

Designation of School Status

Original Implementation: February 3, 2005

Last Revision: October 28, 2019

I. Introduction

Stephen F. Austin State University is subdivided into colleges for the purpose of accommodating broad program areas with common academic interests. The colleges are further subdivided into academic units designated as departments or divisions to enable smaller scholarly communities to devote attention to specific degree programs.

An academic unit seeking school status will be evaluated using the following guidelines:

- The unit should offer primarily professional programs and degrees;
- The programs of the unit should have professional accreditation;
- The unit should have a total enrollment of at least 150 students majoring in its programs;
- The unit may have been the recipient of a substantial endowment or gift.

II. Proposal Review and Approval

An academic unit seeking “school” status should develop a proposal that provides qualitative and quantitative justifications for acquiring the designation. The proposal, endorsed by a two-thirds vote of tenured and tenure-track faculty members within the unit, should include the elements listed below.

- A concise statement should outline the rationale for the request. This statement should address the distinctiveness of the discipline and the advantages of school status to future graduates of the program. A clear discussion should demonstrate how the request addresses the university’s guidelines for awarding designation as a school.
- The impact of the change on staffing (faculty and administrative) and resources should be examined in detail. If available, peer programs at other universities should be presented for comparison purposes. Recommendations and/or letters of support from professionals or practitioners in the field should be attached and referenced in the discussion.
- A quality enhancement plan should describe how school status will be leveraged over the next five-year period to improve academic programs.
- A discipline-specific self-study completed within the last five years (with appropriate updates) should accompany the proposal. Copies of visitors’ reports and annual assessment documents should be included, if available.

Upon endorsement by the faculty of the academic unit, the proposal will be forwarded to the college's dean. If recommended by the dean, the proposal will be reviewed by the Deans Council and the provost and vice president for academic affairs. If recommended, the proposal will be forwarded to the president, who may present it to the Board of Regents for consideration. For final approval, a request will be forwarded to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Cross Reference: None

Responsible for Implementation: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Contact for Revision: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Forms: None

Board Committee Assignment: Academic and Student Affairs