



Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Academic Common Market Overview



OVERVIEW

The Academic Common Market (ACM) began in 1974 as a collaborative agreement between member states of the 15 states in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). The ACM is a tuition-savings program that allows college students to pursue programs that are not offered by their in-state institutions. Students can enroll at an out-of-state institution that offer their academic program and pay the institution's in-state tuition rates. According to SREB, "the ACM reduces the unnecessary duplication of academic programs among participating states, recognizing that it is impractical for any institution or single state to develop or maintain degree programs in every field of knowledge." Participation in the ACM has allowed states to leverage unique academic programs while simultaneously meeting a variety of institutional goals.

As program development occurs at in-state institutions, they may request that state access be removed to similar programs with a reasonable phase-out period. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission ACM coordinator reviews program offerings annually with campuses to ensure the programs available are not duplicative of in-state offerings. Common "export" programs for Tennessee students are: Marine Science and adjacent programs, niche Engineering programs (petroleum, metallurgical, etc.), and Genetics and Genetics-adjacent programs.



TOP 10 PROGRAMS: STUDENT IMPORT AND EXPORT

Student Import Popular Programs		Student Export Popular Programs	
Academic Programs	Institution	Academic Program	Institution
Supply Chain Management	University of Tennessee - Knoxville	Marine Science	Coastal Carolina University
Audio Production	Middle Tennessee State University	Southern Studies	University of Mississippi
Business Analytics	University of Tennessee - Knoxville	Genetics and Genomic Science	University of Alabama - Birmingham
Aerospace	Middle Tennessee State University	Agriculture and Medical Biotechnology	University of Kentucky
Recording Industry	Middle Tennessee State University	Genetics	University of Georgia
Audiology and Speech Pathology	University of Tennessee - Knoxville	Cancer Biology	University of Alabama - Birmingham
Anthropology (<i>Forensic Anthropology</i>)	University of Tennessee - Knoxville	Mass Communication (<i>Political Communication</i>)	Louisiana State University
Therapeutic Recreation	University of Tennessee - Knoxville	Media Arts and Studies	University of Kentucky
Biomedical Engineering	University of Tennessee - Knoxville	Marketing (<i>Professional Golf Management</i>)	Mississippi State University
Interior Architecture	University of Tennessee - Knoxville	Marine Science	University of South Carolina

**All of the Top 10 Import and Export programs are undergraduate programs.*



ACADEMIC COMMON MARKET

The Academic Common Market is a program designed to help college students from 15 Southern Regional Board (SREB) states save on tuition expenses. It caters to students who wish to pursue degrees not available at public institutions in their own state.

Through this program, students can enroll in colleges and universities located outside their home state and be charged in-state tuition. Currently, this benefit extends to more than 100 colleges and 2,200 undergraduate and graduate programs, with the opportunity to propose additional programs for inclusion.

ACM IS...



Access to uncommon programs



A way to share education resources



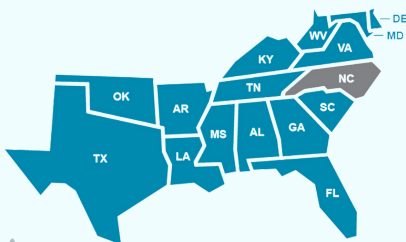
For public institutions only



For undergraduate and graduate degrees

WHO QUALIFIES?

- Must be a resident of TN for at least one year
- Must meet college admissions requirements
- Must be unconditionally accepted to the chosen ACM eligible program



Florida and Texas only participate at the Graduate level

Proof of Residency



Submit a valid state of Tennessee driver's license or identification card, proof of Military residency, your most recent federal tax return (redacted of any personally identifiable information), or valid vehicle registration.

Issue date must be twelve months prior to certification and address must match that provided in the residency certification application.

HOW TO APPLY

- Search for available programs on SREB's website¹.
- Apply to the institution offering your desired program.
- Upon admission, create a profile on THEC's website and complete the ACM application process².

Check for state restrictions and institutional deadlines

LENGTH OF PROCESS



It usually takes 1 to 2 months for existing ACM programs to process an application. If you are requesting a new program, allow 2 to 3 months.

Students interested in **NOMINATING** a program for inclusion in the ACM must successfully complete the program nomination prior to applying for residency certification.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- 1 College acceptance letter that includes program, not just institutional acceptance.
- 2 Documents for residency certification on THEC's website².
- 3 Any institutional requirements

POPULAR PROGRAMS

- Aerospace 
- Marine Science 
- Southern Studies
- Genetic Genomic Sciences
- Agricultural and Medical Biotechnology



*AVERAGE ANNUAL TUITION SAVINGS PER STUDENT

¹ Southern Regional Education Board - www.sreb.org

² THEC-Academic Common Market - www.tn.gov/theac/acm

³ ACM FAQs Southern Regional Education Board - www.sreb.org

⁴ View Program Offerings - Southern Regional Education Board - www.sreb.org

⁵ Tennessee Higher Education Commission ACM Coordinator - ACM.coordinator@tn.gov

ACM Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the Academic Common Market?

