THEC

Letter of Notification (LON) Checklist
Policy A1.0 New Academic Programs: Approval Process

A Letter of Notification (LON) must be submitted to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) to develop new academic programs with a minimum of 24 semester credit hours as outlined in *THEC Policy A1.0 – New Academic Programs: Approval Process*. Items to be included in the LON should follow the structure of the checklist below and must include a letter from the appropriate President or Chancellor signifying support for development of the proposed program. Submissions are to be sent electronically as a PDF document and include page numbers, a table of contents, and appendices.

Letter of Notification Checklist

- **Academic program name, degree designation, proposed CIP code, and CIP code title**

- **Proposed implementation date** – The proposed implementation date should provide a realistic estimate of when the program will have gone through all of the approval steps, including institutional governing board and Commission approval, and be ready to enroll students.

- **Academic program liaison (APL) name and contact information** – The APL will serve as the information resource for the proposed academic program at the institution.

- **Background concerning academic program development** – Provide a short narrative describing the circumstances that sparked the initiation and development of the proposed academic program.

- **Purpose and nature of academic program** – Provide a general overview of the program including a description of the academic program, the target audience, purpose, program outcomes, the delivery method (on-ground, online, hybrid, etc.), and any other pertinent information.

- **Alignment with state master plan and institutional mission** – Explain how the proposed academic program is consistent with the state's economic development, workforce development and research needs (as applicable) as well as the mission and strategic direction statement of the institution.

- **Institutional capacity to deliver the proposed academic program** – Address how the proposed program will impact the overall capacity of the institution, including potential lost enrollment to other majors/programs, collaborative agreements between departments, etc.

- **Existing programs offered at public and private Tennessee institutions** – List all academic programs with the same or similar CIP code offered at public and private higher education institutions in Tennessee along with degrees awarded for the last three years of available data.

- **Feasibility study –** The following sections must be addressed as part of the feasibility study:

    - **Student interest** can be demonstrated through student surveys, enrollments in similar programs/concentrations, etc.

    - **Local and regional need/demand** should be supported by evidence preferably using current quantitative data to support present and future needs of the State's workforce. If similar academic programs exist, how is the local and regional need/demand for the proposed academic program being met by these institutions?

    - **Employer need/demand** can be demonstrated, although not limited to, an assessment of the employment opportunities (i.e., number of anticipated job openings), an employer needs assessment, labor market analysis, and workforce projections. Projections should be for the first three years for associate and certificate programs, five years for undergraduate and master's programs, or seven years for doctoral programs.

    - **Future sustainable need/demand** as evidenced in letters from employers of increased need, preference for proposed academic program, willingness to pay increased salaries for proposed degree, and that the demand for graduates is sustainable, i.e. exceeds beyond the three years of the academic program, if approved.

- **Program costs/revenues** – Provide a budget narrative for the THEC Financial Projection Form. The narrative should address costs associated with hiring new faculty and staff, marketing and recruitment, equipment needs, accreditation costs, and any other relevant expenses. Revenue projections should include tuition and fees, potential research and grant activity, expected gifts, and any other expected revenues.

- **THEC Financial Projection Form** - The THEC Financial Projection Form must be included in the appendix with the LON submission and provide detailed information regarding internal reallocations, tuition and fees, specific program costs, etc. If no costs/revenues are projected an explanation should be provided in the LON and the form should still be included with a note as to why there will be no costs/revenues.

New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) Checklist
Policy A1.0 – New Academic Programs: Approval Process

A New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) must be submitted to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) as outlined in *THEC Policy A1.0 – New Academic Programs: Approval Process*. The NAPP is to be submitted in its entirety to THEC at the time the campus seeks to request an external judgment review and should follow the structure of the checklist below. Submissions are to be sent electronically as a pdf document and include page numbers, a table of contents, and appendices.

New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) Checklist

- **Letter of Notification (LON) items** – All LON items must be submitted and should include responses to any concerns outlined in the THEC LON evaluation. A crosswalk of the changes to the LON should serve as the cover sheet for the revised LON.

- **Implementation timeline** – Provide a timeline which includes the following items:
    - Accreditation considerations for professional disciplinary accreditation organizations and/or SACSCOC, if applicable
    - Proposed dates for the external judgment site visit
    - Estimated date of submission of the external review report to THEC and the institution (within 30 days after the site visit)
    - Estimated date of institution's response to external review (within 30 days upon receipt of external reviewer report)
    - Proposed date of the institutional governing board meeting the new academic program would be considered for approval
    - Proposed date of the THEC meeting for the academic program to be considered for Commission approval. *(2019 Commission Meetings: January 25, 2019; May 17, 2019; July 25, 2019; and November 7, 2019)*

- **Curriculum** – An adequately structured curriculum which meets the stated objectives of the academic program, and reflects breadth, depth, theory and practice appropriate to the discipline and the level of the degree. The curriculum should be compatible with disciplinary accreditation, where applicable, and meet the criteria for the general education core as well as articulation and transfer.

