

Texas Administrative Code

TITLE 19	EDUCATION
PART 1	TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
CHAPTER 2	ACADEMIC AND WORKFORCE EDUCATION
SUBCHAPTER G	APPROVAL PROCESS FOR NEW DOCTORAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMS
RULE §2.146	Criteria for New Doctoral and Professional Degree Programs

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- (a) All proposed doctoral and professional degree programs must meet the criteria set out in this subsection, in addition to the general criteria in subchapter A, §2.5 of this chapter (relating to General Criteria for Program Approval).
- (b) Each institution must provide evidence in its application that a proposed doctoral and professional program meets the following criteria.
- (1) Program Need. To meet the requirements of subchapter A, §2.5(a)(1) and (2) of this chapter, the institution must be able to demonstrate present and future workforce need of the state and nation. There should be a ready job market for graduates of the program. In assessing the need for the program, the institution should consider labor market information and other data provided by Board Staff in response to the institution's Planning Notification. While Board Staff may also recommend or use generally available information to assess the need for the program, particularly in cases where labor market needs are changing rapidly, it is the responsibility of the institution requesting a doctoral or professional program to demonstrate that a workforce need for the proposed program exists. Acceptable documentation includes:
- (A) An analysis of national data showing the number of doctoral or professional degrees being produced annually in the discipline and comparing that to the numbers of professional job openings for those degrees in the discipline as indicated by sources such as the main professional journal(s) of the discipline.
- (B) The institution must also provide data on the enrollments, number of graduates, and capacity to accept additional students of other similar doctoral programs in Texas, demonstrating that current production levels of graduates are insufficient to meet projected workforce needs. The Board may consider local, state, or national workforce needs in this analysis.
- (C) The institution should also provide evidence of student demand for a doctoral program in the discipline, such as potential student survey results and documentation that qualified students are not gaining admission to existing programs in Texas.
- (2) Adequate Financing. In assessing whether the program meets the requirements of subchapter A, §2.5(a)(4) and (5) of this chapter, the program must demonstrate that there is adequate financing available to initiate the proposed program without reducing funds for existing programs or weakening them in any way. For doctoral programs, institutions shall offer comprehensive financial assistance packages to recruit and retain high-quality doctoral students.
- (3) Faculty and Resources. In assessing the criteria under subchapter A, §2.5(a)(7) of this chapter, Board Staff shall ensure that each institution demonstrates a strong core of qualified doctoral faculty capable of guaranteeing a high-quality doctoral program with the potential to attain national prominence. The institution must employ at least one core faculty member active in the department or unit offering the proposed program at the time of application. The institution must also provide an approved hiring schedule demonstrating the ability to hire any additional faculty appropriate to support the projected number of enrolled students. The institution must provide documentation on a schedule determined by Board Staff of the faculty hires through submission of a letter of intent, curriculum vitae or equivalent documentation of faculty credentials in a format determined by the Board, and a list of courses in the curriculum that the faculty hire would be qualified to teach. The program must not result in such a high ratio of doctoral students to faculty as to make individual guidance prohibitive. Evidence of quality faculty may include:
- (A) Doctoral faculty, holding the Doctor of Philosophy degree or its equivalent from a variety of graduate schools of recognized reputation.
- (B) Professors and associate professors have achieved national or regional professional recognition.

(C) Core faculty are currently engaged in productive research and have published the results of such research in the main professional journals of their discipline.

(D) Faculty come from a variety of academic backgrounds and have complementary areas of specialization within their field.

(E) Some doctoral faculty have experience directing doctoral dissertations.

(F) In evaluating faculty resources for proposed degree programs, the Board shall consider only those degrees held by the faculty that were issued by:

- (i) United States institutions accredited by accrediting agencies recognized by the Board; or
- (ii) institutions located outside the United States that have demonstrated that their degrees are equivalent to degrees issued from an institution in the United States accredited by accrediting agencies recognized by the Board.

(4) Support Staff. Each program must have an adequate number of support staff to provide sufficient services for both existing programs and any proposed increases in students and faculty in the proposed program.

(5) Facilities and Resources. To meet the criteria in subchapter A, §2.5(a)(7) of this chapter, each program must include adequate facilities and resources to accommodate the program, including:

(A) Office space for the faculty, teaching assistants, and administrative and technical support staff; seminar rooms; computer and electronic resources; and other appropriate facilities such as laboratories.

(B) Library and IT Resources. Library and information technology resources must be adequate for the proposed program and meet the standards of the appropriate accrediting agencies. Library resources should be strong in the proposed doctoral program field and in related and supporting fields.

(6) Quality of the Program and Alignment with the Long-Range Plan. In addition to meeting the criteria in subchapter A, §2.5(a)(6) and (8) of this chapter, an institution must demonstrate the quality of a proposed program by the meeting the following:

(A) An institution shall be required to utilize disciplinary experts to review the proposed program to assess the overall quality of the program.

(B) Elements of a high-quality program, may include, but are not limited to:

(i) Design of proposed program as evidenced by the program's ability to prepare a graduate student for teaching, creative activities, research, or other professional activities. The program must be characterized by freedom of inquiry and expression.

(ii) Availability of quality undergraduate and graduate programs in a wide number of disciplines at the undergraduate and master's levels. The institution must also offer high-quality programs in other related and supporting doctoral areas.

(iii) Quality Planning. The proposed program shall be carefully planned and result in a degree plan that is clear, comprehensive, and generally uniform. The program may include flexibility to meet the legitimate professional interests of doctoral-level degree or professional degree students. Evidence of a carefully planned, high-quality program includes:

(I) A logical sequence of degree requirements;

(II) Alternative methods of determining mastery of program content, such as competency-based education, prior learning assessment, and other options for reducing students' time to degree;

(III) Specialization and breadth of education, with rules for the distribution of study to achieve both, including interdisciplinary programs if indicated; and

(IV) A research dissertation or equivalent requirements to be judged by the doctoral faculty on the basis of quality.

(iv) External Learning Experiences. In disciplines that require them program must include plans for external learning experiences for students, such as internships, clerkships, or clinical experiences, in disciplines that require them.

(v) Accreditation Standards. Each proposed program shall meet the criteria of its accrediting Board and doctoral or professional program criteria of relevant professional groups and organizations, such as the Council of Graduate Schools, the Modern Language Association, the American Historical Association, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, or other bodies where relevant to the particular discipline.

(vi) Teaching Loads of Faculty. Unless justification is provided in the application, teaching loads of faculty in the doctoral or professional program should not exceed two courses per term. The mix of courses shall include advanced courses and seminars with low enrollments.

Source Note: The provisions of this §2.146 adopted to be effective November 28, 2022, 47 TexReg 7895