UT Martin Guidance for Substantive Changes

UT Martin's Substantive Change policy states:

> The University of Tennessee at Martin follows the substantive change policies and procedures outlined by:
> - The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees (https://trustees.tennessee.edu/bylaws/, Appendix A),
> - the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (https://www.tn.gov/thec/bureaus/academic-affairs-and-student-success/academic-programs/program-approval---academic-policies.html), and
> - SACSCOC (https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/substantive-changes/).

This document is designed to serve as a quick-reference guide to the types of changes that could trigger the need for approvals beyond the Chancellor's level. The document will be updated when changes occur in related policies at the BOT, THEC, or SACSCOC level.

The document includes the following sections:
Where to Get Help with Substantive Change
Curricular Changes
Off-Campus Sites
Other Types of Substantive Change the Institution May Encounter

This document focuses on the most common substantive changes encountered by UT Martin. Other situations that require external approvals may occur, but these will be rare. If you are unsure whether a change requires external approvals, please don't hesitate to contact the SACSOC Liaison for guidance.

Where to Get Help with Substantive Change

The SACSCOC Liaison is charged, in part, with ensuring that UT Martin remains in compliance with BOT, THEC, and SACSCOC policies whenever changes occur. When your department makes a decision (usually a curricular decision) that could be impacted by the need for external review, notification, and/or approval prior to implementation, it is imperative that you involve the SACSCOC Liaison in the process as quickly as possible in order to avoid unnecessary delays in the implementation process. Currently, the SACSCOC Liaison is Stephanie Kolitsch (email: skolitsc@utm.edu; phone 731-881-7477).

In addition to the SACSCOC Liaison on campus, the University of Tennessee System has a person within the Division of Academic Affairs and Student Success to serve as a curricular liaison between UT Martin, the Board of Trustees, and THEC. This person works with UT Martin to ensure the proper paperwork for these kinds of reporting processes is submitted in a timely manner to the Board of Trustees and THEC for review. Currently, our contact within the UT System is Karen Etzkorn (email: kbrinkl2@utk.edu).

Timeline for Implementing Changes – IMPORTANT!

Currently, the timeline for implementing changes that require off-campus approvals could take *up to 2 years*, depending on the nature of the change. This timeline does not take into account the preparation work, such as needs assessments, that is needed prior to proposing new programs, any proposal revisions that could occur at any step in the process, or the time you will need to advertise your new program to prospective students once you have completed the approval process. It is critical that you contact the SACSCOC Liaison as soon as you begin exploring a change that might require off-campus approvals in order to minimize the length of time needed to receive those approvals.

Curricular Changes

Although many curricular changes proposed at UT Martin are routine and do not require external approval processes, significant changes to programs or degrees will trigger the need to either notify or receive approval from the UT Board of Trustees (BOT), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), and/or the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) prior to implementation.

ON-CAMPUS PROCESS: The typical on-campus approval process for curricular changes is described in the *Faculty Handbook*, Chapter 5, Section 5.1.C. In short, approvals for changes to a department's curriculum must go through the following process:

1. Department curriculum committee
2. Department Chair
3. College curriculum committee
4. Dean
5. BA/BS committee (in cases where the curriculum change affects the requirements for the campus-wide BA/BS degree)
6. Faculty Senate Committee on Instruction (in cases where the curriculum change affects courses requirements for the campus-wide general education curriculum)
7. Faculty Senate Undergraduate Council and/or Graduate Council
8. Faculty Senate
9. Chancellor

(Additional information on this process can be found on the Faculty Senate webpage https://www.utm.edu/departments/facsenate/.)

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE: The table below is designed to serve as a quick reference chart for departments who are planning to implement curricular changes. The table lists the most common curricular actions, but other curricular actions not listed here may require prior notification and/or approval by the UT Board of Trustees, THEC, or SACSCOC. Contact the SACSCOC Liaison for guidance.

(Note: By SACSCOC definition, "program" can refer to a degree program, diploma, certificate, or any other collection of coursework that results in a credential. THEC policies currently differentiate between a certificate and a program. The table below lists requirements for certificates, program concentrations, and programs separately due to the differing THEC requirements.)

