



TEXAS A&M **INTERNATIONAL** UNIVERSITY

Texas A&M International University Curriculum Policy Handbook

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Introduction

One of the hallmarks of institutions of higher education is the ideal of shared governance. Under faculty shared governance, faculty are responsible for jointly working with university administrators to effect positive change. While shared governance applies to areas including faculty hiring and tenure/promotion decisions, the most important aspect of shared governance is in relation to the university curriculum. Indeed, it is in this area that faculty exert the most influence on university decision-making. This is especially true at Texas A&M International University (TAMIU).

Faculty make curricular changes for a multitude of reasons. First, changes to the program curricula may be a result of regulatory requirements. New laws are passed or state/federal agencies update policies that may trigger needed changes in curricula. Second, subject-matter areas are often in a process of evolution: theories change, methodological approaches become outdated, and/or new avenues of study are identified. Whatever the reasons, these disciplinary changes can lead to necessary curricular changes predicated on these advancements. Third, modalities may become outdated. Thus, changes from in-person to either online classes or hybrid classes may be necessary in a particular field. Fourth, the addition of new faculty with new skill sets and subject matter expertise may lead to the creation of course content consistent with the faculty member's background. It is common for classes to be added in these instances. Finally, universities should strive to be on the cutting edge of the most recent teaching pedagogies. Enhancing learning outcomes for students is of key concern for universities attempting to stay relevant. Curricular change facilitates this.

The University Curriculum Committee (UCC) is a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, which is deemed necessary to ensure that the programs and courses of the curriculum accomplish the mission of the University. The UCC reviews and approves all curriculum changes; if curricular proposals are found to be lacking, the UCC makes recommendations to the initiator on how to correct.

Curriculum decisions involve the review of:

- New degree programs
- Revised degree programs
- New courses
- Revised courses

New or revised degree programs include an assessment of local and regional demand as well as an analysis of hiring trends both statewide and nationally. New programs and changes to programs that include a substantive change may require the review of external bodies like the Texas A&M System Board of Regents (TAMU BOR), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and/or SACSCOC. New or revised course information includes title, course level, description, prerequisite(s), co-requisites, semester credit hours, course type, instructional method,

syllabi, student learning/program outcomes, and justification for adding or modifying the course. Other minor changes to courses are reviewed as well.

Composition of the University Curriculum Committee includes one representative per academic department or division or free-standing academic unit and the University Registrar. Faculty appointments are made by department chairs (or heads of academic units), who submit their choices through the Provost to the Faculty Senate for concurrence. An Associate Provost, or other Provost designate, chairs the committee as an ex-officio member. The UCC utilizes Robert's Rules of Order in deliberations.

This handbook provides an overview of the entire curricular change process at TAMIU. This policy handbook standardizes the procedures and processes associated with new programs and courses, alterations to programs and courses, and any other changes to the academic catalog. It outlines the processes by which curriculum changes are approved and added to the academic catalog. Additionally, this policy handbook outlines curricular changes that will necessarily trigger external approvals from the Texas A&M Board of Regents, the THECB, and SACSCOC. No matter how small the curricular change, it should be well considered and discussed amongst a large section of the faculty, which is what the curricular process at TAMIU does.

Only full-time faculty are permitted to submit curricular changes under this policy.

While this document outlines the functioning of the curricular process in general and the University Curriculum Committee in particular, college curriculum committees should consider adopting the approaches outlined here.

Curricular Change Timeline

Due to the nature of the academic year, the timeline for completing changes to the curriculum (new programs, program changes, new courses, course changes, and/or general changes to the student catalog) is necessarily condensed. While the CourseLeaf CIM system is open year-round, processing through the system can only occur during the fall semester. Below is the timeline of key points in the curricular process.

Table 1. Curricular Timeline

| Date | Action |
|------------------|--|
| August | Faculty discuss any curricular proposals with program/department faculty |
| September 1 | The CIM System is officially "open" for proposals Faculty check on prior proposal submissions with the Department Chair Faculty submit new proposals Academic Department Chair Review Registrar Review |
| Mid-September | College Curriculum Committees meet (if proposals are ready) College Dean Review Core Curriculum Committee Review (if necessary) |
| End of September | University Curriculum Committee meets (if proposals are ready) Provost Review |
| October 1 | Faculty submit new proposals Academic Department Chair Review |
| Mid-October | College Curriculum Committees meet College Dean Review Core Curriculum Committee Review (if necessary) |
| End of October | University Curriculum Committee meets Provost Review |
| November 1 | Last day to submit proposals to the CIM system Academic Department Chair Review Registrar Review |
| Mid-November | College Curriculum Committees meet |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| | College Dean Review |
| | Core Curriculum Committee Review (if necessary) |
| End of November | University Curriculum Committee meets Provost Review |
| December | Curriculum Process concludes |
| January | Emergency Curricular Meetings Only Registrar works to complete the next Academic Catalog |
| <u>Year Round</u> | <u>Course proposals may be submitted, but will not be processed until after September 1</u> |

The timeline for curricular changes is largely immutable. The only overrides to this timeline come from the Texas Lawmakers, the Texas A&M Board of Regents, the THECB, SACSCOC, or the President/Provost of TAMU. These are extremely rare circumstances and are based only on necessity. All academic units should adhere to the above timeline to ensure that all program and/or course changes go into effect the following academic year.

The above timeline is only for curricular business at TAMU. In instances of new program and substantive changes to programs, different timeframes will apply depending on the agency/organization that will have to review the proposal(s). These different timeframes will be examined below in relation to specific types of curricular proposals.

Curricular Process

The curricular process begins when a faculty member, department, or combination of faculty/department and administration determine some change is necessary through natural evolution or there is a system/THECB/SACSCOC requirement that necessitates the change. **WHILE THIS INITIAL STEP CAN BE INDIVIDUAL, NO ONE PERSON SHOULD UNILATERALLY DECIDE TO MAKE SOME CHANGE WITHOUT CONSULTING THE PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT FACULTY FIRST.** Once an idea for change has occurred, there must be time for all program/department members to discuss the proposal before it is initially submitted. In the majority of instances, this will be a formality. However, some changes will require additional resources and may trigger reporting requirements to the Texas A&M System, the state of Texas, or other external organizations. Thus, any changes should be discussed between program/department faculty and the department chair before any proposal is submitted to the CIM system (also referred to as CourseLeaf) in Uconnect (see next section). If this step is omitted, a proposal can be sent back at any level of review should this knowledge come to light; in certain circumstances, the UCC reserves the right to request copies of program meeting minutes should there be a dispute. The program/department should discuss the proposal and hold a formal vote on the approval of the proposal for accreditation purposes. If the proposal is denied, this should end the process; if the proposal is approved, the proposal can be formally submitted to the CIM system. In the case of a denied proposal, there is an appeals process delineated later in this handbook.

