

The University of Texas at Austin

Revised Guidelines for
Option III Graduate Degree Programs
Revised 2018, Graduate Assembly

Preface: Formula-funded and Non-formula-funded Graduate Degree Programs

The usual method for delivering courses at the University is via formula-funded courses to students in residence — this has been called Option I. To meet the market demand for an opportunity to seek advanced degrees from UT Austin which cannot be accommodated by current formula-funded degree programs, colleges and schools may propose programs using one of the following two strategies: Option II or Option III.

Option II Programs essentially offer the standard curriculum of Option I degree programs by means of non-standard modes of delivery (e.g., location, format, and schedule), such as the Executive MBA Program in the School of Business. Like Option I, Option II courses are formula funded. Supplemental activities which enhance the educational experience may be scheduled and separate incidental fees may be charged to students who participate in those activities.

Option III Programs offer the graduate degree curriculum tailored to special needs in modes of delivery, student clientele, course design, class meeting times and locations. Courses are not formula funded. Supplemental activities are a regular, integral part of the degree program. Courses may be run as either in-residence or not-in-residence. To justify the use of this format, most or all of the special circumstances outlined below must be met. Early consultation with the Graduate School and budgetary approval from the Provost are required to explore this option.

Final authorization to offer a degree under either of these formats requires approval by the Graduate Assembly, the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Provost (as the President's delegate), and may require further approval of the UT System, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Option III Graduate Degree Programs (Non-formula Funded):

Program Characteristics

Items marked with an asterisk (*) also apply to Option II Programs.

- Degree offered is an approved, resident credit UT Austin graduate degree*;
- Normal admission criteria and procedures apply (see below)*;
- Course work will include regular organized courses or courses offered in a non-standard format, schedule, meeting time, or location*; and
- The University's established policies and procedures for payments to current employees will govern any additional compensation permitted under these guidelines for faculty who participate in an Option III program*.
- Degree programs must be at least 30 SCH and are limited to Master's level or relevant professional degrees as sanctioned by individual schools and colleges and in light of national and international professional and credentialing standards.
- The proposed degree program has received prior approval by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department or Academic Program, by the Chair of the Department or Program Director, by the Dean of the College or School, as well as preliminary approval by the Provost, prior to being submitted to the Graduate Assembly for Academic Program approval.

The following special circumstances are normally present for a degree program to be considered under the Option III format:

- 1) Substantial external community demand exists and has been demonstrated;
- 2) The proposed degree is consistent with our institutional mission, enhances the University's community service function, and is responsive to competitive market factors;
- 3) The existing UT Austin degree, if any, is fully subscribed and additional students are not needed or desired in the regular degree program;
- 4) The proposed degree will not be a detriment to the existing UT Austin degree program, if any.

Courses:

- Semester credit hours (SCH) for option III courses are NOT included in the University SCH base for formula funding; that is, the degree will be offered as a resident credit [but] non-state-funded program.
- Supplemental activities are a regular, integral part of the degree program.

- If an off-campus site remote from the Austin area is proposed, it must be justified on the basis of a place-bound clientele. Facility fees should be calculated into the program costs (see below).
- If an on-campus site is proposed, the degree program must procure the use of University facilities (including any special facilities, such as laboratory, computing, or digital communications facilities) through normal channels and without detriment to existing Option I programs, if any. Special fees may apply and should be calculated into program costs (see below).
- Students from Option I and II programs (including undergraduates) may not register in Option III courses; students in Option III programs may only register in Option III courses or sections and vice versa. It is sometimes possible, however, to have a "meets with" arrangement. Provisions for the "meets with" option must be specified and justified in the degree program proposal, including impact on students and considerations of teaching load and compensation for faculty. The maximum number of Option III students allowed in an Option I course through an established room-share arrangement will be (i) 20% of Option I enrollment for a course with enrollment of more than 10 students (capped at a maximum of 10 Option III students) or (ii) two Option III students for an Option I course with enrollment of 10 or fewer students. In addition, no more than 20% of the Option III student's program of work may be made up of "meets with" Option I courses. Two further special provisions apply when "meets with" sections for Option III students are established in Option I courses:
 - (1) Option III students should not displace Option I students; and
 - (2) Option III students must receive permission to enroll from the Option I instructor of record.
- Option III courses are normally taught on a voluntary, overload basis; however, faculty may be assigned to teach on an in-load basis under special circumstances when doing so furthers the mission of the University and allows faculty to meet all of their responsibilities (e.g., allowing faculty to be able to teach specialized Option III classes for Option I programs or vice-versa, or as an incentive to attract new faculty.) In such cases, the option III program must provide reimbursement for the cost of any faculty who teach Option III courses on an in-load basis. No faculty who teach in the option III program on an in-load basis may be compensated directly by the option III program. Excessive in-load teaching is subject to review by the Academic Committee.

