



03.02.99.R0.01 New Program and Curriculum Approval Process

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Revised October 2002
Revised October 18, 2011
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Procedure Statement

Texas A&M University-Commerce (A&M-Commerce) maintains an approval process for both program development and curriculum changes. The process functions within the standards of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools of the Commission of Colleges (SACSCOC).

Reason for Procedure

This procedure describes the university's institution-wide process to coordinate programmatic and curriculum changes.

Procedures and Responsibilities

GENERAL

1. The administration and faculty are responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring of academic programs. In developing academic programs and making curriculum changes, the university will follow standards of good practice and guidelines established by The Texas A&M University System (System), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools of the Commission on Colleges. The university will avoid the unwarranted proliferation of course offerings and degree programs. The development of new academic programs will be considered only after the university has completed a needs assessment and has identified resources to support the programs. The university will proceed only after careful review and approval by the appropriate A&M-Commerce faculty and administrative bodies, as well as approval by applicable external bodies (The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents, the THECB, and SACSCOC). Faculty Senate review is required on all new program development and curriculum changes, even those that undergo an expedited process. Graduate Council review and approval are required on all new graduate programs and curriculum changes.

2. In all situations, the primary responsibility for the quality of the educational program resides with the faculty.

NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS

3. Types of requests:

3.1 Requests for new degree program approval (substantive and nonsubstantive) include new bachelor's, master's, specialist, doctoral, cooperative, and joint degrees. It also includes the reclassification or modification of existing degrees.

3.1.1 The required paperwork varies, depending upon: the level (undergraduate or graduate); the field (engineering or non-engineering); and the projected costs (whether or not it exceeds two million dollars).

3.1.2 The forms are available on the System website.

3.2 Request for expansion of authority includes delivery type and Table of Programs.

3.2.1 Request to offer more than 50% of a degree program (distance education).

3.2.1.1 off-campus via face -to-face instruction or

3.2.1.2 technology-based instruction or

3.2.1.3 online delivery

3.2.2 Request for a change in the Table of Programs (needed when the instructional discipline area requested is not approved by the THECB as being within the institution's mission).

4. Process. Requests for new degree program vary depending upon multiple factors. Because the rules and required forms are changed from time-to-time, the information below is only to assist you in starting the process. After reviewing the System website on programs administrative approval, contact the associate provost for assistance.

4.1 Bachelor's – Master's: Non-Engineering/Does Not Exceed \$2 Million (details in section 5 below).

4.1.1 Preparation and approval of a four-page **Preliminary Authority Request** (concept paper) request through the administrative bodies below.

4.1.2 If the four-page **Preliminary Authority Request** is approved by the System, a full **Request for New Program** must be prepared and submitted through the Review Process for New Program Approval (see 5.4 below)

4.2 Bachelor's – Master's: Engineering (details in section 5 below).

4.2.1 Preparation and approval of a **Preliminary Authority Request** through the administrative bodies below.

4.2.2 Approval by THECB (approved through the System Board of Regents) followed by SACSCOC approval.

4.3 Doctoral (details in section 5 below)

4.3.1 Preparation and approval of a **Preliminary Authority Request** through the administrative bodies below.

4.3.2 Approval by THECB (approved through the System Board of Regents) followed by SACSCOC approval.

5. Guidelines to request a new degree and/or expansion of authority:

5.1 Any request for a new degree program shall be initiated at the faculty level of an academic department and be routed through the academic dean.

5.2 Working with the associate provost, the **Preliminary Authority Request** is developed in accordance with The Texas A&M University System Academic Program Guidelines available online.

5.2.1 A request for a new program requires a **Preliminary Authority Request** (concept paper) that shall not exceed four pages.

5.2.2 The **Preliminary Authority Request** shall respond to the following items:

5.2.2.1 Program description: briefly describe the program.

5.2.2.2 Criteria:

5.2.2.2.1 A demonstrated need for a future program in terms of present and future vocational needs of the state and the nation. (The Office of Planning, Institutional Effectiveness, and Research will assist in the needs assessment.)

5.2.2.2.2 Whether the proposed addition would complement and strengthen existing programs. Also indicate if there are any low producing programs that might have a similar or related subject matter area.

5.2.2.2.3 Whether a future program would unnecessarily duplicate other programs within the region, state, or nation.

5.2.2.2.4 Whether a critical mass of students and faculty is likely to be available to allow the program to be offered at a high level of quality and to become self-sufficient on the basis of state funding.

5.2.2.2.5 Describe current facilities and equipment to be used by the program. If new facilities or the renovation of current facilities will be required, please describe and give an estimate of the new costs for the first five years of the program. Provide a description and estimate of the cost of new equipment.

