

SREB

Academic Common Market

2022-2023

ACM Guideline Manual

- *State Coordinators*
- *Institution Coordinators*

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1. Statement of Purpose

In 1974, an authorizing compact was developed to create the SREB Academic Common Market. The compact states "the purpose of the Academic Common Market (ACM) is to share between states specified academic degree programs located at public, southern colleges and universities. This is accomplished through an exchange of students across borders at in-state rates. The motivation for this cooperation continues to be: 1. To eliminate unnecessary program duplication among the states, in that it is impractical for any institution or single state to develop or maintain degree programs in every field of knowledge, 2. To support existing degree programs that have the capacity to serve additional students, and 3. To provide access and encourage movement across state lines for programs not available in a student's home state."

The following provisions for the ACM are from the 1974 authorizing compact:

The STATES agree:

1. To designate an administrator responsible for coordination of the ACM in the state.
2. To transmit to the SREB coordinator a list of programs that institutions in the home state are willing to include in the ACM.
3. To indicate the programs offered through the ACM by institutions in other states that are not offered in the home state and, thus, to be made available to residents of the state.
4. To certify residents of the state for participation in the ACM and enter certifications into the ACMI.
5. To supply data to the SREB coordinator on operation of the ACM, e.g. the number of students from other states in ACM programs offered by institutions in the state.
6. To describe the ACM in appropriate state publications.

The INSTITUTIONS (or STATE if signatory for STATE has authority to commit institutions to the following provisions) agree:

1. To transmit to the administrator responsible for coordinating the ACM in the state a list of programs to be available through the ACM to residents in states not offering the programs.
2. To admit qualified students from participating states applying for ACM programs, as can be accommodated, and grant them a waiver of out-of-state tuition, or grant them in-state status.
3. To maintain the institution's ACM inventory in the ACMI database.
4. To allow enrolled students a reasonable period to complete a program at in-state tuition if the program is removed from the ACM.
5. To describe the ACM in appropriate institutional publications

The SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD agrees:

1. To administer the ACM in the region.
2. To assist the states and institutions in developing a list of programs to be offered through the ACM.
3. To facilitate meetings of the state coordinators.
4. To distribute information to the states describing the ACM.
5. To disseminate information on the operation of the ACM program and the ACMI database.

¹*SREB reviews the ACM Guideline Manual for necessary updates, in partnership with participating states, at the annual coordinators' meeting. The participating state affirm The Manual prior to the start of each academic year.*

²*Each state and/or institution may have additional guidelines based on the demands of its own governing or coordinating responsibilities.*

2. Overview of Student Process for ACM Eligibility

1. Student is accepted to a participating institution's degree program under his/her own academic merit.
2. Student applies for the ACM through his/her home state ACM coordinator.
 - a. Student must be a U.S. Citizen or eligible non-citizen.
 - b. Application for the ACM includes the student's request for certification of home state residency.
3. State coordinator certifies student and notifies institution.
4. Institution grants in-state status or waiver for out-of-state tuition/fees.
5. Although annual recertification is not required, the institutional ACM coordinator should verify the participating student's program enrollment and residency status annually to determine continuing eligibility for ACM benefits.
 - If the student is no longer enrolled in an ACM-approved program:
 - the institution removes ACM eligibility
 - the institution may charge out-of-state tuition
 - If the student changes his/her resident state of record:
 - the institution requests the student be certified through his/her new state of residence, if it is an ACM-eligible state
 - the institution may charge out-of-state tuition
 - If the student changes his/her major:
 - If the new major is ACM-eligible, the institution requests the student be certified for the new program through his/her home state to maintain ACM eligibility.
 - If the new major is not ACM-eligible, the institution may charge out-of-state tuition
 - If the student maintains enrollment in an ACM-approved program:
 - the institution may verify resident state of record annually, but the student will otherwise maintain his/her ACM eligibility.