After the faculty member has discussed the proposal with the program/department faculty and the department chair, the change can then be added into the CIM system. Only full-time faculty (tenured, tenure-track, and professional teaching faculty) are permitted to submit changes. No adjunct faculty can submit course/program proposals. University/college staff should not submit proposals to CIM on behalf of faculty; this is contrary to faculty shared governance.

After a proposal is reviewed by a program/department, approved, and submitted by a faculty member, the proposal will be reviewed in the following order:

1. Core Curriculum Committee (if needed)
2. Department Chair (formality based on program/department vote)
3. Registrar (to review course numbers, consistency, and other logistical concerns)
4. College Curriculum Committee
5. College Dean
6. University Curriculum Committee
7. Provost (for final review)
8. Registrar (for final logistical review)

Voting at all levels is not confidential. Votes should be public to assure fairness in the process.

Expanding on the above list, Department Chairs review and approve course syllabi and curriculum changes and make recommendations to the initiator if necessary. Curriculum changes approved by the Department Chair are forwarded to the Office of the University Registrar. The Office of the University Registrar reviews documents and ensures that they are fully and properly completed, following TAMIU guidelines and compatibility with Banner, DegreeWorks, and the Online University Catalog. College/School Curriculum Committees review and approve requests submitted by the Department Chair; approval at this college level forwards them to the College/School Dean. Upon approval by the Dean, curriculum recommendations are forwarded to the University Curriculum Committee. The University Curriculum Committee (UCC) reviews and approves the requests submitted by the College Curriculum Committees as forwarded by the Dean of the College/School. The UCC evaluates the proposed new course/revisions, the appropriateness of the learning outcomes for the level of the course as well as the appropriateness of the credit hours. In evaluating new programs, the UCC assesses the program content, the appropriateness of the curriculum to the program outcomes and the connection to the mission of the University. The Office of the Provost reviews and approves documents to be added to the upcoming catalog once they have been reviewed and approved by the UCC.

Curriculum changes involving the core will be reviewed prior to the chair's decision. More on this level of review is discussed below.

Course Levels and Semester Credit Hours (SCH)

At TAMIU, course levels are denoted as 1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000 at the undergraduate level. Lower-level courses are numbered at the 1000 or 2000 level. These classes introduce students to the various academic disciplines, providing overviews of foundational theories, concepts, and methods, while preparing students for upper-level content. Most general education (core) courses are lower-level courses. These classes are typically taken by freshmen and sophomore students.

Upper-level courses are numbered at the 3000 or 4000 level. These classes build on content in lower-level classes, providing advanced approaches and requiring students to possess prior knowledge of an academic discipline. The completion of prerequisites may be required for advanced courses. These classes are taken by students with junior or senior standing.

Graduate-level courses are denoted by 5000 and 6000 levels. Courses at the 5000 level are for master's degrees. These graduate courses are manageable by graduate students who have completed a BA or BS in an appropriate field of study. Master's level courses provide knowledge beyond the undergraduate level geared towards practitioners trying to advance in their current positions and students preparing for advanced study (doctorates). Thus, master's level courses can differ by professional and academic disciplines. These courses expand the student's knowledge base by focusing on analysis and synthesis of data and information. These courses are taught by faculty with terminal degrees in their field.

Courses at the 6000 level are for doctoral degrees. Doctoral level classes build extensively on skills learned at both the undergraduate and masters levels. These graduate courses emphasize theory, higher level critical thinking skills, include greater intellectual rigor, and integrate data and information into theoretical frameworks. Skills included in doctoral level courses lead to the production of knowledge through independent inquiry: scholarly writing skills, an understanding of research methodologies, and quantitative/qualitative analyses. These courses are taught by faculty with a terminal degree in their field; these faculty must be actively and empirically contributing to the field of study through peer-reviewed scholarship.

Semester Credit Hours (SCH) – Courses

The Texas Administrative Code (Title 22, Part 22, Chapter 511, Subchapter C, Rule §511.51) defines a "Semester credit hour" as "a unit of measure of instruction consisting of 60 minutes, of which 50 minutes must be direct instruction, over a 15-week period in a semester system or a 10-week period in a quarter system." Semester credit hours (SCH) are in essence the number of contact hours a student spends in the classroom, physical or virtual. The number of SCH do not include time outside of the classroom required to complete readings, homework, term papers, projects, or any other type of course assignment.

College classes vary in length based on several factors. First, the number of SCH is linked to course requirements. The length of a class often depends on how much content needs to be covered in each session. Courses that require in-depth discussions, hands-on activities, or extensive lectures may have longer class times to accommodate the material. Second, SCH is linked to credits. Classes are often designed to align with credit requirements. For example, a 3-credit course may meet for 3 hours per week (typically in one session), whereas a 1-credit course might meet for just 1 hour per week. Third, SCH is aligned to overall university scheduling. Universities and colleges design schedules to fit within the broader academic calendar and to allow students to balance multiple courses. This can result in classes being scheduled in blocks of 1, 2, 3, or 4 hours to maximize flexibility and accommodate student needs. Fourth, teaching style is also linked to SCH. Some classes may require longer sessions to facilitate activities like labs, workshops, or group projects, while others may be more lecture-based and require shorter sessions. Fifth, and most importantly, SCH is correlated with departmental/discipline-specific standards. Different departments or disciplines may have norms or standards for class lengths based on what is considered effective for learning in that field. In essence, the varying lengths of college classes are typically designed to best serve the educational objectives of the course while considering practical scheduling and logistical constraints.

