# ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

# PLANNING AND COORDINATION

# ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

**CHAPTER 300-2-1**

**PROGRAM REVIEW**

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# 300-2-1-.12 Evaluation of Changes to Instructional Role and Academic Units

* + - 1. **Purpose:** The purpose of evaluating changes to instructional role is to ensure that institutions expand their academic offerings in line with their institutional missions and maintain academic rigor without generating unnecessary duplication of offerings.
      2. **Commission Responsibility**: The Commission is responsible for evaluating requests from public institutions regarding changes in their classification or role and scope, including expansion of instructional offerings to higher or lower degree levels.
      3. **Scope:** The following policy applies to all public postsecondary institutions.
      4. **Definitions:**
         1. [ADDED from 2015-19 Guidelines] Instructional Role: Instructional role is defined as the degree levels for which an institution is approved to award degrees.

The Commission recognizes the following types of instructional role in keeping with the degree level designations recognized by SACSCOC:

Associate degree granting

Baccalaureate degree granting

Master’s degree granting

Education Specialist degree granting

Doctoral degree granting (three or fewer programs)

Doctoral degree granting (four or more programs)

The Commission recognizes a further distinction in instructional role between those institutions approved to offer research-focused doctorates and those approved to offer practice-focused doctorates:

Research-focused doctorate: a doctoral course of study that incorporates substantial research preparation, including the production of original research, and is intended to prepare graduates to seek employment in academia. This includes the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and similar degrees.

Practice-focused doctorate: a doctoral course of study whose primary emphasis is on the application of research. This includes those degrees categorized by IPEDS as Level 18 (Professional doctorates), as well as the Doctor of Education (EdD), the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), and other similar offerings.

~~Instructional role is defined as the matrix of academic subdivision groupings (ASG) and degree award levels approved for a university or two-year college by the Commission. For the 2015-19 planning period, there will be two instructional role matrix templates, one for universities and one for two-year colleges (refer to Appendix A). Each institution's instructional role matrix will be generated by applying the programs in the Commission's academic program inventory to the appropriate instructional role matrix template. Cells in the matrix will either be empty or display an "X". Empty cells are not considered within the institution's current role, and "X" cells indicate that the ASG and degree level are within the institution's role and that at least one program is currently offered.~~

* + - * 1. Role Expansion: Role expansion is defined as the ability to develop and propose academic programs at a higher or lower degree level than previously offered. In some cases, approval for role expansion can be given by the Commission, though in other cases, approval must be sought from the Legislature, as discussed below. ~~Role expansion is defined as approval of a new program proposal that would: a) replace an empty cell on an institution's matrix with an "X," and/or b) add a new CIP code to the instructional role matrix template. Role expansion can occur by expanding to a higher degree level and/or expanding to a new academic subdivision grouping. Parameters for Role Expansion for 2015-19: Through the adoption of general parameters guiding role expansion, the instructional role process allows the Commission to set the parameters for new program development through broad guidelines for a five-year planning period. These parameters will become effective upon approval by the Commission and will continue in effect until the adoption of an instructional role policy for the next planning period.~~

1. [FROM Existing Definitions] Unit of Instruction: An organizational structure which offers instructional courses or other activities for academic credit. This definition pertains to institutions, branches, and campuses as well as colleges, schools, divisions, departments, institutes, and centers within institutions which offer courses or other activities for academic credit.
2. ~~Existing Unit of Instruction: A unit of instruction in place prior to August 19, 1994. Official documentation must be available to support the existence of a unit of instruction.~~
3. ~~Proposed New Unit of Instruction: A unit of instruction not in place prior to August 19, 1994. Several new units which offer academic credit are subject to Commission approval, including a new institution (including one formed by consolidation), branch, campus, school, college, division, or institute.~~
   * + - 1. Academic Unit: Organizational structure that includes individuals with faculty appointments or has a reporting relationship to the institution’s chief academic officer, usually the Provost.

Instructional Unit:

Major Instructional Unit: Division, college or school

Minor Instructional Unit: Department or other unit offering degree programs, cross-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary consortium offering coursework but no degree programs.