The following guidelines relate to students enrolling in programs under the ACM agreement:

6. The student must first be accepted for admission to the desired degree program by following the normal admission procedure for the institution. The student must be accepted as a degree-seeking student in the specified major with a regular admission status. Students with a probationary, provisional, or non-degree-seeking status at the institution are ineligible for ACM participation.
 - Double Major and Major/minor combinations: If both major programs, or a major/minor combination, qualifies for inclusion in the ACM, then the state and institution may allow the student to double major or enroll in the major/minor combination and receive the ACM benefit.
 - Adding an ineligible major/minor while enrolled: If an ACM student adds an ineligible major/minor to an ACM-eligible program, the student will lose his/her ACM status and the institution may charge out-of-state tuition.
7. Institutions that do not classify undergraduate students as degree-seeking in a major until a fixed point in their studies (e.g. sophomore or junior year) may elect to accept ACM students as first-year students or only at the point official acceptance into a major occurs. This decision is at the discretion of the institution and may vary among different disciplines. In addition, institutions may determine additional student eligibility standards such as GPA or full-time status.
8. Institutions should publish information about their eligible ACM programs in appropriate institutional publications. Institutions should notify students who may be eligible for the ACM and encourage them to contact their respective Home State Coordinators.
9. The student must be certified as a resident of his/her home state. Each state will maintain its own forms and procedures for certification, which are consistent with state residency requirements. Residency certification should be considered valid if the student progresses toward the specified degree, remains enrolled at the institution, and does not invalidate his or her residency in the home state as defined by the home state's domiciliary law. After certifying the residency of an applicant, the home state coordinator sends a notice of certification to the student and the ACM coordinator at the receiving institution. The notice must contain, at a minimum, the student's name, address, degree program and title, and the date on which he/she becomes eligible for the agreement. The home state coordinator records all certifications in the Academic Common Market Inventory (ACMI).
10. The institutional ACM coordinator makes arrangements with the appropriate institution officials so that the

student is not charged out-of-state tuition. Any required fees for students are not subject to waiver. The institution sets policy regarding any institutionally imposed deadlines for ACM participation and the payment of tuition. ACM students not accepted or certified within the deadline for payment may have to wait until the next tuition payment period to receive the out-of-state fee waiver or in-state status. Out-of-state waivers or in-state tuition status are not retroactive to any point prior to acceptance into the ACM program, except at the discretion of the institution.