(If you would like to check your Academic Program Inventory according to THEC's records, go to: https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/thec/bureaus/academic-affairs-and-student-success/academic-programs/api/current_api.html then look for University of Tennessee, Martin in the list.)

Type of Change	UT Board of Trustees Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	THEC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	SACSCOC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required
Courses			
Addition, revision, or deletion of a **course** at the current degree level	None	None	None
Addition, revision, or deletion of a **discipline** at the current degree level	None	None	None
Minors			
Addition, revision, or deletion of a **minor** at the current degree level	None	None	None
Certificates			
Addition of a **new certificate** with 50% or more **new content**	Approval See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16	Approval (for certificates requiring 24 or more credit hours) – See THEC Policy A1.0 paragraph 5A Notification (for certificates requiring fewer than 24 credit hours) – See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A Prospectus Required for Approval	Approval Prospectus Required
Addition of a **new certificate** with 25%-49% new content	Approval See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16	Approval (for certificates requiring 24 or more credit hours) – See THEC Policy A1.0 paragraph 5A Notification (for certificates requiring fewer than 24 credit hours) – See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A Prospectus Required for Approval	Notification

Type of Change	UT Board of Trustees Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	THEC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	SACSCOC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required
Addition of a **new certificate** with less than 25% new content	Approval See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16	Approval (for certificates requiring 24 or more credit hours) – See THEC Policy A1.0 paragraph 5A Notification (for certificates requiring fewer than 24 credit hours) – See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A Prospectus Required for Approval	None
Revision of a **certificate**	None	None	None (unless revision results in 25% or more new content)
Changing the name of an existing **certificate**	Approval (if required by THEC) See BOT Bylaws, Appendix A, #16	Notification See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A – Applies to certificates requiring 24 credit hours or more	None
Altering **certificate** length	Approval (if required by THEC) See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16	Notification See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A– applies to ALL changes in length of time needed to complete the certificate	Approval (if program credit hours increase or decrease by 25% or more AND students' expected time to completion increases or decreases by more than one term) Prospectus Required

Type of Change	UT Board of Trustees Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	THEC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	SACSCOC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required
Adding a method of instructional delivery to a **certificate**	None (UTM is already approved for online and distance learning)	Notification (change of *primary* delivery mode) See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A	Notification (applies when 50% or more of a certificate is delivered by the added method)
Closing a **certificate**	Approval (if required by THEC OR if termination of tenured or tenure track faculty members is involved) See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16 and #17	Approval See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A	Could require Approval (including Teach Out Plan) depending remaining concentrations within the program; contact the SACSCOC Liaison
Program Concentrations			
Addition of a **concentration** within a program at the current degree level within an existing degree program	Approval (if required by THEC) See BOT Bylaws, Appendix A, #16	Notification See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A	Could require Notification or Approval depending on amount of new content within concentration (See "Addition of a new program"); contact SACSCOC Liaison
Revision of a **concentration** at the current degree level within an existing program	None	None	None (unless revision is extensive enough to be equivalent to a new program)
Changing the name of an existing **concentration**	Approval (if required by THEC) See BOT Bylaws, Appendix A, #16	Notification See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A	None
Elevating an existing, established **concentration** to a free-standing program	Approval See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16	Approval See THEC Policy A1.1 Paragraph 2a Prospectus Required	None

Type of Change	UT Board of Trustees Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	THEC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	SACSCOC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required
Closing a program **concentration**	Approval (if required by THEC, or if termination of tenured or tenure track faculty members is involved) See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16 and #17	Notification See THEC Policy A1.5, Paragraph 2A Requires Teach Out Plan	Could require Approval (including Teach Out Plan) depending remaining concentrations within the program; contact the SACSCOC Liaison
Altering **concentration** length	Approval (if required by THEC) See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16	Notification See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A– applies to ALL changes in length of time needed to complete the concentration	Approval (if program credit hours increase or decrease by 25% or more AND students' expected time to completion increases or decreases by more than one term) Prospectus Required
Programs			
Addition of a **new program** with 50% or more **new content**	Approval See BOT Bylaws, Appendix A, #16	Approval See THEC Policy A1.0 Paragraph 1A Prospectus Required	Approval Prospectus Required
Addition of a **new program** with 25%-49% new content	Approval See BOT Bylaws, Appendix A, #16	Approval See THEC Policy A1.0 Paragraph 1A Prospectus Required	Notification
Addition of a **new program** with less than 25% new content	Approval See BOT Bylaws, Appendix A, #16	Approval See THEC Policy A1.0 Paragraph 1A Prospectus Required	None

