

NUMBER: ACAF 2.00
SECTION: Academic Affairs
SUBJECT: Creation and Revision of Academic Programs
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Policy for: All Campuses
Procedure for: Columbia, Aiken and Regional Campuses
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I. Policy

University of South Carolina programs that lead to formal recognition including the awarding of all degrees and certificates must be reviewed and approved at appropriate levels of curriculum responsibility within the University, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

This policy applies to program actions on all campuses including the creation and revision of degrees, majors, minors, undergraduate research tracks, academic certificates and concentrations. Following initial program approval, subsequent curriculum changes and revisions such as changes in program delivery method or delivery location, or changes to the program name or program designator require additional review and approval.

A. Academic Program Development: Responsibility and Oversight

1. System Oversight

The faculty of the University has legislative authority over matters pertaining to the curriculum on the campus where they serve. The Provost's Office oversees the system-wide approval process and ensures that all ongoing academic program development is in compliance with CHE and SACS regulations and in alignment with University strategic goals and priorities.

2. Campus and Unit Oversight

The deans of the colleges and schools on the Columbia campus, the campus deans on the Regional campuses, and the chief academic affairs officers on the Senior campuses are responsible for implementing this policy and maintaining unit- and campus-level compliance with CHE and SACS regulations.

Within units, program leadership is responsible for ensuring that programs meet the academic expectations of the University and are assessed annually, including monitoring program offerings using specific delivery methods and/or locations.

3. Academic Program Liaisons (APL)

An Academic Program Liaison (APL) will be designated for each college/school on the Columbia campus, for each Senior campus, and for the Regional campuses. The APLs will serve as the main information resource on academic program actions and as the academic program liaison to the Provost's Office for their respective units. The list of current Academic Program Liaisons can be found at www.sc.edu/provost/acadprog.

Draft documents and notifications may be forwarded to the Provost's Office by the APL, but all formal program actions must be forwarded directly by the dean or chief academic affairs officer.

B. Program Action Approval Process

Required approvals as outlined below may take between six months and two years for full review. Programs cannot advertise or admit students before approval notification has been received from CHE and SACS when appropriate.

1. Initiation of Program Actions

In most cases, program actions will begin in a department or unit of a campus, college or school. After consultation with the APL and receipt of unit-level approval, program actions must be approved by the campus, college or school academic affairs officials, and relevant committees as needed, prior to review by the appropriate faculty governance body.

2. Review process for Columbia and Regional Campuses

a. Faculty Governance Review

- i. Program actions related to baccalaureate majors, undergraduate certificate programs, minors, concentrations and Undergraduate Research Tracks offered on the Columbia campus must be reviewed and approved by the Faculty Senate.
- ii. Program actions related to graduate programs including post-baccalaureate certificates must be reviewed and approved by the Graduate Council.

- iii. Program actions related to first professional degrees must be reviewed and approved by the faculty governance structure in the respective colleges and schools.
- iv. Program actions related to two-year degrees awarded on the Regional campuses must be reviewed and approved by the Regional Campus Faculty Senate.
- v. Cognates and sub-concentrations are approved at the campus, college, or school level only and are not reviewed or approved by any University-level faculty governance structure.
- vi. Following faculty governance approval, all program actions must be transmitted to the Provost's Office by the dean of the responsible campus, college or school. On the Regional campuses, program actions should be transmitted to the Provost's Office through the Office of System Affairs.

b. Administrative Review

The Provost's Office must approve all program actions on the Columbia and Regional campuses. In addition, the following reviews are required when applicable.

- i. College of Education: All proposed new programs and program revisions related to P-12 education at the Columbia and Regional campuses require approval by the Dean of the College of Education.
- ii. Office of Educational Outreach: All Columbia and Regional campus programs offering courses under contract with school districts, other institutions of higher learning, businesses, or other entities require the approval of the Office of Educational Outreach in the College of Education.
- iii. Office of International Programs: All Columbia and Regional campus programs that are offered on an off-site international location must be reviewed and approved by the Office of International Programs.
- iv. Office of System Affairs: Program actions that may significantly affect the curriculum offerings at the Regional campuses must be brought to the attention of and reviewed by the Office of System Affairs.

