

Memo To: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders
From: Michael A. Olivas, Interim President
Subject: Change to Curricula, Courses, and Program

UH-Downtown/PS 03.A.12
Issue No. 6
Effective date: 08/15/2016
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1. PURPOSE

This Policy Statement standardizes the procedures by which course alterations, new courses, and new degree programs are developed. It outlines the processes by which the curriculum changes are approved and added to the University catalog and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board inventory. The Policy Statement describes how program changes are sent to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

This Policy Statement updates and consolidates the policies and procedures formerly described in the Policy Statements listed below. This Policy Statement replaces:

PS 03.A.12	Annual Review and Update of Course Inventory
PS 03.A.13	Approval Procedure for New Degree Programs
PS 03.A.14	Procedure for Approval of New Courses
PS 03.A.15	Procedure for Approval of Alterations to Courses
PS 03.A.27	Approval Process for Degree Minors

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Course: A unit of instruction that includes a set of lessons, lectures, or other assignments or methods of instruction lasting one academic term.
- 2.2 Curriculum: A defined and prescribed set of courses, which students must successfully complete to qualify for receiving a diploma or certificate of completion. In its broadest sense, the term “curriculum” may also refer to all of the formal courses offered at the University.
- 2.3 Program: For the purpose of this Policy Statement, a program is the equivalent of the curriculum required for an academic degree, a major, a minor or any other specialized area of study required as a part of an academic degree.
- 2.4 Course Inventory: The complete list of courses, including course descriptions and credit hour designations that are offered by the University.
- 2.5 Measurable Learning Outcome: The knowledge and skills a student is expected to acquire or achieve upon completion of a course or academic program. Measurement may be quantitative or qualitative, depending on the subject matter of the course.

- 2.6 Program Inventory: The complete list of academic majors and types of degrees associated with each program. Program inventories have to be approved periodically by the Board of Regents, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the SACSCOC.
- 2.7 Substantive Change: According to the SACSCOC substantive change policy, “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>

3. POLICY

- 3.1 All course changes, new course proposals, new academic programs, and curriculum changes must first be approved by an academic department curriculum committee or by a curriculum support committee as per [PS 03.A.34, Curriculum Support Committees](#) for degree programs not housed within a single academic department. New majors and degree programs must receive subsequent approval by the Board of Regents of the University of Houston System, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the SACSCOC before they may be implemented for student enrollment.
- 3.2 All course changes, new course proposals, new academic programs, and curriculum changes must be approved by the Department Chair or Program Chair (for degree programs not housed within a single academic department), by the academic college Dean, by the University Curriculum Committee, and by the Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- 3.3 As required by state law or rules associated with external governing bodies and accrediting agencies including the THECB and SACSCOC, the Office of Academic Affairs shall submit course changes, new courses, new academic programs, and curriculum changes to the appropriate oversight bodies for approval.
- 3.4 The Office of Academic Affairs will maintain the Course Inventory and Program Inventory for the University of Houston-Downtown.
- 3.5 With the approval of the college dean, a new course may be offered initially under a “Special Topics” designation and course number. No approval is required at higher administrative levels for a “Special Topics” course, but the following limits apply.
 - 3.5.1 Once a new course is taught under a “Special Topics” designation, it may be offered in subsequent terms without additional approval.
 - 3.5.2 Once a new course is taught under a “Special Topics” designation, it may be offered no more than two more times within a five-year period.
 - 3.5.3 After three offerings within a five-year period, a course designated as “Special Topics” must be submitted for approval through the normal process as a regular, permanent course to be approved for inclusion in the Course Inventory, in order to be taught another time.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Approval of New Courses and Course Changes

- 4.1.1 The originating department or authorized curriculum support committee prepares an online Course Inventory Update Form for each new proposed course or course change and circulates the proposal to relevant department faculty members. New courses to be offered as “Special Topics” courses also must be described using the online Course Inventory Update form.
- 4.1.2 After verifying that all relevant faculty members in the department are notified of the proposal, the Department Curriculum Committee or authorized Curriculum Support Committee reviews and approves the proposed new course or course change. The committee chair signs the approved Course Inventory Update form electronically and transmits it to the Department Chair or Program Chair for approval.
- 4.1.3 The Department Chair or the Program Chair reviews proposed new course or course change, approves the Course Inventory Update form online, notifying the college Dean. Course requests that are not approved trigger the digital workflow to send an email to the Departmental Curriculum Committee or the Curriculum Support Committee.
- 4.1.4 The Dean reviews the proposed new course or course change and transmits an approved new course or course change proposal to the University Curriculum Committee.
- 4.1.5 The University Curriculum Committee reviews proposed new course or course change as outlined in 4.3.
- 4.1.6 “Special Topics” courses follow the same procedure for approval as other courses except that the college Dean has final approval authority and is not required to transmit a Course Inventory Update form for a “Special Topics” course proposal to the University Curriculum Committee. The Dean is responsible for sending the form to the Provost’s Office for filing. The college also will maintain a file of all approved “Special Topics” courses.

4.2 Approval of New Majors and Minors Degree Programs

- 4.2.1 All relevant faculty members are notified of any proposed new major or minor degree program proposal.
- 4.2.2 An originating department or support area representative works with the department or program Chair, Dean and Provost to prepare a preliminary request for a new major or specialized area of study using a Degree Plan Inventory Update Form. The Provost forwards the request to the UH System Provost Council. If

approved, the originating department or support area representative works with the Chair and Dean to produce a more comprehensive New Program Request Form for Bachelor's and Master's Degrees Form. The representative forwards the completed form to the Department Curriculum Committee or authorized Curriculum Support Committee.

