

Policy Type: Operational

Applies to: Faculty, administrators, students

POLICY DATES

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Edited: Bryan Boatright/Aimee Huter

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From time to time, an academic program (including degree, major, or certificate) is placed on hiatus (temporarily inactivated) or is sunset (permanently eliminated) per processes outlined in the Program Status Matrix. These actions may be due to considerations such as

- low enrollment
- concerns about academic quality
- financial viability
- changing University priorities
- departmental restructuring
- the requirements of accrediting or other regulatory bodies
- alignment with mission

When this occurs, the University has an obligation to those students currently enrolled in the affected degree, major or certificate to provide a reasonable opportunity to complete their program. This document outlines general steps for 1) notifying university personnel, students, and accrediting agencies and 2) creating teach-out plans for the inactivated or eliminated programs.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Currently Enrolled Student	A student who has taken courses in the previous two academic years and who has not been dismissed from or not yet graduated from the affected program.
Hiatus (also Program Inactivation)	The process of temporarily removing a program from the University catalog for a prescribed or undetermined period of time. The program remains an approved program; however, no new students will be admitted. See the Program Status Matrix for guidelines on reviewing a program for hiatus.
Sunset (also Program Elimination)	The process of permanently eliminating an existing program from the University catalog. See the Program Status Matrix for guidelines on reviewing a program for sunset.
Teach-Out Plan	A written agreement presented by the University Registrar to students and university personnel who support a program placed on hiatus or that is sunset. The plan will outline alternative opportunities for each student in the program being inactivated or eliminated to complete their program of study.
Teaching-Out	Following a prescribed individualized Teach-Out Plan so a student in an approved hiatus or sunset program can successfully complete an alternative course of study.

PROCEDURE

Steps to be taken when the University decides to inactivate or eliminate an academic program

1. Notification

a. To University Personnel and Departments

The VPAA will promptly notify all university personnel who support the program as well as the Office of the University Registrar, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and Enrollment Services.

Personnel who recruit, market and/or advise for the program will receive detailed information on the teach-out plan in order to properly advise current and prospective students of their options. All other pending applicants will be advised of the program inactivation/elimination and encouraged to apply to another suitable university program when possible or, if all options at the University are unsuitable, to a program at another institution.

b. To Students

A communication plan regarding the inactivation/elimination of a program will be developed for currently enrolled students and prospective students who have been admitted but have not yet started. Notification should be prompt and include a timeline and available options.

Notification will take the form of an announcement on the University website, a certified letter to the student's official address and an email to the student's mountunion.edu email account. If students do not respond within 30 days of this notification, program administrators will make three attempts to contact the student by telephone at each telephone number on file.

c. To Accrediting/Regulating Agencies

Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE)

When the decision to inactivate or eliminate a program has been made, ODHE must be notified at least 60 days prior to the effective date. A "Change Request Form – Program Inactivation" must be completed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and emailed to the director of program operations. If the program is the education license or endorsement program, a "Change Request – Program Dormancy" must be completed and emailed to the educator licensure staff at ODHE. If the program being inactivated or eliminated has current student enrolled, information for each student will need to be included in the request form.

NOTE regarding inactivated programs: if reactivation occurs within five years of the change request, ODHE must be informed at least 60 days before the reactivation date. If a decision to reactivate the program occurs after five years of the change request, a new program review process must be initiated with ODHE.

Higher Learning Commission (HLC)

When the decision to inactivate or eliminate a program has been made, the institution's HLC staff liaison must be contacted to discuss whether prior approval or notification is required.

Department of Education

Inactivation or elimination of any approved non-degree program (e.g., certificate program) requires notification to the Department of Education at least 60 days prior to the effective date. The Department of Student Financial Aid is responsible for facilitating the amendment to the University's Title IV Participation Agreement.

2. Teach-Out Plan

a. Development

The University Registrar will develop individual teach-out schedules for each student. The student will receive a copy of the schedule, and a copy will be maintained in the student file to document student support efforts during the teach-out.

b. Timeline

The normal timeline for completion of a teach-out is four years counting from the final date of the term in which the termination decision is made. Depending upon the normal length of time required to complete the program, this period may be longer or shorter. The timeline of the teach-out will be expressed through its effective terms; the starting point will be the final term in which students are admitted and the end point will be the last term of offering.

In the event that a student is unsuccessful in an attempt to complete the program within this timeframe, the administration and faculty of the program will nevertheless continue to make reasonable efforts to help the student graduate. In the event a student fails to make satisfactory progress, the University may deny further enrollment.

c. Student Support

Should a student in a terminated program choose to withdraw from the University and apply to another institution, the University will provide one official transcript at no charge.

During the teach-out, the administration and faculty of the academic program will make reasonable efforts to monitor students' progress and facilitate their successful completion. In consultation with the University Registrar, the following options may be considered, although only where granting the option will not compromise the academic quality of the program:

- running courses, even if below the normal enrollment threshold, perhaps as directed study courses,
- allowing independent study courses to satisfy program requirements where relevant,
- allowing reasonable course substitutions, or
- allowing students to complete required courses at other regionally accredited institutions through approved transient work.

d. Submission To Accrediting Agencies

Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE): The previously referenced "Change Request Form – Program Inactivation" or "Change Request – Program Dormancy" require teach-out information for each student.

Higher Learning Commission (HLC): In the case that HLC determines prior approval is necessary for programs the University has decided to inactivate or eliminate, teach-out plans may be required. Additionally, if any of the following circumstance arise and will jeopardize currently enrolled students' ability to complete their programs of study as originally anticipated, HLC liaison staff must be immediately contacted to determine whether a teach-out plan should be submitted to HLC:

- The U.S. Department of Education notifies HLC of an emergency action, or a limitation, suspension or termination or similar action against the institution,
- HLC acts to withdraw, terminate or suspend the status of an institution,
- The institution notifies HLC that it intends to cease or suspend operations or permanently close a site where it offers at least 100% of either a certificate or degree program before all students have completed their program of study,
- A state licensing or authorizing agency notifies Commission HLC that an institution's license or legal authorization to provide an educational program in that state has been or will be revoked, or
- The elimination of the program is the result of withdrawal or dismissal from a program accreditation.

Teach-Out Policy ACA 6.0 Office of Academic Affairs

Responsibilities

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Academic Affairs	Oversees process of academic program inactivation and elimination
University Registrar	Develops teach-out plans
Institutional Effectiveness	Submits program hiatus and sunset notifications and teach-out plans to accrediting agencies
Student Financial Aid	Submits program hiatus and sunset notifications to the Department of Education

Contacts

Subject	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
Program Elimination	Academic Affairs	(330) 823-2690	academic@mountunion.edu
Teach-out plans	University Registrar	(330) 823-6596	registrar@mountunion.edu
Accreditation and/or federal compliance	Institutional Effectiveness	(330) 829-8233	effectiveness@mountunion.edu

History

All changes must be listed sequentially, including edits and reviews. Note when the policy name or number changes.

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