- v. President: All new academic programs and program name changes across the entire USC system must be approved by the president.
- vi. Board of Trustees: All new academic programs and program name changes across the entire USC system must be approved by the University Board of Trustees. The Provost's Office is the sole liaison to the University Board of Trustees for all campuses.

c. CHE and SACS Approval

The Provost's Office coordinates the notification and submission of all program actions to CHE and to SACS for the Columbia and Regional campuses.

i. CHE approval is required in the following cases:

- New degree programs;
- New academic certificates of any length in a new CIP code;
- New academic certificates of 18 credit hours or more in a current CIP code;
- Program revisions of more than 18 credit hours including the addition of program concentrations and CIP code changes;
- Program revisions of delivery location to off-campus (50% or more of credit hours); and
- Center and institute proposals requesting new or additional state funding.

ii. CHE notification is required in the following cases:

- Program revisions of 18 credit hours or less involving the addition of program concentrations;
- New academic certificates of less than 18 credit hours in a current CIP code;
- Program and administrative unit name changes;
- Program four-letter designator changes;
- Program terminations;
- Program revisions of delivery method to distance education delivery (50% or more of credit hours); and
- Center or institute proposals in which state funding is not required.

iii. SACS approval is required six months before implementation in the following cases:

- New programs;
- Program revisions that increase program length by 10%;

- New academic certificates of any length in any CIP code;
 - Program terminations;
 - Program revisions of delivery location to off-campus (50% or more of credit hours); and
 - Program revisions of delivery method to distance education delivery (50% or more of credit hours).
- iv. SACS notification is required six months before implementation in the following cases:
- Program revisions of delivery location to off-campus (25% to 49% of credit hours);
 - Program revisions of delivery method to distance education delivery (25% to 49% of credit hours);
 - Program name changes.

The program percentages must be based on the total number of credits required to earn the degree, not on the number of required credits in the major, minor or course, or the number of contact hours. SACS may also request more information or additional materials such as a prospectus for any action.

3. Review process for Senior Campuses

a. Faculty Governance Review

All program actions must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate faculty governance structure on each respective campus.

b. Administrative Review

The Senior campus chief academic affairs officer must approve all actions leading to the creation and revision of academic programs. In addition, the following reviews and notifications are required when applicable.

- i. **Provost's Office Notification:** For USC system record-keeping purposes, the Provost's Office should receive a copy of all formal academic program actions and notifications on the Senior campuses.
- ii. **President:** All new academic programs and program name changes across the entire USC system must be approved by the president.
- iii. **Board of Trustees:** All new academic programs and program name changes across the entire USC system must be submitted through the Provost's Office for approval by the University Board of

Trustees. The Provost's Office is the sole liaison to the University Board of Trustees for all campuses.

c. CHE and SACS Approval

The Provost's Office is the liaison to CHE for the Senior campuses in the following cases:

- New degree programs;
- Academic certificates of any length in a new CIP code;
- Academic certificates of 18 hours or more in a current CIP code; and
- Program revisions of more than 18 credit hours, including addition of program concentrations and CIP code changes.

The Senior campus chief academic affairs officer serves as the liaison to CHE for all other actions and to SACS in all cases.

Specific CHE and SACS notification and approval regulations are the same throughout the entire system, as outlined in Section I.B.2.c of this policy.

C. Academic Program Definitions

1. Degrees and Other Formal Awards

Formal awards are made by the University at the following levels:

- a. Associate's Degrees: Require a minimum of 60 credit hours beyond high school. May only be awarded by two-year campuses.
- b. Bachelor's Degrees: Require a minimum of 120 credit hours beyond high school. May only be awarded by four-year campuses.
- c. Master's Degrees: Require a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree.
- d. Specialist Degrees: Require a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours beyond the master's degree.
- e. Doctoral Degrees: Require a minimum of three years of graduate study and a minimum of 60 graduate credit hours (with a maximum of 12 hours of dissertation preparation) beyond the baccalaureate, or a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours (with a maximum of 12 hours of dissertation preparation) beyond the master's degree.

- f. First Professional Degrees in Law, Medicine, and Pharmacy: Typically require three or four years beyond the bachelor's degree or beyond pre-professional coursework.
- g. Academic Certificates
 - i. Undergraduate Certificates: Typically require 15 to 18 credit hours beyond high school.
 - ii. Graduate Certificates: Typically require 18 graduate credit hours either post-baccalaureate or post-master's. Post-baccalaureate certificates require the bachelor's degree for admission, and post-master's certificates require the master's degree.
- h. Dual, Joint and Other Collaborative Degree Programs
 - i. Dual Degrees: Typically require all or most of the requirements for two distinct academic degree programs, and two degrees are awarded.
 - ii. Joint Degrees: Typically require all or most of the requirements of two distinct academic degree programs administered by two or more of the University's colleges or schools, or by two or more universities, and a single degree is awarded.
 - iii. Other Collaborative Degrees: Programs governed by specific agreements typically involving an articulated transfer of credit from one institution to another for the award of a single or multiple degrees. May also include bridge programs that require non-credit study prior to course work for academic credit.

2. Program of Study

- a. Major: A program of study in a discipline that leads to a degree in that distinct specialty area at a particular level of instruction.
- b. Academic Program: A major-degree combination.
- c. Within a major or program, the following may also be available:
 - i. Minor: A series of courses that display a distinct curricular pattern in one discipline that is different from the major. Undergraduate minors normally require a minimum of 18 credit hours of prescribed courses. Undergraduate minors are subject to faculty governance review, and appear on the transcripts, but not on the diplomas.

