STATE BOARD FOR TECHNICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE NUMBER: **3-1-301.1**

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TITLE: **ACADEMIC PROGRAM EVALUATION**

**POLICY
REFERENCE NUMBER:**   **3-1-301**

**DIVISION OF
RESPONSIBILITY:**   **ACADEMICS, STUDENT AFFAIRS & RESEARCH**

DATE APPROVED: **September 12, 2024**

DATE OF LAST REVISION: **September 12, 2024**

I. PURPOSE

The evaluation guidelines for the continuation of educational programs in the SC Technical College System (SCTCS, System) were adopted by the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education (SBTCE) on June 8, 1977. These guidelines provide standards by which specific evaluative criteria and procedures are to be developed and implemented. The purpose of the evaluation is two-fold. First, through the evaluation process the SBTCE will fulfill its responsibility to ensure the operation of adequate and high quality diploma and degree programs as specified by S.C. Code Annotated §59-53-50. Second, the SBTCE will ensure the reporting of data to the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) for the evaluation of degree programs for purposes of recommending termination as specified by S.C. Code Annotated §59-53-40.

II. OVERVIEW OF CRITERIA AND TIMELINE

1. Program Evaluation Timeline

SCTCS colleges will submit annually, by the announced deadline, to the System Office Vice President for Academics, Student Affairs, and Research (ASAR) an evaluation report on degree, diploma, and certificate programs. The System Office Division of Academics, Student Affairs and Research will evaluate individual college reports, develop and analyze system reports, and make available on the SCTCS website an annual system-wide program evaluation report. Reports on degree programs will be forwarded to the South Carolina CHE on or before December 1 of each year.

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2. Program Completion Data

Each college must establish procedures for awarding degrees, diplomas, and certificates for the successful completion of approved programs of study. All awards conferred by a college must be reported. Colleges should confirm the number of recognized completions by the type of program, level of award, and date conferred. Awards may be conferred based on the approval of a student's application for graduation or administratively by the college, provided the college has reviewed the student's record and confirms the required coursework and related activities have been completed.

The System President/Executive Director has the authority to approve the awarding of certificates, diplomas, and degrees in exceptional cases where previously approved curricula have been closed/terminated by the college (SBTCE Policy 3-1-502, Procedure 3-1-502.1).

The reporting period for program completion data is July 1 through June 30 and is in compliance with the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) standard reporting period for completions.

3. Overview of Evaluation Criteria

The System Office will provide detailed instructions and guidance to facilitate collection and submission of program evaluation criteria. Each college is required to report academic program productivity in terms of enrollment, number of graduates, and the percent of graduates employed in jobs related to program of study or continuing their education. College officials must determine whether programs that do not meet established criteria and standards shall be continued or closed. Any college wishing to continue a program that does not meet the minimum productivity standards, as outlined in this procedure, must provide to ASAR during the program evaluation reporting period a written plan to improve the program's performance.

In the program evaluation report, colleges will refer to each program by the curriculum code and title based on the System's Academic Affairs Program Inventory as approved by the SBTCE.

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4. <u>Graduate Placement Rate</u>

Graduate placement is determined by the number of graduate awards employed in a job related to their program of study plus the number of graduate awards identified as continuing their education divided by the total number of available graduate awards during the reporting periods.

Graduates who meet an exclusion criteria as defined by IPEDS or are not actively seeking employment are excluded from the graduate placement criterion and not included in the System's calculation of the placement rate.

III. **EVALUATION GUIDELINES**

1. <u>Degrees and Diplomas</u>

All associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, and diploma programs are subject to review and evaluation once they have graduated three classes.

An approved diploma or degree program is subject to annual review and evaluation based on the following minimum criteria and productivity standards:

i.   <u>Number of Graduates</u>: Each diploma or degree program must produce six graduates during the evaluation year or an average of six graduates over the most recent three-year period.

ii. <u>Program Enrollment</u>: Each diploma program must have enrolled 12 students who generated nine full-time equivalents (FTEs) in the most recent fall semester.

Each degree program must have enrolled 16 students who generated 12 FTEs in the most recent fall semester.

iii. <u>Graduate Placement</u>: Fifty percent of the graduates of a diploma or degree program available for job placement must be employed in a job related to their program of study or continuing their education.

