



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSCEP OP: 59.08, New Degree and Certificate Programs, Change in Delivery Format, and Degree and Certificate Program Termination

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Operating Policy and Procedure (HSCEP OP) is to outline the procedure for: initiating, developing, and implementing new degree and certificate programs; changing delivery format for degree and certificate programs; and terminating or merging existing degree and certificate programs.

REVIEW: This HSCEP OP will be reviewed by August 1 of every even-numbered year (ENY) by the dean of each school and the vice president for academic affairs (VPAA) or designee, and the Academic Council, with recommended revisions submitted to the president or designee by September 15th.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

I. Degree-granting Authority

Legal authority to confer undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees, and certificates is granted to TTUHSC El Paso by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Formal THECB approval is required before a new degree or certificate program can be implemented in any school of TTUHSC El Paso. In order to obtain THECB approval and degree-granting authority, proposals for new degree and certificate programs must have the prior approval of the Texas Tech University System (TTUS) Board of Regents (BOR), and must be submitted by the (VPAA) on behalf of the Office of the President to the THECB in the format prescribed by that agency.

II. Proposing New Degree and Certificate Programs

A. A proposal for a new degree or certificate program typically originates with the faculty at the department level. In those instances where the new program impetus originates at levels other than the department faculty, new program proposals necessarily rely on active faculty participation in all aspects of their development. New program proposals normally are developed and refined through an iterative process of collaboration among faculty, department chair, and the dean. Issues related to mission congruence, resource availability, effects on existing programs and long-term market sustainability must be addressed early in the proposal development process by the faculty, department chair, and the dean. The dean will approve continued development of the proposal on the basis of school and institutional priorities, recognized strengths in the department, and an analysis of the expected benefits versus costs of the proposed program.

B. Prior to submission to the Academic Council and VPAA, and as guided by the dean and department chair, the department faculty will prepare a formal new program proposal, in accordance with the guidelines of the THECB and using forms that are available on the THECB website. Program proposals must typically address the following THECB areas of priority:

- 1) Quality of the program, including appropriateness of degree requirements and

- program curriculum;
- 2) Adequacy of faculty, facilities, and funding to undertake the program;
 - 3) Cost and relative impact on existing programs;
 - 4) Need for the program and benefits that will accrue to Texas from approval and implementation of the proposed program;
 - 5) Numbers and kinds of students who likely will enter the program;
 - 6) Market demand and relevance for the program, including analysis of availability of existing or similar programs in the state and region;
 - 7) Long-term market and educational sustainability;
 - 8) Degree of fit with school and university missions; and
 - 9) Degree of fit with THECB program and resource allocation priorities.
- C. Upon completion of the development phase, new program proposals approved by the dean will be forwarded to the Academic Council (see HSCEP OP 10.06 and 59.08 Attachment A). After the Academic Council has approved the proposal, it will move forward to the VPAA for review and approval, and then to the president for final review and approval. When required, the president will submit the proposal to the TTU System BOR for approval. After BOR approval, the VPAA, with the support of the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE), will prepare the proposal for submission to the THECB and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Since the president certifies the availability of funding and other resources to support the proposed degree program for the first five years of its implementation, all new degree program proposals must include a detailed five-year budget, in accordance with THECB guidelines.
- D. The THECB requires institutions to notify peer institutions and SACSCOC of the intent to offer new degree programs on and off campus. The staff of the THECB requests a minimum of three months for review prior to board action. However, the review process may take longer for doctoral programs or if site visits by external reviewers are required per THECB policy and procedures. The VPAA will provide the appropriate notification and documentation to peer institutions and SACSCOC within their stipulated timeline. SACSCOC notification and/or approval must be secured prior to initiating a new program.
- E. Each school at TTUHSC El Paso is responsible for establishing a formal faculty review process to ensure that the amount and level of credit awarded for the school's courses are compatible with sound academic practice in the given field (refer to HSCEP OP 59.09, Definition and Calculation of Credit Hours.) Minimum requirements for degrees and certificates are determined by discipline-specific curriculum committees in accordance with the relevant external accrediting organizations, the THECB and SACSCOC.
- F. All new degree programs, the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy (see HSCEP OP 59.07 – Substantive Change Reporting), available on the SACSCOC website, will be consulted and followed. In some cases, new programs require SACSCOC notification and approval of a substantive change prospectus prior to implementation. The substantive change prospectus (with similar components to the proposal) may be obtained from the SACSCOC website, and should be submitted by the VPAA along with the request for a new degree program. The VPAA will provide timely notification per SACSCOC requirements, prior to the anticipated implementation of new degree programs.

- G. Programs that propose to deliver 25% or more of the curriculum via distance education or at off-campus locations require Academic Council approval. In addition, depending upon the nature of the proposal, the THECB and SACSCOC must be notified or may require approval prior to implementation. In some cases, SACSCOC may require submission of the proposal and other substantive change documentation. The VPAA will provide timely notification per SACSCOC requirements prior to the anticipated implementation of new distance learning degree programs.
- H. All agreements for delivery of 25% or more of a degree program in collaboration with other institutions should be prepared as specified in II.B. and approved as specified in II.C.
- I. Agreements to provide degree or certificate program curricula with less than 25% (but more than one course or clinical placement) delivery via distance or at off-campus sites should be submitted to the VPAA for review and approval prior to implementation. Based upon this review, the proposal may be sent to the Academic Council for review and approval.

III. Changing Method of Delivery of Existing Degree Programs

- A. In addition to the requirements above, for all changes in method of delivery of existing degree programs, the THECB regulations and SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy (see HSCEP OP 59.07 and SACSCOC website), will be consulted and followed. Changes in method of delivery of existing degree programs that result in 25% or more of the degree program being offered via distance learning require Academic Council approval. These proposals may also require TTUS BOR, THECB and SACSCOC notification and/or approval and may require the submission of a substantive change prospectus by the VPAA. When a substantive change prospectus is required, the SACSCOC prospectus should be submitted along with the request to change the method of delivery of the existing degree program. The VPAA will notify SACSCOC prior to the anticipated implementation of the modified degree program.
- B. The following routing is required to approve changes in method of delivery for previously approved degree programs: program director, chair (if applicable), dean, Academic Council, VPAA, president, TTUS BOR, THECB, and SACSCOC.

IV. Termination or Merger of Existing Degree Programs

- A. A degree program may be terminated, or two or more programs may be merged, for various reasons. Such action will be preceded by full study and consultation by the department faculty, chair (if applicable), dean, Academic Council, VPAA, and president.
- B. Before any degree program is terminated or merged with another program, the rationale for such action will be presented and considered by the department faculty, program director, chair (if applicable), and dean. After such review, the dean will make a recommendation to the Academic Council, VPAA, and president who will render the final decision.
- C. The THECB and SACSCOC will be notified by the VPAA of any degree program termination or merger. Closing a program is a SACSCOC Substantive Change and requires notification, approval, and teach-out processes.