- ii. Cognate: A series of courses that display a distinct curricular pattern in one or more disciplines different from the major. Undergraduate cognates require a minimum of 12 credit hours in advanced level courses related to, but outside the major. Graduate cognates range between 9 and 18 credit hours. Cognates are variable according to what is appropriate as determined by the student and the major advisor. Thus cognates are not subject to faculty governance review, and do not appear on either the transcripts or the diplomas.
- iii. Concentration: A series of courses that display a distinct curricular pattern within the major. They are often called options, emphases, tracks, areas, fields, or specializations. These are different from minors or cognates which are typically outside of the major. Concentrations are subject to faculty governance review, and appear on the transcripts but not the diplomas.

3. Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP)

The University uses the federal taxonomy of disciplines and assigns a six- digit code for each major/program. In the taxonomy, a CIP code is specific to a particular category of instructional program. Most graduate and undergraduate degree programs offered by any one department fall under the same CIP code.

4. Delivery Method

Academic programs are identified and approved based upon the delivery method(s) used to satisfy the total number of required credit hours.

- a. Traditional Instruction: Programs offered in a traditional classroom setting in which the instructor is face-to-face in the same room at the same time as the students.
- b. Distance Technology Instruction: Programs offered using distance technology as a primary delivery method. Examples of distance education methods include web-based instruction, live video streaming instruction, and/or CD-DVD instruction.
- c. Blended Method of Instruction: Programs may be considered “blended” if more than one method of delivery is used.

5. Delivery Location

Academic programs are also identified and approved based upon the delivery location(s) or site used to offer the total number of required credit hours.

- a. On-campus: Programs offered on the geographic site of the home campus. A program is identified as “on-campus” if 50 percent or more of the program’s credits can be obtained on the home campus.
- b. Off-campus: Programs or parts of programs offered at locations geographically apart from the home campus.
- c. Blended Location of Instruction: Program may be considered “blended” if more than one delivery location is used.

6. Interdisciplinary Academic Programs

Interdisciplinary programs are academic programs that bring faculty together from various departments, schools and/or colleges for the purpose of scholarly focus on a given subject or subjects. Interdisciplinary programs may be constituted in conjunction with the creation of degree programs or minors, and may offer undergraduate and/or graduate degrees and certificates.

An interdisciplinary program that offers no academic degrees is considered an academic administrative unit, and falls under University Policy ACAF 2.02 Establishment and Modification of Academic Administrative Units.

7. Academic Administrative Units

Academic administrative units at the University include colleges, schools, departments, interdisciplinary programs, centers and institutes. With the exception of centers and institutes, academic administrative units may offer academic programs that lead to formal degrees. For more information, see University Policy ACAF 2.02 Establishment and Modification of Academic Administrative Units.

D. Program Development Guidelines

1. New Majors, Minors and Undergraduate Research Tracks

Proposals for a new undergraduate or graduate major, an undergraduate minor, or an undergraduate research track should include consideration of faculty and departmental resources, measurable program demand, impact upon existing programs at the University and across the state, and sources of funding.

2. Academic Certificates

Undergraduate academic certificates may not be earned independently on four-year campuses due to state law specifications governing the types of degrees that may be awarded by these institutions (no degree lower than baccalaureate level).

Therefore, new stand-alone undergraduate certificate programs are only permitted on the Regional campuses of the USC system, and students are required to be matriculated at the Regional campus to complete the coursework and to receive their certificates. Undergraduate certificates on the Columbia or Senior campuses are permissible only if students are post-baccalaureate and/or are concurrently enrolled in a regular baccalaureate program.

- a. New academic certificate programs requiring 18 hours or more of credit fall under the same guidelines as new majors. These guidelines also apply to new certificate programs of any length being proposed in a CIP code in which the proposing unit has no degree offerings.
- b. New certificate programs requiring less than 18 hours in an existing CIP code require the same initial procedures as new majors, with the exception of sending the proposal to CHE. CHE requires only notification by the Provost's Office, for Columbia and Regional campus programs, or by the chief academic affairs officer for Senior campus programs.

3. International Academic Programs

International academic and exchange programs are typically established as contractual arrangements between the University and the international site. They are normally governed by a Memorandum of Agreement spelling out the terms of the contract such as the program curricular requirements, eligibility and application procedures, instructors, program duration, logistical arrangements, and transfer of credit.

Detailed procedural instructions are available in University Policy ACAF 2.06 International Academic Agreements.

