

Teach-Out Policy

Background

Teach-out policies address scenarios such as when a school chooses to discontinue a degree program or a track within a degree program, terminate a modality of delivering the degree program (e.g., the school wishes to stop offering an on-line program but continue the equivalent on-campus program), or decides to close of an off-campus (out-of-state or international) degree-delivery location. These policies are intended to provide protections for students who have begun degree programs which are being changed, and enable the “teaching out” of currently enrolled students so that they receive uninterrupted education toward their degree completion.

In addition to its being a best-practice for CWRU to have a formal teach-out policy, CWRU is often asked to report its teach-out policy as part of the process for requesting state-level authorization for delivery of CWRU’s on-line degree programs outside of Ohio. In addition, it is part of the Federal Compliance regulations that in certain situations, CWRU must report its teach-out plans to the Higher Learning Commission. (For details, see HLC policy FDCR.B.10.010 in the HLC Policy Book http://download.hlcommission.org/policy/HLCPolicyBook_POL.pdf.)

Policy

If a school decides to close a program or eliminate a delivery modality, it must no longer admit students to the program. In addition, it must choose from one of the following options:

- (1) The school develops and documents a teach-out plan for currently enrolled students and terminates the program after such students complete their programs; or
- (2) The school enters into a teach-out agreement with another institution or organization that will teach- out the program.

Teach-out plans and agreements must be submitted for review and approval by the Provost’s Office prior to the start of the teach-out period. Other relevant administrative offices may be consulted as part of this approval process. The Provost’s Office will also determine whether external agencies (e.g., the Higher Learning Commission, the Ohio Department of Higher Education, authorizing bodies outside of the State of Ohio) will need to be notified.

The school (with assistance from University Marketing and Communications) will develop a communications plan to inform currently enrolled students about the rationale necessitating the program closure. A communications plan notifying and addressing the needs of alumni of the program being closed should also be considered.

The Provost’s Office will notify relevant administrative offices (e.g., Undergraduate Studies, Graduate Studies, Registrar, Financial Aid, etc.) about the program closure and the teach-out plan or agreement.

A framework for a teach-out plan is described in the following section.

Components of a Teach-Out Plan

1. Establishment of the date(s) by which all marketing materials and advertising for the program will be withdrawn, canceled, corrected or deleted.
2. Identification of the date by which recruitment for the teach-out program ceases.
3. Completion of an audit by the dean/chair of the teach-out program to determine what courses and/or other activities are needed by students currently enrolled to complete their programs.
4. Development of a schedule of courses to be taught during the teach-out period that ensures that all remaining courses required for the students to complete their programs will be offered in a reasonable sequence. In some cases, it may be necessary to modify the program requirements (e.g., include self-study courses or other alternatives) to enable the students to complete their programs, but in these cases the learning objectives and credit-hour requirements must be equivalent to those of the original degree program.
5. Establishment of the date by which the teach-out activities will end.
6. A description of the faculty resources and academic support services that will be utilized throughout the teach-out period.
7. A statement about how the school/department will assist students who are enrolled in teach-out program who wish to transfer to another program or institution.

Additional Considerations

1. Teach-out plans must be submitted and approved at least 90-days prior to the intended date of the program closure. The communications plan must be developed in advance of the announcement of the program closure.
2. All teach-out plans must be consistent with any requirements and expectations of the external organizations that accredit or certify the programs to be completed under the teach-out plan.
3. A school/department is not obligated to accommodate students who fail to take required courses when they are offered under the teach-out plan, or who do not receive passing grades in courses taught under a teach-out plan, beyond the formal end of the teach-out period specified in item #5 in the list of components of the teach-out plan.
4. The school/department is not obligated to retain faculty members hired for the teach-out plan beyond the end of the teach-out period specified in item #5 in the list of components of the teach-out plan.