

UNIVERSITY RULE

11.99.99.M3 Curricular Processes and Substantive Changes

Approved September 7, 2012

Revised December 11, 2014

Next scheduled review: December 11, 2019

Reason for Rule

All proposals for new or changed academic programs, including curricula and degrees, are reviewed by processes internal to Texas A&M University (TAMU) in order to ensure quality, reduce redundancy, and track progress. Professional degree program curriculum changes and proposals are approved according to professional accreditation rules, and are sent through the institutional process to ensure consistency and inform the TAMU academic community. All proposals will route through one of three processes:

- Full Review: Most proposals for course and curricular changes will move through full approval process as described below.
- Informational Review: An Informational Review process is used for post-baccalaureate “first professional degree” programs, as defined by the Texas Administrative Code (TAC).
- Editorial Change: An Editorial Change process is used for proposals that involve only “minor changes” as defined below.

All proposals require Presidential signature. Following Presidential signature, many proposals also require further external approval or notification to one or more organizations outside TAMU. (Administrative Changes, such as adding or modifying administrative units, are governed by their own rules and regulations. See University Rule 03.02.02.M1, System Regulation 03.02.02, and <http://www.tamus.edu/academic/approval-process/>.) This rule defines the processing for curriculum, including approvals and substantive changes; outlines the internal and external processes that guide them (including those at the TAMU System [TAMUS] and state); and delineates the processes and procedures for timely reporting to the TAMUS, TAMUS Board of Regents, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), and the U.S. Department of Education, as appropriate.

Definitions

“Curricular,” “curriculum,” and “program” refer to academic programs, including courses, degrees, and certificates.

“First professional degree” refers to the following: DDS, DVM, JD, MD, and PharmD according

to the TAC (TAC 19, §4.272).

“Minor change” is defined as modifications to existing courses that do not involve changes to course content, prerequisites, or credit hours. Examples include:

- Editorial changes to course descriptions such as correction of spelling, typographical, or factual errors,
- Changes to a course description that do not involve changes to course content,
- Implementation of courses offered at one TAMU campus at other campuses.

“Substantive change” is defined by SACSCOC as “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” In addition to TAMU Rules and Standard Administrative Procedures (<http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/>), please consult the websites of TAMUS (<http://www.tamus.edu/academic/>), THECB (<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/>), and SACSCOC (<http://www.sacscoc.org>) for guidance on necessary approvals or notifications.

Guidelines, Procedures, and Responsibilities

The University shall be guided by policies, rules, and procedures of TAMU, TAMUS, THECB, SACSCOC (and, when applicable, other accrediting bodies), and the U.S. Department of Education.

1. CURRICULAR PROPOSALS that are non-substantive include but are not limited to: new courses; new bachelor’s or master’s non-engineering degree programs that cost under \$2 million over the first five years; new programs at existing sites; new certificate programs using existing approved courses; and minor changes to existing courses or degrees.
2. CURRICULAR PROPOSALS that are substantive include but are not limited to: new certificate programs requiring new courses; joint or dual degrees with another institution; some distance learning programs (e.g., when 50% or more of the degree requirements can be obtained via distance and it is the first such offering); courses and programs offered through contractual agreement or consortia; new sites for delivering courses or programs; or closing programs, including those identified as low-producing by the THECB (see TAMUS, THECB, and SACSCOC for more comprehensive descriptions).
3. COMMON REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND TIMELINES
 - 3.1 Forms specific to TAMU, TAMUS, THECB, and SACSCOC are required for most proposals.
 - 3.2 Internal processes typically take a minimum of six months, beginning with the initiating unit and ending with Presidential signature. The Informational Review for first professional programs described by the TAC (see above) or Editorial Change

process for “minor changes” can shorten this timeline.

- 3.3 The timeline for proposals requiring TAMUS notification or approval varies according to whether or not the item requires Board of Regents’ approval.
- 3.4 The timing of THECB notification or approval varies depending on the complexity of the proposal and its approval requirements.
- 3.5 Most, but not all, substantive changes require advance notification or approval from SACSCOC, usually at least six months prior to implementation.
- 3.6 Many substantive change requests that require SACSCOC approval prior to implementation must be accompanied by a full or modified Prospectus (<http://www.sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChange.asp>).

4. ACADEMIC PROPOSAL PROCESS

- 4.1 Submission forms and resources are available on the website of Curricular Services in the Office of the Registrar at TAMU. Curricular Services also monitors progress of curricular proposals on a chart available to website visitors (<http://curricularservices.tamu.edu/>)
- 4.2 Curricular proposals initiated by faculty in departments or programs are submitted through the originating department or program and require department head and/or program chair signatures. Proposals involving more than one program require signatures of all participating unit heads.
- 4.3 Curricular proposals proceed from the originating department or program to the appropriate college or colleges’ curriculum process. Proposals from branch campuses and the Health Science Center are signed by the respective CEOs. The dean, designee, and, when applicable, branch campus or HSC CEO signs all proposals. Proposals involving more than one college require all participants’ signatures.
- 4.4 Curricular proposals signed by deans (and, when appropriate, CEOs) proceed to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) and/or the Graduate Council (GC) for review and vote. Proposals involving both graduate and undergraduate curricula are submitted to both committees for review and vote. Following submission to Curricular Services to review for sufficiency, Informational Review proposals are then sent concurrently to the UCC and/or GC and the Faculty Senate as informational items that require no vote. Following submission to Curricular Services to review for sufficiency, Editorial Change proposals are implemented without further review or vote by the UCC and/or GC or by the Faculty Senate.
- 4.5 Curricular proposals are submitted by the Faculty Senate to the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for review, then to the President for final signature.

