11.10.99.C0.04 Distance Education Programs

Revised: October 6, 2025
Next Scheduled Review: December 2, 2029
Revision History

Procedure Summary

Development of new distance education programs may be implemented at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) following review/approval by the appropriate university advisory groups, President's Cabinet, the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The procedure outlines the development and approval process for creating new distance education programs, as well as the responsibilities of involved parties. Development of new distance education courses and changes in the mode of delivery of existing courses are addressed in university procedure *11.10.99.C0.03, Development of Courses and Catalog Revisions*.

Procedure

1. GENERAL

   The process outlined in this procedure applies to any program that a student can complete more than 50% of the degree online.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

   2.1. Before beginning proposals for new distance education programs, support for the development of the program must be secured from the department chair(s), academic unit (e.g., college, school) dean/director, and Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost).

   2.2. After receiving approval to develop the proposal, the developers of the degree will follow the review process as outlined in section 4 of this procedure.

   2.3. System policy *11.10, Academic Program Requests* explains the system's guiding principles for distance education program requests. Further information on criteria, standards, and processes for approval can be found on the TAMUS website under the Office of Academic Affairs.

2.4. Requests for new distance education programs must be developed according to the rules of the THECB. Program developers should work with Digital Learning and Academic Innovations (DLAI) to ensure program alignment with the THECB's Principles of Good Practice for Distance Education.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE CURRICULUM REVIEW PROCESS

3.1. The faculty originators are responsible for:

(a) Obtaining initial support from the department chair(s), academic unit dean/director, DLAI, and the Office of the Provost.

(b) Presenting the supported idea to the department faculty for a vote.

3.2. Department chairs are responsible for:

(a) Ensuring that proposals are properly prepared, and all necessary forms are completed, including attachments (e.g., syllabi, letter of support from the DLAI, and letters of support or votes from any affected departments or committees).

(b) Ensuring that the course rotation can support new online courses. If a distance education program is proposed, it is expected that a student will be able to take a full load of online classes each semester.

(c) Ensuring that all information being entered into the approved university catalog database is correct.

(d) Alerting other department chairs if the curriculum will involve their departments; supporting documentation from the affected departments must be included in the proposal.

(e) Monitoring the proposed program for quality and compliance with the standards of the university, TAMUS, THECB, and SACSCOC.

(f) Documenting the departmental faculty vote.

(g) Routing the complete proposal to the academic unit curriculum committee.

3.3. The academic unit curriculum committees, whose makeup is defined by the academic unit, are responsible for:

(a) Reviewing the materials for quality, integrity, academic rigor, and purpose.

(b) Considering if the changes support the university's mission.

(c) Checking for potential duplication between disciplines within the academic unit.

(d) Reaching out to the faculty originators and the department chair(s) should anything need clarification.

(e) Routing recommendations to the respective academic unit dean/director.

3.4. Academic unit dean/directors and their designated staff are responsible for

(a) Ensuring that the faculty on academic unit curriculum committees are knowledgeable about the process and the standards for distance education programs.

(b) Working with the departments and programs to ensure that any changes requested by the majority of the academic unit curriculum committee are addressed.

(c) Holding a vote of the academic unit faculty if required by the academic unit's faculty handbook.

(d) Assuming responsibility for the completeness of materials, copy editing, and compliance with THECB policies.

(e) Having final approval of expedited review items.

(f) Evaluating the viability of the proposals, including faculty workload, financial sustainability, availability of resources, and market demand.

(g) Routing to the University Curriculum Committee (UCC).

3.5. The UCC will be chaired by the chair of the Faculty Advisory Council's Academic Affairs Committee. Details on the committee membership can be found on TAMU-CC's official Committee and Councils webpage. The UCC is responsible for:

(a) Reviewing the materials for quality, integrity, academic rigor, and purpose.

(b) Evaluating proposals to ensure that they support the university's mission.

(c) Identifying unnecessary duplication of programs and conflicts of

interest with other existing programs.

(d) Ensuring that the proposals meet the quality standards set forth by the university, TAMUS, THECB, and SACSCOC.

(e) Holding meetings as required in the published catalog review schedule.

(f) Routing recommendations to Academic Affairs.

4. INTERNAL REVIEW OF NEW DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

4.1. The originator secures the support of the department chair(s), academic unit dean/director, and Office of the Provost.

4.2. The appropriate forms must be completed in the approved university catalog database. Requested syllabi must include the course number, the name of the course, a course description, student learning outcomes, major assignments, required readings, grading criteria, and a course schedule.

4.3. According to the SACSOC Resource Manual, curriculum approval will begin at the department or program level and be controlled by the faculty. Therefore, the degree proposal must be reviewed and voted on by departmental faculty first and entered in the university's catalog software no later than the deadlines on the published catalog review schedule. The academic unit's curriculum committee will review and submit to the academic unit dean/director's office according to the published deadlines. It is encouraged to note the academic unit's curriculum committee's meeting schedule to prevent possible delays.

4.4. The academic unit dean/director's office will work with the originator and the department chair(s) to ensure that any changes requested by the majority of the academic unit committee are made in the approved university catalog database. If the department faculty disagree with the changes requested, an explanation of the disagreement must be noted and forwarded with the proposal. If the academic unit's faculty handbook calls for it, an all-faculty vote must be taken before the academic unit dean/director's recommendation is forwarded. The academic unit dean/director's office will submit according to the published deadlines.

4.5. Materials will be forwarded to the UCC according to the published deadlines. Prior to the committees' meeting(s), members will share proposals with their constituencies in order to solicit feedback to bring to the committee meetings. An agenda must be sent to the academic unit dean/director's office at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting. In order to facilitate the

necessary discussion, meetings will be conducted in a medium to encourage synchronous interactions (e.g., face-to-face, web conferencing, conference call). Anyone in the university community is welcome to attend UCC meetings but will need to be recognized by the chair for speaking privileges.

4.6. Materials will be forwarded to the Division of Academic Affairs. A representative from the Division of Academic Affairs will contact originators and department chair(s) regarding any changes recommended by the UCC. If there is a difference of opinion regarding changes, then the Division of Academic Affairs will facilitate conversations to collaboratively find solutions. The President has the authority to make a final decision.

4.7. The Division of Academic Affairs will prepare a recommendation for the President's Cabinet. President's Cabinet is the final internal approver of new distance education programs. With President's Cabinet approval, new program recommendations will continue to the external review process detailed in section 5 of this procedure.

5. EXTERNAL REVIEW OF NEW DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

5.1. Following President's Cabinet approval, the Office of the President will submit proposals to TAMUS, in accordance with the process specified in system regulation *11.10, Academic Program Requests*.

5.2. Following approval by TAMUS, the TAMUS staff will submit notification of new distance education programs to the THECB.

5.3. Distance education programs that qualify as a substantive change may require additional forms and review by SACSCOC. Substantive change is detailed in university procedure *11.10.99.C0.05, Substantive Change*. While not all programs require a full review by SACSCOC, many still require notification.

5.4. New distance education programs will not be advertised until the Provost or their designee informs the department that final approval is expected by a proposed date. Students cannot be recruited or promised enrollment in programs until final approval is given and the university receives notice.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

System Policy *11.10, Academic Program Requests*
University Procedure *11.10.99.C0.01, Development of Academic Degree Programs*
University Procedure *11.10.99.C0.02, Development of Certificate Programs*

University Procedure *11.10.99.C0.03, Development of Courses and Catalog Revisions*
University Procedure *11.10.99.C0.05, Substantive Change*

Contact Office

Contact for clarification and interpretation:	Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs 361.825.2722