Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Standards for Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programs

An institution shall adhere to the following standards and Coordinating Board rules, 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 full degree program proposal using the *Form for Requesting a New Bachelor's or Master's Program.* 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 are: 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 are: 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 FTSE, 30 SCH equals 1 FTSE for bachelor's programs and 24 SCH equals 1 FTSE for master's programs. In accordance with the institution's Uniform Recruitment and Retention Strategy, 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 longer programs

Number of hours in a degree program - The number of SCHs for the degree shall be comparable to the number the SCHs required for similar degrees in the state. The institution shall adhere to Texas Education Code § 61.0515 regarding limitations on the number of semester credit hours required for a baccalaureate degree. A minimum and maximum number of SCHs are prescribed by the Coordinating Board for completion of a degree:

Degree level	**Minimum number of SCHs**	**Maximum number of SCHs**
Baccalaureate	120	120

A baccalaureate program shall not require more SCHs 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.

Transfer issues – Any bachelor's program for which the Coordinating Board has an approved Field of Study Curriculum (FOSC) shall fully accept in transfer and apply the FOSC (or that portion of the FOSC that the student has completed) to satisfy the lower-division requirements of the major.

Curriculum

Required Courses - Required courses are taken by all students in the program. These courses shall meet all requirements for accreditation, licensure, or certification and shall be consistent with similar programs in the state and nation.

Prescribed Electives - Prescribed electives are a list of specific 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.

Free Electives – Free electives, if available, are consistent with similar programs and are selected by the student, subject to advisor approval.

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 requirements here: http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/AAR/EdPrep/)

Faculty

Core Faculty - A core faculty member is tenured (or tenure-track) who devotes an average of fifty percent or more of his or her teaching time in 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 - A support faculty member is a 1) tenured/tenure-track faculty from related disciplines, 2) adjunct faculty, and 3) a graduate teaching assistant or assistant instructor who serves as the instructor of record for a course (only if he or she meets minimum SACS 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.

A minimum number of faculty shall be 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 SACS standards, 25 percent of faculty supporting the program shall have terminal degrees. 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 - All faculty supporting the master's degree program shall have terminal degrees.

Degree-granting Institution - Coordinating Board rules Sections 5.45 (3) (B) and 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 contingency of continued 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 shall include personnel, facilities and equipment, library resources, supplies and materials, administration, and any other new costs directly related to the 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.