



TECHNICAL COLLEGE
OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

**PROCEDURE: Self-Certification of a New Program
Number: 3.1.2.5**

Responsibility: Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, President's Cabinet
Last Updated: November 19, 2024
Related Policy: 3.1.2 Curriculum Development

President

Purpose:

In accordance with regulatory authority, 34 CFR 600.20, and Department of Education guidance (Handbook, Vol 2 Ch. 2) a school has the ability to self-certify itself to determine a new program's eligibility. Based on the Department of Education's guidance the Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL) has developed the following procedure to determine how/when a new program is self-certified for eligibility or added to TCL's Program Participation Agreement/Eligibility Certification Approval Report (PPA/E-CAR) for Department of Education approval prior to providing Federal Financial Aid for the program of question.

Procedure:

New Associate Degree programs:

The Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL) is a public 2 year technical college. TCL is approved by all required agencies to offer 2 year associate degree programs. Public institutions do not have to report degree programs on their PPA/E-CAR. Therefore TCL will automatically self-certify as eligible for federal financial aid any new 2 year associate degree program approved by South Carolina Technical College System and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) . No further action is required.

New Certificates/Diplomas:

In order to best serve our students TCL regularly evaluates its program offerings. Due to the nature of the ability to self-certify new certificates or diplomas and in the interest of ensuring all regulations and gainful employment requirements are met, the following multi-phased approach will be followed.

Phase 1: Academic Deans and Faculty develop new program

- Completes a full program analysis and curriculum development
- Community need-analysis for program offering
- Length of Time – at least one academic semester (15 Weeks)
- Number of Credit hours - at least 16 semester credit hours
- Prepares student for Gainful Employment – assigned designated Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code.

Phase 2: Reviewed by Curriculum Review Committee

- Evaluates efficacy of program analysis
- Confirms that all required items have been properly performed and meet all institutional, state, regional, and national requirements
- If changes are made to a current program, new credit hour total is evaluated for degree type criteria (i.e. Diploma, Certificate, Degree)

Phase 3: Submit new program information to external approving agencies

- Receive approval by State Authorizing Agency
 - Assigned designated Classification of Instruction Program (CIP) Code
 - Receive approval by Institutional Accreditor
 - Letters of approval submitted to Vice President of Student Services, Financial Aid, School Dean by the Academic Affairs Office

Phase 4: Self-Certification Final Review

- Academic Affairs Office will place the following in Colleague:
 - Name of Program
 - Total Semester Hours
 - Start Date
 - CIP Code: xxxxxx
 - Program Length: (semesters, weeks of class, & calendar weeks)
 - TCL Curriculum Committee Approval date
 - TCL Area Commission Approval date
 - SC Technical College System Approval date
 - SACSCOC Approval date
- The President's Cabinet will perform final risk analysis and provide final decision of self-certification. Approval of a program to be self-certified requires full consensus of the Cabinet. Factors to be considered include, but are not limited to:
 - Approved by State Authorizing Agency (SCTCS);
 - Approved by Institutional Accreditor (SACSCOC);
 - The added program leads to an associate, bachelor's degree; that TCL has already been approved to offer programs at that level, and the school's PPA does not require approval of the program;

- OR a certificate or diploma program that is: at least one academic semester (15-weeks) AND 16 semester hours;
- OR 600 clock hours AND
- that prepares students for gainful employment in the same or related recognized occupation as an educational program that the Department already has designated as an eligible program at the school; “Recognized Occupation” as defined in 34 CFR 600.2;
- Classification of Instruction Program (CIP);

The Financial Aid Officer (FAO) will document the new program along with appropriate supporting documentation.

- If approved for self-certification the FAO will file the program and documentation and will add the new program during the next Program Participation Authorization (PPA) recertification process.
- If denied for self-certification the FAO will open TCL’s PPA/E-CAR and submit the new program for pre-approval to disburse Federal Title IV Funds.
- An approval request will be submitted to the Department of Veterans’ Affairs and the SC Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE) once program has been added to Colleague.