actions that must be reported include:

- Establishment of a certificate program less than 24 credit hours regardless of degree level.
- Name change for existing academic program.
- Name change of existing concentration within an academic program.
- Establishment of a new concentration within an existing academic program.
- Change (increase or decrease) in the number of hours of an existing academic program.
- Consolidation of two or more existing academic programs into a single academic program without an essential change in the original approved curriculum and without a net gain in the number of programs.
- Extension of an existing academic program to an approved off campus center.
- Change of the primary delivery mode for an existing academic program. The extension to 100 percent off-campus delivery requires additional action if the location of delivery is to be converted from an off-campus site to a center.
- Inactivation of an existing academic program or concentration. If the inactivated academic program is not reactivated within a period of three years, the academic program or concentration will automatically be terminated and removed from the institution's inventory.

PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE

The procedures for academic program discontinuance may be found in the *UTHSC Faculty Handbook* – Appendix I. Program discontinuance must always be reported to SACSCOC and must include a teach out plan for enrolled students. Notification to THEC is also required and is facilitated by the CAO or designee.

COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Each College will develop and publish a process for selecting the college curriculum committee.
A chair should be identified for each college curriculum committee.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

Academic changes may require notification to SACSCOC and THEC. All submissions to SACSCOC, UT System, and/or THEC are facilitated through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Decision Support.

APPROVAL HISTORY

Effective: June 7, 2016
Approved: May 17, 2016, Committee on Academic and Student Affairs (CASA)
Approved: June 7, 2016, Chancellor
Reviewed: October 2, 2018, CASA
Approved: October 8, 2018, Chancellor
Approved: February 1, 2022, CASA
Approved: February 8, 2022, Chief Academic Officer

APPENDIX – RESOURCE & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Information Needed Internal to the campus
[Note – these resources are also reported in the Compliance Certification to SACSCOC.]

Resources related to new programs, courses or significant modification of curricula include, but are not limited to:
- Finances
- Physical facilities and space
- Equipment
- Library Resources
- Sim resources
- Interprofessional Education collaborations – confirmation of arrangements
- Distance Education – resources
- Duplicative Offerings

Applicable Policies External to UTHSC

University of Tennessee System Administration (UTSA)
Policies and Procedures (https://academicaffairs.tennessee.edu/resources-for-campus-administrators/)

Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC)
Program Approval and Academic Policies (https://www.tn.gov/thec/bureaus/academic-affairs-and-student-success/academic-programs/program-approval---academic-policies/redirect-program-approval---academic-policies/academic-policies--checklists-and-forms.html)

Southern Association of Colleges & Schools Commission on Colleges
 http://www.sacscoc.org

Faculty Resources, i.e., qualifications, number, program coordinator (SACSCOC 6.2)
6.2   For each of its educational programs, the institution
a. Justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members. *(Faculty qualifications)*

Student Learning Outcomes – listing and assessment (SACSCOC 8.2a)
8.2a. Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs. *(Student outcomes: educational programs)*

General Education Competencies – assessment (SACSCOC 8.2b)
8.2b. Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. *(Student outcomes: general education)*

Program Content (SACSCOC 9.1)
9.1. Educational programs (a) embody a coherent course of study, (b) are compatible with the stated mission and goals of the institution, and (c) are based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. *(Program content)* [Core Requirement]

Program Length (SACSCOC 9.2)
9.2 The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides an explanation of equivalencies when using units other than semester credit hours. The institution provides an appropriate justification for all degree programs and combined degree programs that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit. *(Program Length)* [Core Requirement]

General Education program (SACSCOC 9.3)
9.3 The institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the undergraduate level that:
(a) is based on a coherent rationale.
(b) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree program. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent.
(c) ensures breadth of knowledge. These credit hours include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. These courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. *(General education requirements* [Core Requirement]

Institutional Credits for an undergraduate degree (SACSCOC 9.4)
9.4 At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for an undergraduate degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. *(Institutional credits for an undergraduate degree)*

Institutional Credits for a graduate degree, if applicable (SACSCOC 9.5)

9.5　At least one-third of the credit hours required for a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. *(Institutional credits for a graduate/professional degree)*

Post-baccalaureate rigor and curriculum (SACSCOC 9.6)

9.6　Post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and graduate degree programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs and are structured (a) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (b) to ensure engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training. *(Post-baccalaureate rigor and curriculum)*

Program requirements (SACSCOC 9.7)

9.7　The institution publishes requirements for its undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate professional programs, as applicable. The requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. *(Program requirements)*

Admissions policies and practices (SACSCOC 10.5)

10.5　The institution publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission. Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the practices, policies, and accreditation status of the institution. The institution also ensures that independent contractors or agents used for recruiting purposes and for admission activities are governed by the same principles and policies as institutional employees. *(Admissions policies and practices)*

Distance and correspondence education, if applicable (SACSCOC 10.6)

10.6　An institution that offers distance or correspondence education:
(a) ensures that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit.
(b) has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs.
(c) ensures that students are notified in writing at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.
(Distance and correspondence education)

Policies for awarding academic credit (SACSCOC 10.8)

10.8　The institution publishes policies for evaluating, awarding and accepting credit not originating from the institution. The institution ensures (a) the academic quality of any credit or coursework recorded on its transcript, (b) an approval process with oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments, and (c) the credit awarded is comparable to a designated credit experience and is consistent with the institution's mission. *(Evaluating and awarding academic credit)*

Cooperative academic arrangements, if applicable (SACSCOC 10.9)

10.9 The institution ensures the quality and integrity of the work recorded when an institution transcripts courses or credits as its own when offered through a cooperative academic arrangement. The institution maintains formal agreements between the parties involved, and the institution regularly evaluates such agreements. *(Cooperative academic arrangements)*

Library and learning/information resources (SACSCOC 11.1)

11.1 The institution provides adequate and appropriate library and learning/information resources, services, and support for its mission. *(Library and learning/information resources)* [Core Requirement]

Student support services (SACSCOC 12.1)

12.1 The institution provides appropriate academic and student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission. *(Student support services)* [Core Requirement]

Substantive Change (SACSCOC 14.2)

14.2 The institution has a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with SACSCOC's policy. *(Substantive change)*

Comprehensive institutional review (standards apply to all distance education programs, branch campuses and off-site instructional sites (SACSCOC 14.3)

14.3 The institution applies all appropriate standards and policies to its distance learning programs, branch campuses, and off-campus instructional sites. *(Comprehensive institutional reviews)*

Policy compliance (SACSCOC 14.5)

14.5 The institution complies with SACSCOC's policy statements that pertain to new or additional institutional obligations that may arise that are not part of the standards in the current *Principles of Accreditation*. *(Policy compliance)*

SACSCOC Policies:

- *Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions*