
Policy on Curriculum Changes, New Program Development

Program review and development is a critical part of ensuring that the programs and curriculum Gadsden State offers meets the needs of the college's workforce region and the communities of its service area. Curriculum changes and applications for new programs must be recommended by the appropriate instructional dean to the President and the Curriculum Committee. Changes and new program applications also should be reviewed by the Financial Aid Director and Institutional Research Office for financial aid implications and accreditation notifications or requests. The following guidelines follow the Alabama Community College Board of Trustees Policy 702.01: Requests for New Instructional Programs Policy and the Chancellor's Guidelines and detail the considerations and steps for each of these areas.

Curriculum Change

Changes to existing curriculum could result from changes to:

- The Alabama Community College System Common Course directory (course changes, additions or deletions);
- Program or accreditation standards;
- Updates in critical employability skills or technology;
- Input from Industry Advisory Councils or Regional Workforce boards on needed skills or competencies, or
- Increased need for new technology or skill to be taught.

Process for Curriculum Change

1. The requested change is sent from the faculty member(s) to their division chair and then instructional dean.
2. A sample of the change is prepared (course description, syllabi, new program plan of study, etc.).
3. The instructional dean sends the change to the President and discusses the change if needed.
4. If the President recommends moving ahead with the change, the proposed change is submitted to the Curriculum Committee for its approval.
5. The Curriculum Committee will send minutes to the requesting faculty/dean with any changes or suggestions. If the minutes reflect approval with no changes, the minutes will be sent to the Committee Chair, SACSCOC, and the President for signature.
6. The SACSCOC Liaison will review the change for possible notification/approval needed by SACSCOC.
7. Once any approvals or notifications are complete with the Alabama Community College System or SACSCOC, the responsible faculty member/dean will submit the Catalog Revision Request form.
8. If course additions or changes are needed to the Alabama Community College System Common Course directory, please use the ACCS process below after Step 5.

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Course additions and changes

1. All new or revised courses must be approved by the appropriate department head or division chair, dean, and president at the local college before submitting via email to the Instructional Specialist in the Division of Instructional and Student Services.
2. Complete and submit the ACCS [course submission request form](#) in Microsoft Word. Incomplete forms will be returned for additional information.
3. A final copy (including signatures) must be sent to the [Instructional Specialist](#).
4. Course proposals will be reviewed by ACCS staff, with input from curriculum committees. Once approved, the information will be included in the appropriate course directory.
5. Colleges may not implement the course until publication of the updated course directory.

Colleges must complete the [AGSC/STARS Course Proposal Form](#) to request consideration for inclusion of a course in the Articulation and General Studies Committee (AGSC) database. The request will be reviewed by AGSC.

Submit all forms to the Instructional Specialist.

Note: A course can be approved for inclusion on the Alabama Community College System Course Directory without being approved by AGSC/STARS.

New Program Development

The opening of a program is a significant event in the life of a college and should be undertaken only after careful deliberation by the faculty and administration. A clear set of criteria, affirmed by the college's instructional leadership and administration, must be available to guide the decisions needed to be made. These decisions include not only whether any such program should be developed, but also a decision as to whether the proposed program offers the best use of college resources and maximizes the benefit to the students, the faculty, the overall academic program, and the mission and vision of the college.

Criteria for Opening Programs

Agreement with the Mission(s): A new program should strategically align with the College's academic mission, vision, and strategic plan, as well as the long-range goals and unit strategic plan of the department/division requesting the new program. With limited resources, it is critical to consider all opportunities in light of the mission:

- What impact will this new program have on our mission?
- Will this program limit or enhance our mission impact and in what way?
- What will happen if we do not do this?

Impact on Current Students: A central concern in assessing any new program is its ability to help the College serve and retain its students.

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Impact on Student Recruitment: A key concern in assessing any new program is its ability to help the College attract new students.

Impact on Faculty: When opening a new program, the number of new faculty and adjunct positions that will be required for effective implementation should be a significant consideration.

Questions to Consider Include:

- How many full-time faculty would teach full-time in this program? How many full-time faculty would teach part-time in this program? How many part-time or adjunct faculty would teach in it?
- Over, for example, the first five years of the new program, how many credit hours would be required to be scheduled to offer it?

