



Guidelines for New Degree Offerings, Majors, and Certificates

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Introduction

If your School or department is considering offering a new academic pathway (degree, major, or certificate program), it must be reviewed and approved through proper institutional processes prior to implementation. The process for approval is stipulated below. These procedures must be followed to ensure compliance with institutional processes, regional accreditation, and federal regulations.

New Degrees	Degrees that Schools and departments wish to develop that are not currently offered at Tulane.	Example: Tulane already offers a Master of Science in several degree areas, so a department seeking to offer that degree would be offering a new major, not a new degree. However, Tulane does not currently offer a Master of Education (M.Ed), so that would be considered a new degree offering.
New Majors	New majors constitute subjects that a student chooses to specialize in while pursuing a particular degree type already within Tulane's existing degree programs.	Example: Tulane currently offers the Bachelor of Arts degree in the form of many majors. If a new undergraduate major were to be offered in Creole studies, it would most likely be a Bachelor of Arts degree which constitutes a new major, not a new degree type.
New Certificates	A certificate program is a related cluster of credit bearing courses that constitutes a coherent body of study within a discipline or set of related disciplines.	Example: Tulane currently offers a stand-alone Graduate Certificate in River Science and Engineering. Students in this program need not be enrolled in any Tulane degree program.

The following guidelines should be used when establishing the minimum credit hour requirements for a new academic pathway:

- Baccalaureate Degree: 120 credit hours
- Master's Degree: 30 credit hours
- Doctoral Degree (PhD): 48 credit hours
- Professional Degrees may have different credit hours requirements as stipulated by the appropriate accrediting agency or by disciplinary convention.
- Certificate Program: Typically a minimum of 12 credit hours

Additional Notes on Developing a Certificate Program

Even though certificate programs are not degree-bearing, they are designated on a student's official transcript and are as much a reflection on Tulane's quality of education as any other assemblage of courses. As a result, careful consideration should be given to the creation of a new certificate program based not only upon need and interest, but also upon how the program fits into Tulane's educational portfolio. Certificates may be a stand-alone (earned without pursuing a degree) or earned along with a corresponding degree. Certificate programs typically require a minimum of 12 credit hours, but in some cases require a minimum of 16 credit hours to meet federal financial aid requirements (See the *Guidelines for University Certificates* on the Office of Academic Affairs & Provost [Academic Policies](#) webpage for further information).

New Academic Pathways: Steps to Implementation

1) Early Considerations.

- **Mission:** consider how the proposed offering fits into the mission of the department, School, and University, as appropriate.
- **Determination of Need for the Change:** consider why the change is needed and how that change is consistent with the university's mission.
- **Necessary Resources:** consider how the new pathway will impact faculty teaching loads, classroom space, and/or administrative structures/oversight.
- **Learning Outcomes & Assessment:** faculty must determine learning outcomes for the new offering so the curriculum can be aligned with them; so prospective students can know what the skills and knowledge they can expect to gain as a result of the program; and so that assessment work may be developed to ensure the continuous improvement of the offering over time.

NOTE: Learning outcomes must be established and assessment methods must be designed for all academic pathways. Faculty, administrators, and program coordinators are encouraged to contact the Director of Institutional Assessment, for assistance in developing an assessment plan for the new offering (oair@tulane.edu). In all cases, an assessment plan must be developed and completed prior to the establishment of the new academic pathway. Then moving forward, a completed assessment plan/report must be submitted to the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research annually:

<https://oair.tulane.edu/assessment/academic-programs>

- **Implementation Date:** consider the anticipated implementation date. The implementation date is the date students will be admitted to enroll in the new offering. All ensuing actions are timed according to this implementation date. For example, should the new offering require approval by the University's regional accreditor, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), that process may take up to 9 months. In order to have time to receive all internal and external (if necessary) approvals, the approval process should begin 12 months in advance of the anticipated implementation date.

2) Governance Processes. New academic pathways must be reviewed and approved through faculty-based actions that are consistent with the School's constitution and/or governance structure. Approvals must be documented in writing¹ and in accordance with the School's constitution and/or governance structure (such as the School's Curriculum Committee and the School's Faculty).

¹ Note that you may submit Committee Meeting Agendas and Minutes to show discussion and approval of new pathways.

For pathways that involve more than one School, an approval process that is consistent with the constitutions of all the involved schools is followed and approval from both Deans must be received.

- For new undergraduate degrees or majors involving two or more units, a proposal must be submitted to the University Senate Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) in accordance with University Senate Bylaws: <https://senate.tulane.edu/resources/bylaws>
- For new graduate level pathways, written approval must be received from the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (OGPS) Graduate Council.

Additionally, dual pathways (dual, joint, or combined programs) may also have special accreditation requirements, and the involved departments/schools should contact the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research for guidance (oair@tulane.edu).

3) Approval from Accrediting Agencies. After necessary approvals have been received through the institutional channels discussed above, the proposal must be given to Tulane's liaison to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) for review and possible action in accordance with the SACSCOC [Substantive Change Policy](#).

- If necessary, a Substantive Change Communication is submitted to SACSCOC by the SACSCOC Liaison with help from the submitting department. In some cases a new offering needing SACSCOC approval may also require approval by the Tulane University Board of Administrators. *This is not required for all new pathways.*
- If a Substantive Change Communication is not submitted, the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research will document that action in the University's Substantive Change log.

The SACSCOC approval may take as long as **nine (9) months** and cannot be submitted to SACSCOC until the program has been approved through the proper institutional channels.

If the new offering falls under the purview of any other accreditation agencies, those requirements will need to be reviewed as well (i.e. AACSB, NAAB, ABET, CEPH, etc.).

4) Final Implementation. Upon final approval through institutional processes and SACSCOC, if necessary, students may be admitted into the new degree, major, or certificate, and the following steps should be taken to finalize the implementation process:

- A [New Banner Code Form](#) must be completed and returned to the Registrar's Office to activate tracking of requirements and transcribing of the degree program. This will also begin the process of adding the offering to the University Catalog.
- The department or School forwards the program, major, or certificate approval to Kristy Manger (kmagner1@tulane.edu) in the Office of International and Student Scholars if it is an offering to be available to international students.

NOTE: For an academic offering to be included in the next academic year's University Catalog, information will be due to the Registrar's Office early in the Spring semester before the program is to be offered. The University Catalog is published on an annual basis, in advance of the start of each academic year. New offerings seeking implementation or start dates other than the Fall semester may be included in a catalog addendum as determined by the SACSCOC Liaison and the University Registrar.

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Related Documents:

Tulane University [New Banner Code Form](#)

Tulane's [Substantive Change Policy](#)

Tulane University [Senate Committee on Educational Policy \(CEP\) Functions](#)

Tulane University [Assessment Plan Information](#)

SACSCOC [Substantive Change Policy](#)