Texas A&M-Corpus Christi
SACS: Self-Study Report

2.7.1 The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification for all degrees that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit. (Program Length)

Compliance Status: Compliance

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| A minimum of 120 semester hours of credit must be successfully completed for award of the bachelor's degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, and some curricula or combinations of field may require more [1]. Master's programs normally require a minimum of 36 semester hours of approved graduate credit, 24 of which must be from courses at the 5,000 level or higher [2]. Normally a doctoral degree from Texas A&M-Corpus Christi will consist of a minimum of 90 hours beyond the bachelor's degree for students admitted to a doctoral program directly after completion of the undergraduate degree. For students who have completed a master's degree, a minimum of 60 hours is required for the doctoral degree [3]. All undergraduate baccalaureate degrees at A&M-Corpus Christi meet or exceed 120 semester credit hours, and all post-baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degrees at A&M-Corpus Christi meet or exceed 30 semester credit hours. A&M-Corpus Christi does not offer associate degrees. The semester credit hour is the fundamental unit on which all A&M-Corpus Christi work is based, and all transfer work accepted is translated into semester credit hours. Comprehensive lists of the credit hours required for each undergraduate degree program [4] and graduate degree program [5] are included in the supporting documentation. The degree program descriptions in the undergraduate [6] and graduate [7] catalogs detail the minimum hours required for graduation. The University catalogs are available in print and are published on the University Web site [8].

Texas A&M University System Policy 03.02, Policies for the Establishment and Revision of Mission Statements and Tables of Programs [9], requires all member institutions to submit all new academic programs to the board of regents for approval prior to seeking approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The development of new academic degree programs, however, begins with the faculty in the individual disciplines, departments, and colleges. In accordance with University Rule 03.02.02.C1, Development of New Academic Degree Programs [10], proposed programs are first reviewed and approved by faculty in individual colleges through the individual college curriculum review process. In the colleges of liberal arts, science and technology, and education this includes approval by department faculty, recommendation by the department chair, and approval by the college Curriculum Committee [11] [12] or (as in the College of Education) Curriculum Coordinating Committee [13]. In the College of Nursing, proposals originating from the faculty are approved by either the Undergraduate Committee or the Graduate Committee, then by the Faculty of the Whole [14]. In the College of Business, proposals initiated by
the faculty are approved by the department chair and reviewed by the college Administrative Council before they are approved by either the Undergraduate Advisory Committee or the Graduate Advisory Committee [15]. Proposed graduate programs are also reviewed for approval by the University's Graduate Council. All programs are then reviewed and approved by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate as outlined in University Rule 03.02.02.C1, Development of New Academic Degree Programs [10]. This committee makes a recommendation to the senate as a whole and the senate reviews the committee's recommendations and votes on each program.

As noted above, Texas A&M University System Policy 03.02, Policies for the Establishment and Revision of Mission Statements and Tables of Programs [9], requires all member institutions to submit all new academic programs to the board of regents for approval prior to seeking approval from the THECB. Following approval by the Faculty Senate, new program proposals are approved by the Provost's Council, President's Cabinet, and the president before they are forwarded to The Texas A&M University System where the vice chancellor for academic affairs [16] ensures that the new programs meet the board of regents academic program approval standards [17].

Proposals approved by the board of regents are submitted for approval to the THECB. These proposals must meet the THECB standards outlined in Rule 5.45, Criteria for New Baccalaureate and Master's Degree Programs [18], and be submitted on THECB New Program Request Forms [19]. In limited circumstances, the commissioner of the THECB may, on behalf of the board, approve new bachelors and masters programs and, in very limited circumstances, may approve new doctoral programs as dictated in THECB Rule 5.50 [21]. All current degree programs offered at the University have been approved in this manner. The THECB staff reviews the new program for consistency with THECB standards [22] and assures that all undergraduate programs have a minimum of 120 hours and that all graduate programs have a minimum of 30 hours. This review also helps to ensure program equivalency. The THECB staff has the power to approve bachelor's and master's degree programs that have a budget of less than $2 million. Only the THECB has the power to approve programs of more than $2 million and doctoral programs.

In accordance with University Procedure 11.99.99.C6.01, Certification of Degrees [23], Item 4 "Exceptions and Modifications to Degree Requirements," the University exceptions and modifications may be made to University-level degree requirements with the appropriate review, justification and official signatures. Any justification must be approved at the program, department, and college level. The provost may also make exceptions to University degree requirements if the exceptions are in the best interest of the University. No student under the provisions of these rules has graduated with less than 120 hours. No state requirement may be waived by any official of the University [24].