At TAMIU, the second number in the course sequence (1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, 5000, and 6000) will indicate the number of SCH per course. For example, a course with the course number of 1315 is a 3-hour course. Courses are typically three (3) hours in SCH duration at TAMIU. The Texas Administrative Code (Title 22, Part 22, Chapter 511, Subchapter C, Rule §511.51) even indicates the normality of the “3-hour course”: The “Traditionally-delivered three semester-credit-hour course’ or ‘traditional course’ means a course containing 15 weeks of instruction (45 contact hours) plus a week for final examinations so that such a course contains 45-48 contact hours depending on whether there is a final exam.” This is consistent with most universities in the U.S. Any variation from 3 SCH is a function of the rationales listed in the previous paragraph.

Academic departments may develop and offer zero (0) credit courses as a requirement in a degree program to engage students in innovative experiences beyond the classroom. Examples of these experiences can include, but are not limited to:

- Experiential learning events
- International experiences
- Faculty mentoring
- Presentations at professional/academic meetings
- Orientation sessions
- Art installations/exhibitions/showcases
- Performances
- Labs
- Internships
- Capstone exams
- Certifications

In general, these courses are used to track student progress at TAMIU; this progress includes achievement of certain program admission, progression, or completion-related benchmarks or as a prerequisite of a subsequent course.

Requests for zero credit courses must be submitted through the existing curriculum approval process (*University Curriculum Committee Handbook*) and should meet the following conditions:

- Students will primarily work independently to complete course requirements
- Generally, the course does not meet on a regular basis
- The course requires a syllabus with student learning outcomes
- The course requires minimal use of TAMIU resources
- The course cannot be offered for credit
- The course uses Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory for grading (included on a student transcripts)
- The course will not impact the student's GPA

Regardless of course SCH, all new, and change of, course proposals must be submitted to the curricular process outlined in this handbook.

Semester Credit Hours (SCH) – Programs

Degree programs (graduate and undergraduate), majors, minors, and certificates all have a minimum number of semester credit hours that must be completed in order for a degree or certificate to be awarded. These include:

- Undergraduate degree = 120 SCH
- Graduate degree = 30 SCH
- Minor = 18 SCH
- Certificate = 12 SCH

Undergraduate degrees generally contain 120 semester credit hours. The THECB is very strict on program SCH being set at 120. But, in some instances, more credit hours are required due to disciplinary standards, professional mandates, or academic norms. For instance, music degrees tend to require over 130 hours of SCH. This is due to the varieties of instrument training required for the degree. Nursing and Education degrees tend to have more SCH due to professional mandates associated with field work and licensing. Regardless of the number of program SCH, all undergraduate degree program proposals (new or changes) must be submitted to the curricular process outlined in this handbook.

Graduate degrees SCH is determined by type of degree (master's or doctoral degree). Master's degrees are 30 SCH. Any changes for this revolve around thesis vs. non-thesis options or professional requirements (nursing for instance). Regardless of the number of program SCH, all masters' degree program proposals (new or changes) must be submitted to the curricular process outlined in this handbook.

For doctoral programs, there is much more variability in semester credit hours. There is no set number of hours for doctorate degrees mandated by the THECB. The primary driver of the SCH variability for doctorates has to do with whether a program requires a master's degree prior to entering the program. If a master's degree is required, the number of SCH will be smaller, hovering around 50 SCH. If a master's degree is not required by the program, the number of SCH will be more intensive, most likely exceeding 70 SCH. Regardless of the number of program SCH, all doctoral degree program proposals (new or changes) must be submitted to the curricular process outlined in this handbook.

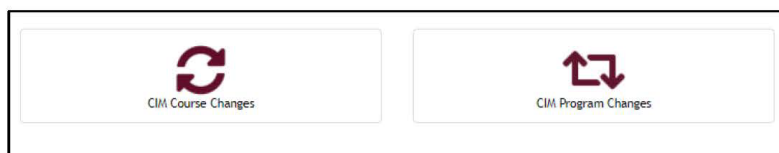
Minors and certificates require 18 and 12 SCH respectively. There is generally not a great deal of flexibility to the SCH associated with these types of programs.

Courseleaf (CIM)

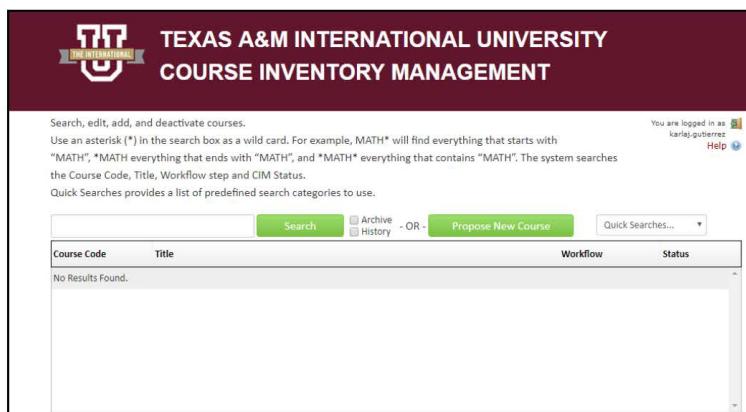
The system used to submit curricular changes is the CIM system (Courseleaf). CIM can be accessed through Uconnect. Faculty submitting proposals should enter their information in either the CIM Course Changes or CIM Program Changes widgets. The full process for entering information into CIM is:

To submit catalog changes, please follow the instructions below.

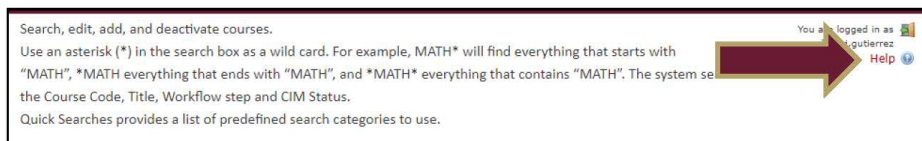
1. Log in to UCONNECT and click on **Click on the Course or Program Changes** depending on the type of change necessary.



2. Search the class or program where the changes are necessary.



3. CIM provides an online support center that includes instructions, handouts, and videos for your convenience.



For access to the CIM widgets, contact the Registrar's Office for assistance. For any issues with CIM, there are several avenues for assistance. First, consult with departmental faculty who have submitted program and course change proposals in the past. This level of assistance is invaluable. Second, consult with members of the college curriculum committee. Again, these individuals have a great deal of experience in operating CIM. Finally, if these avenues fail, which is extremely unlikely, contact the Registrar's Office for assistance.

