

9.1 Program content

Educational programs (a) embody a coherent course of study, (b) are compatible with the stated mission and goals, and (c) are based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education.

Compliance Judgment: In Compliance

Rationale

All educational programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels embody a coherent course of study appropriate to higher education. To ensure that all curricula are directly related and appropriate to the mission and strategic goals of the institution, the development of new programs or substantial modification of existing programs, including substantive changes in delivery mode, involve several steps:

- Origination and approval by discipline faculty in consultation with senior administrators;
- Approval of the College Coordinating Council, if appropriate;
- Review by the Academic Council which consists of school deans and department chairs;
- Review by the University Planning Committee;
- Review and approval by the Courses and Curricula Committee of the Faculty Assembly for undergraduate degree material;
- Review and approval by the Graduate Advisory Council of the Faculty Assembly for graduate degree material;
- Review and approval by the Faculty Assembly;
- Review and approval by the USC Aiken Chancellor;
- Review and approval by the Academic Affairs Committee of the USC Board of Trustees;
- Review and approval by the USC Board of Trustees;

- Review by the state’s Advisory Committee on Academic Programs;
- Review by the state’s Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing;
- Review and approval by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE); and
- Review and approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, if required.

Embody a Coherent Course of Study. There are several means through which the university ensures that each program of study is coherent including review processes by subject matter experts, meeting professional accreditation standards, curriculum mapping, and appropriate sequencing of courses within each program of study to make sure students are presented information at more advanced levels as they progress in their studies.

- **Review processes to ensure coherence.** Each program proposal is carefully examined in terms of its content and structure at several stages in the review process. Discipline faculty consider the curriculum of programs offered at peer institutions as well as new developments within their areas of expertise or in pedagogy as they develop a program proposal. The [Courses and Curricula Committee](#) ^[1] ensures coherence of course sequencing during the program approval process and acts as a deputy of the USC Aiken Faculty Assembly in a deliberative and recommending capacity concerning all requests for additions, deletions, and changes in undergraduate programs, courses, and curricula. The [Graduate Advisory Committee](#) ^[2] fulfills the same role in review of graduate programs. [The South Carolina Advisory Committee on Academic Programs \(ACAP\)](#) ^[3] consists of academic officers from higher education institutions throughout the state. Consisting of educational experts, the committee reviews academic proposals and provides advice to both the institution and the [Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing](#) ^[4] - a standing committee of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. The ACAP examines both needs assessment data and program structure. The [Bachelor of Arts \(Music\) program proposal](#) ^[5] is provided as an example of the external review process.

More examples are provided in the [narrative response to Standard 14.2 – Substantive change](#) ^[6] where all new programs proposals since the last reaccreditation are provided.

- **Professional accreditation standards.** Faculty consider standards from relevant accrediting agencies in developing programs. Among other things, professional accreditation ensures the degree programs are coherent and appropriate for an institution of higher education. The Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, the Bachelor of Arts in Music Education, the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Process Engineering, and the Master of Science in Applied Clinical Psychology are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the National Association of Schools of Music, the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, and the Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council, respectively. All education degree programs are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation and the Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry is approved by the American Chemical Society.
- **Curriculum mapping.** Each USC Aiken program of study has a well designed structure that is related to stated student learning outcomes. As discussed in the [narrative response to Standard 8.2.a – Student outcomes: Educational programs](#) ^[7], curriculum maps are principally created to facilitate the identification of target areas within the curriculum that, based upon assessment data, might be in need of attention, but they also elucidate the curriculum structure. Curriculum maps indicate how each student learning outcome progresses from being introduced, reinforced, practiced, and mastered across the courses that make up the curriculum of the program. Examples of curriculum maps are provided for the [Bachelor of Art \(English\)](#) ^[8], the [Bachelor of Art in Education \(Elementary Education\)](#) ^[9], the [Bachelor of Science \(Exercise and Sports Science\)](#) ^[10], the [Bachelor of Science in Nursing \(Nursing\)](#) ^[11], the [Bachelor of Science in Business Administration \(Business Administration\)](#) ^[12],

and the [Master of Science \(Applied Clinical Psychology\)](#) ^[13] programs of study. More maps are available in the [narrative response to Standard 8.2.a – Student outcomes: Educational programs](#).^[7]