Admissions:

Normal admissions criteria and procedures apply to Option III graduate programs:

The General requirements for admission to the Graduate School are:

1. A bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution in the United States or a comparable degree from a foreign academic institution. The

Graduate and International Admissions Center (GIAC) will determine eligibility for admission in consultation with prospective graduate programs.

2. A grade point average of at least 3.00 in upper- division (junior- and senior-level) coursework and in any graduate work already completed.
3. An official score on the Graduate Record Examinations General Test (GRE), unless otherwise specified by the graduate program to which the student is applying.

The McCombs School of Business requires master's and doctoral degree applicants to submit a satisfactory score on either the GRE or the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT).

Applicants to dual or combined degree programs with the School of Law must submit a satisfactory score on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) as well as on the GRE or GMAT.

The University of Texas Medical Schools require the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT), and most of the joint PhD-MD programs of the Graduate School likewise substitute the MCAT in place of the GRE.

International students whose native language is not English must also submit scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), as specified by the graduate program.

4. Adequate subject preparation for the proposed major. Evidence of adequate preparation varies by program, but examples include letters of reference, auditions, samples of work, and personal statements.
5. A recommendation for acceptance by the Graduate Studies Committee for the proposed major area.

Applicants to Option III graduate programs should be asked to supply normal test scores (as specified in item 3 above). Option III programs may propose to use alternative measures in place of these standard numeric test scores, when the nature of the specific target audience justifies. Such alternative admission criteria must be approved by the Graduate Assembly as part of the program approval process.

Administration and Review:

- The Graduate School will have responsibility for overall administration and coordination of all graduate degrees offered under this format.

- Graduate students admitted to Option III degree programs are under the guidance and oversight of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department or Academic Program.
- The degree plan proposal must include procedures for the collection and disbursement of student fee income (see below).
- The degree plan proposal must include a description of orientation and career services to be provided.
- Option III degree programs must submit an annual report to the Graduate Assembly that includes program metrics identified by the Graduate Assembly.
- Option III degree programs are reviewed by the Graduate School every seven years as part of the regular cycle of review of graduate programs.
- The Academic Committee of the Graduate Assembly will conduct a review of the overall status of option III programs every three years.
- Guidelines for the review process are dictated by prior legislation of the Graduate Assembly (1998; Documents and Proceedings of the Graduate Assembly, pages 3022a-c) and by requirements of the Graduate Program Review in keeping with current statutes of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Program Costs and Budget:

The full costs of the entire program are covered from fees charged to students. This includes the cost of instruction (including any additional compensation of instructional staff), facilities, equipment (purchase, maintenance, and use), computing costs, administrative costs (department, college, and University), and other support services. The program must be fully self-supporting; income in excess of direct program expenses may be used for curriculum and program development or faculty development.

Program Size (Admissions Cohorts) and Duration (Time to Degree): Needs to be consistent with and justified by issues of budget, market (need/demand), and prospects for recruiting and sustainability.

Faculty compensation:

- Instruction in option III courses is normally done on an overload basis; and these courses are not part of a faculty member's regular workload. The faculty member may receive additional compensation for this overload activity.
- Option III courses are normally taught on a voluntary, overload basis; however, faculty may be assigned to teach on an in-load basis under special

circumstances when doing so furthers the mission of the University and allows faculty to meet all of their responsibilities (e.g., allowing faculty to be able to teach specialized Option III classes for Option I programs or vice-versa, or as an incentive to attract new faculty.) In such cases, the option III program must provide reimbursement for the cost of any faculty who teach Option III courses on an in-load basis. No faculty who teach in the option III program on an in-load basis may be compensated directly by the option III program. Excessive in-load teaching is subject to review by the Academic Committee.

- Additional faculty compensation is also permitted for participation in supplemental activities.
- Additional faculty compensation should follow standard policies of each College or School and be approved in advance by the Dean of the College or School in which the program is housed.

Budget:

- Program budget, including additional faculty compensation, additional fees, and administrative costs (see above), must receive preliminary approval by the Office of the Vice President and Provost and by the Dean of the College or School prior to submission to the Graduate Assembly for academic approval.

Student restrictions:

Students registered in these degree programs are not eligible for university financial aid, except federal guaranteed loans and some private sector loans. They may not be offered TA, AI, GRA, AA, or A(G) appointments or departmental fellowships. They will receive no other student "benefits" unless specific arrangements have been made and the appropriate costs (fees) have been paid. Students in Option III programs are not eligible for Hinson-Hazlewood Act Exemptions (for Texas ex-servicemen and their children), but may be eligible for GI Bill benefits. Direct questions to the Veterans Certification section in the Office of the Registrar.

