



Guidelines for Deactivating and Terminating Academic Degree Programs

Jacksonville University (JU) is responsible for ensuring students can complete their academic degree program of study if the University deems it necessary to deactivate and eventually terminate an academic degree program due to low enrollment or fiscal issues.

Per JU's national accrediting body—the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)—statement of Good Practices for “Closing a Program, Site, Branch, or Institution”:

“When the decision is made to close an educational program, the institution must make a good faith effort to assist affected students, faculty, administrative and support staff so that they experience a minimal amount of disruption in the pursuit of their course of study or professional careers. In all cases, individuals should be notified of the decision to close a program as soon as possible so that they can make appropriate plans. Students who have not completed their programs should be advised by faculty or professional counselors regarding suitable options including transfer to comparable programs.”

SACSCOC requires through its “Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions” policy that the Commission on Colleges approve of any teach-out plans prior to “closing” a degree program. For the purposes of these guidelines, “closing” will refer to the decision and act of discontinuing students into an academic degree program of study. Further, an academic degree program of study refers to a degree program at any level including certificates—but not including minors or concentrations. The remainder of these guidelines will outline necessary steps to be taken throughout the maximum two-year teach-out phase after a program has been deactivated in preparation for closure.

Academic Degree Programs with No Current Student Enrollment

If the Registrar verifies that an academic degree program has no currently enrolled students, the program will bypass deactivation, the chairperson of the Planning and Budget Committee will be notified, and JU will notify SACSCOC of the termination of the program prior to the beginning of the next semester. No new students will be admitted.

Academic Degree Programs with Currently Enrolled Students

If an academic program is slated for deactivation and closure due to a prolonged decrease in student demand, fiscal related programmatic issues, or fiscal needs at the institutional level, after consultation with the University's Planning and Budget Committee, the following process will be utilized.

Undergraduate Academic Degree Programs

Prospective Students

Immediately suspend admission of new students when a program has been identified for deactivation and potentially eventual closure. If students have been accepted to the institution and are planning to enroll in a to-be deactivated program, they will be notified by enrollment management and asked to declare another program. If they are unable to or are unwilling to do so, all appropriate incurred fees will be returned to them by financial & administration working with student financial services.

Currently Enrolled Students:

Those with less than sixty (60) credit hours or not yet admitted to the program:

- Immediately suspend new program enrollments and require students to select a different program;
- Advise students regarding suitable options for transferring to comparable programs;
- Suspend all change of program requests for any program selected for deactivation and potentially eventual closure.

With sixty (60) or more credit hours and admission to the major:

- Enable students to complete the academic degree program;
- Provide each student an individualized, prescribed plan for course work during the two-year teach-out period;
- Advise student into a different academic program of study if the student fails to follow the prescribed teach-out plan, or does not complete the plan;
- Continue course offering for up to a maximum of two years (which will constitute the teach-out period);
- Provide the student an option to substitute an equivalent course or complete the course at another accredited institution as a transient student to transfer the credit back to JU if a course is not offered.

Stop-outs or Readmitted Students:

Students who have stopped taking classes or are attempting to be readmitted into a program designated for deactivation and potentially eventual closure will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine the potential for completion during the remaining time of the teach-out period.

Graduate Academic Degree Programs

Prospective Students

- Suspend admission of all new students;
- Notify students who have already been offered admission but have not yet enrolled that they must complete their program of study within the two-year teach-out period.

Currently Enrolled Students:

- Place highest priority on enabling students to complete the academic degree program;
- Provide students with an individualized, prescribed plan for course work during the two-year teach-out period;
- Continue course offerings for up to a maximum of two years (which will constitute the teach-out period);
- Provide students options that if a course is not offered, the student will be given the option to substitute an equivalent course or complete the course at another accredited institution as a graduate student to transfer the credit back to JU.

Stop-outs or Readmitted Students:

Students who have stopped taking classes or are attempting to be readmitted into a program designated for deactivation and eventual closure will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine the potential for completion during the remaining time of the teach-out period.

Timeline and Process for Submission of Teach-Out Plan and Deactivation

The following process will outline the timeline for deactivating in efforts of eventual closure an academic degree program:

1. Reach the decision to close an academic degree program;
2. Develop a teach-out plan and submit it, along with a deactivation request, to the University Curriculum Committee and Planning and Budget Committee;
3. Submit notification of decision to close and request for approval of teach-out plan submitted by SACSOC Liaison to SACSCOC once shared governance process is complete;
4. Receive approval from SACSCOC (recognizing it could take up to six months to receive this approval);
5. Deactivate program for a maximum of two years;
6. Terminate program

Teach-Out Plans

SACSCOC requires all teach-out plans to be approved by the Commission prior to deactivating an academic degree program. Teach-out plans should be submitted along with the justification for program closure through the established institutional shared governance process. Deactivation can only occur after the University receives approval of the teach-out plan from SACSCOC. Approval of teach-out plans falls under Procedure Three of the “Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions” policy, which states:

“A teach-out plan is a written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides fifty percent or more of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study, and may include, if required by the institution's accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between institutions. Teach-out plans must be approved by SACSCOC in advance of implementation.

To be approved, a teach-out plan must include the following information:

1. Date of closure (date when new students will no longer be admitted);
2. An explanation of how affected parties (students, faculty, staff) will be informed of the impending closure;
3. An explanation of how all affected students will be helped to complete their programs of study with minimal disruption;
4. An indication as to whether the teach-out plan will incur additional charges/expenses to the students and, if so, how the students will be notified;
5. Copies of signed teach-out agreements with other institutions, if any;
6. How faculty and staff will be redeployed or helped to find new employment;
7. If closing an institution, arrangement for the storing of student records, disposition of final financial resources and other assets.

Following review and approval of a teach-out plan that includes a program that is accredited by another accrediting agency, the Commission will notify that accreditor of its approval.”