    - **Program learning outcomes** – *Provide the academic program learning outcomes. Focus on program outcomes that reflect the specific knowledge and skills one expects students to acquire as part of their educational experience in the proposed program.*
    - **Academic program requirements** – *Include the minimum number of semester credit hours (SCH), required courses, (course prefix and number, title, SCH) and any special requirements including thesis, internships, practicum, etc.*
    - **Current courses and existing programs** – *List current courses and existing institutional programs which will affect the proposed academic program.*
    - **New courses needed** – *List any new courses which must be added for the academic program and include a catalog description for each of these courses.*

- o **Distance learning** – *Indicate whether this academic program will be offered via distance learning and which courses are available via distance learning.*
- o **Course syllabi** – *Provide syllabi for existing and proposed courses.*

- **Academic standards** – Admission, retention and graduation standards should be clearly stated, be compatible with institutional or governing board policy, and encourage high quality.

- **Equity** – Provide information regarding how the proposed program will recruit, retain, and graduate a diverse population of students including underserved and historically underrepresented students.

- **Program enrollment and graduates** – Provide the projected number of declared majors and graduates expected over the first three years (associate and certificate), five years (baccalaureate and master's programs), or seven years (doctoral programs).

- **Administrative structure** – Provide an organizational chart to include the administrative unit and program director that will be responsible to ensure success of the proposed academic program.

- **Faculty resources** – Current and/or anticipated faculty resources should ensure a program of high quality. The number and qualification of faculty should meet existing institutional standards and should be consistent with external standards, where appropriate. The adequacy of the number of faculty should be paramount in the planning process as institutions build increasing numbers of interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary academic programs. The student/faculty ratio for the proposed academic program should be included in the documentation.

  - o **Current Faculty** – *List the name, rank, highest degree, primary department and estimate of the level of involvement of all current faculty members who will participate in the academic program. If the proposed academic program is at the graduate level, designate current graduate faculty status in relation to eligibility to chair thesis and/or dissertation. Attach a three page vita for each faculty member listed including relevant related activities for the past five years.*
  - o **Anticipated Faculty** - *Describe the additional faculty needed during the next five years for the initiation of the academic program and list the anticipated schedule for addition of these faculty members.*

- **Library and information technology resources** – Provide documentation to demonstrate adequate library and information technology resources to support a high quality academic program which meets recognized standards for study at a particular level or in a particular field.

  - o **Library and Information Technology Acquisitions Needed** - *Describe additional library and information technology acquisitions needed during the first three years (associate and certificate), five years (undergraduate and master's programs), or seven years (doctoral programs) for the successful initiation of the academic program.*

- **Support resources** – Provide documentation to demonstrate adequate support resources including support staff, student advising resources, arrangement for clinical or other affiliations, and professional development for faculty necessary for a successful academic program.

  - **Evidence of willingness to partner** – *Provide evidence of established partnerships with appropriate entities which can include business, government, education, and healthcare institutions.*
  - **Other support currently available** – *Include support staff, university and non-university assistance.*
  - **Other support needed --** *List additional staff and assistance needed during the first three years (associate and certificate), five years (baccalaureate and master's programs), or seven years (doctoral programs).*

- **Facilities and equipment** – Provide documentation to demonstrate adequate existing and/or anticipated facilities and equipment. New/or renovated facilities required to implement the academic program should be clearly outlined by amount and type of space, costs identified, and source of funds to cover costs.

  - **Existing facilities and equipment** – *Assess the adequacy of the existing physical facilities and equipment available for the proposed academic program. Include special classrooms, laboratories, physical equipment, computer facilities, etc.*
  - **Additional facilities and equipment required or anticipated** – *Describe physical facilities and equipment that will be required/anticipated during the first three years (associate or certificate programs), five years (undergraduate and master's programs), or seven years (doctoral programs).*

- **Marketing and recruitment plan** – Provide a plan, including marketing and recruitment, to ensure all prospective students will have equitable access to the academic program so as not to impede the state's commitment to diversity and access in higher education. Identify any budget implications in the THEC Financial Projection Form.

- **Assessment and evaluation** – Although the primary responsibility for academic program quality rests with the institution and its institutional governing board or its system, THEC considers pertinent information to verify that high standards have been established for the operation and evaluation of the programs. Evidence must be proposed to demonstrate that careful evaluation is undertaken periodically throughout the lifetime of the academic program indicating:

  - the schedule for program assessments or evaluations, (including program evaluations associated with Quality Assurance Funding, institutional program review, student evaluations, faculty review, accreditation, and employer evaluation),
  - those responsible for conducting program assessments or evaluations, and accreditation, and
  - a plan for how results will inform the program post-approval.

- **Accreditation** – Where appropriate, professional disciplinary accreditation organizations should be identified. Any substantive change that requires a SACSCOC review should be indicated.

- **Funding** – A budget narrative that complements the budget projections on the THEC Financial Projection Form should be included. The narrative must address the institution's capacity to deliver the proposed program within existing and projected resources including an explanation of the current departmental budget in which the proposed program will be housed and estimated additional costs for the first three years (associate degrees), five years (undergraduate and master's degrees), or seven years (doctoral degrees) for the proposed program. Please note that these costs for each year are incremental costs not cumulative costs. Include all accreditation costs and proposed external consultations as related to accreditation. Identify any grants or gifts which have been awarded or anticipated.