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Texas Higher Education
Coordinating Board

Standards for Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programs

An institution shall adhere to the following standards and Texas Administrative Code, Coordinating Board rule, Chapter 5, Subchapter C, Section 5.45, "Criteria for New Baccalaureate and Master's Degree Programs," in developing new degree programs. An institution is expected to incorporate these standards into its program unless it provides *compelling* information that justifies deviations from the standards. An institution that cannot certify adherence with the standards must submit a degree program proposal using the *Full Request Form*. Additionally, existing degree programs are expected to meet these standards.

I. Need

Job Market Need – The institution has researched and documented recent and reliable data on the number of potential job openings in the discipline that reflect both short- and long-term need. Types of data to be used include: 1) documented vacancies in existing positions; 2) documented need for new positions; and 3) evidence of emerging markets. These data can come from: a) survey of advertisements for job openings; b) employer surveys; and c) evidence from professional associations, workforce commissions, and related governmental agencies. For programs that do not lead directly into a job, the institution has documented other justification for the program such as enhancing educational opportunities currently unavailable to students, preparing students for graduate education, etc.

Student Demand – The institution has researched and documented recent and reliable data of short- and long-term evidence of student interest. Types of data to be used include: 1) increased enrollments in related programs at the institution; 2) high enrollment in similar programs at other institutions; 3) qualified applicants rejected at similar programs in the state or nation; and 4) student surveys.

Enrollment Projections – The institution has calculated enrollment projections that reflect student demand estimates to ensure financial self-sufficiency of the program by the end of the program's fifth year. In calculating yearly full-time student equivalent (FTSE), 30 semester credit hours (SCH) equals 1 FTSE for bachelor's programs and 24 SCH equals 1 FTSE for master's programs. The institution has developed a plan to recruit, retain, and graduate students from underrepresented groups for the program.

II. Quality

Degree Requirements

Core Curriculum – The number of semester credit hours (SCH) in the general education core curriculum shall equal the number of SCH in the institution's approved Core Curriculum Plan.

Number of Hours in a Major – A minimum number of SCH are required for an academic major (required courses and prescribed electives):

- Bachelor's program – 24 SCH (30 SCH for most majors)
- Master's program – 18 SCH in a 30 to 36 SCH program; more for programs with greater than 36 SCH

Number of Hours in a Degree Program – The number of SCH for the degree is comparable to the number the SCH required for similar degrees in the state. The institution shall adhere to Texas Education Code, Section 61.0515, which limits the SCH required for a baccalaureate degree. A minimum and maximum number of SCH are prescribed by the Coordinating Board for completion of a degree:

Degree level	Minimum number of SCH	Maximum number of SCH
Baccalaureate	120	120

A baccalaureate program shall not require more SCH than the maximum, unless the institution requests a waiver in writing to the Coordinating Board. The waiver shall document a compelling academic reason for requiring more SCHs than indicated above. Acceptable justifications include programmatic accreditation requirements, statutory requirements, and licensure/certification requirements.

Initial Teaching Certificate – New or revised undergraduate degree programs leading to an initial teaching certificate must comply with the requirements adopted by the Coordinating Board (See http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/EdPrep).

Transfer Issues – Coordinating Board approved Field of Study Curriculum (FOSC) are fully accepted in transfer and the FOSC (or courses in the FOSC that the student has completed) satisfies the lower-division requirements of the program.

Marketable Skills – The proposed program has identified marketable skills and students will graduate with the ability to articulate the job skills they acquired through it.

Curriculum

Required Courses – Courses taken by all students in the program and that meet all requirements for accreditation, licensure, and/or certification, as appropriate. Required courses are consistent with courses offered in similar programs in the state and nation.

Prescribed Elective Courses – Specific list of courses from which students must choose to meet curricular requirements of the program. Prescribed electives shall complement the required courses and are numerous enough to provide breadth and depth of study.

Electives – Courses available to students, which are neither required nor prescribed, and are consistent with similar programs, and are selected by the student, and may be subject to advisor approval.

Faculty

The proposed program shall have a sufficient number of core and support faculty to teach the scope of the discipline, consistent with similar programs in the state and nation.

Core Faculty – Tenured or tenure-track faculty who devotes an average of fifty percent or more of teaching time to the program. Some programs such as interdisciplinary degrees may have core faculty devoting less than 50 percent of their teaching time to the program. The background and education of each core faculty member shall be in the field of the program or in a closely related field.

Support Faculty - Tenured or tenure-track faculty from related disciplines, adjunct faculty, and graduate teaching assistant or assistant instructor who meets SACSCOC minimum requirements and serves as the instructor of record for a course.

The proposed program meets, or exceeds, the minimum number of faculty devoted specifically to the proposed program:

- Bachelor's program – three FTE or two FTE if comprised of four individual faculty members. (Note: The standard for upper-level institutions could be lower for those programs in which lower-division courses are required for the major and taken at feeder institutions.)
- Master's program – three FTE or two FTE if comprised of four individual faculty members.
- At least 50 percent of the faculty FTE supporting a bachelor's or master's program must be core faculty.

Qualifications of Faculty for Bachelor's Programs - To meet minimum SACSCOC standards (as defined in SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation* Comprehensive Standard 3.5.4), 25 percent of the program's SCH must be taught by faculty members with a terminal degree. Beyond that minimum standard, the percentage of faculty with terminal degrees shall compare favorably to the percentage of faculty with terminal degrees at similar programs in the state and nation.

Qualifications of Faculty for Master's Programs – To meet minimum SACSCOC standards, faculty supporting the master's degree program shall have terminal degrees, unless the institution determines other qualifications (as defined in SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation* Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1) are a factor in effective teaching and student learning.

Degree-granting Institution - Coordinating Board rules, Chapter 5, Subchapter C, Section 5.45 (3) (B) and Chapter 7, Subchapter A, Section 7.4 (a) (1) require that core and support faculty have terminal degrees from institutions that are accredited by agencies recognized by the Coordinating Board or from equivalent institutions located outside the United States.

Other Resources

Library Resources – Resources shall meet the standards of the appropriate accrediting body or other professional association and be adequate to support the program. Faculty and library staff shall collaborate on writing a collection development policy for the program and on purchasing core collection materials.

Facilities and Equipment – Facilities and equipment shall be equivalent to those provided at similar programs in the state and nation.

Accreditation – The institution shall identify plans to seek accreditation from appropriate accrediting agencies or organizations. The Coordinating Board requires institutions to meet accreditation deadlines for certain programs (e.g., ABET for undergraduate engineering) as a requirement for program approval. If the institution does not plan to pursue accreditation, it shall provide the rationale for that decision.

III.   Costs and Funding

Identifiable new and reallocated revenues shall cover the incremental costs of operating the program. New formula funding shall not be considered as a funding source for the first two years of the program and shall not exceed 50 percent of all funding for the program for years three through five. By year six, the identified sustainable incremental revenue shall be equal to or above the incremental costs. Incremental or new costs to the institution shall be below $2,000,000 for the first five years of the program. Costs include personnel, facilities and equipment, library resources, supplies and materials, administration, and any other new costs directly related to the proposed program.

IV.   Program Review

The institution has a process for regular program review to assess the quality and effectiveness of the degree program and for continuous improvement. Program reviews shall be submitted to the System Office for institutions within a System, as well as to the Coordinating Board upon request.