Type of Change	UT Board of Trustees Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	THEC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	SACSCOC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required
Revision of a **program** at the current degree level	None	None (unless adding or deleting concentrations)	None (unless revision is extensive enough to be equivalent to a new program)
Changing the name of an existing **program**	Approval (if required by THEC) See BOT Bylaws, Appendix A, #16	Notification See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A	None
Consolidating two or more existing **programs** into a single academic program without an essential change in the original approved curriculum and without a net gain in the number of programs	Approval See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16	Notification See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A	None
Closing a **program** (institution-wide or at a single site) *Note: To re-open a program that has been closed, contact the SACSCOC Liaison for guidance. Requirements for re-opening depend on a number of factors, including how long the program has been closed.*	Approval (when termination of tenured or tenure-track faculty is involved) See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #17	Notification See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A Requires Teach Out Plan	Approval (including Teach Out Plan)
Altering **program** length	Approval (if required by THEC) See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16	Notification See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A– applies to ALL changes in length of time needed to complete the program	Approval (if program credit hours increase or decrease by 25% or more AND students' expected time to completion increases or decreases by more than one term) Prospectus Required
Adding a method of instructional delivery to a **program**	None (UTM is already approved for online and distance learning)	Notification (change of *primary* delivery mode) See THEC Policy A1.5 Paragraph 2A	Notification (applies when 50% or more of a program is delivered by the added method)

Type of Change	UT Board of Trustees Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	THEC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	SACSCOC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required
Degrees			
Change in degree designation (at the same level)	Approval See BOT Bylaws, Appendix A, #16	Approval See THEC Policy A1.1 Paragraph 2A	None
Addition of a degree level for which the institution is not already approved *Note that this will also have at least one "new academic program" associated with the request, which will be a separate prospectus.*	Approval See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16	Approval See THEC Policy A1.0 (tied to "new program" policy)	Approval Prospectus for Level Change AND Prospectus for New Program Required

There are several other types of curricular changes that involve the BOT, THEC, and/or SACSCOC. If you are considering any of these changes, please contact the UT Martin SACSCOC Liaison for further information:

- Competency-based courses or programs
- Cooperative Academic Arrangements with other institutions or entities
- Dual or Joint Academic Awards
- Programs designed for prior learning
- Other new and/or innovative approaches to program delivery

Off-Campus Sites

SACSCOC defines an off-campus site as a location that is "geographically apart from an institution's sole main campus" and "where instruction is delivered." Our regional centers and our dual enrollment sites are both "off-campus sites" under this definition; no distinction is made between the two. (Clinical training sites are not considered "off-campus sites" because didactic instruction is not delivered at these sites.)

THEC distinguishes between an off-campus center and an off-campus site. By THEC's definition, an off-campus center is a location that is geographically apart from the main campus where students can enroll and complete academic programs. THEC also requires that an off-campus center have a continuing administrative presence in the form of at least one full-time or part-time administrator housed on-site. In contrast, an off-campus site is a physical space used to offer credit enrollment. Thus, in THEC's eyes, our five centers are classified as "off-campus centers" while high schools where we offer dual enrollment courses are "off-campus sites."

Why is this important? Currently, THEC and SACSCOC approach the recognition of off-campus sites and centers in different ways. SACSCOC determines the level of recognition based on the percentage of a program (including a certificate) a student can complete at that location, while THEC depends on the ability to complete academic programs and the existence of an administrative presence to determine the level of recognition.

The table below describes the types of substantive change associated with off-campus sites and centers. For additional guidance, please contact the UT Martin SACSCOC Liaison.