As a reminder, **ONLY FULL-TIME FACULTY SUBMIT CURRICULAR PROPOSALS**. No staff or adjuncts may submit curricular proposals. Any proposals not submitted by faculty will be returned to the submitter.

Committee Makeup

The University Curriculum Committee (UCC) is a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, which is deemed necessary to ensure that the programs and courses of the curriculum accomplish the mission of the University. Composition of the UCC includes one representative per academic department or division or free-standing academic unit and the University Registrar. Faculty appointments are made by department chairs (or heads of academic units), who submit their choices through the Provost to the Faculty Senate for concurrence; over 50% of these members should be tenure-track faculty. The Associate Provost (or representative) chairs the committee as an ex-officio member.

The voting members of the committee include one member from each of the following:

- Biology and Chemistry
- College of Education
- Engineering
- Fine and Performing Arts
- Health Sciences
- Humanities
- International Banking and Finance Studies
- International Business and Technology Studies
- Killam Library
- Mathematics and Physics
- Nursing
- Psychology and Communication
- Social Sciences
- University College
- Provost Designate

The committee also consists of several ex officio members:

- AVP for Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning
- Distance Education
- Graduate Studies (Dean)
- University College (Program Manager)
- University Registrar

To assist the committee in its efforts, lead advisors from every college shall attend all meetings. Lead advisors are permitted to engage in all discussions, solicited or unsolicited.

Quorum of the committee shall be considered eight (8) voting members in attendance.

University Curriculum Committee – Chair

The University Curriculum Committee Chair plays a critical role in the curricular review process at TAMU. The chair's responsibilities are as follows:

- Call Meetings – The Chair organizes meetings for the entire University Curriculum Committee. These always occur on Friday afternoons, once a month, during the Fall semester.
- Review Proposals – The Chair is responsible for reviewing all proposals facilitate the discussion of proposals during meetings.
- Introduce Proposals – The Chair must be able to provide a brief summary of proposals to begin committee deliberations.
- Lead Discussions – The Committee Chair is responsible for leading discussions on all curricular changes.
- Project Proposals for Viewing – The Chair must show/project the proposals under review in case the committee has any questions/concerns.
- Make Minor Changes to Proposals – Should there be minor changes/edits required, the Chair can make these during the meeting; for major changes, the proposal will be returned.
- Take/Record Votes – Proper records of votes reflecting In Favor or Not in Favor are recorded by the Chair.
- Approve/Return Proposals in CIM – Upon approval or objection, the Chair processes all proposals through the CIM system to ensure they are managed in a timely fashion.
- Work with Proposal Submitters – The Chair works with proposal submitters to answer questions about or resolve issues with proposals.
- Provide Reports at the End of the Academic Year – The Chair reports are kept in CIM and are readily available after the completion of all UCC meetings; generally, this occurs in February.

University Curriculum Committee – Members

Members of the University Curriculum Committee are appointed by the department chair or the unit head. Following are the responsibilities of all UCC committee members. It is critical that committee members attend all UCC meetings, as the meetings must have a quorum before any committee business can begin. As noted above, quorum is eight (8) voting members present at a UCC meeting. If a member cannot attend, there will be no virtual option for the meeting, nor can another member act as a proxy vote.

The first responsibility of committee members is to review all proposals prior to meetings. Committee members are to evaluate proposals to ensure the following: that they relate to TAMIU's mission, that they are of high quality, that program/student learning outcomes are consistent and matched to the appropriate level, that there is not unnecessary duplication of programs/courses, and that consistency across proposals is monitored.

While there are often many proposals to be reviewed prior to a given meeting, careful review of all proposals is a critical function of the UCC. Proposals are made available to UCC members in CIM approximately 3 days prior to the scheduled UCC meeting. Committee members should read all proposals carefully prior to the meetings, identifying any issues with proposals in advance. Such issues may range from problems with catalog language to alignment with institutional or state requirements to typographical or other errors. As each proposal is discussed individually, identifying such issues in advance significantly streamlines the discussion process.

The second responsibility of committee members is to engage in e-votes. For proposals that require e-votes, UCC members should read through each proposal carefully and identify any potential issues with the proposal. If the committee member believes the proposal should be approved, they should vote "yes" in CIM; if they do not believe the proposal should be approved, they should vote "no." If the member has questions about or objections to the proposal, they are able to leave a comment outlining any such questions or objections in the voting box in CIM. Members are welcome to address any issues they find with e-vote proposals at the UCC meeting. All UCC members are able to view the votes cast by other members as well as any comments they leave. Time is allotted to discussing e-votes and accompanying issues at each UCC meeting.

The third responsibility of committee members is to engage in substantive deliberations on proposals. When reviewing proposals, committee members are to prepare questions, raise any objections, register their e-votes, and/or prepare to approve all course and program changes in the face-to-face meeting. For proposals that only require a partial review, members should have registered their e-votes prior to the meeting. Any comments about or objections to partial review proposals should be discussed and deliberated upon by the committee at the meeting.

For full review proposals, the committee should engage in a robust discussion about each proposal. Related proposals may be discussed as a group, especially those involved in large-scale program changes or those relating to the creation of new programs or certifications. The discussion should

include any objections to or questions about catalog language, alignment with institutional or state requirements, and typographical or other errors. Sponsoring faculty or departmental leadership may attend the UCC meeting to provide context or justification for their full review proposals. This provides UCC members with an opportunity to ask questions and gain fuller context for such proposals.

If UCC members raise concerns about a proposal, it can be sent back to the initial proposer for revision based on UCC feedback. Any revised proposals need to be resubmitted for consideration at a future UCC meeting.

The final responsibility of committee members is to hold formal votes on proposals requiring full review; Robert's Rules of Order are applied to these votes. Once the proposals have been discussed by members of the UCC committee, and any additional information has been presented, a committee member must move to open the vote on the proposal. The initial motion must be seconded by another UCC committee member. At that point, the chair(s) of the UCC committee will ask all UCC members to register their approvals or oppositions. If the proposal is approved by the majority of UCC members, it will be considered approved and sent to the next step in the curriculum approval process.

Full Review vs. Partial Review

The chair(s) of the UCC determines whether course and program proposals require a full review or a partial review. Guidelines for those determinations are outlined below.

