



ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Form and Instructions for the Submission of Reasonable Extensions to Existing Programs: New Options, Tracks, Specializations, and Concentrations

Commission Review of Extensions to Be Added to Existing Programs: Proposals for new options, tracks, specializations, and concentrations, etc., to be added to existing programs are reviewed as substantive extensions under the Commission's "Guidelines for the Review of Extensions and Alterations of Existing Programs." The purpose of the Commission's review and decision on a proposed extension is to insure that it is reasonable in the context of the existing program and in terms of its impact.

Note: An option, track, specialization, concentration, focus, or emphasis will not be identified separately in the Commission's Academic Program Inventory, and the institution may not identify it as a degree program.

The Commission's Definitions Related to Extensions/Alterations:

Reasonable Extension or Alteration of a Unit or Program of Instruction:

Modification of an existing unit or program of instruction which does not change its essential character, integrity, or objectives. Such modifications do not create new units or programs of instruction. Program changes may include reasonable extensions such as the addition of a new area of specialization (concentration, option, emphasis, focus, track), or reasonable alterations such as a change in degree nomenclature at the same degree level (except doctoral), or a change in program title or CIP code, provided these modifications are within the Commission guidelines. Provisions for reasonable extensions or alterations of units or programs of instruction do not relate to the addition of off-campus sites or adding any new unit or program. Extensions and alterations are either non-substantive or substantive. Non-substantive extensions/alterations require Commission notification by information item. Substantive extensions/alterations require Commission approval.

Specialization, Concentration, Option, Focus, Track, Emphasis: Synonymous terms that represent a specified group of courses within a program of instruction.

For additional information, refer to the "Guidelines for the Review of Extensions and Alterations of Existing Programs" for details. The Guidelines are available on the Commission's website at the following address:

<http://www.ache.alabama.gov/Acadaffr/Extenson/Altrevue.PDF> . Specific sections of the guidelines related to this topic are attached to this document, pages 5-6.

The following form is for the submission of any proposed option, specialization, track, concentration, emphasis, or focus.

Each proposed extension must be submitted in a separate document.

To submit a proposed extension, send a transmittal letter and the completed form to:

Mrs. Ellen E. Haulman
Director of Instruction and Special Projects
Alabama Commission on Higher Education
PO Box 302000
Montgomery, AL 36130-2000

For deadlines for submission, please refer to the Commission website:
<http://www.ache.alabama.gov/CommissionMeetings/Deadlines.pdf>.

**ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTRUCTION**

**Proposal Form for the Addition of an Option, Track, Specialization, or
Concentration, etc., to an Existing Program**

1. Institution:

2. CIP Code, Program Title, and Degree Nomenclature of the existing program [see instructions below]:

Refer to the institution's Academic Program Inventory for the current CIP code, program title, and degree nomenclature for the existing program to which the extension will be added. This information is necessary for the review and evaluation of your request. Failure to include this information will cause a delay in processing the request.

The Inventory for each institution is available online at
<http://www.ache.alabama.gov/Acadaffr/ProgInv/institu.htm>.

[Example: CIP 44.0401, Public Administration, MPA]

3. Name of the proposed extension:

[Example: Option in Non-Profit Administration]

4. Fill in the table provided with the following information:
 - a. For certificate, associate, and baccalaureate programs, the number of hours in the General Education Curriculum.

 - b. For all program levels, the number of hours in the program core. The program core includes all courses in the major taken by students regardless of option, concentration, specialization, or track.

 - c. For all program levels, the number of hours in the proposed option, specialization, concentration, track, etc.

 - d. For all program levels, the total hours in the program including the new extension/alteration.

Semester Hours in the General Education Curriculum (Certificate, Associate, and Baccalaureate Programs Only)	
Semester Hours in the Program Core	
Semester Hours in the Option, Concentration, Etc.	
Total Semester Hours in the Program with the Proposed Extension/Alteration	

5. List the courses in the program core with the number of semester hours for each:

6. List the courses in the proposed option, concentration, specialization, or track, etc., with the credit hours for each:

7. What is the scope or effect of the proposed extension?

- a. How many of the major courses to be offered by the proposed extension are offered in the existing program?
- b. How will the proposed extension impact other public institutions?
- c. Will the proposed extension move the program listing to a new two-digit CIP category in the Commission's academic program inventory?

