



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY™

Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 36.04: New Academic Programs, Course Approval for New Programs, Program Termination, and Changes in Delivery Format

DATE: October 15, 2009

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy and Procedure (OP) is to ensure understanding of the procedure for initiating and developing new programs, for reviewing new courses proposed to accompany new programs, for terminating existing programs, and for changing delivery format for programs.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in August of odd-numbered years by the senior vice provost with recommended revisions presented to the provost and senior vice president (PSVP) by September 15.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Proposing New Programs

- a. Proposals for new or revised undergraduate programs typically originate at the department level. Conferences with the relevant academic dean(s), the department chair(s), and the Office of the PSVP should precede formal proposal development.
- b. Although a proposal for a new graduate degree program commonly originates at the departmental level, development of the proposal should be preceded by conferences with the appropriate academic dean and the dean of the Graduate School, who will encourage or discourage continued development of the proposal on the basis of college and university priorities and recognized strengths in the department and college concerned. Should it be deemed necessary for outside authorities to evaluate the proposed new graduate degree program and its potential for future development, the dean of the Graduate School will coordinate such review.
- c. Once a department or other appropriate unit receives encouragement or approval to develop a new degree program, it will prepare a proposal in accordance with the guidelines of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) (available from the Office of the PSVP and on the THECB Web site). If the proposal includes delivery of all or part of the program off-campus or via electronic delivery, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges *Substantive Change Procedures* (available from the Office of the PSVP and on the SACS-COC Web site) will also be consulted and followed. During the preparation of such a proposal, the advice and review of the dean of the appropriate college or school and/or the dean of the Graduate School shall be sought in order that all viewpoints may be considered and the best possible representation of the proposed program may be made. Highest priorities for consideration of new programs shall be given to:
 - (1) Adequacy of faculty and facilities to undertake the program;

- (2) Cost and relative impact on existing programs;
 - (3) Numbers and kinds of students who likely will enter the program if approved;
 - (4) Genuine need for the educational product;
 - (5) Long-term prognosis for success; and
 - (6) Allocation of resources within the state as concerns possible competition or duplication of effort.
- d. The proposal first should have the review and approval of the department and then be forwarded to the dean of the college. If all or part of the degree is to be offered by distance/off-campus delivery, the proposal proceeds to the dean of the College of Outreach and Distance Education for review by the Distributed Learning Council. From there, the proposal for a graduate program proceeds to the dean of the Graduate School for review by the Graduate Council; the proposal for an undergraduate program is forwarded to the senior vice provost for review by the Academic Council.
 - e. A proposal for a new graduate degree is reviewed by the Academic Programs Committee of the Graduate Council. The committee may recommend the proposal to the council for approval, or it may send the proposal back for revisions and/or clarification before the Graduate Council makes a recommendation to the Academic Council. Proposals approved at the Graduate Council level are forwarded to the Office of the PSVP for review by the Academic Council and recommendation to the PSVP.
 - f. If approved by the PSVP, the proposal will be forwarded through the president to the Board of Regents for final review at the university level. At any one of the review stages, a proposal may be rejected or sent back to the originating department or unit for revision and/or additional information.
 - g. All proposals should be accompanied by a routing sheet indicating approval at each level (see Attachment A). If the proposal is approved through all university levels, it will be transmitted by the PSVP to the THECB and SACS-COC for final review. The staff of the THECB requests a minimum of three months for review prior to Board action, although a longer timeline frequently is needed.
 - h. All proposals are subject to the current rules and guidelines of both the THECB and SACS-COC.

2. **Reviewing Courses for New Programs**

- a. Any new courses proposed as part of new program proposals will be reviewed as all other new courses are reviewed: with the understanding that final approval is dependent upon THECB acceptance of the new program.
- b. Proposed new courses must be listed on the standard *Application for Course Approval* form (see OP 36.01, Attachment A) and forwarded with the program proposal so that both courses and the overall program description may be treated as a package.

- c. New courses submitted as parts of new programs should receive the same scrutiny against duplication and disciplinary encroachment that is applied to all other courses submitted for approval.
- d. The Office of the PSVP will hold the course applications until the Board of Regents and the THECB approve the programs. The office will then complete the paperwork to have the courses entered on the THECB inventory.
- e. New courses proposed as a part of a new degree program will not be included in catalog copy until the program is approved by the THECB. An approved course section in which 50 percent or more of the contact hours will be delivered electronically must meet the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board *Principles of Good Practice* and be certified by filing a *Principles of Good Practice/Copyright Compliance Form*, which is available online at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/distancelearning/faculty>, prior to delivery. The College of Outreach and Distance Education is responsible for ensuring that the course has been entered into the distance education database before the course is offered.