Type of Change	UT Board of Trustees Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	THEC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	SACSCOC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required
Instructional Sites			
Off-campus instructional site that offers 50% or more of the total instruction for at least one program, concentration, or certificate	Approval (for Centers) See BOT Bylaws, Appendix A, #18 (also has financial and facilities considerations)	Approval (for Centers) Notification (for Sites) See THEC Policy A1.4 Prospectus Required (for Centers)	Approval Prospectus Required; May also require Committee Visit

Type of Change	UT Board of Trustees Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	THEC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	SACSCOC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required
Off-campus instructional site that offers between 25% and 49% of the total instruction for at least one program, concentration, or certificate but no more than 49% of the total instruction of *any* program, concentration, or certificate is offered	None	Notification (for Sites) See THEC Policy A1.4 (Not applicable for Centers since no programs can be completed)	Notification
Off-campus instructional site at which less than 25% of the total instruction for *any* program, concentration, or certificate is offered	None	Notification (for Sites) See THEC Policy A1.4 (Not applicable for Centers since no programs can be completed)	None
Off-campus instructional site **name change** or **address change**	Approval (Centers only, if required by THEC) See BOT Bylaws, Appendix A, #18	Notification	Notification
Off-campus instructional site **closure** *SACSCOC: Site may be re-opened within five years of closure date by submitting notification; closure date is the date at which admissions to the site ceased, not necessarily the date at which instruction ceased at the site.*	Approval (Centers only) See BOT Bylaws, Appendix A, #17	Notification See THEC Policy A1.4A, Paragraph 5A3	Approval (applies to "notified" sites and "approval" sites; does not apply to sites with less than 25% of any program offered) Teach Out Plan Required
Courses and Programs at Instructional Sites			
Extending existing **courses** to an off-campus site	None	None	None

Type of Change	UT Board of Trustees Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	THEC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	SACSCOC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required
Extending existing **programs** (including certificates) to an off-campus site	Approval (if required by THEC) See BOT Bylaws, Appendix A, #16 (may also have financial and physical space implications)	Approval or Notification may be required (depending on scope of program and location of the extension) See THEC Policies A1.2 and A1.5	None
Closing a **program** (institution-wide or at a single site) *Note: To re-open a program that has been closed, contact the SACSCOC Liaison for guidance. Requirements for re-opening depend on a number of factors, including how long the program has been closed.*	Approval See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16 and #17	Notification See THEC Policies A1.4A Paragraph 5A1 and A1.5 Paragraph 2A Requires Teach Out Plan	Approval (including Teach Out Plan)

Other types of Substantive Changes the Institution May Encounter

Some types of substantive change are not related to instruction but rather relate to the administrative structure or the institution in its entirety. A few of these types of change are listed in the table below.

Other changes, such as a change in the governance structure (as occurred with the Board of Trustees), will also trigger substantive change policies. Contact the UT Martin SACSCOC Liaison for guidance.

Type of Change	UT Board of Trustees Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	THEC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required	SACSCOC Prior Approval and/or Notification Required
New **academic unit** (department, school, institute, college, or division)	Approval (college, institute, or school) See BOT Bylaws, Appendix A, #18	Approval See THEC Policy A1.3 Paragraph 1A	None
Name change for an **academic unit**	None	None See THEC Policy A1.3 Paragraph 4a	None
Reorganization of **academic units**	Approval (if required by THEC) See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16	Approval (under certain circumstances) See THEC Policy A1.3 Paragraph 5A	None
Level change (offering coursework or a program at a different level than previously approved (e.g., our offering degree above the Master's level); UT Martin is currently a "Level III Master's" institution) *Note that this will also have at least one "new academic program" associated with the request, which will be a separate prospectus.*	Approval See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #16	Approval See THEC Policy A1.1	Approval Prospectus for Level Change AND Prospectus for New Academic Program Required
Mission change	Approval (also approved on an annual basis as part of the UT Martin mission profile) See BOT Bylaws Appendix A, #14	Approval on an annual basis as part of the UT Martin mission profile	Approval (applies only if the change fundamentally alters the character of the institution and its portfolio of programs; does not apply to simple rewordings of the mission)