8. What is the impact of the proposed change on the existing program or unit?
- a. What will be the budgetary impact of the proposed extension?
 - b. What changes in faculty and staff will be required to implement the proposed extension/alteration?
9. If the extension will require additional resources, please provide a list of sources of funds available for the extension.

10. Please state the rationale for the extension/alteration.

Signature of Institution's Authorized Representative

Date

Title

Institution

Attachment

Alabama Commission on Higher Education

**GUIDELINES FOR THE REVIEW
OF EXTENSIONS & ALTERATIONS OF EXISTING PROGRAMS**

According to the Commission's statute, a new unit of instruction does not include reasonable extensions or alterations of existing curricula or programs that have a direct relationship to existing programs previously approved by the Commission. However, the statute also states that the Commission may, under its rule-making authority, define the character of such reasonable extensions and alterations.

A Reasonable Extension or Alteration of a Unit or Program of Instruction is defined as a modification of an existing unit or program of instruction that does not change its essential character, integrity, or objectives. Such modifications do not create new units or programs of instruction. Program changes may include the addition of a new area of specialization (concentration, option, emphasis, focus, track), or changes in degree nomenclature at the same degree level (except doctoral), or changes in program title or CIP code, provided these modifications are within Commission guidelines (see below). Provisions for reasonable extensions or alterations of units or programs of instruction do not relate to the addition of off-campus sites or adding any new unit or program.

There are two types of reasonable extensions or alterations of a unit or program of instruction:
1) Non-Substantive Change which requires notification to Commission by information item; and
2) Substantive Change which requires Commission approval.

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2. Substantive Extensions/Alterations of Existing Programs or Other Units of Instruction: A substantive change must be approved by the Commission as a reasonable extension/alteration of an existing program. All proposed extensions and alterations of existing programs and curricula not specifically defined as non-substantive in section 1 must be presented to the Commission for approval as substantive changes. If the staff determines that the proposed extension or alteration is a new program or unit and not a reasonable extension/alteration of an existing program, the institution must follow established review guidelines and procedures for reviewing new programs and units. Generally, if less than one-third of the major of the proposed extension/alteration is in common with the major of the existing program(s), the change will be considered a new program. The criteria used for evaluating the reasonableness of a proposed substantive extension or an alteration include:

- The scope or effect of the proposed extension or alteration (How many of the major courses to be offered by the proposed extension/alteration are offered in the existing program? How will the proposed extension/alteration impact other public institutions? Will the proposed extension/alteration move the program listing to a new two-digit CIP category in the Commission's academic program inventory?)
- The impact of the proposed change on the existing program or unit (What will be the budgetary impact of the proposed extension/alteration? What changes in faculty and staff will be required to implement the proposed extension/alteration?)
- The rationale for the proposed change (Is justification for proposed extension/alteration based on academic principles and/or market demand? What evidence can be presented that this proposed change will benefit students?)

Reference need or demand studies if available. How will the resulting program be improved as a result of this proposed change?)

Substantive extensions/alterations of existing programs and other units of instruction include, but are not limited to:

A. Approval of New Options/Tracks/Specializations/Concentrations as the Result of Program Mergers and Consolidations or New Course Sequences

- 1) Option must be in a field closely related to the major (usually 28 sh or more).
- 2) Generally, an option must be less than half of the total credits needed for the major (two-year), upper-division major (baccalaureate) or graduate program. (Note: The Commission's definition of minor is 18 sh generally. An option generally would require fewer hours than a minor except in cases where the major is greater than 34 sh.)
- 3) Generally, the resulting program must have a common core (excluding the general education core) for all majors regardless of which option selected, which is at least 50% of the major. Exceptions to this guideline will be considered if the institution can present convincing rationale that the 50% should be reduced.