A full review is required for all substantive course and program changes. Proposals that are required to undergo full review will be made available to UCC members approximately 3 days prior to the scheduled UCC meeting. Proposals for course and program changes will be voted on, in person, at the UCC meeting. The proposal will only be approved if a quorum of UCC members (8) approve the proposal.

At the course level, full reviews are required for new course proposals and substantive changes to existing courses, such as those requiring major changes to course description, course title, etc. If the content of a class is changed, a full review is required.

At the program level, full reviews are required for new degree programs; new certificate programs; new minors; new concentrations/specializations; new tracks within existing degree programs; deactivation of degree programs, certificate programs, minors, or concentrations/specializations; changes to program requirements (with or without a SCH change); changes to the name of degree programs, certificate programs, minors, or concentrations/specializations. If the content of a program is changed, a full review is required.

Partial review is required for minor changes to courses and programs. Proposals that require partial review involve minor or editorial changes to courses, minors, or degree/certificate programs. UCC members will receive course vote proposals approximately 3 days prior to the UCC meeting; as such, these proposals should be reviewed by UCC members prior to the meeting at which they will be discussed in brief. Any questions about or objections to partial review proposals can be added as a comment to the proposal in Courseleaf's CIM Platform, and any such objections or questions should be discussed at the UCC meeting. Passage of such proposals occurs when they receive a quorum of e-vote approval by UCC members. E-voting closes the weekend after the course proposals are made available.

At the course level, partial reviews are required for course deactivations as well as changes to: instructional method (modality), pre- and/or co-requisites, classification restrictions, course type, grade mode, cross-listed courses, repeatability, minor changes to course descriptions, core curriculum, and WIN (writing intensive) designations.

At the program level, partial reviews are required for minor changes to graduation requirements, updates to program electives (to account for new and/or deactivated courses), and updates to account for changes in course prefixes, titles, and/or codes.

Program Review

The most important proposals that are reviewed in the curricular process are those dealing with new or revised degree programs. According to the THECB, an “Academic Program is an instructional program leading toward a certificate, associate's, bachelor's, master's, doctoral, or first-professional degree or resulting in credits that can be applied to one of these degrees.”

For the purposes of this policy, programs that require review include:

- New degree programs
- New certificate programs
- Minors
- New concentrations
- Dual degrees
- Joint degrees
- Combination programs
- Program closures
- Degree, minor, certificate name changes
- Semester credit hour (SCH) change for degree, minor, or certificate programs
- Changes to degree, minor, or certificate requirements

Program changes, especially new program proposals, always require a full review. Information that may be required in new program and change to existing program proposals include:

- Projected start date
- Program title
- CIP code
- Relationship of program to institutional mission, vision, and values of the institution
- Program level (graduate or undergraduate)
- Type of graduate program (Masters or PhD)
- Curriculum and instructional design of the program
- List of courses
- Program learning outcomes
- Program modality
- Program evaluation (program review and annual assessment)
- Marketable skills
- Years to completion of degree
- Additional admissions requirements
- Number of faculty (full-time and part-time)
- Faculty vitae
- Faculty scholarship
- Library and IT resources

- Projected revenue
- Expected number of students
- Institutional planning process
- Local and regional demand for the program

There are three types of program proposal outlined here: New Programs, Changes to Existing Programs, and Eliminating Programs.

New Programs

According to the THECB, an “Academic Program is an instructional program leading toward a certificate, associate's, bachelor's, master's, doctoral, or first-professional degree or resulting in credits that can be applied to one of these degrees.” For the purposes of this policy, new academic programs include majors, minors, concentrations, specializations, and certificates. These may be initiated by the department, school, or administration. In all situations, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the AVP for Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning will be contacted as soon as possible in the process to provide guidance and oversight in the development of the program. All new program proposals will require not only TAMIU curricular approval, but will also require review by the Texas A&M System Board of Regents (TAMU BOR), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and SACSCOC. The review process is long and arduous, taking anywhere from one to two years to complete. Indeed, new PhD program proposals require a one-year period of initial review before a proposal can be submitted to the THECB. There is more on external review agencies in the next section (substantive changes).

There are several items that must be addressed in the discussion phase of the new program proposal process. A new program is not as simple as the idea. There are many factors that must be considered. These include determining whether the program is necessary, whether there are comparable programs already in existence on campus, student demand, projected revenue, and necessary resources (for example, are more faculty/staff needed for the program to operate effectively?). This means that all new programs will receive scrutiny from almost the entirety of the TAMIU administration.

Once the above issues have been addressed, the program/department will then begin work on the proposal in earnest. Before submission of a new program proposal, the proposal will be showcased to a variety of different campus stakeholders for feedback. There will be at least two presentations to these stakeholder groups. Feedback from these presentations must be incorporated into the final proposal; if feedback is not applied to the final draft of the proposal, members writing the proposal should be able to explain why this advice was not followed. After the penultimate draft of the proposal has been completed, the proposal will be presented to the President and all the Vice Presidents. Final guidance provided by this group will be incorporated into the final proposal.

After consultation with the faculty, departments, appropriate administrators, TAMIU's curricular process is the first stop for review. Faculty will submit the proposal through CIM and the review process will proceed according to this handbook. After approval at TAMIU, the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will transmit the proposal to the TAMU BOR and the THECB; the AVP for Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning will transmit the proposal to SACSCOC. Upon receiving final approval from TAMIU, the TAMU BOR, the THECB, and SACSCOC, the department chair works with the dean and others to develop a plan for recruitment, promotion of the program, and implementation.

The proposal of a new program that is already closely aligned with an existing major, minor, or concentration, that will not require new courses, and that will not require new faculty may not need as much initial discussion. For instance, if the new program does not represent a substantial expansion requiring additional resources (i.e., it is a new concentration in an existing major or a new minor or certificate, and therefore does not require new resources or additional faculty), a proposal will still be required; in these cases, the question of any substantive changes associated with this kind of proposal will be determined by the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the AVP for Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning.

Duplication of existing programs, in part or in whole, is prohibited.

Changes to Existing Programs

Departments may make changes they deem necessary to existing programs to ensure that they best meet the academic needs of students and include the most current and relevant content. Revisions to all existing majors, minors, and concentrations within a discipline will be managed within the department and be submitted through TAMIU's curricular process.

