

PROCEDURE THREE

Closing a Program, Instructional Site, Branch Campus or an Institution: Teach-Out Plans and Teach-Out Agreements

In accordance with Federal regulations, an institution is required to submit a teach-out plan to SACSCOC for approval if any of the following occurs:

1. The USDOE notifies the Commission that it has initiated an emergency action against an institution or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate an institution participating in any Title IV, HEA program.
2. The Commission terminates accreditation or candidacy.
3. The institution notifies the Commission that it intends to cease operations entirely or close a location that provides at least 50% of at least one program.
4. A State Licensing or authorizing agency notifies the Commission that an institution's license or legal authorization to provide an educational program has been or will be revoked.

If an institution decides to close an educational program, approved instructional site, branch campus, or the entire institution, it must choose one of the following options:

1. The institution teaches out currently enrolled students; no longer admits students to programs; and terminates the program, the operations of an approved instructional site or a branch campus, or the operations of an institution after students have graduated. (**Teach-out plan**)
2. The institution enters into a contract for another institution or organization to teach out the educational programs or program. (**Teach-out agreement**)

Teach-out plans and teach-out agreements must be approved by SACSCOC prior to implementation. See *also* the SACSCOC Good Practices document "[Closing a Program, Site, Branch or Institution](#)"

Teach-out Plans

A teach-out plan is a written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides fifty percent or more of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study, and may include, if required by the institution's accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between institutions. Teach-out plans must be approved by SACSCOC in advance of implementation.

To be approved, a teach-out plan must include the following information:

1. Date of closure (date when new students will no longer be admitted)
2. An explanation of how affected parties (students, faculty, staff) will be informed of the impending closure
3. An explanation of how all affected students will be helped to complete their programs of study with minimal disruption
4. An indication as to whether the teach-out plan will incur additional charges/expenses to the students and, if so, how the students will be notified
5. Signed copies of teach-out agreements with other institutions, if any

6. How faculty and staff will be redeployed or helped to find new employment
7. If closing an institution, arrangement for the storing of student records, disposition of final financial resources and other assets

Following review and approval of a teach-out plan that includes a program that is accredited by another accrediting agency, the Commission will notify that accreditor of its approval.

Teach-out Agreements

A teach-out agreement is a written agreement between institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their program of study if an institution, or an institutional location that provides fifty percent or more of at least one program offered, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their program of study. Such a teach-out agreement requires SACSCOC approval in advance of implementation.

For approval by SACSCOC, the agreement must be between institutions that are accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency, be consistent with applicable standards in the *Principles of Accreditation* and with SACSCOC policies, and provide for the equitable treatment of students by ensuring that:

1. the teach-out institution has the necessary experience, resources, and support services to provide an educational program that is of acceptable quality and reasonably similar in content, structure, and scheduling to that provided by the closed institution; and
2. the teach-out institution demonstrates that it can provide students access to the program(s) and services without requiring them to move or travel substantial distances.

Please see the SACSCOC Good Practices document "[Closing a Program, Site, Branch or Institution](#)" for additional discussion of issues regarding closing of programs, sites, branch campuses or institutions.

Closing an institution without an agreement

If an institution accredited by SACSCOC closes and is no longer accredited, SACSCOC will seek assistance from the United States Department of Education and appropriate state agencies to help its students find reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional expense.

Approval Process

Time of Notification

As soon as the decision to close is made, the institution should provide to SACSCOC at the same time the following two pieces of information: (1) notification of the intended closing of a program, site, branch campus, or institution and (2) a teach-out plan for approval (including any teach-out agreements with other institutions).

Staff Options

Upon receipt and review of the notification of impending closure, SACSCOC staff will recommend that the President of SACSCOC acknowledge receipt of the notification and request the teach-out plan if was not included with the notification. Upon receipt and review of the teach-out plan, SACSCOC staff may recommend one of the following options to the SACSCOC President:

1. request additional information for the teach-out plan
2. approve the teach-out plan