



Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Section Title: Academic Policies
Policy Title: Academic Program Modifications
Policy Number: A 1.1

1.1.1A Program Modifications Subject to Approval. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) Executive Director will have approval authority for modifications to currently approved academic programs as reflected in THEC's Academic Program Inventory (API). Should the Executive Director determine a proposed Academic Program Modification would be more appropriately evaluated as a new academic program under Academic Policy A1.0 – New Academic Programs: Approval Process, which would be then considered for approval by the Commission.

1.1.2A Modifications to Currently Approved Programs. Modifications requiring approval from THEC are limited to the following changes and may require an external review if deemed necessary by THEC staff:

- Adding an academic program degree designation to an existing program (e.g., adding a B.A. to an existing B.S.).
- Changing an academic program degree designation (e.g., B.A. to B.F.A.; M.A. to M.F.A.; Ed.D. to Ph.D.).
- Changing the six-digit Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code for an approved academic program.
- Establishing a free-standing academic program from an existing concentration that has demonstrated steady enrollment and graduation numbers for a period of the last three (3) years. This program modification may be considered only if the establishment of the concentration as a free-standing academic program does not compromise the remaining academic program and requires limited new resources.
- Consolidating two (2) or more existing academic programs into a single academic program.

- Creating a joint degree program consisting of academic programs that are already approved at each participating institution.

1.1.3A **Criteria for Review of Proposed Program Modifications.** The Academic Program Modification (APM) checklists located on the THEC website specify the criteria for each type of academic program modification. However, the stringency of individual criteria will depend on the specific academic program, and, in particular circumstances, other criteria may be added based on THEC staff evaluation.

1.1.4A **Duplication as a Result of Proposed Modification of Currently Approved Programs.** Institutions must examine the potential impact of any academic program modification on current academic programs offered within their institution and existing academic programs offered in public and private institutions across Tennessee to ensure the program modification would not be unnecessarily duplicative.

1.1.5A **Quality Assurance Funding.** Newly approved academic program modifications will be subject to Quality Assurance Funding, which is a statewide supplemental funding incentive to encourage continuous improvement of academic programs.

1.1.6A **Program Modifications to Currently Approved Programs at Tennessee Community Colleges.** Modifications of academic programs offered at the community colleges are not required to seek approval from THEC for program modifications but must be reported monthly by the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) to THEC staff.

Sources: THEC Meetings: April 22, 1988; April 19, 1996; January 29, 1997; November 14, 2002; April 26, 2007; January 27, 2011; January 29, 2015; January 26, 2017; and July 28, 2022.