Modifying content, reducing course credit hours (i.e., moving 4- to 3-credit hours) or combining existing courses are examples of changes that departments may make. Before creating a new program or making a change to an existing program, faculty must consult department chairs, college deans, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the AVP for Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning. Such consultation provides guidance as to what changes should be effected and to what scale. Additionally, and most importantly, these discussions will allow for the determination of whether a change triggers a substantive change that would need to be reviewed by external organizations (TAMU System BOR, THECB, and SACSCOC) in addition to reviews through TAMIU's curricular process; see the next section for more details on the nature of substantive changes.

If the proposed change results in conflict with another department/program or requires the second department to add courses or faculty to compensate for the change, discussions, and possible votes, between the departments/programs must occur prior to any proposal submission.

Eliminating Programs

Sometimes, programs do not work. In other instances, the need for the program diminishes with the advent of other programs. In either case, the elimination of programs is a curricular concern. The request to eliminate an existing major, minor, concentration, or certificate may be initiated by the department or by administration based on enrollment, employment trends, changes in educational focus, institutional finances, or other reasons.

If the request is initiated by the administration, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will discuss the rationale with the school dean and, if applicable, the department chair. If the decision is final, the dean or chair will notify the appropriate campus offices, including the Registrar's Office and the AVP for Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning, of the change so that, at the earliest possible date, the website, marketing, catalog, admissions office, Graduate School, and other offices can be updated to accurately reflect the department's offerings. If the request to eliminate a major, minor, concentration or certificate is initiated by the department or school, the chair will submit the request and rationale to the college dean, who will then transmit the proposal to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the AVP for Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning for evaluation against the offerings and curricular needs of other departments; the department chair will work in cooperation with the AVP through this process. If the request is approved, the dean will notify the appropriate campus offices of the change so that, at the earliest possible date, the website, catalog, admissions office, Graduate School, and other publications can be updated to accurately reflect the department's offerings.

Concurrently, a Teach-Out plan must be developed to make sure that all students currently enrolled in the program will be able to complete the program. Viable alternative programs can be provided to the students as well. A Teach-Out plan is developed by the institution and provides equitable treatment of students if an institution providing at least 25% of a program ceases to operate. This plan will provide a pathway to completion for students who are currently enrolled. Teach-Out plans must include:

- Teachout agreements with any other institutions;
- Commitment to teaching a specific list of students who are currently enrolled in programs at TAMIU;
- A commitment to assuming the educational responsibilities of the identified students, without compensation from any outside party, for the remainder of a current semester if TAMIU terminates operations.

Teach-Out plans are very important as they can have an impact on financial aid to an institution.

While the Teach-Out plan is being implemented, a program elimination proposal must be submitted through TAMIU's curricular process (CIM). The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will update the decision on the program's fate to the Texas A&M System Board of Regents and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The

AVP for Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning will submit the correct paperwork to SACSCOC.

The elimination of an existing program is always considered a substantive change, which is the subject of the next section.

Substantive Changes

For new programs and programs changes that are deemed “substantive,” faculty will likely need to go through several external bodies for the program to gain full approval. Substantive changes are:

based on the concept of “significant departures” from previously approved programs, off-campus instructional sites or mode of delivery as well as a change in institutional scope.

According to SACSCOC, a substantive change includes a “significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.”

At TAMIU, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the AVP for Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning, are responsible for determining if changes rise to the level of substantive changes. In addition to the TAMIU curricular process, there are three (3) external bodies that will evaluate substantive changes: the Texas A&M System Board of Regents (TAMU BOR), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and the Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for transmitting substantive changes to the TAMU BOR and the THECB; the AVP for Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning will submit substantive changes to SACSCOC.

As noted above, discussion on substantive changes must occur prior to any proposal being developed or submitted in the TAMIU curricular process. Once the substantive change has been determined, this will trigger the need for external reviews. Reviews can range from full deliberation of a proposal by an external approval body to a simple memorandum.

For the TAMU BOR, meetings occur quarterly ([Meeting Dates - Office of The Board of Regents \(tamus.edu\)](#)):

- February
- May
- August
- November

Generally, proposals must be submitted at least a month in advance of meetings. Approval at the institutional level is required before submitting to the TAMU BOR.

For the THECB, meetings also occur on a quarterly basis ([Quarterly Board Meetings - Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board](#)).

- January
- April

- July
- October

Depending on the type of proposal submitted, consultation by additional subcommittees may be necessary. Examples of these include programs that utilize over 50% distance education (elearning) or graduate programs. If proposals need to be reviewed by subcommittees of the THECB, this will be determined in the initial discussion phases of the proposal.

The majority of substantive program changes the UCC will be dealing with will also require SACSCOC Executive Council approval. For a substantive change requiring approval by the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees (which meets year-round), the submission deadlines are

- January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year
- July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.

For a substantive change requiring approval by the full SACSCOC Board of Trustees (which meets biannually), to be implemented after the date of the Board meeting, the submission deadlines are:

- March 15 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year
- September 1 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year

The AVP for Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning will be responsible for determining which kind of SACSCOC review is necessary during the program proposal development phase of the curricular process.

For a substantive change requiring notification only, such notification can be submitted any time before implementation. Once the institution has submitted notification, it may implement the change before receiving a response from SACSCOC. If there are deficiencies or additional information required regarding the notification, the AVP for Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning will be contacted at the time of review for resolution and before action is taken. This applies to notifications only, not to approvals: changes requiring approval cannot be implemented until approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

For substantive changes that include closing a program, site, program at a site, or changing the method of delivery, a Teach-Out plan should be submitted as soon as possible after the decision is made to close and therefore stop admitting students (see the discussion above on eliminating programs).

The TAMIU policy for substantive changes can be found at [Microsoft Word - UL_SACS Substantive Change Policy_revised 4.15.2015 \(tamiu.edu\)](#)

New Courses, Course Additions/Changes/Deletions

One of the most common types of curricular proposal is in relation to new classes, changes in classes, or deletions of classes in the academic catalog. This section evaluates these types of curricular proposals. To complete any of these changes, simply go to CIM Course Changes in Uconnect.