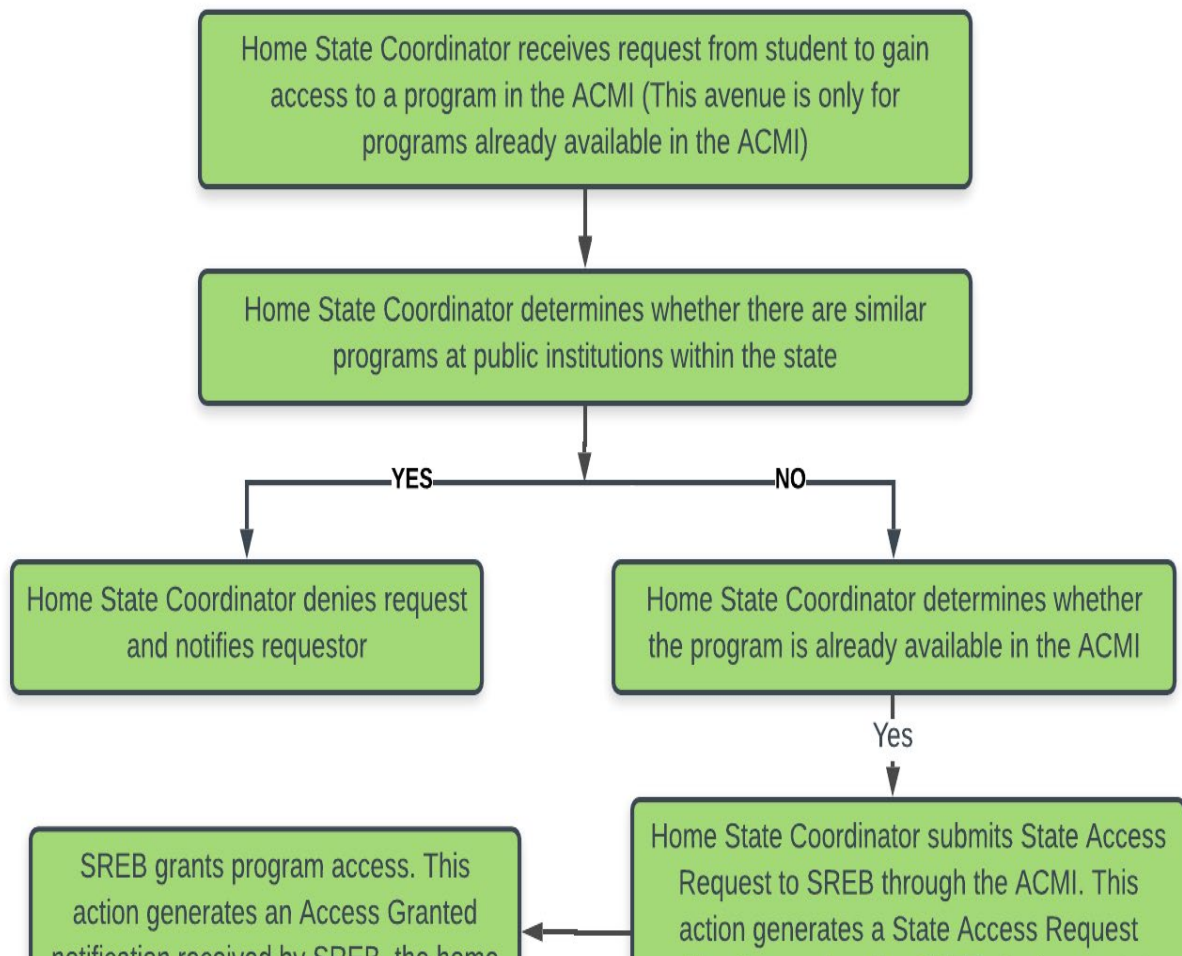
11. A review of the degree progress and home of record of ACM participants should be completed annually by the institutional ACM coordinator.
12. Students accepted to the ACM program must be given the ability to finish their programs with an out-of-state tuition waiver or in-state status if they make satisfactory progress toward the degree. This is true regardless of whether ACM access to the program continues or is removed at the request of either the home state or institution. However, reasonable time entitlement is limited to students who are continuously enrolled and who make satisfactory progress toward the specified degree. Continued access for students who do not meet these criteria is at the discretion of the institution.