Use of Resources: In evaluating a proposal for a new program, one consideration, given limited resources, is if the program is an effective and efficient use of institutional resources. For approval by ACCS, the proposal for a new program will have to have a detailed plan, including a proposed budget with any possible external sources of revenue stated, the potential for recruiting new students, faculty and staff needed, and facility requirements. **The information in the plan will be needed to complete the Alabama Community College New Program Application form.**

Questions to consider:

- By the end of five years, how many students might be enrolled in this program? If applicable, how many students are expected to have received a degree or certificate from this program by the end of five years? How many students are likely to take courses offered in the program without pursuing the degree or certificate? • How many support staff, either full-time or part-time, might be associated with this program (administrative assistants, secretaries, lab assistants, etc.)?
- What additional needs for classroom, computer, or lab space would arise if the program were opened?
- What additional needs for library or media resources would arise if the program were opened?
- What proportion of the resources for the proposed program would be supplied or funded externally? How long is that support expected to last, and what internal resources will be required at that point?

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- What resources will be needed to support the student services load of this new program (recruiting, advising, etc.)?
- Do we have a champion(s) for this program?
- What role might this champion play in the development, launch, and maintenance of the program?
- What benefits and limitations are associated with this champion?
- Is anyone likely to resist this initiative and if so, for what reasons?

Quality of the Program: In considering opening a new program, it is proper to take into consideration the anticipated *quality* of the program. A new program proposal should address how the program could create opportunities for faculty and students and if it would enhance the College's reputation and fulfill its academic mission.

- How successful would the program likely be in placing its students in career positions?
- What is the anticipated level of engagement of the program's faculty in activities or roles that would support the broader educational mission of the college?
- For current faculty members who would be participating in the program, what is the demonstrated level of their teaching effectiveness, including the general trend of their student course evaluations in recent years? For any new positions, can we attract and retain faculty members who will be effective and committed teachers?
- To what degree would the program as proposed be able to meet its educational goals for its students?
- What does success look like?
- What will it take to be successful?
- How long will it take to be successful?
- What existing institutional assets might we draw upon to launch this effort?

Special Attributes of the Program: It is proper to consider other factors, such as the level of innovation, timeliness, and anticipated future relevance of the program under consideration. A final consideration involves assessing the potential for failure against the potential for success. Questions that help us assess both the probability and impact of failure include:

- What might go wrong?
- How likely is it that this will happen?
- If this happens, what is the impact?

Changes in External Accreditation or Credentialing Requirements: Finally, if external accreditation or credentialing requirements have recently changed, a particular new program may have become more desirable or even essential.

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Process for New Program Development

1. The concept for a new program is sent from the respective faculty member(s) to their division chair and then instructional dean.
2. A sample of the new program concept is prepared (new program plan of study, etc.).
3. The instructional dean sends the program idea to the President and discusses the opportunity if needed.
4. If the President recommends moving ahead with the new program, the proposed curriculum is researched for cost, number of faculty needed, job openings in field, and support from employers in the area.
5. The ACCS - 27 "Intent to Submit a Program Application" is prepared and submitted along with the detailed plan and proposed curriculum to the Curriculum Committee for its approval.
6. The Curriculum Committee will send minutes to the requesting faculty/dean with any changes or suggestions. If the minutes reflect approval with no changes, the minutes will be sent to the Committee Chair, Director of Institutional Research, and the President for signature. The President's office will submit the "Intent to Submit a New Program Application" to the ACCS offices.
7. Once approval on the "Intent to Submit a New Program Application" is received, the faculty and division chair/dean will prepare the plan and surveys for the completion of the ACCS-28 "Application for a New Instructional Program."
8. The SACSCOC Liaison will review the new program for possible notification/approval needed by SACSCOC per SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>.
9. The new program once approved by ACCS must be approved by the Board of Trustees. The Chancellor will inform the College if the program is approved, and ACCS will submit the program to ACHE for approval and notify any external constituents as per Board Policy 702.1 and its guidelines.
10. The completed "New Program Application" is reviewed by the respective instructional dean and the President prior to submission by the President's office to ACCS.
11. Once any approvals or notifications are complete with the Alabama Community College System, ACHE, and SACSCOC, the responsible faculty member/dean will submit the Catalog Revision Request form.
12. If course additions or changes are needed to the Alabama Community College System Common Course directory, please use the ACCS process included in the curriculum change process above.