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Comprehensive Standard 3.4.10

The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty. (Responsibility for curriculum)

Judgment: Compliant

Response:

The University of South Carolina (USC) ascribes the primary responsibility for the content, quality and effectiveness of its curriculum to its faculty in Academic Affairs Policy (ACAF) 2.00, [Creation and Revision of Academic Programs](#): "The faculty of the University has legislative authority over matters pertaining to the curriculum on the campus where they serve."

The faculty of an academic department or unit of a campus, college or school is responsible for the development, approval, implementation, evaluation, and improvement of the curriculum for the degree programs of that unit. The substantive curriculum review function normally resides within the departments or program units of the colleges. Although the structures and specific responsibilities vary both among colleges and between departments within a college, the bodies with this function ensure that the theories and practices reflected in the curriculum are current and relevant in the discipline, assess the program curricula for connectivity and sequencing of course work, establish program-specific standards, and guarantee appropriate academic rigor. In addition, there are curriculum decision-making entities at the college level in many of the colleges and schools.

As a comprehensive university, USC organizes faculty governance over curriculum review by academic level: undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. At the faculty governance level, curriculum content proposals are reviewed first by the relevant curriculum committee. On the Columbia campus, for all undergraduate curricula, this is the [Curricula and Courses Committee of the Faculty Senate](#). For graduate curricula, there are [two separate curriculum committees in the Graduate Council](#), one for the Sciences and one for the Humanities. The professional schools – Law (see the [Faculty Bylaws](#)), [Medicine](#) and [Pharmacy](#) – each have their own curriculum committee structures, which report to the faculty of their respective schools. With regard to curricula on the regional campuses, which are exclusively undergraduate curricula, the relevant committee is the [Systems Affairs Committee](#).

ACAF 2.00 requires that additional details be provided for distance learning degree programs primarily related to the modes of delivery and the mix of traditional and distance learning courses in the degree program. [Appendix 6](#) (Program Revision: Change of Delivery Method to Distance Education (25 to 49% of Program) and [Appendix 7](#) (Program Revision: Change of Delivery Method to Distance Education (50% or more of Program) of ACAF 2.00 provide additional information). The Vice Provost and Director of Distance Learning monitors distance learning degree programs to assure their quality on the basis of data collected from students, faculty, and degree program level reviews. The [Distance Learning Plan](#) incorporates quality assurances related to degree programs including approvals and student and faculty assessment.

When reviewing curriculum proposals, both undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees adhere to the following [criteria](#):

- Is the course subject matter properly placed within the discipline of the proposing unit?
- Is the appropriate rationale and justification for the course supplied?
- Are the course title and description accurate and informative?
- Is the course syllabus properly formatted and does it include all required elements?
- Is the proposed credit justified by the course requirements?
- Is the course rigor and assessment appropriate for its educational level?
- Is there potential overlap with other courses and/or are other programs affected by the proposal?
- Have affected programs, if any, reviewed the proposal and provided a letter of support?

As specified in [ACAF 2.03](#), Creation and Revision of Academic Courses, all courses are required to have syllabi that include course objectives expressed as student learning outcomes, required texts and/or readings, the instructional delivery strategy, course assessments including grading scheme and weights, a topical outline of course content to be covered, a course calendar, and an attendance policy. ACAF 2.03 incorporates special requirements for distance learning courses. These requirements include specification of instructional time commitments for students and other distance course offering parameters to assure the quality of the course plan before approval and inform students and others of course offering parameters as distance courses are offered. [Appendix 1](#) (New Course Approval Procedures), [Appendix 2](#) (Course Change Approval Procedures), and [Appendix 5](#) (Course Method of Delivery Change—Distance Education) of ACAF 2.03 provide additional information on special requirements for distance courses. The Vice Provost and Director of Distance Learning monitors distance learning course offerings to assure their quality on the basis of data collected from students, faculty, and level reviews. The [white paper on distance education](#) and the [five-year action plan](#) incorporate quality assurances related to course offerings including approvals and student and faculty assessment. The Distance Learning Plan also includes a strategic initiative related to course approvals. [Tracking charts for approval of distance learning courses](#) by the Graduate Council provide examples of the detailed information required as part of the course approval process. The types of curriculum changes and specific procedures for each are delineated on the [Academic Program Development website](#).

