

## **AGREEMENTS INVOLVING JOINT AND DUAL ACADEMIC AWARDS GUIDELINES**

An agreement involving a joint or dual academic award is an agreement between UTSA and another degree-granting institution of higher education (accredited or non-accredited) anywhere in the world, for purposes of awarding academic credits and/or educational program completion credentials, such as certificates, diplomas, degrees or transcripts. The agreement (agreement) should reflect integrity, academic quality, and compliance with accreditation requirements. The typical agreement has a UTSA sponsor and a sponsor at another institution. The UTSA Sponsor is the employee responsible for developing and/or negotiating the terms and operational details of the agreement on behalf of UTSA and providing information and regular reports to every responsible party in her/his division responsible for oversight.

Before a Sponsor may implement an agreement involving a joint or dual academic award with another institution, the Sponsor must provide documented assurance that the steps in HOP 2.43 and these guidelines related to notice and implementation, designed to ensure quality and compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), have all been completed.

Once the agreement is implemented, the Sponsor of each new or continuing agreement must provide documented assurance that outcomes of the agreement are regularly assessed, and that it is periodically evaluated against UTSA's vision and mission.

### **New Agreements Involving Joint or Dual Academic Awards:**

The Sponsor must:

1. Provide notice of intent to form an agreement to:
  - a. The entire chain of command starting with the person to whom the Sponsor directly reports, through the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, concluding with the President or the President's designee for the purpose of obtaining approval to proceed. Depending upon the title of the sponsor, this may include the Department Chair, the Dean of the college, the Vice Provost and Dean of University College (for an undergraduate agreement) and/or the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School (for a graduate agreement). A sponsor must be assigned to a unit in Academic Affairs. If an individual outside Academic Affairs is contacted about a potential agreement, the individual may serve as an initial liaison to work with appropriate parties to identify a sponsor within Academic Affairs to serve as a sponsor. All agreements involving a joint or dual academic award, therefore, must reside in Academic Affairs.
  - b. The UTSA SACSCOC Liaison (Liaison), for the purpose of obtaining advice regarding compliance with relevant SACSCOC requirements and policies.

2. When approval to develop the agreement and advice from the Liaison are received, the sponsor must:
- a. Provide to every responsible party in her/his chain of command the following two documents:
    - i. The Final Agreement draft
    - ii. The *Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards Information Form* (available on the Provost's web site under [Resources for Deans and Department Chairs](#)) to summarize:
      - Identification of the type of agreement
      - Identification of the name of the entity with whom the agreement is being proposed (with SACSCOC Disclaimer Statement if agreement is made with entity not accredited by SACSCOC)
      - The name of the agreement
      - A description of the purpose of the program
      - A description of the benefits to be derived from entering into the agreement
      - Identification and description of the activities (if any) to be undertaken by establishing the agreement
      - Identification and description of the expected outcomes resulting from the activities identified in the bullet above
      - Identification and description of performance measurement metrics and the timetable that will be used to evaluate the performance and effectiveness for each of the outcomes described in the bullet above.
  - b. Arrange for the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs to provide the final signed agreement to the Liaison, who will submit the agreement to SACSCOC for evaluation of compliance with principles of accreditation. **Note:** The finalized agreement must be signed by a UTSA agent officially authorized to bind the university.
    - i. Agreements involving joint or dual academic awards are always defined as “substantive changes” by the SACSCOC and require submission of prior notification in advance of implementation of the agreement. The Liaison will submit the notification letter and agreement for approval. Formal, written acceptance of the agreement by the SACSCOC is required before implementation of the provisions of the agreement.
      1. Dual Educational Programs
        - All dual education programs must adhere to the requirements identified in SACSCOC Comprehensive Standards 3.4.4 (Acceptance of academic credit) and 3.4.7 (Consortial relationships/contractual agreements).
        - The UTSA Contact/Sponsor is required to ensure that these requirements are met. The Liaison will assist in ensuring that all agreements are in compliance with these standards.
      2. Joint Educational Programs