3. ACM Program Inclusion Process

1. Residents must be accepted to the eligible ACM program at a participating ACM institution to apply for ACM status. Residents must also be accepted to any non-eligible program for which they request program inclusion to the ACM.
2. State coordinators handle requests for access to programs, from both individual residents and other state coordinators, throughout the year in a manner that accommodates the needs of the participating states, but within a reasonable timeframe. In addition to receiving individual requests, programs may be nominated at any time, including program additions initiated by institutions. States may choose to act on requests for program access and/or inclusion as they are received or may review requests on a periodic basis (i.e. monthly or quarterly represents a reasonable timeframe, while annually is not considered a reasonable timeframe).
3. Programs that are nominated for inclusion to the ACM inventory must be entered into the Academic Common Market Inventory (ACMI). Once entered by the institution, the program is reviewed and approved by the host state coordinator. Then, SREB staff activates the program and state coordinators may request access at any time. State coordinators can solicit nominations from institutions in their state by a process that accommodates the needs of their state.
4. All state and institutional coordinators should annually review both the programs to which residents have out-of-state access and those that are accessed at in-state institutions by non-residents. This review should affirm the availability and necessity of both in-state and out-of-state access agreements.
5. Once the program access request has been made, if the program is already open to ACM participation, the SREB coordinator will notify the home state coordinator of its availability. If the program is not available in the ACM Inventory, the SREB coordinator forwards the request to the host state coordinator. The host state coordinator will determine whether the program can be made available for ACM use by determining state and institutional interests, as discussed in item #6 below.
6. To ensure a timely response to students when access to a new program is requested, SREB will request a status update two weeks after the original request is submitted. If there is no reply from the institution after two weeks, SREB will allow another two weeks for the state/institution to respond. If after four weeks (30 days) no reply is received from the host institution, SREB will deny the request due to no institutional response. Also, the home state coordinator will either place the student's application into inactive status or deny the request, then alert the student that the program is no longer under consideration at the institution. Should the program become available in the future, the student's application may be reinstated, but will remain inactive or denied otherwise.
7. If the program is made available, the institutional coordinator, or the host state coordinator (if institution does not have access to the database), completes the program description in the ACMI. Once the program has been entered in the ACMI and the program status changed to ENTERED, a notification is generated and sent to the host state coordinator to review the program entry. After the state coordinator has APPROVED the entry, SREB will do a final review of the program entry, ACTIVATE the program, then grant access to the requesting state. All these actions generate an automated notification from the ACMI.

8. While the determination of the similarity of programs rests solely with the home states, the authority to open or close access to programs is that of the institution or the host state coordinator. Limitation or termination of access to ACM programs at institutions may be imposed at any time by the institution's state coordinator, at the request of institutions, or by state coordinating or governing policy.
 - a. **EXCEPTION** in the interest of equity of access to degrees. At the point when an ACM institution adds a degree to its ACM inventory, any state that wants access to an activated ACM degree can get access. The institution does not have authority to decide which states do and do not get access to activated degrees, considering that the requesting state concluded its program similarity comparison and deemed the out-of-state degree unique.
 - i. Only states can deny access to its residents for out-of-state degrees.
 - ii. If an ACM institution decides to stop accepting new ACM students for activated degrees, the degree must be removed from the ACM program in the interest of equity to access.
 1. Currently enrolled students will be grandfathered in to the removed degree provided they do not stop out, drop out, or change their majors.
9. Program inclusion requests can be denied by institution with no reason provided. However, if a program inclusion request is denied based on program similarity, residents can appeal to their home state. SREB strongly recommends that participating ACM states have a written program inclusion appeals policy that outlines residents' recourse for program inclusion requests that are denied due to program similarity/overlap.
 - a. This appeal is a state-level ACM appeal process that each state creates and enforces. At this point, the responsibility is now on the requestor (resident) to provide proof contrary to the initial information that supports a reversal of the initial decision. However, the institution(s) that denied the initial request still has review authority over existing information used and new information provided.
 - b. If the state appeal results in a subsequent denial and the requestor still does not agree with the denial, the requestor can then appeal to SREB through the state ACM office. This review is a courtesy provided to the requestor to be heard. This review consists of a platform for the requestor to present his/her case for program inclusion, SREB's review of the state's decision based on the institutional review, and SREB's review of whether the state followed its own processes. SREB will then confirm the state's decision or open the floor to more discussion if there are discrepancies.

3.1 Program Access Overview: State Access Request



4. Determining Program Similarity

The purpose of the ACM is to provide programs of study that are not available to students in their home states. Access to programs is based on a decision that similar programs (curriculum configurations, not necessarily degree titles) are not offered at any regionally accredited, public institution in the resident's state. Regardless of when requests are made, state coordinators must determine that similar programs are not available within their home state and meet the following criteria:

1. The program must be designed to culminate in the conferral of a baccalaureate, master's, specialist, or doctoral degree (first professional degrees as defined by the [USDE](#) are excluded), and the institution must be able to classify the participant as degree seeking. Degrees or awards at the less-than-associate, associate, first professional, [post-baccalaureate](#), and [post-master's certificate](#) levels are not eligible for the ACM. Some institutions and states may impose additional acceptance requirements such as GPA or full-time enrollment status.
2. Correspondence and other degree programs operating out-of-state (relative to the teaching institution) are not eligible for the ACM.
3. The program must be one that is approved by the state's higher education agency. It also must be a published degree program offered by an institutional unit (i.e., a department, school, or college) or an interdisciplinary program with a defined and published curriculum structure.
 - a. Independent study, individualized study majors, and other arranged or negotiated programs of study are ineligible for the ACM, under the premise that such study may be arranged in the home state.
 - b. Independent combinations of available degree programs such as biology and music should not be considered, nor should double major or major/minor combinations that are independently set by students.

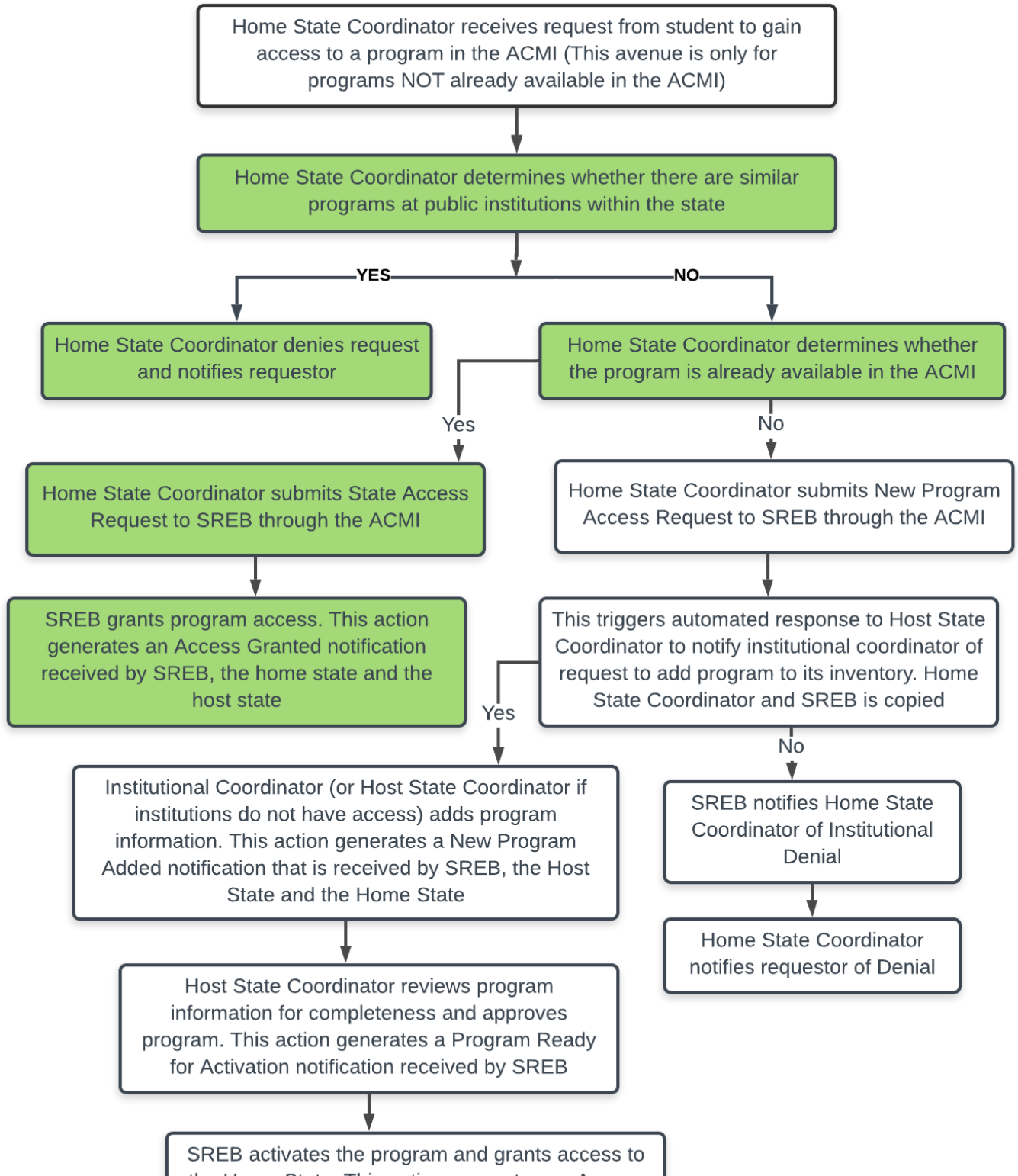
Note on double major and major/minor combinations: For these institutionally approved combinations, if both major programs or a major/minor combination qualifies for inclusion in the ACM, then the state and institution may allow the student to double major or enroll in the major/minor combination and receive the ACM benefit.