New course proposals shall include:

- Department
- College
- Course prefix
- Course number
- Course title
- Course description
- Number of credit hours
- Course learning objectives
- Course pre-requisites
- Course co-requisites
- Existing course equivalency (if applicable)
- Restrictions
- Content learner approach
- Grade type
- Modality
- Syllabus
- Course repeatability and the amount allowed
- WIN designation (i.e., is the course writing intensive (WIN)?)
- Core curriculum designation (i.e., is the course part of the Core Curriculum, which will trigger additional layers of review)?

New course proposals will always require full committee reviews.

Course additions/changes proposals deal with many of the issues associated with new course proposals. A class could have a writing intensive component added or a change of description or course learning objectives. Most changes here will be reviewed through the expedited process. The only real exception is if the class is added to the TAMIU Core; this will trigger a review by the Core Curriculum Committee.

Course deletions are the easiest of the proposals outlined here. The deletion of a course occurs when a faculty member with an expertise in the area is no longer at the university or the course is no longer consistent with the field. The nature of the review is predicated on if the course was

required for the degree program or if there is a change in semester credit hours (SCH). If not in a list of required classes, these types of reviews always utilize the expedited review process.

NOTE: *Should new courses impinge on other disciplines, programs, departments, or colleges, faculty must discuss the class and potentially get approval from the other group before submission. Not doing so could result in rejection of the proposal.*

Core Curriculum

The Texas A&M International Core Curriculum, in compliance with the Texas Core Curriculum, is a set of common courses that are required of all undergraduate students and are considered the necessary general education for students, no matter their choice in major. The Core Curriculum ensures that students will be provided with the essential knowledge and skills to succeed in college, their careers, their communities, and in life. Through the core curriculum, students will (1) gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, (2) develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world, and (3) advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for lifelong learning.

TAMIU's Core Curriculum student learning outcomes are:

- Communication
 - TAMIU students will be able to develop ideas and express them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering knowledge, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively by using their command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable them to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.
- Critical Thinking
 - TAMIU students will be able to think critically and creatively by utilizing skills such as innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
- Empirical & Quantitative
 - TAMIU students will be able to develop informed conclusions by engaging in manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts.
- Personal Responsibility
 - TAMIU students will be able to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.
- Social Responsibility
 - TAMIU students will be able to apply intercultural competence and knowledge of civic responsibility to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
- Teamwork
 - TAMIU students will be able to consider different points of view to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

More on the TAMIU Core Curriculum can be found at: [GENERAL EDUCATION CORE \(tamiu.edu\)](http://tamiu.edu).

Core proposals will be the first level of review after submission (before the department chair's review). Core curriculum changes are necessarily substantive changes. These changes will require THECB approval/notification in addition to UCC approvals.

The TAMIU Core Curriculum Committee is selected by the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs. This committee is comprised of:

- Provost designated chair (generally an Associate Provost)
- AVP for Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning
- One faculty member/lead advisor from every college (except Graduate School)

Members of this committee will review and discuss Core proposals. When deliberations have concluded, proposals are voted on. After a decision has been reached, the chair will process the proposal in CIM. The chair will then forward the proposal to the THECB for review; this can occur before or after the committee has reviewed the proposal. Before the course can be added to the Academic Catalog, the THECB must have made a decision regarding the proposal.

If new or old courses are to be placed in the Core, the process differs from other curricular proposals. In addition to the information required for new and change to course proposals, Core Curriculum proposals require more detail. Core proposals will include:

- If the course has been approved by the THECB (yes or no)
- Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for the course
- Core Curriculum Learning Objectives (all need to be addressed)
- Competency areas addressed by the course
- A sample syllabus

The list of courses in the TAMIU Core Curriculum can be found in Appendix A of the Academic Catalog ([University Catalog \(tamiu.edu\)](http://tamiu.edu)).

Travel Abroad/Study Abroad

There are three (3) types of study abroad program students at TAMIU can explore: Faculty led, exchange, and affiliate. Faculty led programs are organized with TAMIU faculty and take place during the winter or summer. Exchange programs feature universities that have established academic agreements. This allows students from both institutions to participate in an academic exchange. Affiliate programs are hosted by third party company providers. The TAMIU curricular process does not apply to exchange and affiliate programs.

For the faculty led study abroad programs, the policy is currently being crafted.

Appeals

Generally, there is a consensus about curriculum outcomes in departments, colleges, and universities. Sometimes, however, one or two individuals, faculty or administrator, can hamper the processing of curriculum proposals. This curricular appeal procedure outlines the steps and parameters of the appellate process for curriculum decisions at TAMIU. Appeals for curricular decisions are available for all levels of curricular review (see the curricular process above). There is only one appeal allowed for a given curricular proposal, program or course.

Faculty or administrators who wish to appeal curricular change decisions should appeal to the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) Chair. The chair will consult with the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs on the nature of the appeal and indicate that the appeal process has been officially initiated. Once an appeal has been invoked, the proposal will proceed through the full curricular process to the UCC. Should a proposal receive three (3) total outcomes at different levels of review that are the same (approval or denial), the appeal will be over, even if it has not made its way to the UCC.

If the proposal advances to the UCC, the formal appeal will occur. The faculty member and the department chair, College Curriculum Committee Chair (CCC), and college dean will be required to submit explanations for the respective sides of the appeal; parties in the appeal are not required to respond, but can rest on the original material in the curricular review process. For curriculum committee decisions being appealed, regardless of the level, these reviews will largely be predicated on written arguments. During the next UCC meeting, the appeal will occur in the first 15 minutes of that meeting. The UCC members will have reviewed the documentation with the normal business before the committee. After both parties have presented their brief arguments (five minutes or less), they will be asked to leave and the committee will hold a deliberation and vote on the proposal. This vote will be considered final. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will then make the final determination on the fate of the proposal.

Disagreements about the right path forward occur. There will be no retaliation against any faculty member who chooses to use the curricular appeals process.

Conclusion

This Curriculum Policy Handbook has outlined the nature of the curricular process at TAMIU. It reviewed curriculum proposal creation, the process for submitting proposals, the manner in which proposals are reviewed, and the nature of substantive change proposals. As illustrated, the process can be easy, but it can also be difficult, primarily in relation to the length of time required for substantive changes. This manual allows faculty to know what to expect and who to contact if there are any questions/issues.

We conclude this document with a list of suggestions for when a department or individual decides to shepherd curricular change proposals through the process.

