



**ASCENT**  
COLLEGE

## **Teach-Out Policy When Closing a Branch Campus or Degree Program**

Updated April 2021

### A. Purpose

The decision to close a branch campus or degree program requires substantial planning and careful consultation with all those affected. Every effort should be made to inform everyone affected as fully as possible about the conditions leading to a decision of such importance, and all available information should be shared. As the immediate interests of current students and faculty are most directly affected, their present and future prospects require sensitive and timely attention and involvement. The college teach-out policy aims to protect the interests of students and faculty and to satisfy the requirements established for the college by our accrediting agency, the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), and State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) during this process.

### B. Definitions

1. **Branch Campus.** The branch campus refers to Ascent College campus located at 1705 Todds Lane, Hampton, Virginia.
2. **Degree Program.** Degree Programs are those located in the college's current Academic Catalog.
3. **Date of program termination.** The date on which the educational program is closed permanently to admissions.
4. **Date of program closure.** The date on which the last student in teach-out has completed the educational program.
5. **Notification.** A letter from an institution's chief executive officer, or his/her designated representative, to ABHE and SCHEV summarizing a proposed change, providing the intended implementation date, and listing the complete physical address, if the change involves the termination of the branch campus. The policy and procedures for

reporting and review of institutional substantive change are outlined in the ABHE Manual and SCHEV regulations.

6. ABHE Accreditation and SCHEV Liaison. The individual at the institution who is responsible for ensuring the timely submission of annual institutional profiles and other reports as requested by the Commission on Accreditation and SCHEV in the years between accreditation.
7. Teach-Out Plan. The written plan and subsequent process by which the college provides instructional and academic support services to students enrolled at the terminated campus or the educational program that has been discontinued. The teach-out process often extends well beyond the termination date (the date on which the site or program is closed permanently to admissions) to allow time for enrolled students to complete their programs in a reasonable amount of time. The plan must provide for the equitable treatment of students if an institution ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study. The plan may include a teach-out agreement between institutions.
8. Teach-Out Agreement. A written agreement between accredited institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students if one of those institutions stops offering an educational program before all students enrolled in that program complete the program.

### C. Policy

- 1) In accordance with Federal regulations, the college is required to submit a teach-out plan to ABHE and to SCHEV for approval if any of the following occurs:
  - a. The institution notifies the Commission that it intends to cease operations entirely or close a location that provides at least 50% of at least one educational program.
  - b. The Commission terminates accreditation or the candidacy of an institution.
  - c. The USDOE notifies the Commission that it has initiated an emergency action against an institution or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate an institution participating in any Title IV, Higher Education Act program.
  - d. A State Licensing or authorizing agency notifies the Commission that an institution's license or legal authorization to provide an educational program has been or will be revoked.

More specifically, if the college decides to close an educational program, approved branch campus, or the entire institution, ABHE requires that the college choose one of the following options:

- e. Execute a Teach-Out Plan. The teach-out option occurs when the institution "teaches out" currently enrolled students; no longer permanently admits students to programs; and terminates the educational program, the operations of an approved instructional site or a branch campus, or the operations of an institution.
  - f. Develop and implement a Teach-Out Agreement. The teach-out agreement option occurs when the institution enters into a contract with another institution or organization to teach out the educational programs or program.
- 2) Teach-out plans and teach-out agreements will be approved by ABHE and SCHEV in advance of implementation. To be approved, a teach-out plan must include the following information:
- a. Dates of termination and closure;
  - b. An explanation of how affected parties (students, faculty, staff) will be informed of the impending closure;
  - c. An explanation of how students will be helped to complete their programs of study with minimal disruption or additional expense;
  - d. Signed copies of teach-out agreements with other institutions, if any;
  - e. How faculty and staff will be redeployed or helped to find new employment; and
  - f. If closing an institution, arrangement for the storing of student records, disposition of final financial resources and other assets.

The teach-out plan should make appropriate distinctions between undergraduate prospective and currently enrolled students.

As soon as the decision to close is made, the institution should provide to ABHE and SCHEV: (1) notification of the intended closing of a program, branch campus, or institution and (2) a teach-out plan for approval (including any teach-out agreements with other institutions).

ABHE and SCHEV may request additional information for the teach-out plan before approving the teach-out plan.

