

**Section Title:** Academic Policies  
**Policy Title:** Academic Program Modifications  
**Policy Number:** A 1.1

**1.1.1A Programs Subject to Approval.** The THEC Executive Director will have approval authority for modifications to currently approved academic programs as reflected in THEC's academic program inventory, subject to specified provisions. At the will of the Commission, the Executive Director has the right to elevate an academic program modification to a new academic program as referenced in Academic Policy A1.0 which may be considered for approval by the Commission.

**1.1.2A Program Modifications to Currently Approved Programs.** Modifications requiring approval from THEC are limited to the following changes:

- Change or add a program degree designation when this change does not involve a significant curriculum shift in redefining the program's purpose (e.g., B.A. to B.F.A; M.A. to M.F.A.; Ed.D. to Ph.D.) or a change of degree designation for an existing academic program or concentration per recommendation of a disciplinary accreditation body. These requested modifications may be subject to external review.
- Establish a free-standing academic program from an existing concentration with a steady enrollment and degrees awarded within both the degree designation and all concentrations under that degree for a period of the last three years. This program modification may be considered only if the establishment of the concentration as a free-standing academic program does not compromise the remaining academic program and does not require new faculty resources.

**1.1.3A Criteria for Review of Proposed Program Modifications.** The Academic Program Modification (APM) Checklist located on the THEC website represents the criteria for a degree designation change or addition or to establish a free-standing academic program. However, the stringency of individual criteria will depend on the specific academic program, and, in particular circumstances, other criteria may be added based on THEC evaluation.

- 1.1.4A Duplication as a Result of Proposed Modification of Currently Approved Programs.** Institutions should examine the potential impact of any academic program modification on current academic programs offered within their institution and existing academic programs offered in public and private institutions across Tennessee. No modification may be submitted for academic programs where annual THEC statewide and institutional degree production analyses indicate there is great potential for unnecessary program duplication. Need for any modifications must be demonstrated to and approved by the institutional governing board and THEC before development of any modifications in these academic program areas.
- 1.1.5A Post-Approval Monitoring.** Performance of any newly established free-standing academic program will be evaluated annually by THEC and reported to the Commission. The monitoring period will be three years for pre-baccalaureate programs, five years for baccalaureate and Master's programs, and seven years for doctoral programs following approval.
- 1.1.6A Program Modifications to Currently Approved Programs at Tennessee Community Colleges.** Modifications of academic programs offered at the community colleges are not required to seek approval from THEC for program modifications.
- 1.1.7A** Policy will be reviewed every five years unless changes in eligible academic program modifications are warranted.

**Sources:** THEC Meetings: April 22, 1988; April 19, 1996; January 29, 1997; November 14, 2002; April 26, 2007; January 27, 2011; January 29, 2015; and January 26, 2017.