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**Owner:** *Pierre Neuenschwander:  
Senior Associate Provost*  
**Policy Area:** *Academics, Faculty and  
Students*

**References:**

## Approval and Review of Degree Programs

### Scope

This policy applies to all University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler (the "University") faculty and administrators who support degree granting programs offered by the University.

### Purpose

To define the process by which new degree programs are created, approved and reviewed.

### Definitions

- A. *Degree Program* – a program offered for academic credit toward an earned degree.
- B. *Chief Executive Officer* – the President of the University
- C. *Board of Regents (BOR)*– the governing body of The University of Texas System (UTS)
- D. *Board of Regents Designee* – individual authorized to sign for BOR
- E. *Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)* - an advisory board with a commissioner and staff whose primary purpose is to provide leadership and coordination for the Texas higher education system, which meets four times a year
- F. *THECB Preliminary Authority* – THECB requires institutions to obtain preliminary authority to offer a new Engineering Degree (all levels) or to offer a PhD degree program from a Health-Related Institution. An application for Preliminary Authority Requests is found on the THECB web site.
- G. *THECB Program Approval* – The appropriate program-level approval application will be submitted to THECB via UTS.
- H. *Texas Administrative Code Criteria for New Baccalaureate and Master's Degree Programs Chapter 5, Subchapter C, Rule 5.45* – criteria for THECB approval of new baccalaureate and master's degree programs.
- I. *Texas Administrative Code Criteria for New Doctoral Programs, Chapter 5, Subchapter C, Rule 5.46* – criteria for THECB approval of new doctoral programs.
- J. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges ( SACSCOC ) – the regional accreditation body to which the University belongs and that has been authorized by the US Department of Education to oversee academic quality in higher education.

- K. *Core Faculty* - A core faculty member in a proposed program is considered one who is the instructor of record for one or more courses in the proposed program, whose workload reflects teaching as part of his/her academic responsibilities, who will share responsibility in program/curriculum assessment and review, and who has a terminal degree in the discipline or a related field.
- L. *Support faculty* - A support faculty member in a proposed program can be faculty from a related discipline, faculty with limited programmatic responsibilities (teaching in courses or mentoring students but with no direct responsibility for programmatic assessment and review), adjunct faculty, or a graduate teaching assistant or assistant instructor who serves as the instructor of record for a course (only if he/she meets minimum SACSCOC requirements). The program shall have a sufficient number of support faculty to teach the scope of the discipline, consistent with similar programs in the state and nation.

## **POLICY**

The process for approval and review of degree programs (Attachment A) should follow the steps delineated in the following sections. All forms used in the process will be the latest forms available from the Office of Academic Administration (OAA), in accordance with the rules and processes set forth by UTS, THECB, and SACSCOC.

### **SECTION 1: Application for Approval by the University**

1. For proposing a new Bachelor or Master's Degree Program, the requesting academic/instructional unit must complete the *New Program Request Form for Bachelor and Master's Degrees* (Attachment B).
2. For proposing a new doctoral-level program, the requesting academic/instructional unit must use both the *UTS Planning Authority to Offer a New Doctoral Program* (Attachment C), as well as the *THECB Proposal for a Doctoral Program* (Attachment D).
3. The appropriate application form(s) as per above must be signed by the appropriate Dean before submission to OAA.
4. OAA will submit the documentation simultaneously to the President and the Deans' Council. The Deans' Council will review the documentation and should inform the President of its recommendation in due course.

### **SECTION 2: Application for Approval by UTS Board of Regents**

1. The application for any new degree program must adhere to BOR Rule 40311.
2. The appropriately approved institutional application documents from Section 1 shall be submitted to UTS for review and approval, or subsequent submission to BOR for their consideration and approval.

### **SECTION 3: Application for Approval by THECB**

1. The application for a new degree program must follow the THECB guidelines for New Degree Programs.
2. The application must also adhere to Texas Administrative Code Chapter 5, Subchapter C, Rule 5.45.
3. Program applications approved by UTS and/or BOR in Section 2 shall be submitted by UTS to the THECB for consideration and approval.
  - In accordance with THECB rules, thirty (30) days prior to submitting the application to THECB, a letter of intent shall be sent from the President to all public institutions of higher education within fifty (50) miles of the program teaching site naming the program and target implementation date.

## SECTION 4: Application for Approval by SACSCOC

1. OAA will notify SACSCOC of the new program and/or submit a prospectus to SACSCOC for approval as may be required, along with a copy of the State authorization letter from Section 3.
2. Upon implementation of a Graduate-level program, OAA will set the first review date with THECB at a date not to exceed five (5) years from program implementation and notify the program as to the first review date.

## SECTION 5: Academic Program Review

1. Academic Program Reviews (APRs) are designed to evaluate the quality, productivity, and role of each academic unit and program in the fulfillment of the University's mission and strategic priorities. The general APR process and guidelines are given in Attachment E.
2. APRs serve to encourage self-study and planning within units and to strengthen the linkages connecting the planning agendas and practices of individual units with those of their academic schools and of the University as a whole. Reviews also inform budgetary planning decisions at every level of administration. Workload policies must also be reviewed as part of the unit's APR and/or periodic review for accreditation or re-accreditation.
3. All University academic programs are reviewed by external reviewers every seven (7) years. Graduate programs are reviewed by the schedule approved by THECB (Section 4). Undergraduate programs will normally be reviewed at the same time as the corresponding graduate program.
4. The resulting Evaluation Report and the Program Response to the Evaluation Report shall be uploaded to THECB in accordance with THECB rules. University Administration will also use these documents to make programmatic adjustments as needed (refer to *Academic Program Closure* policy).
5. Core faculty of each approved degree program will perform an annual program assessment with appropriate input from students and all faculty involved in the program. The annual assessment report will be uploaded to *TracDat* and used for monitoring and enhancing program effectiveness, as well as providing documentation of ongoing assessment for the next APR.

## References

[Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Part I, Chapter 5, Subchapter C, Rule 5.45](#)

[UT Board of Regents' Rule 40311](#)

[THECB Guidelines for New Degree Programs](#)

## Attachments:

[Attachment A: New Program Process Flow Chart](#)

[Attachment B: New Program Request Form for Bachelor and Master's Degrees](#)

[Attachment C: UTS Planning Authority for a New Doctoral Program form](#)

[Attachment D: THECB Doctoral Program Proposal form](#)

[Attachment E: APR Process](#)

## Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
	Kirk Calhoun: President/Prof of Medicine	07/2017
Executive Cabinet	Carol Davis: Executive Assistant Senior	06/2017
Office of Legal Affairs	Terry Witter: VP Legal Affairs/ChiefLegalOf	06/2017
Faculty Senate	Vijaya Lella: Prof Of Biochemistry	06/2017
Deans Council	Michelle Harris: Executive Assistant	05/2017
	Pierre Neuenschwander: AVP, Academic Administration	02/2017

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