These evaluation criteria are used to determine a degree or diploma program's status.

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i. Good: All degree and diploma programs that meet or exceed the minimum criteria and productivity standards receive a good status. Colleges may advertise, enroll, and graduate students from programs with a good status.

ii. Probation: Programs subject to review which do not meet one or more minimum productivity standards must be further evaluated. In this case, a specific plan for improvement, referred to as an Override Request, must be provided to ASAR staff if the college seeks to continue the program. If the Override Request is approved, the program is placed on probation. A program may continue with a probationary status for a period of three consecutive years. Colleges may continue to advertise, enroll, and graduate students from programs with a probationary status.

iii. Suspension: Programs on probation that do not meet minimum productivity standards for three consecutive years will be suspended, unless adequate justification to retain the program is made by the college to ASAR staff. The justification for an extended probationary period must be submitted by the Chief Academic Officer and contain documentation indicating the program will meet minimum productivity standards for the next program evaluation cycle. The program may continue on a suspended status for three consecutive years. Colleges may graduate students from programs with a suspended status but are not permitted to advertise suspended programs or enroll students into such programs.

iv. Closed: If there is no justification to reinstate a program on suspension for three consecutive years, the program is closed/terminated (formerly referred to as "canceled"). Colleges are not permitted to advertise closed programs nor enroll or graduate students from such programs. To reactivate a closed degree or diploma program, the college must submit a new program proposal to the SBTCE.

The following are exceptions for degree and diploma programs:

i. Associate in Arts (AA) and Associate in Science (AS) statistics are reported separately by the colleges but are combined by the System Office ASAR staff for determining minimum productivity criteria and standards.

ii. The Associate in Applied Science (AAS) with a major in Vocational-Technical Education is excluded from all program evaluation criteria.

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iii.   The AAS with a major in General Technology is subject to evaluation by only the graduate placement rate criterion. The primary and secondary specialties for General Technology majors must also be reported.

iv.   The AAS with a major in General Engineering Technology is subject to evaluation by only the graduate placement rate criterion.

v.   A diploma which has a parent degree program can be termed a stop-out and is evaluated as good-stop-out, even though the diploma may not meet the minimum criteria and standards. However, if the parent degree program is suspended or canceled, the diploma program becomes a stand-alone and cannot receive a status of good-stop-out.

2.   Certificates

Certificate programs are evaluated only if graduates of the programs are produced. If no graduates are produced, and if there is no enrollment in the program, the certificate is maintained in an inactive status. Certificate programs subject to evaluation and review must meet the following minimum productivity standard.

i.   Graduate Placement: Fifty percent of the graduates of a certificate program available for placement must be employed in jobs related to the program of study or continuing their education.

This evaluation criterion is used to determine a certificate program's status.

i.   Good: All certificate programs that meet or exceed the 50 percent graduate placement rate receive a good status. Colleges may advertise, enroll, and graduate students from programs with a good status.

Certificate programs subject to review which do not meet the minimum productivity standard of a 50 percent graduate placement rate must be further evaluated by the college to determine if they should be continued.

ii.   Probation: Certificate programs subject to review that do not meet the minimum productivity standard will be placed on probation for one year. Colleges may continue to advertise, enroll, and graduate students from programs with a probationary status.

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iii. <u>Suspension</u>: Certificate programs subject to review on probation for one year that do not meet the minimum productivity standard during the following evaluation year will be placed on suspension for one year. Colleges must provide justification, referred to as an Override Request, based on local labor market needs to continue a suspended certificate program. Colleges may graduate students from programs with a suspended status, but colleges are not permitted to advertise suspended programs or enroll students into such programs.

iv. <u>Closed</u>: Suspended certificate programs are closed after one year in a suspended status. A college may elect to close a certificate program at any time provided there are no students enrolled in the program. Colleges are not permitted to advertise closed programs nor enroll or graduate students from such programs. If a certificate program does not enroll students for three consecutive evaluation years, the program is closed unless the college justifies retention of the program.

IV. **SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN REPORTS**

Supplementary written program evaluation reports are required for the General Technology major and degree and diploma programs which do not meet minimum productivity standards. The System Office Division of Academics, Student Affairs, and Research will maintain written guidelines for the content of these reports.