Program fees:

The fee charged to the students shall recover the full costs to the University to offer the program. This is a complex area that requires careful consultation with the administration to insure that the costs for all desired services are included in the base fee.

The following elements should be considered in determining the proposed student fee(s):

1. Instructional personnel for organized classes — salaries and fringe benefit costs for faculty, TA/AI's tutors, graders, and all other instructional personnel.
2. Administrative costs at the department, college, and Graduate School — salary and fringe benefits costs for clerical, program administration (faculty and staff), computer and other technical staff, accounting and records, and other support personnel.
3. Equipment cost and maintenance.
4. Supplies and course related materials.
5. Seminars and other instructional activities associated with organized classes.
6. Orientation and career services.
7. Miscellaneous other expenses such as promotion, postage, telephone, etc.
8. Facilities Overhead Fee, Institutional Overhead (\$50 per Semester Credit Hour per student for on-campus programs.) This fee applies to programs that are classified as on-campus. On-campus is defined as utilizing UT Austin Education and General purpose space for program activities for any period of time for program use. Education and General purpose space excludes auxiliary entities such as the AT&T Conference Center, Thompson Conference Center, Texas Unions, Bob Bullock Museum, etc.

The items listed below are not included in the calculation of the-facilities overhead fee.

8. Student fees (at current rates paid by regular degree students) for existing equipment, facilities, and services to be used.
9. Capital costs for equipment.
10. Supplemental (optional) activity program costs – specify individual components.

Previously Approved Option III Programs:

Option III Programs implemented prior to passage of these new guidelines may continue to operate without modification according to the proposal under which they were approved. Previously approved Option III Programs that were never implemented or that have been deactivated or formally terminated must file a new proposal under the new guidelines should they wish to seek reinstatement. Any Option III Program that wishes to implement new provisions as outlined in these revised guidelines must (a) adhere to all the new guidelines presented above, and (b) file an amendment clarifying how it plans to modify its current operation to meet the new guidelines.

The proposed modifications must have received prior approval by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Department or Academic Program, by the Chair of the Department or Program Director, by the Dean of the College or School, as well as preliminary (budgetary) approval by the Provost, prior to being submitted to the Graduate Assembly for academic approval. Final authorization of the modified degree program requires approval by the Graduate Assembly by action of the Academic Committee, the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Provost (as the President's delegate).

Appendix A

Approved Option III Programs

Active Option III Programs

Graduate Degree and Program	Approval Date
MSTC-Technology Commercialization, School of Business (Austin)	April 1995
MBA- Business Administration (Mexico City)	May 1996
MBA- Business Administration (Dallas)	October 1998
MSE-Electrical and Computer Engineering (Software Engineering) [Note: Originally approved as Opt II program in 1996 in error. Officially changed to Opt III program in 1998]	December 1998
MSE-Engineering Management	June 1999
MBA - Business Administration (Houston)	April 2004
MSE-Engineering Management (via distance education)	February 2012
MSFinance-Department of Finance, School of Business	March 2012
MA-Human Dimensions of Organizations, COLA	March 2012
MSIROM (Information, Risk, and Operations Management)- McCombs School of Business	July 2012
MA with a major in Economics, Department of Economics, COLA	December 2012
MPAff- LBJ School of Public Affairs	March 2013
MSBusinessAnalytics – McCombs School of Business [Note: Originally approved as MSIROM. Officially changed to MSBA degree title in 2014]	June 2014
MSE-Mechanical Engineering	November 2014
MSE-Electrical and Computer Engineering	May 2015

MSIMS-Identity Management and Security	June 2015
DNP in Nursing	July 2015
MSMarketing	March 2016
M.Ed. in Kinesiology (major in Sport Management)	June 2017
MSITM - InformationTechnology and Management	September 2017

Inactive Option III Programs

MSTC-Technology Commercialization (Mexico City)	March 2000 (not implemented)
MSTC-Technology Commercialization (Dallas)	March 2000 (not implemented)
MSTC-Technology Commercialization (Houston)	March 2000 (not implemented)
MSTC-Technology Commercialization (Web-based)	March 2000 (deactivated 2006)
MSE-ECE Integrated Circuits and Systems	April 2003 (deactivated 2014)
MSE-Mechanical Engineering (Advanced Manufacturing Eng.)	December 2007 (not implemented; formally terminated 2009)
MSIROM (Information, Risk, and Operations Management) - McCombs School of Business	July 2012 (changed to MSBA degree June 2014)