5.2.2.3 Estimated new costs and funding.

5.3 A&M-Commerce Administrative Review Process of **Preliminary Authority Request**.

Once developed, the four-page **Preliminary Authority Request** will be sent to the provost for review by the Deans Council, who will either approve, request revisions, or deny the request.

5.3.1 If approved, the submission forms required by the System will be prepared by the department, working with the associate provost, and sent to the President's Office for approval.

5.3.1.1 Once signed by the president, the forms are submitted to the Academic Office at the System for action.

5.3.1.2 Staff in the System Academic Affairs Office reviews the **Preliminary Authority Request**. Once a decision is made, the Academic Affairs Office staff notifies the President's Office, which subsequently notifies the Provost's Office.

5.3.1.3 Once approval by the System is received, the provost notifies the academic department that a **Request for New Program** is to be prepared.

5.3.2 If revisions are requested, the appropriate dean will contact the department head and explain the requested changes. Once revisions are made, the revised request can be resubmitted to the steps described in 5.3.1.

5.3.3 If the Preliminary Authority Request is denied, the appropriate dean will notify the department head of the decision and provide the rationale behind the decision.

5.4 Review Process for **Request for New Program Approval**.

5.4.1 Working with the associate provost, the full **Request for New Program** will be developed in accordance with the System Academic Program Guidelines.

5.4.2 The **Request for New Program** will go through the administrative bodies that are required of curriculum change requests, i.e., College Executive Committee, the Graduate Council (if applicable), the Ad Hoc Teacher Preparation Committee (if applicable), the Faculty Senate, and provost (with recommendation from the Deans Council).

5.4.3 If approved by all A&M-Commerce administrative bodies, the **Request for New Program** and the required A&M System forms are submitted by the associate provost to the President's Office for approval and submission to the System and other external review/approval accreditation bodies (when appropriate).

CURRICULUM CHANGE APPROVAL PROCESS

6. Types of changes:

- 6.1 Changes in program requirements;
- 6.2 Addition of new courses to the course inventory;
- 6.3 Changes to existing courses such as course description, prerequisites, value, and number;
- 6.4 Course reinstatement;
- 6.5 Cross-listing; and
- 6.6 Course deletion.

7. Approval Process. As with new program requests, the curriculum change process for all other requests shall be initiated by the faculty within the academic department.

7.1 All curriculum changes are to be submitted online according to the instructions provided by the coordinator of schedule, catalog, and curriculum (Registrar's Office).

7.2 The sequence for approval of all curriculum change requests is identified below:

7.2.1 Department

7.2.2 College Executive Committee

7.2.3 Simultaneous review by:

7.2.3.1 Faculty Senate—all requests;

7.2.3.2 Ad Hoc Teacher Education Committee—teacher certification requests only;
and

7.2.3.3 Graduate Council—only graduate requests.

7.2.4 Deans Council: reviews all of the curriculum change requests, taking into consideration prior recommendations, and makes recommendations to the provost.

8. Curriculum changes needing approval by other bodies:

8.1 Curriculum requests requiring System approval: forms are forwarded by the Provost's Office to the President's Office for submission to the System staff for appropriate action.

8.2 Curriculum changes not needing action by the System are submitted by the coordinator of schedule, catalog, and curriculum to the THECB for action.

SUMMARY OF APPROVALS AND REPORTING

9. Approved programmatic and curriculum requests (as defined in sections 4 and 6) above are submitted, in the required format, to the System Board of Regents and, thereafter, to the THECB as appropriate.

10. Any substantive change must be reported to the executive director of the SACSCOC in advance of the admission of students (see SACSCOC document: *Substantive Change Policy for Accredited Institutions*). The report to the executive director is prepared by the associate provost.
 11. Following THECB approval, curriculum requests are incorporated into the next academic year's undergraduate catalog and/or graduate catalog and degree audit information.
 12. The university's coordinator of schedule, catalog, and curriculum shall notify all appropriate administrators and offices the final resolution of all curriculum changes.
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Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

System Policy [03.02 Policies for the Establishment and Revision of Mission Statements and Tables of Programs](#)

System Regulation [03.02.02 Approval Procedures for Degree Programs, Administrative Changes, Etc.](#)

[System Academic Affairs Program/Administrative Approval](#)

[Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Rules](#)

[Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Policies and Publications](#)

Flow Chart and Timeline (Provost's Office)

Curriculum Change Formats (Registrar's Office)

Definitions

The Academic Affairs and Research Division of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is responsible for the academic integrity of public colleges, universities, and health-related institutions in Texas. To accomplish its mission, the department staff reviews certificate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral programs, and administrative change requests from all public higher education and health-related institutions. The department also provides continual assessment of academic programs and statewide policies through independent research and analysis of education trends.

Contact Office

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
903-886-5439

Appendix

Curriculum Change Approval Process

