

506. Cooperative, Joint, And Shared Degree Programs

I. Policy Statement

- A. The Board of Trustees encourages the institutions of The University of Alabama System to make efficient use of system-wide resources. To that end, efforts at collaboration and sharing, including cooperative, joint, and shared programs, must be explored at the campus and System levels whenever a new degree program of instruction is considered.
- B. All new degree programs, including cooperative, joint, and shared programs must be approved by the Board of Trustees prior to implementation.

II. Guidelines for Cooperative Programs

A. Definition

A cooperative program is under the sponsorship of a single institution (identified as the primary institution) but contains elements of resource sharing agreed upon by one or more other institutions (the secondary institution(s)). The administrative control of such a program and commitment for maintaining the resources necessary to support it are the responsibility of the primary institution. The degree is granted under the seal of that institution and the program will be identified in the Alabama Commission on Higher Education's (ACHE) Academic Program Inventory for that institution only. The program is so designed that in the event the elements contributed by the secondary institution(s) are discontinued, the basic strength of the program will not be damaged seriously and the institution administering the program will be able to continue to do so with few or no additional resources.

- B. A student will be admitted to the primary institution according to its program admission requirements.
- C. For cooperative programs requiring a thesis or dissertation, the major professor/thesis chairperson and the majority of the committee will be from the primary institution.
- D. A student may take courses listed in the program of study from either institution with permission of the major professor.
- E. Each institution accepts the faculty appointments of the other campus without the necessity for re-evaluation.
- F. A student must satisfy all degree requirements according to the primary institution's guidelines.

- G. Any issues requiring attention or resolution will be considered by the appropriate department chairs and dean(s).
- H. Any residency requirement for the program may be satisfied by a student being a resident on either campus.
- I. Each cooperative program must be reviewed periodically. The primary institution will establish the schedule and parameters of the reviews and submit them to the System's Office of Academic Affairs. The results of each review are to be reported to the Presidents and the Chancellor.

III. Guidelines for Development of a Joint/Shared Program Proposal

A. Definitions

1. A joint program is one that is mutually sponsored by two or more campuses, leading to a single degree that is conferred by all participating institutions.
 2. A shared program is mutually sponsored by two or more institutions and benefits from their collaborative efforts. However, withdrawal of one or more partners does not preclude the continuation of an independently sponsored program (i.e. the program is not automatically terminated).
- B. When there is an interest in a new program by one or more campuses in The University of Alabama System, the question of whether a joint program is desirable must be considered by the System Academic Council (SAC). Recommendations by the SAC on joint programs are considered by the Presidents of the affected campuses.
 - C. Among the factors to be considered in determining whether a program should be joint are the mission and role of the campuses in question, student demand, potential benefits to the region, and the quality and quantity of the faculty and other learning resources to support the program.
 - D. When it is agreed that a proposal for a joint program should be developed, it is the responsibility of each campus involved in the program to choose a representative to take responsibility for assuring that the proposal follows campus and System guidelines.
 - E. The SAC must review all completed proposals for joint programs to ensure that the appropriate guidelines and procedures have been followed. Following that review the proposal goes back to the Presidents of the campuses sponsoring the program. When the Presidents are satisfied with the proposal, it is forwarded to the Chancellor.

- F. If the Chancellor concurs, the proposal for a joint program will be presented to the Board of Trustees and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education in the same order and following the same procedures as other proposals for new programs. (See guidelines for new program approval.)
- G. The joint program is so designed that its viability is dependent upon the shared resources of the participating institutions. In the event one or more of the participating institutions cannot meet its commitments and responsibilities, the program would be terminated. Shared programs benefit from, but are not totally dependent on, the collaborative effort. Therefore, withdrawal of one collaborating institution does not automatically terminate the program.

IV. Guidelines for the Operation of Joint/Shared Programs

- A. A joint/shared program in The University of Alabama System has the same requirements for each student, regardless of the campus where he or she is enrolled. That includes but is not limited to standardized entrance requirements, minimum course and hour requirements, and program examinations (such as qualifying examinations for the Ph.D. degree).
- B. Qualified faculty from each of the campuses participating in the program are included in the program faculty. Rules for appointment to the program faculty are established for each program. The procedure for selection of new program faculty must include the other program faculty members. However, the primary departmental affiliation and appointment of the individual faculty members, along with determination of tenure, promotion, and salary, remains at the campus level. Program faculty members are granted appropriate status to allow for full participation in the degree program at those campuses where they do not already hold an appointment.
- C. The program description sets forth some specific procedures and processes making it possible for students to take courses or do research on other campuses. These may differ depending on the type and level of program.
- D. The faculty and students in the program meet together at least twice each academic year. Seminars, conferences, and other meetings for this purpose are encouraged.
- E. For joint/shared doctoral programs that require a thesis or dissertation, the thesis or dissertation committee of each student must include at least one faculty member from each campus.
- F. Each program has a director, who is chosen from among the program faculty, appointed by his/her campus President, and reported to the Chancellor. Each program also has a coordinating committee composed of

an equal number of faculty representatives from each campus participating in the program. The coordinating committee is chaired by the director, and meets at least once each academic term to consider plans, policies, and administrative matters. If further administrative action is required, the director consults with the appropriate deans, and, if necessary, the provost on his/her campus. The provost may bring the matter to the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs and the System Academic Council for discussion.

- G. Depending on the size and complexity of the program, special arrangements may be made to provide release time, clerical assistance, a travel allowance, or other expenses for the program director. In this case the costs are to be shared among the campuses in the program.
- H. Each student successfully meeting all of the program requirements will receive a degree that is designed for the program and that is the same regardless of the home campus of the student.
- I. Each joint/shared program must be reviewed periodically. The coordinating committee will establish the schedule and parameters of the reviews and submit them to the System's Office of Academic and Student Affairs. The results of each review are to be reported to the Presidents and the Chancellor.

(Adopted December 5, 1997; amended May 7, 1999; November 14, 2008.)