



Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Section Title: Academic Policies

Policy Title: New Academic Programs: Approval Process

Policy Number: A 1.0

1.0.1A Purpose. Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated §49-7-202(q)(2)(A), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission has the statutory responsibility to review and approve new academic programs for public institutions of higher education in the State of Tennessee. These responsibilities shall be exercised so as to:

- promote academic quality and ensure that programs are adequately supported;
 - fulfill student demand, employer need, societal, and economic requirements;
 - avoid unnecessary duplication and ensure that proposed academic programs cannot be delivered more efficiently through collaboration or alternative arrangements; and
 - encourage cooperation among all institutions, both public and private.

These expectations for program quality and viability are underscored by Tennessee Code Annotated §49-7-202(d)(4)(A)-(C). This statute directs public higher education to:

- address the state's economic development, workforce development and research needs;
- ensure increased degree production within the state's capacity to support higher education; and
- use institutional mission differentiation to realize statewide efficiencies through institutional collaboration and minimized redundancy in degree offerings, instructional locations, and competitive research.

1.0.2A New Academic Programs Subject to Approval. Programs subject to approval, per this policy, are associate degree programs, baccalaureate degree programs, master's degree programs, and doctoral degree programs.

1.0.2B

Joint Degree Academic Programs. For purposes of this policy, a joint degree academic program is whereby two (2) or more institutions grant a single academic award for completion of an academic program.

For new joint programs that involve the development of a new academic program, a Memorandum of Understanding that clearly outlines program responsibilities and fiscal arrangements among participating institutions must be developed and approved concurrently with the program proposal at each institution.

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associated with the academic program.

1.0.3A2

No Unnecessary Duplication. The THEC Academic Program Inventory provides the initial indication of apparent duplication or undue proliferation of programs in the state. When other similarly titled existing programs may serve the same potential student population, an

institution seeking to develop a new program should first determine if a similar program already exists in the state. If a similar program is found, the institution should consider whether the proposed program is necessary and whether it can be developed in a way that is distinct from the existing program. If a similar program is found, the institution should consider whether the proposed program is necessary and whether it can be developed in a way that is distinct from the existing program.

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staff and will include consideration of any public comments. The fifteen (15)-calendar day public comment period may be extended to a maximum of thirty (30)-calendar days at the discretion of THEC staff.

THEC staff have the authority to request additional information for the proposed program including, but not limited to, an external, independent feasibility study.

Based on the assessment of the LON both internally, and in relation to external comments, THEC staff will make one of the following determinations and notify the institution within thirty (30)-calendar days after the close of the public comment period:

- to support;
- not to support; or,
- to defer a decision based on revision of the LON.

Furthermore, the THEC Executive Director has the authority to refer action on the LON to the Commission for determination if deemed appropriate and/or at the request of the Chairman of the Commission.

1.0.5C

Letter of Notification (LON) Expiration. All approved LONs are

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evaluators for all proposed new academic programs. For doctoral programs, two (2) external reviewers will be required to evaluate the proposed academic program.

THEC will select reviewers from the proposed institutional external reviewer list. Individuals used in the development stage as external consultants may

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programs are subject to the criteria for review and accountability set forth in Section 1.0.3A1 of this policy. These guidelines must be the basis for TBR staff review and governing board approval.

After final approval by TBR of a new associate degree program, TBR must submit a written request for the program to be included on the next Commission agenda for approval. The request must include documentation of governing board approval and all new academic program approval materials. Prior to inclusion on the Commission agenda, THEC staff will review new program approval materials to ensure completeness and alignment with Section 1.0.3A1 of this policy. Those new degree programs that are submitted with complete documentation and are confirmed to be in alignment with Section 1.0.3A1 will be included on the next Commission meeting agenda.

For deposit of \$135,000.00 to the 2013-14 13th Ward Tax[Assessment] of \$16,989.00 and 2014-15 \$14,020.10.