In general, after curricular action at the committee level, curriculum proposals proceed to either the full Faculty Senate (Columbia undergraduate curricula), the Graduate Council (Columbia graduate curricula), the respective professional school faculty (Law, Medicine or Pharmacy curricula), or the [Regional Campus Faculty Senate](#) (regional curricula). Minutes of these meetings over the preceding decade offer evidence of

systematic review and approval by the **faculty of undergraduate curricula** and **graduate curricula** in all colleges including the professional schools (**School of Law**; School of Medicine through **Office of Curricular Affairs**; the **College of Pharmacy**;) and the **regional campuses**.

Upon full faculty governance approval, all curriculum content proposals entailing substantive revisions require the endorsement of the Provost, the President, and in some cases, also the USC Board of Trustees. The Provost's Office of Academic Programs coordinates the processing of proposals through the internal USC steps, and forwards them to the State of South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE). The **South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 59-103-35** requires all major program modifications undertaken by public institutions of higher education to be approved by CHE. At CHE, proposals are reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP), and the full Commission. Modified programs are entered into the Academic Bulletin only after the Provost's Office receives formal notification of approval from both CHE, and SACS as appropriate. Minor program changes require only notification to CHE. In all cases, CHE requires a detailed justification for the proposed change.

Faculty members evaluate the quality and effectiveness of academic program curricula on an ongoing basis in department-level curriculum bodies, as part of active discussions on program learning outcomes. Each program furthermore submits an assessment report to the Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance (IAC) in June of every year (see **Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1**). Program faculty assess curricula in light of learning outcomes data collected over the preceding year. Their program assessment plans for the upcoming year, and if need be their curricula, are adjusted to more effectively target achievement of the desired learning outcomes.

The ongoing curriculum discussion is reinforced periodically through the process of external program reviews, which are required by the Provost's Office (see memorandums from the **Provost** and the **Vice Provost for Academic Affairs**) for all programs not subject to professional accreditation. In all but one of the University's colleges and schools, most program curricula are reviewed periodically by **professional accreditation agencies**. The exception is the College Arts and Sciences (A&S), with the largest number of programs that are not professionally accredited. A&S has maintained a comprehensive **schedule of external program reviews** since 2005. The A&S Academic Planning Council has regular procedures for soliciting and reviewing a department's Self Study, discussing the External Review Report, and advising the Dean of the College regarding specific measures the department may take to improve its programs and curricula. See the **Program Accreditation and Review chart** for more detailed information on external program review.

Supporting Documentation:

Description	Source
Curriculum Policies	
Creation and Revision of Academic Programs, ACAF 2.00	http://www.sc.edu/policies/acaf200.pdf
South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 59-103-35	http://www.scstatehouse.gov/CODE/t59c103.htm#59-103-35
Standard 3.3.1.1	CS_3.3.1.1.html
Curriculum Committees	
Curricula and Courses Committee of Faculty Senate	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacultyManualColumbia.pdf#Curricula
Graduate Council Curriculum Committees	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/GradCouncilManual.pdf#CurricComm
Professional Schools	
School of Law	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/LawSchoolFacultyBylaws.pdf#CurricComm
School of Medicine	http://ca.med.sc.edu/handbooks/08-09%20Curriculum%20Committee%20Handbook.pdf
College of Pharmacy	http://sacs.sc.edu/secure/Pharmacy/Minutes/
Regional Campuses – Systems Affairs Committee	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacultySenateRegCamp.pdf#SysAffairs
Faculty Senate and Meeting Minutes	
Regional Campus Faculty Senate	http://saeu.sc.edu/RCFS/index.html
Regional Campus Minutes	http://saeu.sc.edu/RCFS/minutes.html
Faculty Senate Minutes	http://www.sc.edu/faculty/meetings.shtml
Graduate Council Minutes	http://gradschool.sc.edu/gradcouncil/minutes/
Professional Schools	
School of Law Minutes	http://sacs.sc.edu/secure/LawSchool/Minutes/
School of Medicine	http://ca.med.sc.edu/curriculum_committee.asp
College of Pharmacy Minutes	http://sacs.sc.edu/secure/Pharmacy/Minutes/
Curriculum Review	
Provost Office External Review	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/evaluations/ExtProgRevMemo.pdf and http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/evaluations/ViceProvProgRevMemo.pdf
Professional Accreditation Agencies	http://www.ipr.sc.edu/factbook/2009/columbia/accred.htm
Program Accreditation and Review List	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/ProgramAccred.pdf

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