

C-12a

PROCEDURE

Changes to Existing Programs

Changes to existing programs are implemented utilizing insights from the College's Curriculum Committee as well as established catalog revision processes. These processes include reviews from multiple stakeholders such as faculty, instructional administration, Student Affairs, the Office of Marketing & Communications, the Office of Accreditation and Planning, the Administrative Team, and the Board of Governors where appropriate. The following procedures are identified to monitor and report substantive changes in a timely manner to Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE), Higher Learning Commission (HLC), and United States Department of Education (ED).

1. Converting a program from clock to credit hour
Prior approval is required when a clock hour program converts to a credit hour program. To gain HLC approval for this type of change, the College must submit a [clock/credit hour application](#) to HLC. HLC reviews the application via a [desk review process](#) and informs the President and Accreditation Liaison Officer of the application decision within three months of submitting the application.
2. Increasing or decreasing the number of clock or credit hours required for completion of a program
The College annually notifies the Higher Learning Commission and Department of Education of credit hour changes. When the College wishes to increase or decrease the total number of clock or credit hours required for successful completion of a program by 25% or more since its most recent HLC accreditation review (i.e. comprehensive evaluation, Assurance Review, Probation visit or Show-Cause visit), prior HLC approval is required. To gain HLC approval for this type of change, the College must submit a [clock/credit hour application](#) to HLC. HLC reviews the application via a desk review process and informs the President and Accreditation Liaison Officer of the application decision within three months of submitting the application.
3. Substantially changing the content of a program
According to the U.S. Department of Education, program content changes include changes to a program's curriculum (measured by clock or credit hours), learning objectives, competencies, or required clinical experiences; this includes changes in the general education courses required for program completion and not merely courses within the discipline, program, or major. In alignment with Higher Learning Commission (HLC) guidelines regarding changes to existing programs, when the College wishes to make an aggregate change of 25% or more to the content of a program since its most HLC accreditation review (i.e. comprehensive evaluation, Assurance Review, Probation visit or Show-Cause visit), HLC notification is required. To notify the HLC about this type of change, the College submits a [screening form for changes to existing academic programs](#) which serves as official notification of the change.
4. Adding a concentration or specialization that is a significant departure from the original program approval
According to the HLC, a program concentration (or specialization, track, or emphasis) involves less than half of the total hours in the program of which it is a part, with the remaining hours taken in common by all students in the program. SCC's Accreditation Liaison Officer should contact Southeast Community College's HLC staff liaison to discuss the proposed program concentration/specialization and determine whether prior HLC approval or notification is required.

If prior approval is required, the College's Accreditation Liaison Officer submits a program application to the HLC. Based on the type and complexity of the request, HLC will determine the appropriate [review process](#) and notify the College of its decision accordingly. If HLC notification is required, the Accreditation Liaison Office should update its degree program information in its next [Institutional Update](#).

5. Developing customized Pathways or abbreviated/modified courses for academic programs as described in the Prior Learning Assessment policy
When SCC develops customized pathways or abbreviated/modified courses (or another program that either accommodates a student's existing knowledge from experiences such as employment or military services or closes competency gaps between demonstrated prior knowledge and the full requirements of a particular course or program), its Accreditation Liaison Officer should complete a [screening form for changes to existing academic programs](#). HLC reviews the information provided and notifies the College as to whether prior HLC approval of the proposed change(s) is required.
6. Changing a program's method of delivery
Southeast Community College's current stipulation for distance education is "approved to offer distance education courses and programs". Therefore, HLC notification is required when there is a change in a program's method of delivery. The Accreditation Liaison Officer submits a [screening form for changes to existing academic programs](#) which serves as official notification of the change.
7. Changing the length of term affecting allocation of credit
Changes in term length are provided to the Higher Learning Commission and the Department of Education. When the College wishes to change its term length (i.e. semester to quarters or semesters to a five-week compressed term) in a way that affects 25% or more of all the institution's courses or programs, prior HLC approval is required. To gain HLC approval for this type of change, the College must submit a [length of term affecting allocation of credit application](#) to the HLC. HLC then reviews the application via a [desk review process](#) and informs the Accreditation Liaison Officer of the application decision within three months of submitting the application.
8. Cancellation or suspension of a program
Notification and/or approval of a program cancellation or suspension are provided to CCPE, HLC, and ED. When Southeast Community College wishes to cancel or suspend an existing academic program, its Accreditation Liaison Officer contacts the College's HLC staff liaison (as identified in the College's Institutional Status and Requirements Report) to discuss the program to be cancelled or suspended and determine whether prior HLC approval or notification is required. If prior approval is required, the College's Accreditation Liaison Officer submits a provisional plan for teaching out students currently in the program to the HLC based on its [Teach-Out Procedure](#). If HLC notification is required, the Accreditation Liaison Officer's communication with the HLC staff liaison constitutes official notification of the change.

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