Standardized Description of UT Knoxville for Programmatic Accreditation

(Created May 2015; revised January 2023)

Purpose
The SACSCOC policy Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies states,

“SACSCOC requires candidate and member institutions holding accredited or candidacy (pre-accredited) status from more than one U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting agency (https://ope.ed.gov/dapip/#/agency-list) to keep each agency apprised of any change in its status with one or another agency. Any institution seeking or holding accreditation from more than one USDOE-recognized accrediting agency must represent itself accurately to each agency with regard to purpose, governance, programs, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituents, and must keep each USDOE-recognized accrediting body, including SACSCOC, apprised of any change in its status with one or another accrediting agency.”

When preparing accreditation reports that require a description of the University, the mission and vision statements (see https://www.utk.edu/vision accessed January 23, 2023) or other language relating to the items previously listed, departments should contact the SACSCOC Liaison to ensure each uses similar language and maintains compliance with this policy. This document provides recommended text (abbreviated and expanded descriptions) and is maintained by the Office of Accreditation and posted to https://sacs.utk.edu/programmatic-accreditation/ for department use.

Abbreviated Description of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UT Knoxville) is the flagship, land-grant, comprehensive research university in the University of Tennessee System (UT System). The University offers more than 300 degree programs to its 33,805 students and is authorized to award bachelor, master, professional and doctoral degrees. UT Knoxville’s Carnegie Classification is Research University/very high and holds the Elective Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. UT Knoxville is one of the nation’s oldest institutions of higher education. Established in 1794 as Blount College, it was renamed East Tennessee College (1820) and again as East Tennessee University (1840). The Civil War forced the institution to close, and its buildings were used as a hospital. The University reopened after the war and, in 1869, was chosen as Tennessee’s land-grant institution, changing its name to the University of Tennessee (UT) in 1879. The medical campus in Nashville was acquired by the University in 1879 and moved to Memphis in 1911.
The UT System was created in 1968, bringing various entities together under one Board of Trustees.

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate, masters, educational specialist, and doctorate degrees. Degree-granting institutions also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels. Questions about the accreditation of University of Tennessee, Knoxville may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC’s website (www.sacscoc.org). UT Martin (1951), UT Chattanooga (1910), UT Health Science Center (1972), and UT Southern (2021) carry separate regional accreditation by SACSCOC.

Since creation of the state lottery that provides funds for the Tennessee Hope Scholarship, applications to UT have increased, and the quality of incoming freshmen has risen continuously during the past decade. The incoming fall 2022 freshman class has an average ACT composite score of 27.7 and average high school GPA of 4.07 (data from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment “5 Year Trend of First-Time Freshmen By Equivalent ACT and GPA Group Fall 2018-2022”, https://oira.utk.edu/).

Expanded Description of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville
NOTE: Delete sections as appropriate depending upon the requirements of each programmatic accreditor’s guidelines.

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The UT System Board of Trustees, acting through a president and other officers, leads the UT System through the adoption and administration of system-wide human resources, financial management, and academic policies (https://policy.tennessee.edu/ut-system-policies/, accessed January 23, 2023). Randy Boyd became President of the UT System on March 27, 2020. The President and the UT System Administration maintain their principal offices on the Knoxville campus. The organization of the UT System and Board of Trustees is defined in the Tennessee Code Annotated (Title 49, Chapter 9) and the Board of Trustees Charter Provisions and Bylaws (https://trustees.tennessee.edu/bylaws/, accessed January 23, 2023). The UT System President and Board of Trustees report to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (www.tn.gov/thec, accessed January 23, 2023).

The President, his staff, and the Board of Trustees review the UT System Mission Statement, the UT System Administration Mission Statements (https://tennessee.edu/mission-statements/, accessed January 23, 2023), and the mission statements of each campus and institute to ensure system integrity and identity. The Knoxville campus mission statement, as published on the web (see https://www.utk.edu/vision, accessed January 23, 2023), is:

We are a diverse community with a shared commitment to discovery, creativity, learning, and engagement. At UT Knoxville, we:

- Empower learners of all ages and backgrounds to achieve their dreams through accessible and affordable education and state-of-the-art research training opportunities.
- Advance the prosperity, well-being, and vitality of communities across Tennessee and around the world through our research, teaching, service, and engagement.
- Commit to excellence, equity, and inclusion within the university, across the state, and in all our global activities.

At the campus level, governance structures and rules applicable to campus and unit personnel and activities are set forth in the Faculty Handbook, available at https://facultyhandbook.utk.edu/ (accessed January 23, 2023) with leadership from the UT Knoxville Faculty Senate, Chancellor Dr. Donde Plowman, and her Cabinet that includes (from http://chancellor.utk.edu/cabinet/, accessed January 23, 2023):

- Ms. Tisha Benton, Vice Chancellor for Communications;
- Mr. Chip Bryant, Vice Chancellor for Advancement;
- Dr. Carrie Castille, Senior Vice Chancellor/Senior Vice President for the UT Institute of Agriculture;
• Dr. Deborah Crawford, Vice Chancellor for Research;
• Dr. Frank Cuevas, Vice Chancellor for Student Life;
• Mr. Matthew Scoggins, Esq., Chief of Staff;
• Mr. Tyvi Small, Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement;
• Dr. Daniel White, Vice Chancellor and Director of Athletics; and
• Dr. John Zomchick, Senior Vice Chancellor and Provost.

Other campus policies relating to academics and student life, administration and operation, environmental health and safety, finance, human resources, information technology, and research and intellectual property may be found at Policy Central (http://policycentral.utk.edu/, accessed January 23, 2023).

UT Knoxville’s strategic vision It Takes a Volunteer (https://www.utk.edu/vision, accessed January 23, 2023), refreshed during the 2021-2022 academic year, was approved by the UT System Board of Trustees on October 22, 2021. The five strategic goals are: 1) Cultivating the Volunteer Experience; 2) Conducting research that makes life and lives better; 3) Ensuring a culture where Vol is a Verb; 4) Making ourselves nimble and adaptable; and 5) Embodying the modern R1 land-grant university. It Takes a Volunteer is guided by adherence to core values that define the Volunteer spirit and permeate who we are, what we do, and our approach to living and learning at UT Knoxville and beyond. The vision of this strategic plan is to establish the University of Tennessee as a top tier public research university.

UT Knoxville is composed of eleven colleges which offer graduate and professional degrees, of which, nine offer baccalaureate degrees. The Graduate School provides oversight for graduate admissions, curriculum, and other aspects of graduate education. Both undergraduate and graduate catalogs are electronic and available online (http://catalog.utk.edu/) and managed by the Office of the University Registrar (undergraduate catalog) and the Graduate School (graduate catalog).

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