- 4.6 The Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President coordinates reporting to TAMUS, including preparing agenda items for the Board of Regents when needed; THECB; SACSCOC, and the U.S. Department of Education, as required.
- 4.7 Copies of requests to SACSCOC as well as any written approvals from SACSCOC are distributed to the appropriate administrative units for record-keeping. Copies of all submissions and approvals are maintained electronically in the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Department Heads and Program Chairs are responsible for:
 - 5.1.1 Preparing proposals using current forms and guidelines;
 - 5.1.2 Consulting with and seeking acquiescence from other TAMU units whose programs are or may be implicated in the proposed program;
 - 5.1.3 Consulting with Curricular Services or the Office of the Provost for guidance, if needed;
 - 5.1.4 Monitoring proposed programs for quality and compliance, including adherence to “good practice” statements from the TAMUS, the THECB and SACSCOC, where relevant;
 - 5.1.5 Announcing or advertising a program only after it has received final approval, or clearly denoting that final approval is pending;
 - 5.1.6 Signing approval for proposals only after assuring that all of the above responsibilities have been met.
- 5.2 Deans of Colleges are responsible for:
 - 5.2.1 Assuring that curriculum committees reviewing proposals are knowledgeable about the current process;
 - 5.2.2 Attesting to the quality of the proposed program;
 - 5.2.3 Acknowledging that all responsibilities listed above have been met.
- 5.3 Curriculum committees are responsible for:
 - 5.3.1 Evaluating proposals within the context of the university’s mission and scope;
 - 5.3.2 Ensuring that proposed educational programs are of high quality and adhere to TAMUS, THECB, and SACSCOC guidelines for good practices

(see especially <http://www.sacscoc.org/policies.asp>);

- 5.3.3 In partnership with Curricular Services and the Faculty Senate, communicating clearly to the campus community the requirements for proposals submitted to university-level curriculum committees;
 - 5.3.4 Monitoring proposals to ensure consistency in adhering to the curriculum committees' own principles and requirements, as well as to approved standards such as Minimum Syllabus Requirements;
 - 5.3.5 Avoiding unnecessary duplication of programs or conflicts with other existing programs;
 - 5.3.6 Ensuring as far as possible that all responsibilities listed above have been met;
 - 5.3.7 Reporting to the Faculty Senate and others as required or needed.
- 5.4 The Faculty Senate is responsible for:
- 5.4.1 Representing the entire faculty as the body charged with assuring the content, quality, and effectiveness of graduate and undergraduate curricula;
 - 5.4.2 Charging the curriculum committees and providing guidance as needed for evaluating proposals;
 - 5.4.3 Performing due diligence in creating or amending courses and programs according to the standards set by the institution, the system, the state, the regional accrediting body, other accrediting agencies, when relevant; and the federal government;
 - 5.4.4 Ensuring as far as possible that all responsibilities listed above have been met; and
 - 5.4.5 Reporting Faculty Senate actions to the President through the Provost.
- 5.5 The Office of the Provost is responsible for:
- 5.5.1 Communicating information affecting curriculum or approval processes to the university community, particularly the Faculty Senate and Council of Deans;
 - 5.5.2 Overseeing and providing guidance for Curricular Services;
 - 5.5.3 Reviewing proposals approved by Faculty Senate for all of the standards of quality and excellence listed above prior to forwarding to the president

for final institutional signature and submission;

- 5.5.4 Coordinating submission of institutionally approved curricular proposals to system, state, and regional entities, as required;
- 5.5.5 Maintaining records and distributing copies of approvals from System, state, and regional entities to appropriate campus offices, including Scholarships and Financial Aid for the purpose of updating and submitting the Program Participation Agreement to the U.S. Department of Education.

Related Statutes and Policies

System Regulation 03.02.02 *Approval Procedures for Degree Programs, Administrative Changes, etc.*

<http://policies.tamus.edu/03-02-02.pdf>

System Policy 11.03 *Shortened Courses*

<http://policies.tamus.edu/11-03.pdf>

System Policy 11.06 *Core Curriculum*

<http://policies.tamus.edu/11-06.pdf>

Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Chapter 19, Part 1, Subchapter 4, Subchapter Q, §4.272

[http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=4&rl=272](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=4&rl=272)

University SAP 03.02.02.M0.02 *Policy and Procedure for Effecting Change in Academic Departmental Structure*

<http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/03.02.02.M0.02.pdf>

University rule 11.03.99.M1 *Shortened Courses*

<http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/11.03.99.M1.pdf>

Contact Office

For information on clarification on this rule, call (979) 845-4016 or use email <http://provost.tamu.edu>.

OFFICE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

Provost and Executive Vice President