

<b>Section 10 Academic Policies</b> <b>Section 10.1 Academic Programs</b>	07/23/12 -Originated -Reviewed w/ changes -Reviewed w/o changes 07/23/12 -Effective
<b>Policy 10.1.3 Review of Existing Degree Programs</b>	Council of Deans - Author

## Review of Existing Degree Programs

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### Definitions

Degree program: Any grouping of subject matter courses which, when satisfactorily completed by a student, shall entitle him or her to a degree from a public university or health-related institution.

Doctoral Graduation Rate: The percent of students in an entering fall cohort for a specific degree program who graduate within 10 years. Doctoral graduation rates do not include students who received a master's degree.

Faculty publications: Discipline-related refereed publications, books or book chapters, juried creative or performance accomplishments, and notices of discoveries filed and patents issued.

Faculty teaching load: Total number of semester credit hours taught per academic year by faculty divided by the number of faculty.

Graduate placement: The number and percent of graduates employed or engaged in further education or training, those still seeking employment, and unknown.

Master's Graduation Rate: The percent of students in an entering fall and spring cohort for a specific degree program who graduate within 5 years.

New Doctoral Degree Program: A doctoral degree program approved by the Coordinating Board for a period of less than five years.

Student time-to-degree: The average of the number of semesters taken by program graduates from the time of enrollment in the program until graduation.

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**Policy** To comply with the Texas Administrative Code ([19 TAC §5.52](#)), each doctoral and stand-alone master’s degree program shall be reviewed at least once every seven years. The Vice President for Education shall submit a review schedule to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Assistant Commissioner of Academic Affairs and Research for approval. Once approved and distributed to the individual schools, the Academic Affairs Council shall ensure the reviews occur according to the schedule and follow the procedures set forth below.

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**Exemptions** None

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- Procedure** **Doctoral Programs**
1. Each doctoral program director shall begin each review of a doctoral program with a rigorous, written self-study.
  2. As part of the required review process, the program shall use at least two external reviewers with subject-matter expertise employed by institutions of higher education outside of Texas.
  3. The program directors must provide the materials and products of the self-study to the external reviewers and bring them to the campus for an on-site review.
  4. The external reviewers must be part of a program that nationally recognized for excellence in the discipline.
  5. The external reviewers must affirm that they have no conflict of interest related to the program under review.
  6. Closely related programs, defined as sharing the same 4-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code, may be reviewed in a consolidated manner at the discretion of the Academic Affairs Council.
  7. Program directors shall review master's and doctoral programs in the same discipline simultaneously, using the same self-study materials and reviewers. At the discretion of the Academic Affairs Council, program directors may also review bachelor's programs in the same discipline as master's and doctoral programs simultaneously.

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**Procedure,  
continued**

8. The criteria for the review of doctoral programs must include, but are not limited to:
  - a. [The 18 Characteristics of Texas Doctoral Programs](#)
  - b. Faculty qualifications
  - c. Student retention rates
  - d. Student enrollment
  - e. Graduate licensure rates (if applicable)
  - f. Alignment of program with stated program and institutional goals and purposes
  - g. Program curriculum and duration in comparison to peer programs
  - h. Program facilities and equipment
  - i. Program finance and resources, and
  - j. Program administration

**Master's Programs (Stand-Alone)**

1. Each stand-alone master's degree program director shall begin each review of a master's program with a rigorous, written self-study.
2. As part of the required review process, the program shall use at least one external reviewer with subject-matter expertise employed by an institution of higher education outside of Texas.
3. The program directors must provide the materials and products of the self-study to the external reviewer. The external reviewer may be brought to the campus for an on-site review or may be asked to conduct a remote desk review.
4. The external reviewer must be part of a program that is nationally recognized for excellence in the discipline.
5. The external reviewer must affirm that they have no conflict of interest related to the program under review.
6. Closely related programs, defined as sharing the same 4-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code, may be reviewed in a consolidated manner at the discretion of the

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**Procedure,  
continued**

Academic Affairs Council.

7. Master's programs in the same 6-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code as doctoral programs shall be reviewed simultaneously with their related doctoral programs.
8. The criteria for the review of master's programs must include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Faculty qualifications
  - b. Faculty publications
  - c. Faculty external grants
  - d. Faculty teaching load
  - e. Faculty/student ratio
  - f. Student demographics
  - g. Student time-to-degree
  - h. Student publication and awards
  - i. Student retention rates
  - j. Student graduation rates
  - k. Student enrollment
  - l. Graduate licensure rates (if applicable)
  - m. Graduate placement (i.e. employment or further education/training)
  - n. Number of degrees conferred annually
  - o. Alignment of program with stated program and institutional goals and purposes
  - p. Program curriculum and duration in comparison to peer programs
  - q. Program facilities and equipment
  - r. Program finance and resources, and
  - s. Program administration

Each doctoral and stand-alone master's degree program director shall submit a report on the outcomes of each review (including an evaluation of the external reviewers) and actions the program has taken or will take to improve the program, and shall deliver these reports to the Academic Affairs Council within 10 business days of completing the review.

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**Procedure,  
continued**

**The program directors may submit reviews performed for reasons of programmatic licensure or accreditation in satisfaction of the review and reporting requirements above.**

The Academic Affairs Council shall examine the program review and deliver the review materials and a written opinion of the review or recommendation for changes to the Council of Deans within 10 business days.

Once approved by the Council of Deans, the Vice President for Education shall submit a report of the outcomes of each program review (including the evaluation of the external reviewer(s)) and actions the institution has taken or will take to improve the program, and shall deliver these reports to the THECB Academic Affairs and Research Division no later than 90 days after the reviewer(s) have submitted their findings to the institution.

Per [19 TAC §5.52](#), the THECB shall review all reports submitted for master's and doctoral programs and shall conduct analysis as necessary to ensure high quality.

The THECB may require additional actions to improve the programs as a result of their review.

**References**

TITLE 19: EDUCATION  
PART 1: TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD  
CHAPTER 5: RULES APPLYING TO PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES AND HEALTH-RELATED INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN TEXAS  
SUBCHAPTER C: APPROVAL OF NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, HEALTH-RELATED INSTITUTIONS, AND ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING DEGREE PROGRAMS  
RULE §5.52: Review of Existing Degree Programs