- c. Coordinated degree programs, such as joint MBA/MPH programs, should have a defined, published structure. States may further limit ACM program eligibility, as well as allow institutions to further limit ACM eligibility based on the needs of the institution.
4. Degree names, program titles and/or course titles do not define program content. As a guideline, if ***51% or more of the courses and course content in the major*** of out-of-state degrees are similar to those contained in degrees offered at public institutions in the home state, then the degree is ineligible for inclusion to the ACM. Concentrations, options, tracks, or specializations provided in more general degree programs (and otherwise ineligible) must be extraordinary, specific, and structured to merit eligibility for the ACM. They must materially change the nature of the degree such that it is markedly different from degree programs that are offered at in-state institutions.
5. Curricular differences will always exist between two programs of study at different institutions. State coordinators are responsible for determining whether to seek access to out-of-state programs based on the extent of the differences in curriculum between degrees. States should develop written processes for assuring that they do not seek ACM access to programs available in or similar to those in their own state. State coordinators should inform and train their institutions on determining similarity, so faculty know what is expected of them for their part in determining similarity. The written process should include these guidelines:
 - a. The state coordinator petitions the public (not just the ACM-participating) institutions in its state for a program similarity comparison.

- b. The program similarity comparison should be conducted by faculty from the program area or the CAO of the academic affairs department.
 - c. The program similarity comparison should be a course-by-course curricular comparison of the major courses between the in-state and out-of-state degrees.
 - d. The institutional representative conducting the comparison should provide a written response that clearly states the percentage to which there is similarity between the in-state and out-of-state degrees.
6. Several factors are explicitly excluded from consideration when determining program similarity and the eligibility of programs for the ACM. These excluded factors include:
- a. The college, school, or department in which a degree program is housed.
 - b. Specific programmatic accreditations, industry certifications, state licensure requirements, or academic and professional outcomes (such as internships, externships, or placements opportunities)
 - c. The difficulty of access or acceptance to (i.e., limited access program) in-state programs or the longevity (age) of the degree at an institution.
 - d. The geographic location of programs within states (i.e., students who reside 50 or less miles from an out-of-state institution, but multiple hours away from the nearest in-state institution).
 - e. Access to degree programs solely because they offer unique student services/amenities, or other non-academic features (i.e., programs geared specifically towards students with specific disabilities).
7. States and institutions may promulgate additional policies regarding the ACM designed to meet specific state and institutional objectives. Each state's ACM coordinator will maintain such policies.

4.1 Program Access Overview: New Program Access Request

(Green shading indicates process overlap with State Access Request)



5. Additional State and Institutional Notes

Alabama

Auburn University limits ACM access to undergraduate programs. Only 25 new ACM participants are accepted each year, and students must be at either the junior or senior level to participate in the ACM. Auburn selects applicants on a competitive basis; for which the deadline is March 15th. Applicants should contact the institutional coordinator's office prior to contacting his/her state coordinator.

