

# Report of the Academic Policies Committee, Spring 2025

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*World Changers Shaped Here*



**SMU**

# Committee's Work Is Principally Reactive

“The Academic Policies Committee represents the General Faculty in all academic matters...The Committee shall review standing policy regarding academic affairs *and proposed changes in those policies.*”

--From Committee's standing charges (emphasis added)

Central role of the Committee is to guarantee meaningful faculty input on any academic policy changes contemplated by the Provost's Office.

# Topics Considered 2024-2025

- Faculty Sufficiency Policy
- Defining minimum Credit Hours in Majors and Minors
- SMU Go AI Certificate Proposal
- AI Policy for Graduate Students and Dissertations



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Commission on Colleges  
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Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097

## FULL-TIME FACULTY (CORE REQUIREMENT [CR] 6.1 AND STANDARD 6.2.b)

### Guideline

**Why a Guideline?** This guideline addresses the array of full-time faculty responsibilities.

CR 6.1 *The institution employs a sufficient number of full-time faculty members to support the mission and goals of the institution. (Full-time faculty)*

Standard 6.2.b *[For each of its educational programs, the institution....] Employs a sufficient number of full-time faculty members to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review. (Program faculty)*

**Rationale.** Sufficiency of faculty resources is necessary to ensure the quality and integrity of an institution's academic programs to support its mission. Moreover, the mission of the institution will govern the type of faculty employed, including the number, distribution, and expected role of full-time faculty in academic and governance matters. The achievement of the institution's mission with respect to teaching, research, and service requires a **critical mass of full-time, qualified faculty to provide direction and oversight of academic programs**. The number of full-time faculty should be sufficient to fulfill basic faculty functions – curriculum design, development, and evaluation; teaching; identification and assessment of appropriate student learning outcomes; student advising; research, scholarship, and creative activity; and institutional and professional service. Consequently, an institution relies on full-time faculty engagement in all aspects of the academic program; its quality and integrity are not driven solely by the number of hours that full-time faculty are teaching.

#### **Distinguishing CR 6.1 and Standard 6.2.b**

CR 6.1: As part of its case for compliance, it is advised that an institution (1) define full-time and part-time faculty; and (2) identify the expected role, responsibilities, and functions of full-time faculty, as well as its policies and procedures for addressing any work overloads.

Standard 6.2.b: As part of its case for compliance, it is advised that an institution will (1) define faculty oversight of its academic programs (beyond just broad areas such as *social sciences or humanities, or broad degree categories such as Associate in Arts or Bachelor of Science*) and academic processes; (2) describe the distribution/disaggregation of full-time and part-time faculty by academic program; (3) describe the responsibilities and functions of full-time faculty charged to support and ensure the quality and integrity of each academic program; and (4) provide persuasive evidence that the number of full-time faculty in each academic program is adequate to fulfill those responsibilities. Institutions committing such evidence to tables should use institutionally-generated tables/charts as appropriate in lieu of those formerly provided by SACSCOC.

#### **Document History**

Approved: SACSCOC Board of Trustees, June 2014  
Revised for 2018 Principles: SACSCOC Board of Trustees, June 2019  
Revised: Executive Council, March 2024

# Faculty Sufficiency Policy

# Faculty Sufficiency Policy

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## What it is:

- A threshold set for the sake of determining if we are meeting marks for accreditation

## What it is not:

- A change in anyone's duties or titles

*This policy is for the sake of determining whether SMU is meeting its goals for full-time faculty per our accreditor—which requires us to set a goal*

# The Faculty Sufficiency Policy Overview

*Reminder:  
Only for the sake of determining  
whether SMU has met the  
threshold or not, as required for  
accreditation*

- Suggested threshold of 50% to match peer institutions
- Next problem: How does SMU define full-time faculty?

## Faculty Sufficiency Policy Section 3

Full-time, voting faculty are defined as faculty contracted to the university on an annual or recurring basis and whose assigned teaching load is four, three-credit courses per academic term, or the equivalent load through a combination of teaching, research, and/or service. Any full-time, voting faculty members may serve as Department Chairs, Program Directors, Assistant or Associate Deans, and/or Deans and may also serve on faculty committees with responsibility for curriculum review or oversight. Full-time, tenured, voting faculty may serve on promotion and tenure committees, in accordance with policy 2.3.

Academic Professionals, who have been hired as full-time staff, but who have appropriate academic credentials and who have for-credit teaching assigned as part of their duties are considered full-time, non-voting faculty.

# The Faculty Sufficiency Policy

## *Questions and Concerns*

*Reminder:  
Only for the sake of determining  
whether SMU has met the  
threshold or not, as required for  
accreditation*

What about areas where professionals come in and teach, particularly in graduate programs?

