

# 03.02.02.D0.01 Approval of Substantive Changes Including the Establishment of New Academic Programs



Approved: March 5, 2013  
Revised: January 2, 2017  
June 15, 2020  
Next Scheduled Review: June 15, 2025

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## Procedure Summary

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This standard administrative procedure covers the review and approval process for substantive changes, including but not limited to establishing new academic programs (i.e., academic degree or certificate) within Texas A&M University-Central Texas (A&M-Central Texas).

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## Procedure

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### 1. PROGRAM INVENTORY

- 1.1 Each academic institution's program inventory lists the academic institution's degree and certificate programs authorized by the system board and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (coordinating board).
- 1.2 Upon approval by the system board, a request to change the academic institution's mission statement or add a new degree program to the program inventory will be submitted by the System Office of Academic Affairs to the coordinating board.

### 2. SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

A "substantive change" refers to any significant alteration to existing, or the addition of new, academic programs, departments, colleges/schools or institutions. Substantive changes within institutions of higher education must be approved by governing authorities (e.g., accrediting agencies, the Texas A&M University System, the system Board of Regents (system board), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges) *prior to* implementation.<sup>1</sup>

- 2.1 Substantive Changes requiring notification and/or approval by the Texas A&M University System, the A&M System Board of Regents and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) include, but are not limited to, the following:

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<sup>1</sup> **Note:** Academic certificate programs comprised of less than 16 semester credit hours will not require approval by either the A&M System Board of Regents or the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

- 2.1.1 Initiating an administrative change
  - 2.1.2 Initiating an administrative reorganization
  - 2.1.3 Establishing new degree programs
  - 2.1.4 Reclassifying or modifying existing degree programs
  - 2.1.5 Offering a degree program through the use of distance education
  - 2.1.6 Offering a degree program at an off-campus location
- 2.2 Substantive Changes requiring Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) notification and/or prior approval include, but are not limited to, the following:
- 2.2.1 Changing the established mission or objectives of the institution
  - 2.2.2 Changing the legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution
  - 2.2.3 Adding or modifying courses or programs that represent a significant departure, *either in content or method of delivery*, from those previously approved
  - 2.2.4 Adding courses or programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the current accreditation or reaffirmation for Texas A&M University-Central Texas
  - 2.2.5 Substantial increase in the number of credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program
  - 2.2.6 Establishment of a branch campus
  - 2.2.7 Closing a program, off-campus instructional site, branch campus, or main campus
  - 2.2.8 Establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program
  - 2.2.9 Entering into a collective academic agreement such as a dual degree program or a joint degree program with another institution

### 3. ELEMENTS OF PROPOSAL

Before establishing a new academic program or initiating a substantive change as outlined above, a proposal must be submitted to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs for review and approval. Each proposal must include information regarding each of the following elements with content tailored as necessary depending on the nature of the request:

#### 3.1 Needs Assessment

- 3.1.1 A demonstrated need for the proposed program or change in terms of present and future needs of the component, institution, region and state (depending on the nature of the request)
- 3.1.2 Description of how the proposed program or change would complement and strengthen existing programs or structures within the program area/department and across A&M-Central Texas
- 3.1.3 If a proposed new degree program appears to duplicate a similar program within the region and state, a rationale for its need

- 3.1.4 Demonstrated student demand for the proposed new program or change to an existing program (including offering an existing program at a new location or through a new modality) and the likelihood of a sufficient critical mass of qualified applicants and
- 3.1.5 Critical mass of qualified faculty and staff to be available to support high quality program.

If the request is for a new doctoral program, the following must be addressed as well:

- 3.1.6 A demonstrated regional, state or national unmet need for doctoral graduates in the field;
- 3.1.7 Evidence that existing doctoral programs in Texas cannot accommodate additional students, access to existing programs is limited, or that expanding existing programs is not feasible; and
- 3.1.8 Evidence of sustainability and excellence in master's level programs in the field and/or programs in related and supporting areas

### 3.2 Resources

- 3.2.1 Resources needed for the new program start-up or other proposed substantive change (e.g., administrative infrastructure, faculty and staff, facilities, equipment, library and related information technology)
- 3.2.2 Information technologies and classroom support necessary to implement the proposed program or substantive change
- 3.2.3 Future expectations of financial support and
- 3.2.4 Plan for self-sufficiency

### 3.3 Program Description

- 3.3.1 Educational objectives
- 3.3.2 Assessment strategies to be used for student learning outcomes
- 3.3.3 Admission standards
- 3.3.4 Certificate or degree requirements
- 3.3.5 Mode of course delivery and primary location of the faculty and students involved
- 3.3.6 Effect on existing programs in the program area/department and
- 3.3.7 Program administration

### 3.4 Governance

Information must address how the proposed academic program will fit within the organizational structure of A&M-Central Texas and identify the point of contact and responsibility for oversight and management of the proposed program.

### 3.5 Evaluation

Information to include but not limited to proposed mechanisms and timeline for periodic review; strategies for monitoring start-up expenses; sources of funds; and steps in formal accreditation process, if required.

## 4 PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals must be reviewed and approved in accordance with existing university curriculum guidelines regarding new program review. Once the Office of Academic Affairs review is completed, the following steps must be followed, and additional information or edits may be required at any stage prior to progressing through the review process:

- 4.1 Proposals will be submitted to the Department Chair for review.
- 4.2 Following department chair review and approval, the proposal will be presented to the members of the College curriculum committee for review and approval. The Department Chair will also certify via a memo to the College Curriculum Committee, that the majority of the program faculty approved the curriculum proposal. Recommendations will then be submitted to the College Dean for approval.
- 4.3 Following College Dean approval, new undergraduate program proposals will be reviewed and approved by the Undergraduate Council, University Curriculum Committee, and Associate Provost/AVP for Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Studies.
- 4.4 Following College Dean approval, new graduate program proposals will be reviewed and approved by the Graduate Council, University Curriculum Committee, Dean of the Graduate School, and Associate Provost/AVP for Academic Affairs.
- 4.5 Following approval by the University Curriculum process for undergraduate and graduate programs, the proposal will be presented to the Provost/Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs for approval and then recommendations will be submitted to the president for final action.
- 4.6 Following presidential approval, the Associate Provost/AVP for Academic Affairs will be responsible for securing all necessary approvals and notifying all appropriate agencies prior to implementation of the proposed program or change. Failure to report the initiation of a new program or change (i.e., an unreported substantive change) can result in official sanctions to the institution, including but not limited to probation, fines, or loss of accreditation.
- 4.7 There may be occasions when opportunities present themselves which necessitate an expedited review. In such cases, it is at the president's discretion to modify or eliminate steps of the previously outlined review process as needed.

## 5. PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF PENDING SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

As a number of approval steps are required prior to implementing any substantive changes or new programs, preliminary notification should be provided to the Associate Provost/AVP for Academic Affairs as soon as possible. All proposed new programs or changes will be recorded on the A&M-Central Texas Academic Program Planning Matrix with an anticipated timeline developed and provided to the college dean's office or requesting entity. The substantive changes outlined above require PRIOR approval before implementation and may take 12 to 18 months to secure all necessary approvals depending on the nature of the request.

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### **Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements**

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[Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#)

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### **Contact Office**

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Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs  
(254) 519-5447

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