1. Start early. As the timeline for curricular changes is brief, plan to begin the process as early as possible.
2. Discuss any changes with the program/department before proceeding. This step is critical to the proper functioning of the curriculum process at TAMIU.
3. Discuss with the department chair and college dean, especially regarding a program proposal of some sort. Department/college visions may be impacted and more funding may be required.
4. If the proposal involves making any changes to a program, or creating a new program, consult with both the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Associate Vice President of Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning. Program changes could trigger reviews from the TAMU Board of Regents, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and/or SACSCOC. Have these discussions before submitting anything in CIM.
5. Attend College and University Curriculum Committee Meetings in case questions arise about your proposal.
6. Make changes to proposals if requested.
7. Curriculum changes should never be a spur of the moment endeavor. No matter how small the change, it should be well thought out and discussed with a large cross-section of faculty, which is what the curricular process at TAMIU does.

Good luck as you work through the curricular process.

While this manual did not address the structure/operation of individual College Curriculum Committees, it is suggested that these committees adopt the processes outlined here for their operations.

Trainings on the curricular process will be provided during the middle of August.

Key Links

University Curriculum Committee Website:

[University Curriculum Committee \(tamiu.edu\)](http://tamiu.edu)

Faculty Handbook:

[Faculty Handbook \(tamiu.edu\)](http://tamiu.edu)

Uconnect/CIM:

[TAMIU Home](#) (Middle Right Top of Page)

Guidelines for CIM Courses:

[cim-courses.pdf \(tamiu.edu\)](#)

Guidelines for CIM Programs:

[cim-programs.pdf \(tamiu.edu\)](#)

SAP – Awarding Credit Hours:

[11.03.99.10.02awardingcredithours.pdf \(tamiu.edu\)](#)

Substantive Changes Website (TAMIU Forms and Policy):

[Substantive Changes \(tamiu.edu\)](#)

Substantive Changes SAP:

[11.10.99.10.01substantivechanges.pdf \(tamiu.edu\)](#)

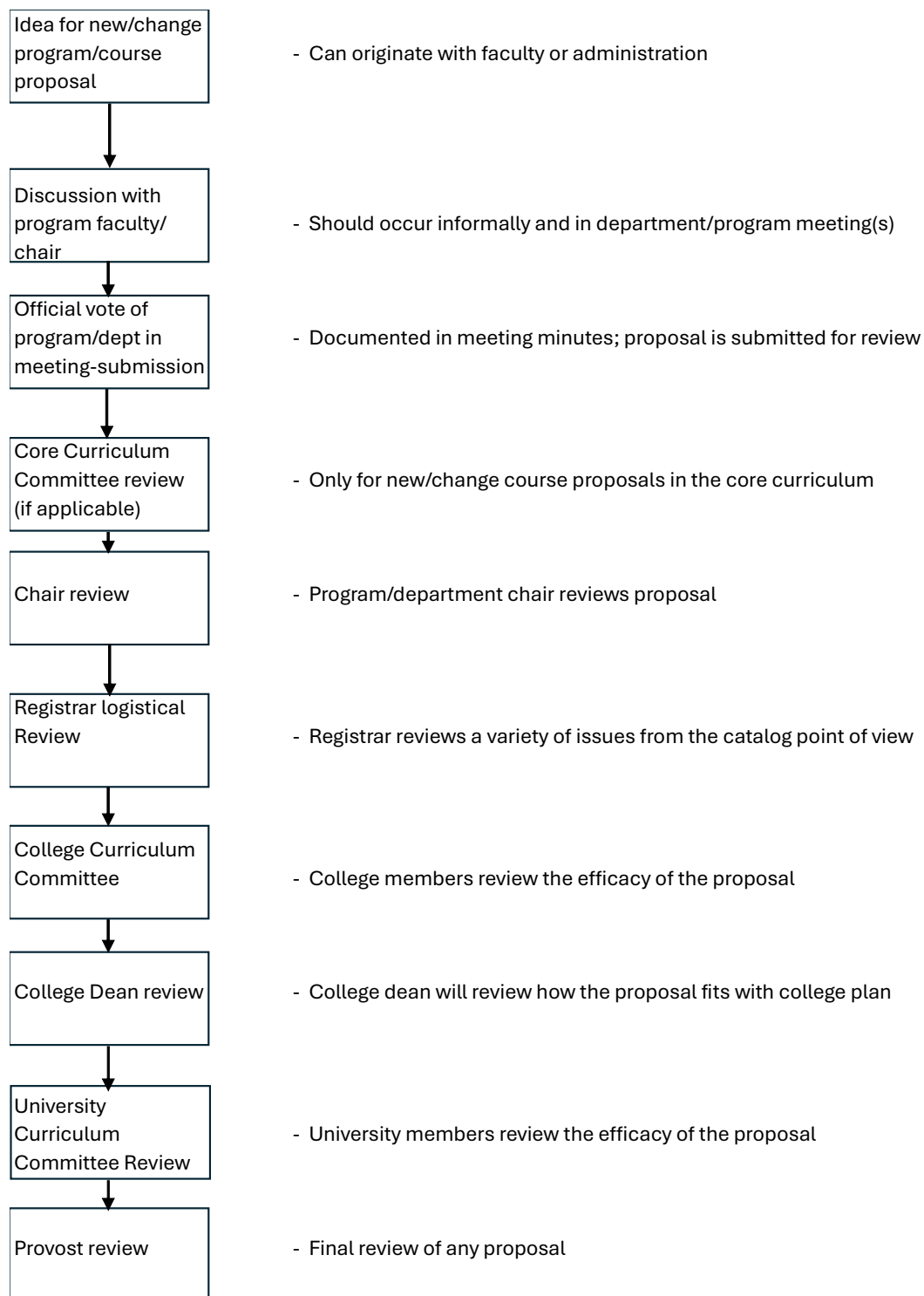
Substantive Changes SACSCOC:

[Substantive Changes \(tamiu.edu\)](#)

THECB Program Changes/New Degree Programs

reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/agency-publication/miscellaneous/factors-to-consider-degree-program-change-or-new-degree-program/

Process Workflow*



*Does not account for additional reviews by external reviewers (TAMU BOR, THECB, and SACSCOC) or appeals. If denied, the process ends.