

- 10.4** The institution (a) publishes and implements policies on the authority of faculty in academic and governance matters, (b) demonstrates that educational programs for which academic credit is awarded are approved consistent with institutional policy, and (c) places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty.  
*(Academic governance)*

### Rationale and Notes

Because faculty are generally responsible for ensuring the achievement of appropriate student learning and academic program outcomes, it is imperative that an institution establish policies that explicitly delineate the responsibilities and authority of its faculty in academic and governance matters. These published policies clarify the role of the faculty in relation to other constituencies regarding these fundamental aspects of the institution. It is recognized that the authority of faculty in academic and governance matters varies widely across different types of institutions due to differences in organizational structure, mission, and tradition. Nonetheless, all institutions should have clear policies and should act in accordance with these policies.

The tradition of shared governance within American higher education recognizes the importance of both faculty and administrative involvement in the approval of educational programs (degrees, certificates, and diplomas). Approval by the faculty ensures that programs, including programs offered through collaborative arrangements, contain appropriate courses reflecting current knowledge within a discipline and include courses appropriate for the students enrolled. Approval by the administration affirms that educational programs are consistent with the mission of the institution and that the institution possesses both the organization and resources to ensure the quality of its educational programs.

Institutional policies concerning the role of faculty in academic matters should make clear that the faculty has primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum. Documentation should include evidence that faculty actively assume these responsibilities. While department chairs may take a major role in these processes, the evidence should show broad faculty involvement in what are considered fundamental faculty roles.

### Questions to Consider

- What are the institution's policies regarding the authority of faculty in academic and governance matters?
- Where are these policies published? Are they accessible to all who are affected by them?
- Are the policies consistently followed?
- How are these policies approved and updated?
- What is the process for developing and approving educational programs?
- Who is responsible for the process?

- What are the policies and procedures for expanding or limiting the curriculum and what are the faculty’s responsibilities?
- What is the process for program evaluation and improvement or updating the curriculum?
- How are the faculty involved in these processes? Is it fair to say the faculty responsibility is “primary”?

### Sample Documentation

- Policies regarding the role of the faculty in academic and governance matters.
- Details on where these policies are published and how they can be accessed.
- Committee structure and assignments that clarify which members are faculty.
- Minutes and other documents that clearly show the faculty role in academic and governance affairs.
- Procedures for approving educational programs.
- Minutes, forms, and sign-off sheets from relevant committees, both faculty and administrative, that show the program approval process being followed (forms should not be blank).
- Similar documentation for curricular change actions.
- Bylaws and minutes that document the role and responsibility of faculty in determining the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum.
- Curriculum evaluations conducted by faculty showing attention to curriculum quality and effectiveness.

### Reference to SACSCOC Documents, If Applicable

SACSCOC policies:     [Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards](#)  
                                   [Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs](#)  
                                   [Distance and Correspondence Education](#)  
                                   [Quality and Integrity of Educational Credentials](#)

This standard requires a policy or procedure; see Appendix A of this document for implications. See also:

SACSCOC Good Practices:     [Developing Policy and Procedures Documents](#)

### Cross-References to Other Related Standards/Requirements, If Applicable

Standard 4.2.b   *(Board/administrative distinction and shared governance)*  
 Standard 8.2.a   *(Student outcomes: educational programs)*  
 Standard 8.2.b   *(Student outcomes: general education)*