

Teach Out Policy

Sofia University Teach Out Policy

Sofia University engages in rigorous and on-going evaluation of programs to ensure compliance and educational effectiveness and engagement. In the event the Board makes a decision to discontinue a program, Sofia University will make arrangements to allow students to finish their degree requirements, including the opportunity to transition to another program at Sofia University or to transfer to another institution. Students will be notified of the change with at least one semester's notice.

For students who elect to complete the program, after a review of students' degree audits, arrangements will be made to teach the remaining courses needed by students. The arrangements for a teach out will be consistent with WASC standards and with our humanistic values. Sofia University will maintain its obligations to students, including: maintaining the learning community and global engagement experience, providing resources and support services such as access to the library and data bases to provide an educational program that is of comparable quality and reasonably similar in content, and meaningful structure and scheduling of courses, support to that being offered at the time of the decision.

WASC – Senior College and University Commission

Teach-Out Plans and Agreements Policy

Definition of Teach-Out

Teach-out is a process during which an institution, or institutional location that provides 100% of at least one program, engages in an orderly closure or when, another institution provides an opportunity for the students of a closing institution to complete their program, regardless of their academic progress at the time of closure. A teach-out plan may include agreements with one or more other institutions. For more information about the definitions and required content of teach-out plans and teach-out agreements, please see the required elements set forth in this Policy and the Teach-Out Plans and Agreements Guide.

Circumstances Requiring a Teach-Out Plan

An institution accredited or pre-accredited (granted Candidacy) by the Commission must submit a teach-out plan to the Commission for approval upon the occurrence of any of the following:

1. The Commission grants Candidacy to an institution seeking accreditation;
2. The Commission places an institution on probation or issues a show-cause order;
3. An institution notifies WSCUC that it intends to cease operations entirely or close a location that provides 100% of at least one program, including if the location is being moved and is considered by the US Secretary of Education (the Secretary) to be a closed school;

4. When, in the Commission's judgment, an institution lacks sufficient resources to operate in accordance with the Commission's Standards or any time it determines that a teach-out plan is appropriate to safeguard the interests of students;
5. The Commission acts to withdraw, terminate, or suspend the accreditation or candidacy status of an institution;
6. A state licensing or authorizing agency notifies WSCUC that an institution's license or legal authorization to provide an educational program has been or will be revoked; or
7. The Secretary notifies WSCUC of the occurrence of any of the following events concerning an institution's participation in Federal Student Aid Programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (HEA):
 - The institution is participating in Title IV, HEA programs under a provisional program participation agreement and the Secretary has required a teach-out plan as a condition of participation;
 - The Secretary has placed the institution on the reimbursement payment method under Section 34 C.F.R 668.162(c) or the heightened cash monitoring payment method requiring the Secretary's review of the institution's supporting documentation under 34 C.F.R 668.162(d)(2);
 - The Secretary has initiated an emergency action against an institution, in accordance with section 487(c)(1)(G) of the HEA, or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate an institution participating in any Title IV, HEA program, in accordance with section 487(c)(1)(F) of the HEA, and that a teach-out plan is required;
 - The institution's independent auditor expresses doubt with the institution's ability to operate as a going concern or indicating an adverse opinion or a finding of material weakness related to financial stability.

Teach-Out Plan

A teach-out plan is a written plan developed by an institution if that institution, or an institutional location that provides 100% of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study. The institution must submit a teach-out plan to WSCUC for approval prior to implementation of the plan. WSCUC may require the institution to enter into a teach-out agreement (see below) with other institutions as part of its teach-out plan.

A Teach-Out Plan must:

1. Be consistent with applicable Commission Standards and policies.
2. Include a list of currently enrolled students in each program and the program requirements each student has completed.
3. Give consideration to how inactive students will be notified about the closure and their options for completing their programs.
4. Identify the names of other institutions that offer similar programs and that could potentially enter into a teach-out agreement with the institution. (See requirements for Teach-Out Agreements below.)
5. Specify and provide for notification to students of any additional costs including fees, tuition or other charges associated with completing the program. (Whenever possible, institutions are encouraged to form agreements with teach-out receiving institutions so students will not be required to pay more in tuition and fees than they would have been charged at the closing institution.)

6. Contain a communication plan that provides all potentially eligible students with information about how to obtain a closed school discharge of their federal loans and, if applicable, information on state refund policies.
7. Describe the retention plan that delineates the final disposition of the closing institution's records (e.g., student transcripts, financial aid records) and how that plan will be shared with students. (Note: records should be made available to students regardless of fees they may owe to the institution.)
8. Include all of the required Teach-Out Plan Elements.

Institutions are expected to communicate regularly with WSCUC during the teach-out process and provide periodic status updates, including copies of notifications related to the institution's closure or to teach-out options to ensure the information accurately represents students' ability to transfer credits and to determine whether corrections may be required.

