

Proposing a Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree (Focused Baccalaureate Degree)

All Focused Baccalaureate Degrees (FBDs) require prior approval from SACSCOC (the Commission), regardless of the amount of new content being added to the curriculum. The checklist below prompts prospectus writers to provide the contextual information reviewers will need for decision-making to approve UT Knoxville FBDs. *Please use this checklist to ensure each prospectus clearly explains the rationale, structure, evidence, and review considerations for the proposed program.*

Review Criteria	Notes/Evidence
Confirm the proposed program name accurately reflects both the nature of the degree and its reduced-credit-hour format.	
State the total number of credit hours required for the Focused Baccalaureate Degree (FBD), verifying that the total is 90-119 credit hours.	
Explain why the program is well suited to a reduced-credit-hour format and justify why this structure is more appropriate for the degree's educational goals than a traditional bachelor's degree.	
Demonstrate the program's relationship to workforce needs, including relevant evidence such as regional labor-market demand, employer needs, state requirements, and other workforce data.	
Explain how the curriculum maintains appropriate breadth and depth despite the reduced number of credit hours.	
Describe how students, faculty, advisors, employers, transfer partners, UT's Graduate School, and other relevant stakeholders will receive adequate information about any possible limitations of the reduced-credit degree.	
Describe how the program will be assessed, including student learning outcomes and additional metrics for evaluating the demand, program's value, effectiveness, completion, employment outcomes, and any other relevant indicators.	
Include course descriptions for every required course in the program.	
Verify that assigned faculty are appropriately qualified to teach the courses included in the program (utilize the faculty roster form).	
Provide any additional context reviewers may need to understand the proposed program, including distinctive features, assumptions, constraints, external requirements, or implementation considerations.	

This document is an adaptation of "Questions for Analysis of Reduced Credit Hour Undergraduate Degree Prospectus" provided at the 2026 SACSCOC Summer Institute. This is a preparation aid, not official policy or procedures. Always defer to the Commission's current Substantive Change Policy and Procedures. *Questions? Contact Ashley M. Browning, Assistant Director of Accreditation (ashleyb@tennessee.edu; 865-974-9758) or Dr. Heather Hartman, Associate Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation Liaison (hhartman@utk.edu; 865-974-3635).*