- All joint educational programs must adhere to the requirements identified in SACSCOC “[Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures.](#)”
  - Participating in agreements involving the offering of joint academic awards falls into three categories. Reporting responsibilities differ depending on the accreditation status of the institutions which are partnering with UTSA.
  - The UTSA SACSCOC Liaison will assist in ensuring that these requirements are met.
- ii. The SACSCOC accreditation principles include:
- Integrity (Section 1);
  - Institutional mission (Core Requirement 2.4)
  - Faculty (Core Requirement 2.8 and Comprehensive Standard 3.7.1)
  - Learning resources and services (Core Requirement 2.9)
  - Institutional Effectiveness: educational programs, to include student learning outcomes (Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1)
  - Academic program approval (Comprehensive Standard 3.4.1)
  - Admission policies (Comprehensive Standard 3.4.3)
  - Acceptance of academic credit (Comprehensive Standard 3.4.4)
  - Practices for awarding credit (Comprehensive Standard 3.4.6)
  - Consortial relationships/contractual agreements (Comprehensive Standard 3.4.7)
  - Institutional credits for a degree (Comprehensive Standards 3.5.2 and 3.6.3)
  - Student records (Comprehensive Standard 3.9.2)
  - Physical facilities (Comprehensive Standard 3.11.3)
  - Substantive change (Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1)
  - Program curriculum (Federal Requirement 4.2)
  - Publication of policies (Federal Requirement 4.3)
  - Program length (Federal Requirement 4.4)
  - Student complaints (Federal Requirement 4.5)
  - Recruitment materials (Federal Requirement 4.6)
  - Distance and correspondence education (Federal Requirement 4.8), if applicable
  - Definition of credit hours (Federal Requirement 4.9)
  - Policies: [Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards](#), [Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions](#), and [Distance and Correspondence Education](#) (if applicable)
- iii. Additional information may be requested by SACSCOC in order to ensure compliance and receive approval.
- iv. It should be noted that the SACSCOC requires notification and documentation of substantive changes by January 1 for July 1 to December 31 implementation in the same year and by July 1 for January 1 to June 30 implementation in the next year. In order to ensure these substantive changes are in compliance with the above, the UTSA

SACSCOC Liaison should be notified of pending agreements at least 1 ½ months prior to the SACSCOC submission deadline of either January 1 or July 1 (see HOP 2.35).

- c. Receive notice from the Liaison that the agreement is in compliance with SACSCOC principles and approved by the SACSCOC for implementation.

### **All Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards:**

1. Program/course outcomes described in the *Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards Information Form* must be assessed based on an annual schedule and the assessment documented. The nature of the assessment is based on the nature of the agreement:

- a. Programmatic Outcomes:
  1. Collect and analyze data required to calculate measurement metrics described in *Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards Information Form* related to activities undertaken, that are not related to student learning outcomes, such as
    - a. Faculty, student, staff participation (numbers, roles)
    - b. Research activities, collaborations (number of activities; breadth; publications or other products associated with the research)
  2. Evaluate results of analysis.
  3. Determination of changes to be made as a result of evaluation to improve the program.
- b. Student Learning Outcomes:
  1. Collect and analyze data required to calculate measurement metrics described in *Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards Information Form* related to student learning outcomes.
  4. Evaluate results of analysis.
  3. Determine changes to be made as a result of evaluation to improve the program/course so that student learning will be enhanced.
  5. Adhere to student learning assessment schedule appropriate to the needs of the program and UTSA
- c. The sponsor will assess the outcomes in partnership with individual identified as the “Signatory Name and Title” on the *Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards Information Form* (or current collaborative sponsor with whom the UTSA sponsor works at the collaborative institution). The data necessary to calculate the metrics identified in the same form will be collected and analyzed. To document that assessment has occurred, the sponsor will then complete the “Annual Assessment Report” portion of the *Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards – Annual Assessment and Periodic Review Report* and sign the form. The signature will also serve as verification that the assessment report has been shared with the current agreement sponsor at the collaborating institution/organization and with the Associate Vice Provost for Assessment.

- d. Documentation of joint and dual academic agreements provided outside UTSA academic degree programs must also be provided in the UTSA electronic assessment portfolio system, TracDat.
2. The agreement must be periodically evaluated against the purpose of the University utilizing the *Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards Information Form*:
    - a. The periodic evaluation should take place at scheduled, logical intervals (not annually) to determine if the agreement still aligns with the University mission. The purpose of the University is reflected in its current mission and vision, which may evolve over time. A periodic evaluation should always be conducted if the vision and/or mission change substantively.
    - b. The results of the evaluation, when performed, shall be recorded on the “Periodic Review” portion of the current year’s *Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards Information Form*. The evaluation should refer to the annual assessment results for the program/course outcomes recorded on past and current “Annual Assessment Reports” sections of the form. The “Decision” regarding continuation or discontinuation, based on the results of the Periodic Review, should also be checked off. The Periodic Review and Decision should be signed by the sponsor, and signatures obtained to indicate approval of the decision by the dean (or equivalent) (or designee), the Vice Provost and Dean of University College (for an undergraduate agreement), the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School (for a graduate agreement), the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Liaison.

If the decision results in discontinuation, the Liaison must provide SACSCOC required information related to its closure, which may include a Teach-Out Plan. The Liaison must notify the sponsor that SACSCOC approval of the decision (if required) has been obtained before it is discontinued.

## **FORMS AND TOOLS/ONLINE PROCESSES**

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Refer to the Provost’s website, under [Resources for Deans and Department Chairs](#) for:

- Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Checklist and Approvals Form
- Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards Information Form
- Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Annual Assessment and Periodic Review Report

Refer to [HOP 2.43](#) for the official University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) policy for statutes, requirements, standards and definitions related to agreements involving joint and dual academic awards.