3. **Changing Method of Delivery of Existing Programs**

- a. The following routing is required to approve changes in method of delivery that result in 50 percent or more of the program being delivered off-campus or electronically: department, college committees, dean, Distributed Learning Council, Graduate Council (for graduate programs), Academic Council, PSVP, and, in the case of doctoral programs, Board of Regents.
- b. The department or college should notify the dean of the College of Outreach and Distance Education early in the approval process to ensure compliance with all THECB and SACS-COC procedures related to distance/and off-campus degree and certificate programs.
- c. All proposals are subject to the current rules and guidelines of both the THECB and SACS-COC. All proposals should be accompanied by a routing sheet indicating approval at each level (see Attachment A).

4. **Termination of Existing Programs**

- a. A program may be terminated for various reasons, but such action will be preceded by full study and consultation by the parties concerned. Persistent under-enrollment, loss of critical faculty, a shift in priorities, or financial exigency are some of the issues that might lead to termination of programs.
- b. Before any program is terminated, the rationale for such action will be presented and considered by the unit involved and its program administrator, by the relevant academic dean, the dean of the Graduate School (for graduate programs), and the PSVP. When the necessity for action has been established, the Graduate Council will review the proposed change for graduate programs. After such review, the dean of the Graduate School will make a recommendation to the PSVP who will render the final decision in consultation with the relevant academic dean and the president. For undergraduate programs, the PSVP will consult with the relevant program administrator, academic dean, and the president.

- c. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and SACS-COC will be notified by the Office of the PSVP of any program termination, as will all relevant campus entities.

5. **Proposing New Certificate Programs**

- a. Proposals for new or revised certificates typically originate at the department level. Conferences with the relevant academic dean(s), the department chair(s), and the Office of the PSVP should precede formal proposal development.
- b. Although a proposal for a new certificate commonly originates at the departmental level, development of the proposal should be preceded by conferences with the appropriate academic dean and the dean of the Graduate School, who will encourage or discourage continued development of the proposal on the basis of college and university priorities and recognized strengths in the department and college concerned. Should it be deemed necessary for outside authorities to evaluate the proposed certificate and its potential for future development, the respective dean will coordinate such review.
- c. Once a department or other appropriate unit receives encouragement or approval to develop a new certificate, it will prepare a proposal in accordance with the guidelines of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Chapter 5, Subchapter C, §5.48, and complete the *Certification Form for New Certificate Programs at Universities and Health-Related Institutions* (available on the THECB Web site).
- d. The proposal first should have the review and approval of the department and then be forwarded to the dean of the college. If all or part of the certificate is to be offered by distance/off-campus delivery, the proposal proceeds to the dean of the College of Outreach and Distance Education for review by the Distributed Learning Council. From there, the proposal for a graduate certificate proceeds to the dean of the Graduate School for review by the Graduate Council. Once this step is complete, the Graduate School will forward the proposal to the PSVP for review by the Academic Council. After approval by the dean of the college, and after review by the Distributed Learning Council in the case of proposed distance/off-campus delivery, proposals for undergraduate certificates will be submitted to the PSVP for review by the Academic Council.
- e. If approved by the Academic Council, the certificate proposal will be forwarded to the PSVP for approval. At any one of the review stages, a proposal may be rejected or sent back to the originating department or unit for revision and/or additional information.
- f. All proposals should be accompanied by a routing sheet indicating approval at each level (see Attachment A; please indicate "Certificate Program" at the top of the form) and the THECB Certification Form (available on the THECB Web site). If the proposal is approved through all university levels, it will be transmitted by the PSVP to the THECB and SACS-COC.
- g. All proposals are subject to the current rules and guidelines of both the THECB and SACS-COC.

[Attachment A: Academic Program Proposal/Routing form](#)

Attachment B: Planning Timetable for Approvals and Submissions for Distance/Off-campus Degree Programs

Attachment C: Distance Doctoral Degree Submissions

Attachment D: Format for Distance Baccalaureate and Master's Degree Program Requests

See OP 36.01, Attachment B, for the *Principles of Good Practice/Copyright Compliance Form*