### 3) Affected Groups

- a. Prospective undergraduate students with active applications awaiting admission decisions to an affected branch campus or degree program should be immediately advised to seek alternative majors or institutions. Prospective students should be given as much time as practicable to make this decision. The academic department or program also should immediately suspend recruiting and admission of new students.
- b. Currently enrolled undergraduate students who have fewer than 60 credit hours in a terminated branch campus or degree program, after consideration of their circumstances and potential impacts of college actions on such students, should be immediately offered to select a different major or different institution. Departmental faculty or staff should advise such students regarding appropriate options.
- c. Currently enrolled students in a degree program at the upper division level who have 60 or more credit hours applicable to the major in their program of study should be given a high priority in college efforts to enable them to complete their degree programs. An academic plan should be developed for each student that enables him/her to complete the curricular program requirements within the teach-out period. Students should expect to take a sufficient number of courses each semester, including summers, to enable them to complete all requirements within the teach-out period. The teach-out period, typically, will continue for no more than two academic years following the date on which the notice of termination is given to students. Programs, on a case-by-case basis, will determine the necessary length of a teach-out program. Students who do not make adequate progress on their academic plan for teach-out will be advised into another major. If a course required for the degree is not offered in the teach-out period, students may make arrangements, with the department's consent, to take the course at another institution as a transient student and transfer the credit, or to arrange with the department to complete the requirements in some other academically appropriate fashion. Students are required to have ongoing contact with their academic advisors during the teach-out period to ensure that their academic plans are current and consistent with the projected course offerings.
- d. Undergraduate students previously admitted into a terminated educational branch campus or degree program who are not currently enrolled shall have their requests for readmission made on a case-by-case basis. At a minimum, the decision to readmit shall consider the ability of the student to complete the program within the teach-out period, the ability of the college to offer needed courses within the teachout period, and the student' s previous performance within the terminated educational program.
- e. Faculty should be involved in and informed of plans to terminate a branch campus or degree program at the earliest possible stage of consideration.

Faculty shall be informed of any potential layoff considerations at the earliest possible stage of consideration and be kept apprised plans to terminate a branch campus or degree program.

#### D. Responsibilities

- 1) The Academic Dean (and relevant Department Chair) whose scope of authority involves an educational program or branch being considered for termination shall inform and involve affected faculty and students at the earliest possible stage of consideration. Once the decision to pursue closure of an educational program or branch has been made, the Dean shall forward a proposal to the President, which must be consistent with and allow for the reporting timelines required by the ABHE as reflected in Substantive Change Policy and by SCHEV. The proposal should be developed with the involvement of faculty and students as possible and should outline the:
  - a. Nature of the program,
  - b. Reasons for termination,
  - c. Number of students currently enrolled,
  - d. Progression statistics of students in the program,
  - e. Resources used to offer the program,
  - f. Financial savings, if any, realized from the termination,
  - g. Explanation of how any students enrolled in the program will be helped to complete their program,
  - h. Assessment of whether any faculty will be adversely affected by termination, and
  - i. Explanation of how affected individuals will be informed of the planned termination.

The President will work with the Dean to develop and coordinate presentations on the proposal to the President's Cabinet and the College Board of Control. Once both bodies have approved requests for approval of termination of the program or branch, the Dean shall insure the ABHE Accreditation and SCHEV Liaison is notified and the Liaison provides appropriate notification of ABHE and SCHEV.

The Dean shall work with the ABHE Accreditation and SCHEV Liaison to develop a teach-out plan, and implement the notification elements of the plan for students and faculty. Both current and prospective students should be notified as soon as practicable. The Dean is responsible for on-going monitoring and reporting on implementation of the teach-out plans. A monitoring report should be used to provide periodic reports to the President and ABHE Accreditation and SCHEV Liaison on the status of the teach-out. The monitoring report shall also be used to advise students of their progress in the teach-out.

- 2) The ABHE Accreditation and SCHEV Liaison will be informed by the Dean of pending decisions to consider termination of an educational program or branch. Once the President's Cabinet and the College Board of Control have approved a proposal for termination at a date conditional upon ABHE and SCHEV notification and approval, the Liaison will work with the Dean to insure the materials needed for notification and approval by ABHE and SCHEV are developed. The Liaison will notify ABHE and SCHEV promptly of the proposal to terminate and upon receipt of approval by ABHE and SCHEV, will communicate with the Dean and President. The Liaison will maintain a record of the approval and coordinate with the President and the Dean to receive on-going updates on the status of the teach-out. The Liaison and the Dean will notify the President of any difficulties encountered in implementation of the teach-out plan or termination of programs or branches.

