



**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
FOR NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS,
AND PROGRAM TERMINATIONS**

Revised: Fall, 2023

Curriculum Committee Approval: February 8, 2024

Faculty Senate Approval: February 20, 2024

Deans Council Approval: February 21, 2024

Provost Approval: February 21, 2024

President Approval: March 5, 2024

Internal Approval Step 5 Revised: Fall, 2025

Faculty Senate Approval: October 14, 2025

Faculty Approval: October 21, 2025

Lander University is a public institution in the state of South Carolina, which is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. As a State institution, any new or substantially revised academic program must be approved by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE), which has regulatory authority over the public higher education institutions of South Carolina. (South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 59, Chapter 103, Section 35)

The mission statement for Lander University says, in part, that the institution “offers high-demand and market-driven programs to ambitious and talented students in South Carolina and beyond.” Therefore, the internal proposal approval process focuses on demonstration of the marketability and sustainability of proposed programs.

SUMMARY: The specific internal and external steps required for approval of new programs or courses, and for modifications to existing programs or courses, depend on several criteria. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness maintains the criteria for determining if a proposal is a simple modification or represents a substantive change per the policies and procedures outlined in [Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions](#). Proposals for the establishment of new academic programs or courses, substantial revision of existing programs or courses, or program or course terminations must go through a multistep approval process involving internal and external components. However, some simple program or course modifications require only a subset of the approval steps. Department faculty should consult with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness at an early stage in proposal development to determine whether the proposed curricular changes will meet SCCHE, SACSCOC, or DOE criteria to be reported as substantive changes.

The internal and external procedures for the development and approval of degree programs offered by Lander University must conform to the following commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs:

1. all must meet or exceed either the 120 semester credit hours required for undergraduate programs or the 30 semester credit hours required for graduate programs as stipulated in SACSCOC Standard 9.2, and

2. all degree programs must embody a coherent course of study compatible with Lander University's mission and be based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education as stipulated in SACSCOC Standard 9.1, and
3. all undergraduate degree programs must require the successful completion of a general education component that is a minimum of 30 semester hours as stipulated in SACSCOC Standard 9.3, and
4. all courses are assigned the appropriate amount and level of credit, regardless of format or mode of delivery, by persons academically qualified to make necessary judgements, as stipulated in SACSCOC Standard 10.7.

Definition of a Credit Hour

Lander University adheres to the federal definition of a credit hour for cumulative contact time per semester:

1. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Lander University ensures a minimum of 700 minutes of instruction per credit hour (2,100 minutes of instruction for a standard, three-hour course), regardless of mode of delivery. The fall and spring semester standard meeting times for three-hour courses are a 50-minute Monday, Wednesday, Friday schedule, and a 75-minute Tuesday, Thursday schedule.

Summer Session classes follow the same standard of 700 minutes of instruction per credit hour but because the summer sessions are shorter than a fall or spring semester, the summer terms' standard meeting times are longer and more frequent.

Application of the Credit Hour Policy

Lander's definition of the credit hour applies to all courses at all levels (graduate and undergraduate) that award academic credit (i.e. any course that appears on an official transcript issued by the University) regardless of the mode of delivery, including, but not limited to, self-paced, online, hybrid, lecture, seminar, and laboratory. Academic departments are responsible for ensuring that credit hours are awarded only for work that meets the requirements outlined in the Credit Hour Policy Statement. The Lander University Undergraduate and Graduate catalogs provide the number of credit hours in each course description.

The expectation of contact time inside the classroom and student effort outside the classroom is the same for all formats of a course whether fully online, a hybrid or face-to-face contact with some content delivered by electronic means, lecture, or seminar. Courses that have less structured classroom schedules, such as laboratories, independent studies, internships, practica, studio work, or any other academic work leading to the award of credit hours state clearly the learning objectives and expected outcomes and workload expectations that meet the standards set forth above.

Zero Credit Hour Policy

A program's formal degree requirements may include courses with zero (0) earned hours of academic credit. Zero credit hour courses are courses for which the learning experience is based primarily on participation and/or attendance, or on public performance of work that is assessed in a course that awards credit hours. An example of the latter type of course would be one in which a student delivers a public performance of work completed in applied lessons.

Credit Hour Policy Oversight

The Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee is charged with following the policy on credit hours in its review and approval of all courses and in certifying that the expected student learning in the course meets the credit hour standard. The determination of credit hours is made when a new course or a modification to an existing course is proposed.

Lander University's "Definition of a Credit Hour" is published in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. It also is published with the "Application of the Credit Hour Policy" and the "Credit Hour Policy Oversight" policies on the [Registrar's pages of the university website](#).

Course Level Policy

Lander University identifies courses with numbering that labels undergraduate courses as 100s, 200s, 300s, and 400s. Lower division or introductory 100/200-level courses are typically taken during the freshman and sophomore year. Upper division 300/400-level undergraduate courses are more advanced and are typically taken during the sophomore, junior, and senior years. Graduate courses are numbered 500s – 800s. The course level for undergraduate and graduate courses indicates the level of content knowledge or skills expected for students entering the course and the level of knowledge and skills the course and its student learning outcomes are designed to produce.

Course Level Policy Oversight

The Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee is charged with following the policy on course level in its review and approval of all courses and in certifying that the expected student learning in the course meets the course level standard. The determination of course level is made when a new course or a modification to an existing course is proposed.

Lander University's "Course Level Policy" and "Course Level Policy Oversight" are published on the [Registrar's pages of the university website](#).

Note: Within this document, the processes described assume that the majority of programs submitted for internal and external review will be approved. If during any of the review steps the program is not approved, the process stops, and the document is returned to the academic department of origin with reason(s) for disapproval. The academic department may revise the proposal and re-initiate the approval process.

NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND MODIFICATIONS

Overview: Although ideas for new academic programs may originate with any institutional stakeholders, formal academic program proposals are developed within the department housing faculty with appropriate credentials to support the program.

Conceptualization

1. Ideas for new programs, or substantive changes to existing programs, are discussed informally by faculty in the discipline with the chair, dean, provost, and president for authorization to

prepare a formal proposal. The dean or provost may request preliminary information or data documenting evidence of marketability and sustainability of the new program such as target audience and local employment data. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness is consulted and provides guidance relating to the type of proposal and a projected timeline for approval. Department faculty are always authorized to propose simple modifications that do not require external approval to existing programs or courses and enter the internal process at step 2. In this case the administrative authorization comes from the department chair and/or dean.

Academic Program Proposal Development

2. Once the department secures administrative authorization to develop and submit a formal proposal, faculty with appropriate credentials in the department provide narratives and evidence in response to specific prompts on proposal templates provided for the specific type of new program or modification. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness maintains proposal templates, resource documents, checklists to aid in the determination of the type of proposal to prepare, and access to current SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy.

Internal Approval Steps

3. **Academic Department and Chair Approval:** Once the formal proposal has been produced by the academic department, the chair of the department will submit the proposal to the respective department faculty for review and approval.
4. **College or School Dean Approval:** If approved by the department and chair, the department chair will submit the proposal to the college or school dean for review and approval.
5. **Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate Approval:** The dean submits the proposal to Academic Affairs staff who prepare the proposal for review and approval by the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate. Significant proposed changes to the general education program require review and approval by the General Education Council prior to review by the Curriculum Committee.
6. **Faculty Senate Approval:** The Curriculum Committee minutes are reviewed and approved by the Faculty Senate and the proposal is forwarded to the Deans Council.
7. **Deans Council Approval:** The Deans Council reviews and approves the proposal in a process coordinated by the provost or designee. For simple modifications of existing programs and curricula that do not meet criteria for external reporting and approval, this completes the approval process and the provost or designee forwards the approved proposal to Academic Affairs staff for catalog updates and implementation.
8. **Provost Approval:** For new programs and substantive changes to existing programs, the provost reviews and approves the proposal and forwards the proposal to the president.
9. **President and Board of Trustees Approval:** The president approves the proposal and asks the provost to present it to the Board of Trustees for approval.
10. The proposal continues through SCCHE, SACSCOC, and DOE approvals as necessary, depending on the type of proposal. This process is managed by the provost or designee and the director of Institutional Effectiveness.

Note: The preceding review process allows for the addition of details and editorial changes to the proposal at each step.

External Approval: South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE)

Degree programs receive external approval by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE) involving three levels of review:

- 1) the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP), comprised of all chief academic officers of state institutions,

- 2) the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAAL), comprised of appointed Commissioners of Higher Education,
- 3) the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE) which provides final approval.

Once approved the provost or designee and the director of Institutional Effectiveness will notify the Academic Affairs staff for catalog updates and implementation.

Note: If the proposal is for a program in teacher education involving preparing graduates for certification as K-12 teachers, Lander must submit a proposal to the South Carolina Department of Education (DOE). The extra materials required by DOE are included in the CHE proposal submission and CHE forwards the proposal to DOE.

External Approval: SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy

Lander University follows policies and procedures outlined in [Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions](#) available on the SACSCOC website. The SACSCOC Institutional Liaison and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness work with the college or school dean to format the proposal for submission as a Notification or a Substantive Change Prospectus based on institutional and SACSCOC criteria. Academic Affairs, in consultation with the dean, applies these criteria in a Significant Departure Worksheet that provides documentation of the institutional determination of the need for a Notification or Substantive Change Prospectus. A file of completed Significant Departure Worksheets is maintained by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness. The university's policy and procedures for monitoring, notifying, requesting, and implementing substantive changes is found the Lander University "*Policy and Procedures for Substantive Change SACSCOC Policy Compliance.*"

The provost or designee and the director of Institutional Effectiveness will notify the Academic Affairs staff for catalog updates and implementation.

PROGRAM TERMINATIONS

Overview: When Lander University decides to terminate a program, steps 1-7 of the internal process described above will be completed. The proposal reviewed in this process will include justification for the termination and a proposed teach-out plan that ensures that currently enrolled students have appropriate options to complete the program. The Office of Academic Affairs will notify the SCCHE and SACSCOC as indicated below.

SCCHE Termination Process:

Terminating an academic program, concentration, or organizational unit requires informing the SCCHE's Director of Academic Affairs of the change within three months of the termination using the *Notification of Termination of Academic Program, Concentration(s), or Organizational Unit* form. The Office of Academic Affairs will work with the dean and department chair in which the program, concentration or organizational unit resides to complete the form. The Provost submits the form and the SCCHE Director of Academic Affairs will notify the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs of such notifications at its next meeting.

In the *Notification*, Lander University must provide a date by which the program will be closed to new students and a date by which the SCCHE CHEMIS data file will be closed (typically not longer than 150% of program duration, e.g., six years for a four-year program).

For programs subject to additional approval by a state board or agency other than the SCCHE (e.g., State Board of Nursing, State Department of Education), the SCCHE will notify the appropriate board or agency of any notification of termination received for such programs.

Terminated programs may be reactivated within three years of termination by a program modification proposal. If the program has been terminated for more than three years, Lander University must submit a new program proposal to reactivate the program.

SACSCOC Termination Process:

As outlined in [Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions](#), the Office of Academic Affairs will follow concurrently both the SCCHE process and the SACSCOC substantive change process, as appropriate. Both processes require submission of similar information including a teach-out plan for currently enrolled students.