The University of Alabama limits ACM access to the programs that are currently listed in the ACM inventory. Further, UA applies the following two new conditions for eligibility for approved ACM programs:

- 1) The annual ACM Deadline for fall admissions is May 1st.
- 2) Only first-time, incoming freshman are eligible for the ACM program.
- 3) For first-time ACM certification, an undergraduate student must have at least a 27 ACT composite score or 1260 SAT composite score (math and verbal only) and at least a 3.50 overall high school GPA.
- 4) For continuing participation after the initial semester of ACM support, each UA ACM student must maintain at least a 3.00 cumulative GPA on all UA course work attempted. This GPA standard is in addition to the long-standing requirements for maintaining residency and major.
- 5) UA ACM does not provide a probation semester. The ACM award is lost if student fall below 3.0 overall GPA.
- 6) ACM award is only approved for 8 academic semesters – summers are not included.
- 7) ACM students are not allowed to double major under the ACM program. Adding a second major, regardless of ACM-eligibility, will result in the loss of ACM award. ACM students are prohibited from a minor unless required for major. Also, undergraduate students are prohibited from enrollment in graduate school courses.
- 8) ACM students must maintain full-time status. Dropping below full-time will result in loss of ACM award.
- 9) ACM award does not post to student account until grades are verified each semester.

The University of Delaware limits ACM access to the programs that are currently listed in the ACM inventory.

Florida

The state of Florida limits ACM access to graduate programs only.

The **University of Florida** requires that student certifications be submitted to the ACM Institutional Coordinator at the University of Florida prior to the payment deadline for the upcoming semester's tuition and fees. Any certifications received by the institution on or after the payment deadline, will not be processed until the following semester. Students should be directed to the academic calendar for the University of Florida to view the upcoming tuition and fee payment deadlines.

Georgia

The state of Georgia does not accept and will not review program inclusion requests (*to add new degrees to the ACM*). Therefore, Georgia residents are limited to choose only from the ACM-eligible degrees already activated in the program inventories of eligible out-of-state institutions. Also, the state of Georgia does not include "mode of delivery" as a determinant for program eligibility for state residents.

Georgia Institute of Technology limits ACM access to graduate programs that are currently listed in the ACM inventory.

Georgia State University limits ACM access to graduate programs only.

The University of Georgia grants ACM access after students have completed at least 60 credit hours and have been formally admitted to the ACM degree program. ACM eligibility at UGA is limited to four academic semesters for undergraduate students and continues through ACM degree program completion for graduate students.

Louisiana

The state of Louisiana does not include "mode of delivery" as a determinant of program eligibility for state residents.

Maryland

The State of Maryland has a strict ACM application deadline policy. The following ACM deadlines are firm and cannot be appealed:

- Fall semester – March 1st through June 30th
- Spring semester – September 1st through November 15th
- Summer semester – January 2nd through February 28th

NOTE: These deadlines are subject to change without prior notice. For certainty, please always check the state's ACM webpage at https://mhcc.maryland.gov/institutions_training/Pages/acadaff/commonmarket.aspx for accurate deadlines.

The University of Maryland, Eastern Shore does not participate in the ACM.

The University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) does not participate in the ACM.

Towson University does not participate in the ACM.

Mississippi

The state of Mississippi limits the eligibility of Mississippi residents participating in the ACM program to those enrolled in degree programs on a full-time basis. Full-time enrollment status will be based on the host institution's definition.

The state of Mississippi does not include "mode of delivery" as a determinant of program eligibility for state residents.

Mississippi State University limits ACM access to the programs that are currently listed in the ACM inventory.