Required Elements of Teach-Out Plans

Closure of an Institution

1. Background information
 - a. Rationale for institution's closure decision
 - b. Description of decision to:
 - i. Teach-out students prior to closure, or
 - ii. Enter into a teach-out agreement (see section on Teach-Out Agreements below), or
 - iii. A combination of both
 - c. Descriptive statistics including:
 - i. Enrollment by degree program and certificate program
 - ii. FTE of faculty (full time/part time)
2. FTE of staff (full time/part time)
3. Plans and options for students (currently enrolled and inactive)
4. Plans and options for faculty (part time and full time)
5. Plans and options for staff (part time and full time)
6. Academic transcripts and financial aid records
 - a. Provisions for identifying a receiving institution or entity for records
 - b. Arrangements with state or international equivalent authorizing bodies for transfer of student records as applicable
7. Governing board financial and legal obligations
 - a. Rationale for closure date
 - b. Disposition of assets
 - c. Description of funding or escrow arrangements to cover the cost of implementing the teach out plan, such as record retention and transcript services, student advising, and events or communications to inform students about their options
8. Notification/communication plan
 - a. Student communication
 - b. Staff and faculty communication

- c. Public communication
 - d. Coordination with other accrediting bodies
 - e. Coordination with state authorizing bodies
9. Timeline of teach-out events
 10. Consideration of requirements of programmatic or specialized accreditors
 11. Consideration for requirements of professional licensure and certification bodies
 12. As applicable, teach-out, transfer and articulation agreements with receiving institutions that meet the requirements for Teach-Out Agreements (see below).

Closure of a Location

Required if 100% of any program is offered at a closing location

1. Background information
 - a. Rationale for location's closure decision
 - b. Descriptive statistics including:
 - i. Enrollment by degree program and certificate program
 - ii. FTE of faculty (full time/part time)
 - iii. FTE of staff (full time/part time)
2. Plans and options for students (currently enrolled and inactive)
3. Plans and options for faculty (part time and full time)
4. Plans and options for staff (part time and full time)
5. Notification/communication plan
 - a. Student communication
 - b. Staff and faculty communication
 - c. Public communication
 - d. Coordination with other accrediting bodies
 - e. Coordination with state or international equivalent authorizing bodies
 - f. Timeline of teach-out events
6. As applicable, teach-out, transfer and articulation agreements with institutions that meet the requirements for Teach-Out Agreements (see below).

Teach-Out Agreements

If the closing institution is not able to remain open long enough to teach-out its own students, it must then rely on the assistance of one or more accredited or pre-accredited (granted Candidacy) institutions to complete the teach-out of its students.

WSCUC may require an institution to enter into a teach-out agreement with one or more institutions as part of its teach-out plan. Institutions on probation or show cause are required to enter into one or more teach-out agreements, unless WSCUC determines agreements are not needed. A teach-out agreement is a written agreement between two institutions when the institution, or a location of an institution that provides 100% of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their programs of study and enters into an agreement with another institution to teach out the program(s). When an institution enters into a teach-out

agreement with another institution, the initiating institution must submit the agreement to the Commission for approval prior to its implementation. The review and approval are handled by the Vice President liaison for the initiating institution.

The teach-out agreement may be approved only if the agreement is between institutions that are accredited by or hold candidacy status from an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (or international equivalent).

The closing institution must provide documentation that the receiving institution's accreditor has approved the agreement and has determined that the receiving institution has sufficient capacity to carry out the teach-out plan in accordance with the accreditor's standards.

In order to be approved, a teach-out agreement must:

1. Be consistent with applicable Commission Standards of accreditation and policies.
2. Provide for the equitable treatment of students by demonstrating that the receiving 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, delivery modality, and scheduling to that provided by the institution that is closing or discontinuing its location(s), and to remain stable, carry out its mission, and to meet all obligations to its existing students.
3. Provide a clear statement to students of the tuition and fees of the educational program and the number and types of credits that will be accepted by the teach-out institution.¹
4. Offer an option via the same method of delivery as the original educational program, although students may choose an option with a different method of delivery.
5. Demonstrate that the receiving institution can provide students access to the program and services without requiring them to move or travel substantial distances or duration.
6. Specify any additional costs charged to students by the receiving institution.
7. Provide for timely notification to students of any additional charges.
8. Include a statement from the receiving institution that it is not subject to any of the regulatory sanctions set forth in 34 C.F.R. §602.24 (c)(1) and 2, or the factors described under Circumstances Requiring Teach-Outs above and is not under investigation, subject to an action, or being prosecuted for an issue related to academic quality, misrepresentation, fraud, or other severe matters by a law enforcement agency; does not require approval of another accrediting agency if the receiving institution holds accreditation from that agency for the program(s) that will receive students under the agreement.
9. Provide for timely notification to any applicable programmatic accrediting agency.
10. Provide information on the number and types of credits the receiving institution is willing to accept prior to the student's enrollment.
11. Provide a complete list of students currently enrolled in each program at the institution and the program requirements each student has completed.

Institutional Closure without an Approved Teach-Out Plan or Teach-Out Agreement

If a candidate or an accredited institution closes without a teach-out plan, the Commission will work with the US Department of Education and appropriate state or international equivalent agencies, to the extent feasible, to assist students in finding reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional charges.

Revised by the Commission, November 2009 Revised, November 2013

Revised, February 2019

Revised, November 2020

¹If the student is completing a program through a written teach-out agreement or transfer, the receiving institution's accrediting organization may waive requirements regarding the percentage of credits that must be earned in order for a credential to be awarded to the student in a particular program.