

Substantive/Non-substantive Curriculum Change Information

The official approved program of study for each degree, concentration, or certificate is maintained on file at the Tennessee Board of Regents. Often departments wish to revise the approved program of study and, therefore, propose an on-campus *Non-substantive Curriculum Change* or a *TBR Substantive Curriculum Modification*.

Generally, the decision regarding a substantive or non-substantive proposal is based on an 18-hour rule that considers any changes that the way a curriculum looks as compared to the TBR-approved program and as it is published in the catalog. These changes include, but are not limited to, the addition or deletion of courses, increase or decrease in total semester credit hours, course titles, rubrics, and course descriptions. Once the 18-hour rule is reached, **whether in one proposal or in the cumulative addition of several non-substantive proposals**, a *TBR Substantive Curriculum Modification* proposal must be submitted and approved by the Board prior to implementation.

The 18-hour rule is applied better to an undergraduate degree than to a concentration, certificate, or master's degree. Consider the ratio of changes to the total hours of the program. For instance, a six-credit hour change in a certificate would be substantive whereas a six-credit hour change in a undergraduate degree would be non-substantive. In these instances, professional judgment and common sense are needed to decide if the changes are substantive or non-substantive in relation to the entire degree even if less than 18 credit hours are impacted.

Again, the official approved program of study must be on file at TBR, accurate, and readily available to the public, Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), Academic Common Market prospects, or sister institutions. Additionally, programs presented on the ETSU Website should be comparable to the original or last-approved revision on file at the Board.