**Undergraduate Programs**

A&M-Corpus Christi offers 39 undergraduate programs under 27 different Classification of Instructional Program codes, variously leading to a bachelor of arts (BA), bachelor of applied science (BAS), bachelor of business administration (BBA), bachelor of fine arts (BFA), bachelor of music (BM), bachelor of science (BS), bachelor of science in health science (BSHS), bachelor of science in interdisciplinary studies (BSIS), and bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) degrees [4] [25]. All undergraduate degree plans require a minimum of 120 semester credit hours as specified in the undergraduate catalog [11]. Every degree program is subdivided into components that vary by
program in format and terminology, but each includes the University core curriculum requirements as well as specific major requirements. The degree plans for the bachelor of arts in communication [26] and bachelor of science in electrical engineering technology [27] demonstrate how the total hours to degree are distributed across the various curricular requirements. Exceptions to undergraduate degree requirements, including number of hours required for the degree, may be made in case of extenuating circumstances per University Procedure 11.99.99.C6.01, Certification of Degrees [23]. Such exceptions must be documented [24].

**Graduate Programs**

A&M-Corpus Christi offers 27 graduate programs under 17 different Classification of Instructional Program codes, variously leading to seven masters-level degrees (MA, Macc, MBA, MFA, MPA, MS, MSN) and five doctoral programs under five different Classification of Instructional Program codes, leading to two doctoral degrees (Ed.D., Ph.D.) [28] [5]. As noted above, all graduate and professional degrees at A&M-Corpus Christi meet or exceed 30 semester credit hours. The minimum semester hours required for each graduate program is listed in the supporting document [5]. The degree requirements for all graduate degrees are detailed in the catalog under the program description. The degree requirements for the master of arts in psychology [29], the master of science in computer science [30] and the master of accountancy [31] demonstrate how the minimum hours are distributed. Exceptions to graduate-degree requirements, including number of hours required for the degree, may be made in case of extenuating circumstances as is noted in University Procedure 11.99.99.C6.01, Certification of Degrees [23]. Any degree that is granted an exception must be documented [32].

**Conclusion**

All undergraduate degree programs at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi require a minimum of 120 semester credit hours to earn the degree. All masters-level programs require a minimum of 30 graduate-level or professional-level hours. The doctoral programs at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi require either 90 hours beyond the baccalaureate degree or 60 hours post-masters depending upon the nature of the program of study. The University does not offer any degrees that require hours that fall below the above minimums. All degree programs are submitted through a rigorous approval process at the University, the Texas A&M University System, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to ensure quality and compliance with University, system, and state rules that ensure appropriate program length.

**Evidence**

- UD 732 2008-09 UG Catalog p69
- UD 733 2008-09 Grad Catalog pp58-66
- UD 733B 2008-09 Grad Catalog pp 58-66
- UD 734 Graduate Catalog, Requirements for Terminal Degrees
- UD 735 Bachelors Degrees Hours Required for Major
- UD 736 Summary of Minimum Hours Required for Graduate Degree 2008-09
- UD 048 UG Catalog Printable Format
- UD 049 Grad Catalog Pritable
UD 477 University Catalogs Webpage
BD 003 TAMUS 03-02 Policies for the Establishment and Revision of Mission Statements and Tables of Programs
UD 139 AMCC 03-02-02-C1 Development of New Academic Degree Programs
CD 144 Faculty Handbook, College of Liberal Arts
CD 146 Faculty Handbook, College of Science and Technology 2008-09
CD 143 Faculty Handbook, College of Education
CD 145 Faculty Handbook, College of Nursing Draft 11-06 (under revision as of Jan. 2009)
CD 142 Faculty Handbook, College of Business
BD 151 TAMUS Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Mission
BD 018 2.2-20 Bylaws of the Board Of Regents of The Texas A&M University System
SD 101 TAC 19.1.5 Rule 5.45
SD 035 THECB NewProgramRequestFormBachelorandMasters
SD 099 doctoral degree proposal
SD 100 TAC 19.1.5 - Rule 5.50
SD 036 THECB Standards-Bachelor and Masters
UD 001 AMCC 11-99-99-C6-01 Certification of Degrees
UD 737 Exceptions Form
SD 062 THECB Table of Programs-AMCC
UD 738 2008-09 UG Catalog BA Communication degree requirements
UD 739 BS Electrical Engineering Technology Degree Plan 2008-09
UD 740 Graduate Degrees Granted
UD 741 2008-09 Grad Catalog-MA Psychology Degree Requirements
UD 742 2008-09 Grad Catalog MS Computer Science Degree Requirements
UD 743 2008-09 Grad Catalog MAcc Degree Requirements
UD 744 Graduate Exception form

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