- To be eligible to receive the Academic Common Market tuition remission for approved programs, an entering student must have an ACT composite score of 22 or better (minimum ACT sub-score of 19 for Math and English) and a core GPA of 2.75 on the high school transcripts.
- Transfer students (4-year college, community college, and internal program transfers) must have a GPA of 2.75 on the college transcripts.
- To be admitted into ACM-approved graduate programs, applicants must meet minimum university requirements, as well as any specific departmental requirements that may apply.
- As part of the Academic Common Market application student must secure a letter from the home department confirming that:
 - The student has been admitted into the appropriate ACM-eligible major at Mississippi State University.
 - The student meets the Mississippi State University Academic Common Market criteria as stated above.

NOTE: This letter is critical as it informs the Academic Common Market Coordinator of the student's home state, that the student meets the criteria to access the desired major through the Academic Common Market at Mississippi State University.

- Please be advised that Mississippi State University ACM has deadlines to submit all ACM paperwork to Mississippi State University's ACM Office by the following dates:

○ Fall Semester	June 30 th
○ Spring Semester	October 31 st
○ Summer Semester(s)	March 31 st
- In order to maintain ACM eligibility, students must maintain a 3.0 overall GPA.

The **University of Mississippi (Ole Miss)** limits ACM access to the programs that are currently listed in the ACM inventory.

The Provost for the **University of Southern Mississippi** will review additions to the institution's ACM inventory on a case-by-case basis.

Mississippi State University, The University of Mississippi and **The University of Southern Mississippi** are not adding any new programs to the ACM.

North Carolina

Effective of the General Assembly of North Carolina's Appropriations Act of 2011, North Carolina's participation in the ACM, as both a sender and a receiver of students, ended.

Oklahoma

The **University of Oklahoma** limits ACM access to the programs that are currently listed in the ACM inventory and is not considering additional programs.

South Carolina

The state of South Carolina limits the eligibility of South Carolina residents participating in the ACM program to those enrolled in degree programs on a full-time basis. Full-time enrollment status will be based on the host institution's definition.

The state of South Carolina does not include "mode of delivery" as a determinant of program eligibility for state residents.

Clemson University participates in the ACM at the graduate level only effective academic year 2024-25.

- Students must be approved for the ACM their first semester at Clemson: first-time freshmen or first-time graduate student. Students will lose their ACM tuition rate if they change their majors.
- Clemson limits ACM access to 35 new ACM participants each year.
- Applicants should first contact their state coordinator. Clemson will notify the South Carolina State Coordinator when our limit has been reached on new student participation.
- Receipt of the ACM waiver may affect eligibility for other scholarships.
- Students who seek approval for ACM in engineering (except for Biosystems Engineering) and business majors are not eligible for consideration for ACM until their sophomore year; at which time they have declared a major and the major has been approved for ACM.

The following institutions do not participate in the ACM program:

- The Citadel
- College of Charleston
- Francis Marion University

Coastal Carolina University will not add the BSBA in Marketing (Professional Golf Management) to the ACM. This restriction will remain in effect until further notice. Check again in 2020.

Tennessee

Tennessee residents will no longer have access to the MS in Prosthetics and Orthotics degrees at Alabama State University or University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center after June 1, 2023.

University of Tennessee – Knoxville participates in the ACM at the graduate degree level only effective Spring 2025.

Texas

The state of Texas limits ACM access to graduate programs only.

The University of Texas at Austin does not participate in the ACM.

The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston currently does not participate in the ACM.

Virginia

The state of Virginia reviews **program inclusion requests** once a year. The deadline for submitting program inclusion requests is February of each year. This process may take up to one (1) year to complete and there is no guarantee that the request will be approved.

The **College of William and Mary** limits ACM access to the program that is currently listed in the ACM inventory.

The following institutions do not participate in the ACM program:

- Christopher Newport University
- George Mason University
- James Madison University
- University of Mary Washington
- University of Virginia
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Virginia Military Institute
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)

West Virginia

West Virginia University participates in the ACM at the graduate degree level only

West Virginia University Institute of Technology participates in the ACM at the graduate degree level only

6. ACM State Coordinators List

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