- 4.2.3 The Department Curriculum Committee or Curriculum Support Committee verifies that the majority of relevant faculty members accept the proposed new major or minor degree program. The Department Curriculum Committee or authorized Curriculum Support Committee reviews and approves the proposed new major or specialized area. The committee chair signs the Degree Plan Inventory Update Form and forwards it to the Department Chair or Program Chair for approval.
- 4.2.4 The Department Chair or Program Chair reviews proposed new major or specialized area of study, signs the Degree Plan Inventory Update Form indicating approval, and transmits each approved form to the college Dean. Program requests that are not approved are returned to the departmental curriculum committee or the curriculum support committee.
- 4.2.5 The Dean transmits an approved Degree Plan Inventory Update Form to the University Curriculum Committee and submits the [UHD Compliance Change form](#) to the SACSCOC liaison.
- 4.2.6 The University Curriculum Committee reviews the Degree Plan Inventory Update Form according to 4.3.
- 4.2.7 Modifications to degree programs follow the process outlined in 4.1.
- 4.2.8 Approval of minors follows the procedure outlined for the approval of new course and course changes as outlined in 4.1.
- 4.2.9 Approval of interdisciplinary majors or specialized area of study follows the same procedure as outlined in 4.2 with the exception that such proposals must be approved by all relevant Department Curriculum Committees, Department or Program Chairs and Deans. Approval of interdisciplinary minors follow procedures outlined in 4.1, but also requires approval by all relevant Department Curriculum Committees, Department or Program Chairs, and Deans.

4.3 Role of the University Curriculum Committee

- 4.3.1 The membership of the University Curriculum Committee is governed by [PS 01.A.03, Academic Shared Governance Policy](#). The University Curriculum Committee receives, reviews, and makes recommendations pertaining to every course and program offered for academic credit by the University.

- 4.3.2 The University Curriculum Committee ensures that there are not any unjustifiable duplications of effort among courses or programs. Through discussion and deliberation the Committee recommends approval of courses and programs that provide the greatest opportunities for enrollment, retention, graduation, and student career success.
- 4.3.3 Each member of the University Curriculum Committee has the responsibility to review courses and programs to ensure that adequate communication has taken place between academic units, so that courses and programs are not poorly designed, or that there is not unjustifiable duplication or overlap with existing courses or programs. The Committee has the responsibility for requesting additional information from the academic units involved and/or bringing the units together to resolve specific problems or issues.
- 4.3.4 The University Curriculum Committee has the responsibility of ensuring that each course that they review is accompanied by a descriptive list of measurable outcomes as required by Texas Education Code, Chapter 51, Sections 51.96851 and 51.974(g). The descriptive list may be accompanied with examples of the quantitative or qualitative metrics that will be used to evaluate the outcomes.
- 4.3.5 It is the responsibility of the University Curriculum Committee to ensure that each course that they review is accompanied by the major elements of the course syllabus as required by Texas Education Code, Chapter 51, Section 51.974, Parts (1)(B) and (1)(D), and PS 03.A.29, Course Syllabi.
- 4.3.6 If the University Curriculum Committee approves a proposal for a new course, a course change, a curriculum change, or a new academic program, the Committee will forward the appropriate form to the Provost. Course and program proposals that are not approved are transmitted back to the Dean in the originating department.
- 4.3.7 The Provost has the final authority to approve or reject a proposal for a new course or course change. Changes that are approved will be forwarded for inclusion in the UHD catalog. Changes that are not approved will be returned to the Dean in the originating college.
- 4.3.8 The Provost forwards approved new undergraduate majors and new undergraduate and graduate degree programs to the Provost's Council of the University of Houston System and the Board of Regents of the University of Houston System for review. New majors and degree programs must receive subsequent approval by the Board of Regents of the University of Houston System, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the SACSCOC before they may be implemented for student enrollment.

4.3.9 The appropriate Dean's office, in consultation with the SACSCOC liaison and with approval of Provost, will ensure a review of the SACSCOC substantive change policy: 'Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges' to determine substantive change reporting and complete the [UHD Compliance Change form](#).

4.4 Maintenance of Course and Program Inventories and University Catalog

4.4.1 The Office of Academic Affairs has the responsibility for maintaining course and program inventories on campus and at external governing agencies.

4.4.2 The Office of Academic Affairs has the responsibility for ensuring that the University Catalog contains an accurate list of courses, programs and program requirements.

4.4.3 The Office of Academic Affairs has the responsibility for maintaining UHD Compliance change forms, notifications, proposals and recommendations/approvals in adherence to [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy](#).

5. EXHIBITS

There are no exhibits associated with this policy.

6. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party (Reviewer): Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and Provost

Review: Every five years on or before October 1st.

Signed original on file in Employment Services and Operations.

7. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #3: 04/11/86

Issue #4: 01/29/14

Issue #5: 02/08/16

8. REFERENCES

[PS 03.A.34](#)

[PS 01.A.03](#)

[Texas Education Code, Chapter 51, Sections 51.96851 and 51.974\(g\)](#)

[Texas Education Code, Chapter 51, Section 51.974, Parts \(1\)\(B\) and \(1\)\(D\)](#)

[PS 03.A.29](#)

[PS 3.A.32](#)

[SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy](#)

[UHD Compliance Change Form](#)