



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, the vice president for academic affairs (VPAA) or designee, and the Academic Council, with recommended revisions submitted to the president or designee by September 15.

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 faculty at the department or school level. In those instances where the new program impetus originates at levels other than the faculty, the subsequent new program proposal needs to include active faculty participation in all aspects of development. New program proposals normally are developed and refined through an iterative process of collaboration among faculty, department chair, as relevant, appropriate faculty committee(s), and the school 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.
- B. Prior to development of a formal THECB proposal (Section II. C.), the dean, or designee, will present a summary of the proposed program to the Academic Council for preliminary review based on school and institutional priorities, and analysis of expected benefits versus costs of the proposed program. (See [HSCEP OP 10.06, Academic Council](#) and [HSCEP OP 59.08 Attachment A, Request for New Degree or Certificate Program Academic Council Review](#)).
- C. Once preliminary review by the Academic Council is complete, development of a full proposal for submission to the THECB will begin. As guided by the appropriate school-level administrator (e.g., dean, department chair) and in collaboration with the THECB Liaison, the program requestor will prepare a formal new program proposal, in accordance with the guidelines of the THECB, using forms that are available on the THECB website. Program proposals must address the following THECB areas of priority:

- 1) Need for the program and benefits that will accrue to Texas from approval and implementation of the proposed program;
 - 2) Market demand and relevance for the program, including analysis of availability of existing or similar programs in the state and region;
Quality of the program, including appropriateness of degree requirements and description of the program curriculum, including required Semester Credit Hours;
 - 3) Numbers and kinds of students who likely will enter the program;
 - 4) Adequacy of faculty, facilities, and funding to undertake the program;
 - 5) Cost and relative impact on existing programs;
 - 6) Long-term market and educational sustainability;
 - 7) Degree of fit with school and university missions; and
 - 8) Degree of fit with THECB program and resource allocation priorities.
- D. 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, Academic Council](#) and [HSCEP OP 59.08, Attachment A, Request for New Degree or Certificate Program Academic Council Review](#)). After the Academic Council has approved the proposal, it will move forward to the VPAA for review and approval, and to relevant institutional departments for sign-off (see [HSCEP OP 59.08, Attachment B Approval of New Degree and Certificate Programs Routing Sheet](#)). The president will provide final review and approval, and when required, the president will submit the proposal to the TTU System BOR for approval. After all approvals have been secured, the THECB/SACSCOC Liaison, with the support of the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE), will prepare the proposal for submission to the THECB and notify the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) as relevant. 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.
- E. The THECB requires notification for degree programs prior to proposal submission, and requires institutions to notify SACSCOC as required by its policy on Substantive Change (see [HSCEP OP 59.07, Substantive Change Reporting](#)). For doctoral programs, the THECB requests notification a minimum of one year prior to proposal submission, which in turn should occur one year prior to expected THECB action. However, the review process may take longer if site visits by external reviewers are required per THECB policy and procedures. The THECB/SACSCOC Liaison will provide the appropriate notification and documentation to THECB and SACSCOC within their stipulated timelines.
- F. 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 (see [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.
- G. For 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 SACSCOC Liaison

along with the request for a new degree program. The SACSCOC Liaison will provide timely notification per SACSCOC requirements, prior to the anticipated implementation of new degree programs.

- H. Programs that propose to deliver 25% or more of the curriculum via distance education or at off-campus locations require THECB and SACSCOC notification and may require approval prior to implementation. In some cases, SACSCOC may require submission of the proposal and other substantive change documentation. The THECB/SACSCOC Liaison will provide timely notification per SACSCOC requirements prior to the anticipated implementation of degree programs that are considered distance education programs, or programs that include off campus instruction.
- I. All agreements for delivery of 25% or more of a degree program in collaboration with other institutions should be prepared as specified in Section II.B. and approved as specified in Section II.C.
- J. Agreements to provide degree or certificate program curricula with less than 25% delivery via distance (but more than one distance education course) or include off-campus instruction 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, Substantive Change Reporting](#) 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 THECB/SACSCOC Liaison. 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 SACSCOC Liaison 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 THECB/SACSCOC Liaison of any degree program termination or merger. Closing a program is a SACSCOC Substantive Change and requires notification, approval, and teach-out processes.