4. Dual, Joint and Other Collaborative Degree Programs

The APLs or chief academic affairs officers in the units seeking to create a joint or dual degree program must collaborate in preparing a joint proposal, following the appropriate guidelines depending on the type of program.

The proposal requires the approval of the faculty and leadership in both or all collaborating programs, and letters of concurrence from all University units in closely related disciplines.

5. Interdisciplinary Programs

Faculty members of the disciplines seeking to establish an interdisciplinary program must determine the nature of their collaboration, the type(s) of degree program(s) and/or minor they wish to pursue, and division of teaching and

administrative responsibilities among program participants. Proposals for new majors, certificates and minors fall under the respective guidelines detailed above. Each instance in which an interdisciplinary program is created, revised, or terminated requires letters of concurrence from all related academic units.

Interdisciplinary programs without related degree programs are governed by University Policy ACAF 2.02 Establishment and Modification of Academic Administrative Units.

E. University Bulletins

As of 2009, the official University Undergraduate Bulletin and Graduate Bulletin exist in electronic form only.

The online bulletins are frozen on August 15 each year to establish the guidelines and regulations under which each incoming class matriculates. The August 15 bulletin becomes the archived bulletin of record for the coming academic year, containing the official language used to describe academic programs at USC. Both the Undergraduate and Graduate bulletins are maintained by the Office of the Registrar. Changes to the bulletins must be approved by the appropriate faculty governance bodies.

Senior campuses and professional schools on the Columbia campus each have academic bulletins/catalogs subject to the unit-wide faculty governance approval policies of those units.

F. Program Assessment

All academic programs should be developed using measurable learning outcomes and expectations. Achievement of these outcomes must be assessed on an annual basis by the individual academic unit as well as by the campus, college or school dean, or chief academic affairs officer. A program assessment project is implemented each year by the Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance for the Columbia campus and Regional campuses. Senior campuses conduct their own assessments and maintain separate assessment records.

Academic programs using distance technology must also regularly assess the extent to which the program has maintained the same level of quality in both the portions of the program delivered traditionally and those employing distance technology.

G. Program Review

All academic programs are to be reviewed regularly by an external review committee. Regular review should be scheduled at least every ten years. Costs of the review are to be borne by the unit or college/school housing the academic program. The unit housing the academic program is responsible for maintaining documentation on the unit's

program review procedures, as well as copies of all external review committee final reports.

Documentation of professional accreditation by a national accrediting agency may be substituted for external review committee reports. If professional accreditation does not extend to all academic degree programs of the accredited unit, the unit or college/school is responsible for scheduling external reviews of the non-accredited programs on the same cycle as the accreditation.

II. Procedure

A. Procedure for Senior Campuses

Each Senior campus should develop individual campus-based procedures to implement this policy.

Detailed procedural instructions for new or substantive revisions of existing academic programs at USC Aiken are found in Section III, Appendix 10.

B. Procedure for Columbia and Regional Campuses

Detailed procedural instructions have been developed regarding all program and curriculum development actions. See Section III: Appendices 1 through 9 for complete procedures. Required forms are available online at www.sc.edu/provost/acadprog.

III. Appendices

Columbia and Regional Campuses

- Appendix 1: New Programs; New Academic Certificates of Any Length in a New CIP Code; and New Academic Certificates: 18 Credit Hours or more in a Current CIP Code
- Appendix 2: New Academic Certificates: Less than 18 Credit Hours in a Current CIP Code; and All Program Name and Four-Letter Designator Changes
- Appendix 3: Program Revision (Including Addition of Concentrations and CIP Code Changes): More than 18 Credit Hours
- Appendix 4: Program Revision (Including Addition of Concentrations): 18 Credit Hours or Less
- Appendix 5: Creation, Revision, or Termination of a Minor or Undergraduate Research Track for Graduation with Distinction
- Appendix 6: Program Revision: Change of Delivery Method to Distance Education (25% to 49% of Program)

- Appendix 7: Program Revision: Change of Delivery Method to Distance Education (50% or More of Program)
- Appendix 8: Program Revision: Change of Delivery Location to Off-Campus (25% to 49 % of Program), using Traditional On-Site Delivery Method, including Out of State and International
- Appendix 9: Program Revision: Change of Delivery Location to Off-Campus (50% or More of Program), using Traditional On-Site Method, including Out of State and International

Aiken Campus

- Appendix 10: USC Aiken Review Process for New or Substantive Revision of Existing Academic Programs

IV. Related Policies

University Policy ACAF 2.01 Establishment and Modification of Centers and Institutes
University Policy ACAF 2.02 Establishment and Modification of Academic Administrative Units
University Policy ACAF 2.03 Creation and Revision of Academic Courses
University Policy ACAF 2.06 International Academic Agreements
USC Columbia Faculty Manual

V. Reason for Revision

Policy revised to add Section I.G. as recommended by SACS.