

Program Closure

Closing a program requires SACSCOC approval. Approval requires a teach-out plan.

REQUIRES	Approval Exec Council of the Board
COMMITTEE VISIT	No
FEE	No
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Closure is defined as closed to admission or entry, not the cessation of instruction; i.e., closure date is when students can no longer start, not the date instruction ends. Closure approval ensures the institution has a plan and process to provide students reasonable completion options that minimize disruption and additional costs. Because closure approval is approval of the teach-out process, not the closure per se (i.e., not after the fact), a teach-out plan should be submitted as soon as possible after the decision is made to close.

Program closure includes ending a program at all locations or by all methods of delivery, but also includes ending a student's completion option at a specific location or by a specific method of delivery. Therefore, program closure approval is required if a program closes

- at a location (on-campus or off-campus instructional site) but continues to be offered at other locations, or
- by a method of delivery but continues to be offered by other methods of delivery.

Program closure is not required for a specialization embedded *within* a discipline-specific program. Depending on an institution's terminology, a specialization within a program may be called a minor, concentration, cognate, or other similar term.

Because time is of the essence – to provide students maximum time to consider and adapt to alternate completion plans – an institution may generally begin a program teach-out plan after it has been submitted to SACSCOC for approval. This assumes the institution completes a teach-out plan with all due care to address the requirements explained here and in the teach-out plan requirements in Appendix A. If upon review by SACSCOC the teach-out plan is incomplete or inadequate, the teach-out plan may be deferred pending additional information, explanation, or an acceptable revised teach-out plan is provided to SACSCOC. Although the institution may begin a teach-out immediately after submitting it, the closure is not approved until action is taken by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Starting and completing a teach-out plan before securing SACSCOC Board approval does not relieve the institution of its obligation to provide an acceptable teach-out plan.

The teach-out institution(s) – i.e., the institution(s) accepting displaced students from the closing program – may request an exception to Standard 9.4 (institutional credits for an undergraduate degree) and/or Standard 9.5 (institutional credits for a graduate or professional degree) to accommodate students near the end of their program of study. Refer to the [*Request for a Period of Noncompliance*](#) policy for guidance. The institution

closing its program should ensure the teach-out institution(s) are aware of this option and may wish to include it in any teach-out agreement(s) executed pursuant to the closure.

What to submit

A teach-out plan: Submit a teach-out plan using the outline provided in [Appendix A for a program closure](#).

Program Designed for Prior Learning – Approval

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES	
Approval	
Exec Council of the Board	
COMMITTEE VISIT	
No	
FEE	
Yes	
Yes	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

This requirement applies only to institutions on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION; refer to the SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION section for more information.

Initiating a program requiring students to possess prior learning as a condition of admission requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation only for institutions currently on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION. For all other institutions, notification is required but approval is not.

Standard 10.7 (*Policies for awarding credit*) of the *Principles of Accreditation* applies without exception to programs designed for prior learning. A new program designed for prior learning is subject to notification or approval as a new program as defined in *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*.

What to submit

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in [Appendix A for a program designed for prior learning](#).