Non-Instructional Academic Unit: An academic unit that does not offer credit-bearing coursework or degree programs. These often include units of research, administration, and public service.

Unit of Research: An organizational structure for those activities intended to produce one or more research outcomes, including the creation of new knowledge, the organization of knowledge, and the application of knowledge. Might include such entities as research divisions, bureaus, institutes, centers, and experiment stations.

Unit of Public Service: An organizational structure established to make available to the public the various unique resources and capabilities of an institution for the specific purpose of responding to local, regional, or statewide needs or problems. ~~(From Operational Definitions adopted by the Commission on 5/20/88 and 8/19/94; and revisions adopted by the Commission on 6/21/91 and 8/19/94; Code of Ala. 1975, Chapter 5, Paragraphs 16-5-1; 16-5-8).~~

Unit of Administration:

* + - 1. Request for expansion to a higher degree level:

[ADDED from 2015-19 Guidelines, needs to be cleaned up]

~~h. Unless specifically required in writing by the accrediting body addressed to ACHE or by state statute:~~

(a) Baccalaureate to masters, masters to doctorate (prof); ~~instructional role expansion to doctoral research cannot be considered without legislative authorization.~~

(a) the institution shall attain three successful single discipline program implementations in ~~three (3) different CIP codes (2-digit classification)~~ before it may request an expansion of institutional instructional role to a higher degree level; and

(b) the institution shall not seek a fourth (4th) program ~~discipline~~ implementation before an expansion of institutional instructional role to a higher degree level request has been approved by the Commission.

* + - 1. Evaluation of instructional role change [ADDED from Guidelines: <https://www.ache.edu/wp-content/Instruction/Instr-Role.pdf> ]

1. To be considered for any expansion of instructional role to a higher level, the request must be aligned with applicable State statute recognizing it.
2. The Commission will use all of the following criteria to evaluate and approve or disapprove requests for expansion of institutional role to a higher instructional level:
3. Successful implementation of three academic programs at target degree level, [MOVED from elsewhere in Guidelines] where successful implementation is defined as two years of acceptable post-implementation information including enrollment data, assessment results of the program learning objectives, as well as survey results of faculty and student feedback regarding each program’s efficacy, and documentation of ongoing steps that have been implemented to facilitate graduates’ employment. The Commission realizes that some data measures may have limited availability or determination within a two-year timeframe.
4. The institution’s mission

(3) institutional readiness (defined as faculty credentials, financial resources, and institutional commitment);

(4) rationale for the expansion to a higher instructional level;

(5) relationship of the requested role expansion to the state's strategic needs,

(6) no substantive needless role duplication with other Alabama Public Universities; [Also refer to Alabama code 16-5-8(4)(b)]

(7) justification of having no anticipated/projected adverse influence on enrollments at public institution(s) already having that role ~~[as determined by the Academic Program Inventory CIP code(s)],~~ particularly those within 50 miles of the proposing institution or within that service area;

(8) priority consideration being accorded to institution(s) with role seniority in that service area [Also refer to Alabama Code 16-5-10];

(9) accreditation considerations;

(10) peer and other feedback.

* + - 1. Instructional Role to Include Research-Focused Doctorates

(a) The following institutions are recognized as having an instructional role commensurate with offering research-focused doctoral degrees:

Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University (AAMU)

Alabama State University (ASU)

Auburn University (AU)

University of Alabama (UA)

University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB)

University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH)

University of South Alabama (USA)

1. The Commission cannot consider requests from other institutions to expand their instructional role to include research-focused doctoral degrees without legislative authorization.

(8) Changes to Academic Units

(a) Changes to Major Units of Instruction: [MOVED from Ext/Alt] If the administrative change creates a more prominent unit of instruction such as a division or school, Commission approval as a new unit is required. may require approval if any of the following conditions are met:

(b) Changes to Minor Units of Instruction—require prior notification only: Administrative changes at the Department level, such as establishing a new department, combining two or more departments into a single department, or dividing a department into two or more departments.

(c) Changes to Non-Instructional Academic Units—require prior notification only. New Units of Instruction, Research or Service which do not offer courses or other activities for academic credit.

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**Statutory Authority:** Code of Ala. 1975, §§16-5-10.

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