



Tennessee Higher Education Commission
2026-2031 Quality Assurance Funding
Program Review Rubric – Graduate Degrees

Purpose:

All academic programs are required to engage in regular reviews of curricula—including content, progression, and organization at the associate, baccalaureate, and graduate levels—to enhance and improve the curriculum. This review is the responsibility of program faculty, who need to regularly review the curriculum based on evidence and/or comparison with best practices. This rubric provides the criteria for evaluating program quality via the program review process.

Performance Levels:

The rubric provides a scale ranging from zero (0) to three (3): *Exceeds Standards/Expectations* (3); *Meets Standards/Expectations* (2); *Does Not Meet Standards/Expectations* (1); and *No Evidence of Standards/Expectations* (0). The performance description provided for Performance Level 2: Meets Standards/Expectations is the “anchor” description for the rubric. Higher performance than what is articulated for Level 2 should be given a score of 3. Lower performance than Level 2 would receive a score of 1. A zero (0) score should be used when there is no evidence of any good faith attempt to meet the standard. Any score other than a (2) requires feedback from the reviewer that provides a rationale for the score.

Scoring:

Scoring is calculated based on the “anchor” score (Level 2) as described above. To achieve this, THEC staff will use the number of standards (30) multiplied by two (to reflect the anchor score) as the denominator in the following formula: *total score across all standards / anchor score = Percent Attained*

For example, if a graduate degree program receives a total score of 54, the formula would be calculated as $54 / 60 = 90\%$. It is possible for an institution to score higher than the anchor score on most standards, which can lead to an overall percent attained higher than 100%. However, when calculating an average score across all program reviews, the percent attained is capped at 100%.



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Standard	Category	3 <i>Exceeds Standard/ Expectations</i>	2 <i>Meets Standard/ Expectations</i>	1 <i>Does Not Meet Standard/Expectations</i>	0 <i>No Evidence of Attempting to Meet Standard/Expectations</i>
1.1	Curriculum		The program ensures courses are offered regularly and that students can make timely progress toward their degree.		
1.2	Curriculum		The program incorporates pedagogical and/or technological innovations that enhance student learning into the curriculum.		
1.3	Curriculum		The curriculum is aligned with and contributes to mastery of program objectives and student learning outcomes.		
1.4	Curriculum		The curricular content of the program reflects current standards and best practices in the discipline.		
1.5	Curriculum		The curriculum progressively challenges students to effectively prepare them for careers.		
1.6	Curriculum		The curriculum fosters the continued development and presentation of results and/or ideas effectively and clearly in both written and oral discourse.		

Standard	Category	3 Exceeds Standard/ Expectations	2 Meets Standard/ Expectations	1 Does Not Meet Standard/Expectations	0 No Evidence of Attempting to Meet Standard/Expectations
1.7	Curriculum		The curriculum fosters ongoing student engagement in discipline-specific research and/or professional practice and training experiences.		
1.8	Curriculum		The program offers structured co-curricular activities that enhance and support student learning outcomes and/or professional development.		
2.1	Economic Development and Program Sustainability		The program demonstrates responsiveness to local, regional, state, and/or national workforce needs.		
2.2	Economic Development and Program Sustainability		The program identifies applicable workforce, skills-based, and/or disciplinary trends and uses the information to improve the program.		
2.3	Economic Development and Program Sustainability		The program regularly and systematically collects data on graduating students and evaluates placement of graduates.		
2.4	Economic Development and Program Sustainability		The program has a history of enrollment and/or graduation rates sufficient to sustain high quality and cost-effectiveness.		
2.5	Economic Development and Program Sustainability		The program's operating budget is consistent with the needs of the program.		

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3.1	Faculty		Full-time and part-time faculty credentials align with program requirements and accreditation guidelines, supporting effective instruction and student success.		
3.2	Faculty		The program maintains faculty staffing levels to meet the needs of the program.		
3.3	Faculty		The program implements clearly defined, transparent, and fair processes to evaluate faculty contributions in teaching, scholarship, creative activities, and service.		
3.4	Faculty		The institution provides ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty members as teachers, scholars, and practitioners, consistent with the institutional mission.		
3.5	Faculty		The faculty are actively engaged in planning, evaluation and improvement processes that measure and are designed to advance learning and student success.		
4.1	Learning Outcomes		Program objectives and student learning outcomes are clearly identified and measurable.		
4.2	Learning Outcomes		The program implements a structured process to collect and analyze evidence to evaluate achievement of program objectives and student learning outcomes.		

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4.3	Learning Outcomes		The program uses the results from evaluation of program objectives and student learning outcomes to seek continuous improvement.		
4.4	Learning Outcomes		The program objectives and student learning outcomes align with the institution's mission.		
5.1	Learning Resources		The program faculty has access to resources/professional development opportunities to support teaching and learning activities.		
5.2	Learning Resources		The program regularly evaluates its equipment and facilities, encouraging necessary improvements within the context of overall institutional resources.		
5.3	Learning Resources		The program provides defined resources and support services to facilitate research, creative activities, and/or scholarly publication appropriate to the discipline and program level.		
6.1	Student Engagement		The program provides students with opportunities to regularly evaluate the curriculum and faculty relative to the quality of their teaching effectiveness.		
6.2	Student Engagement		The program provides opportunities to introduce students to professional and/or career opportunities within their field of study.		

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6.3	Student Engagement		Students have access to academic support services.		
6.4	Student Engagement		The program incorporates and values multiple perspectives, experiences, and approaches to learning through its academic and/or professional activities, events, and programming.		
6.5	Student Engagement		The program provides students with the opportunity to apply what they have learned to situations outside the classroom.		