- **Course sequencing.** In accordance with the University of South Carolina [system policy ACAF 2.03 - Creation and Revision of Academic Courses](#) ^[14], courses within the curriculum are sequenced with introductory and survey classes occurring at the 100 and 200 levels, and more advanced major classes occurring at the 300 level and above. Many academic units provide samples of enrollment plans to students pursuing majors within their departments. The sample enrollment plans ensure timely completion of degrees and demonstrate a coherent and sequential course structure for the program of study. Examples of sample enrollment plans are provided for the [Bachelor of Science \(Psychology\)](#) ^[15], [Bachelor of Fine Arts \(Professional or Creative Writing\)](#) ^[16], [Bachelor of Science \(Industrial Process Engineering\)](#) ^[17], [Bachelor of Science \(Applied Computer Science\)](#) ^[18], and [Bachelor of Science in Nursing](#) ^[19] programs. Sequencing is also evident through course and grade prerequisites. Prerequisites and co-requisites for courses are included in course descriptions that are published annually in the [Academic Bulletin](#).^[20]

Compatibility with Mission and Goals. In accordance with the [strategic plan](#) ^[21] and [mission statement](#) ^[22], the University of South Carolina Aiken offers degrees in the arts and sciences and in the professional disciplines of business, education, engineering, and nursing. All courses of study are grounded in a liberal arts and science core curriculum. The University of South Carolina Aiken seeks to create an academic environment that encourages students to think critically and analytically; to communicate effectively; to appreciate cross-cultural perspectives; to explore values openly and critically; to find and examine relationships among the disciplines, concepts and areas of study; and to develop depth of knowledge in chosen fields of interest.

Program proposals are carefully scrutinized by the [University Planning Committee](#) ^[23] to ensure conformity to the mission and strategic goals of the institution. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education also carefully examines all

proposals to ensure, among other things, the program's compatibility with the mission, role, and scope of the institution. Submissions to the Commission on Higher education require the institution to document alignment, as illustrated in the [Bachelor of Science \(Applied Computer Science\)](#) ^[24] and the [Bachelor of Arts \(Chemistry\)](#) ^[25] proposals. More examples are provided in the [narrative response to Standard 14.2 – Substantive change](#) ^[6] where all new programs proposals since the last reaccreditation are provided.

Appropriate Fields of Study. The appropriateness of programs of study to higher education is at the heart of the CHE approval process. As part of the program approval process, all [educational programs have a designated Classification of Instructional Programs \(CIP\) code](#) ^[26] congruent with the United States Department of Education Classification of Instructional Programs taxonomy of academic disciplines at institutions of higher education.

Supporting Documentation

1. [Faculty Manual: Courses and Curricula Committee](#)
2. [Faculty Manual: Graduate Advisory Committee](#)
3. [South Carolina Advisory Committee on Academic Programs](#)
4. [South Carolina Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing](#)
5. [Bachelor of Arts \(Music\) program proposal](#)
6. [Narrative response to Standard 14.2 – Substantive change](#)
7. [Narrative response to Standard 8.2.a – Student outcomes: Educational programs](#)
8. [Bachelor of Art \(English\) Curriculum map](#)
9. [Bachelor of Art in Education \(Elementary Education\) Curriculum map](#)
10. [Bachelor of Science \(Exercise and Sports Science\) Curriculum map](#)
11. [Bachelor of Science in Nursing \(Nursing\) Curriculum map](#)
12. [Bachelor of Science in Business Administration \(Business Administration\) Curriculum map](#)
13. [Master of Science \(Applied Clinical Psychology\) Curriculum map](#)

14. [System policy ACAF 2.03 - Creation and Revision of Academic Courses](#)
15. [Bachelor of Science \(Psychology\) Sample enrollment plan](#)
16. [Bachelor of Fine Arts \(Professional or Creative Writing\) Sample enrollment plan](#)
17. [Bachelor of Science \(Industrial Process Engineering\) Sample enrollment plan](#)
18. [Bachelor of Science \(Applied Computer Science\) Sample enrollment plan](#)
19. [Bachelor of Science in Nursing Sample enrollment plan](#)
20. [2019-20 Academic Programs Bulletin: Examples of course requisites](#)
21. [University of South Carolina Aiken Strategic Plan](#)
22. [University South Carolina Aiken Mission Statement](#)
23. [Faculty Manual: University Planning Committee](#)
24. [Bachelor of Science \(Applied Computer Science\) program proposal](#)
25. [Bachelor of Arts \(Chemistry\) program proposal](#)
26. [South Carolina Commission on Higher Education Inventory Report with CIP codes for USC Aiken programs](#)