



## Tennessee Higher Education Commission

**Section Title:** Academic Policies  
**Policy Title:** New Academic Units  
**Policy Number:** A 1.3

- 1.3.1A** **Purpose.** Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-7-202(q)(2)(A), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) has the statutory responsibility to review and approve new academic departments or divisions at public universities and community colleges. Pursuant to Section VII of the Rules of Procedure, the Executive Director should be empowered to act for the Commission in the interim when the Commission is not in session.
- 1.3.2A** **Definition of Academic Units.** Academic units include, but are not limited to, colleges, departments, institutes, schools, and other divisions that house at least one academic program including degrees, certificates, and minors.
- 1.3.3A** **Approval Process for New Academic Units -** Following proper institutional approval, a public community college or university seeking to establish a new academic unit shall submit a written request to THEC's Executive Director. The request shall be in alignment with Section 1.3.4A and include all required materials as outlined in the New Academic Units Checklist available on the THEC website.
- 1.3.4A** **Criteria for Review.** Proposals for new academic units will be evaluated on the following criteria:
- Feasibility of the new academic unit
  - Alignment with the Tennessee State Master Plan for Higher Education and institutional mission
  - Required investment for new and/or renovated facilities.
  - Overall costs associated with the new academic unit
- 1.3.5A** **Modifications to Existing Academic Units.** Any changes, with the exception of a name change, to existing academic units must be submitted to THEC for review and approval.

**1.3.5B**

**Name Changes of Academic Units.** For purposes of maintaining accurate records, institutions renaming an existing academic unit shall submit written notification to THEC prior to the name change taking effect.

**Sources:** THEC Meetings: April 22, 1988; January 29, 2015; January 26, 2017; and January 27, 2023.