Does the policy distinguish between tenure track lines and non-tenure track lines?

Is this further eroding tenure?

Are there any potential benefits for faculty?

The policy uses prefixes to measure.  
Undergraduate courses should balance with graduate courses more likely to be taught by professionals

For the sake of accreditation and this policy, there is no distinction. Titles are irrelevant for SACSCOC

TBD

A threshold to point to for advocating for more full-time positions

# Approved and making its way to the Provost's Executive Committee (PEC)



# Defining Minimum Credit Hours in Majors and Minors

## SMU Undergraduate Degree Definitions and Overlap Policies (for Undergraduate Catalog)

The Problem:  
Several degrees could be completed with effectively the same coursework

The Solution:  
Defining unique credit hours for majors and minors in the catalogue policy

**Major:** An undergraduate major is a coherent primary program within an academic discipline or interdisciplinary subject area. It requires a minimum of thirty credit hours to complete a major. Individual schools and colleges establish the upper limit of courses/credit-hours required for a particular major. The major appears on both the diploma and the transcript. Fifteen credit hours must be unique to the major and may not count toward the fulfillment of additional majors or minors. Students at SMU may complete majors in multiple colleges or schools.

**Minor:** An undergraduate minor is a focused area of study not necessarily related to the major and may be completed in another school or college from the student's major(s). Minors require a minimum of fifteen credit hours. Nine credit hours must be unique to the minor and may not count toward the fulfillment of majors or additional minors. The minor appears only on the transcript.

# Specializations and Concentrations

**Specialization:** A specialization is a formally recognized group of interrelated courses within an approved major field. A specialization differs from a concentration or track in that it appears on the transcript. A specialization is not reflected on the diploma. Students may complete more than one specialization, if their major is structured to accommodate this. However, students completing more than one specialization within the same major may not double count courses across specializations. Specializations are not standalone credentials and may not be awarded outside of the major with which they are associated.

**Concentration/Track:** A concentration or track is a focus within an approved major field of study. Students may have more than one concentration or track, if their major is structured to allow this. However, students completing more than one track or concentration within a single major may not double count courses across concentrations/tracks. The concentration or track does not appear on the diploma or the transcript. Concentrations/tracks are not standalone credentials and may not be awarded outside of the major with which they are associated.

Approved by the APC and then the EPC  
Effective Fall 2025



# SMUGo AI Certification

The screenshot shows the SMU Continuing and Professional Education website. The header includes the SMU logo, navigation links for Programs, Customized Learning, and Help, and a search icon. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: NONCREDIT PROGRAMS FOR CAREER GROWTH · PROGRAM TYPES · CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS. The title 'Certificate Programs' is prominently displayed. Below the title, there is a list of certificate programs on the left and a descriptive paragraph on the right.

**SMU** EXPLORE SMU

Continuing and Professional Education Programs Customized Learning Help

NONCREDIT PROGRAMS FOR CAREER GROWTH · PROGRAM TYPES · CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

## Certificate Programs

**Certificate Programs**

- AI Bootcamp
- Business Analytics
- Certified CMMC Assessor
- Certified CMMC Professional
- Cybersecurity Bootcamp
- Data Literacy for Business

SMU Continuing and Professional Education (CAPE) offers a wide variety of noncredit certificate programs in high-growth professions to accelerate career advancement. Expanded knowledge, up-to-date skills, stronger resumes—the results can drive your success in a competitive job market.

Backed by SMU's world-class reputation, SMU CAPE instructors are experienced practitioners in their fields, teaching the essential skills employers seek today. Building your current career? Changing course? Join us on campus to earn your certificate, or complete one of our programs online. You'll be well-prepared with the learning that propels professional success.

# Generative AI Policy

The Problem:  
What is the policy on Generative AI in theses and dissertations?

Graduate students are required to discuss any use of generative AI in their dissertation or thesis with their advisor and committee. This is to ensure that their use and citation of generative AI tools meets the standards set by the advisor and committee. The use of generative tools in a way that is not deemed acceptable by the dissertation or thesis committee can constitute a violation of SMU's Honor Code and may result in sanctions including suspension or dismissal. In addition, if an unacceptable use of generative AI comes to light after approval of the dissertation or thesis, approval may be revoked, and the dissertation or thesis may be retracted.

Revoking dissertation/thesis but not degree

There is currently no policy on revoking degrees at SMU to draw from



# Wrapping up the Year and Starting in Fall 2025

1. A catalog policy on credit hours and zero credit courses
2. A proposal for a policy on the program sustainability reviews.
3. A proposed catalog policy that limits non-degree seeking, visiting, undergraduate students
4. Continuing dialogue with the bookstore

