Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097

REDUCED-CREDIT UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES

Policy Statement

As part of its review of an institution seeking initial or continuing accreditation, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) conducts reviews of an institution's program length requirements. Shared expectations for educational program degree requirements are foundational to communication among students, institutions, employers, and others in support of a wide range of activities, including, but not limited to, the admission and transfer of students from one institution to another and the preparation of graduates for employment or advanced study.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to institutions and evaluation committees on SACSCOC's expectations regarding reduced-credit undergraduate degree programs. Reduced-credit undergraduate degree programs are defined as degree programs that require fewer than 120 semester credit hours. These programs require approval prior to implementation as described in SACSCOC's policy, *Substantive Change Policies and Procedures.* The following requirements must be addressed in the prospectus for approval and in all subsequent initial accreditation or continuing accreditation reviews:

- The name of the reduced-credit undergraduate degree program must clearly distinguish itself from traditional baccalaureate degree programs that require a minimum of 120 semester credit hours by use of a modifier within the degree name.
- Reduced-credit undergraduate degree programs must be based on at least 90 semester credit hours or the equivalent. The institution must provide an explanation of equivalencies when using units other than semester credit hours.
- Reduced-credit undergraduate degree programs may only be offered in specialized or applied disciplines that address workforce needs and prepare graduates for direct entry to employment.
- The institution provides an appropriate justification for any reduced-credit undergraduate degree program as appropriate to the mission and goals of the institution. The institution also ensures that all programs offered comply with the *Principles of Accreditation (with the exception of 9.2:Program Length)*, including, but not limited to, standards regarding 1) general education requirements that ensure a breadth of knowledge and alignment with commonly-accepted higher education competencies, and 2) faculty responsibility for program development, quality, integrity, and review.
- The institution ensures that its recruitment, admissions, and other marketing materials, as well as transcripts, accurately represent the reduced-credit undergraduate degree programs. These materials must clearly communicate to all stakeholders that the degree might not fulfill admission and pre-requisite requirements for graduate and professional degree programs and might not meet expectations of some future employers.

Document History
Approved: SACSCOC Board of Trustees, March 2026
Revised: SACSCOC Board of Trustees, June 2026