A: The Academic Common Market is a tuition savings program for college students in 15 SREB states who want to pursue degrees that are not offered by public institutions in their home state. Students can enroll in out-of-state institutions and pay the institution's in-state tuition rates for more than 2,200 undergraduate and graduate programs.

Q: Who qualifies? (Tennessee)

A: Student must be a resident of TN, select a program that is approved for the ACM for their home state, be admitted unconditionally into that program, and meet state residency and college admissions requirements. **Residency Certification-** Valid State Driver's License or Identification Card, Vehicle Registration, Voter Registration Card, Proof of Military Residency, Most recent federal tax return (redacted of any personally identifiable information).

Q: Is there a deadline for submitting my ACM application to THEC?

A: No, our agency does not have a deadline for application submission. However, a number of institutions have internal deadlines that must be followed. We suggest you contact the institution's ACM coordinator to determine if there is an internal ACM deadline. **Tennessee's ACM coordinator contact information: ACM.coordinator@tn.gov.** Processing residency certification applications can take 2-4 weeks.

Q: What states participate in SREB's Academic Common Market?

A: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia. Florida and Texas participate only at the graduate level.

Q: How long does it take to process my application?

A: For existing Academic Common Market programs, it can take 1 to 2 months to process an application (including residency certification and institutional processing). If you are requesting a new program, allow 2 to 3 months.

Q: How do I check the status of my application?

A: Contact your state ACM coordinator: ACM.coordinator@tn.gov

Q: Are distance learning degree programs offered?

A: Yes, the Academic Common Market also offers students the opportunity to pursue degree programs via distance education. The same eligibility requirements apply.

Q: Is it necessary for me to reapply each year for ACM? Once certified, is there anything that can disqualify me from continuing to use ACM?

A: No, residency certification is a one-time-only procedure. However, you must remain enrolled in an ACM-eligible major and maintain your residency classification, full-time status, and good academic standing. If you decide to withdraw, take a leave, or change majors, understand that the program may no longer be eligible to be included in the ACM when you seek to be recertified. If a student is placed on academic probation or dismissed, it is the discretion of the institution to reinstate ACM access.



ACM Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I want to nominate a program for the ACM inventory. How do I know if the program I want to nominate is already offered at a public university in Tennessee?

A: You can search for programs by major name and/or by institution using THEC's searchable Academic Program Inventory (API).

Q: A previously eligible program I am interested in is no longer listed on SREB's website. Why?

A: Participation in ACM is completely voluntary and sometimes institutions or states decide to remove ACM access for out-of-state students seeking admissions. Further, as new program development occurs at in-state institutions, they can request for out-of-state programs to be removed if a new program is 51% similar to the out-of-state offering. ACM coordinators at public institutions within the state review ACM programs eligible for Tennessee residents annually, but may request a program be removed at any time (with a reasonable phase-out period).

Q: How does being a military-affiliated student impact residency certification?

A: The Rules of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission offer the following provisions for military-affiliated students:

- An unemancipated person whose parent is not domiciled in this State but whose parent is a member of the armed forces and stationed in this State or at Fort Campbell pursuant to military orders shall be classified out-of-state but shall be permitted to participate in Commission programs as if they were classified in-state. Such person's status, while in continuous attendance toward the degree for which he or she is currently enrolled, shall not be affected should his or her parent thereafter be transferred on military orders (1540-1-1- .06).
- Military personnel and their spouses stationed in the State of Tennessee who would be classified out-of-state in accordance with other provisions of these regulations will be classified out-of-state but shall be permitted to participate in Commission programs as if they were classified in-state. This provision shall not apply to military personnel and their spouses who are stationed in this State primarily for educational purposes.

Q: I am already enrolled in an ACM approved major, but I just found out about the program. Can I still apply?

A: Yes, you can apply for participation in the ACM at any time. However, certifications are made for the next semester, so you will not receive a retroactive tuition reduction. Further, be sure to check institutional deadlines for certification, as that will dictate when ACM is applied toward your tuition.

Q: If I change my major to a different program that is not available in my home state, can I still pay reduced tuition through Academic Common Market?

A: If you change your major to another ACM-eligible program, you need to be recertified by your state coordinator. ACM certifications are valid only for the specific institution and major stated on the form.

Q: I would like to use ACM to attend an out-of-state institution. Will I still be eligible to receive other Tennessee scholarships, such as HOPE?

A: No. By participating in the ACM and attending an institution outside of the state, students forfeit their eligibility for other state-administered scholarships, including all Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) programs (HOPE, GAMS, ASPIRE, and Access).



ACM Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What happens if I change my major from an ACM-eligible program to one that is not ACM-eligible? Do I have to pay back the money I saved through the ACM?

A: If you change your major during a semester, the institution may charge you the out-of-state tuition rate for that semester. You will lose ACM benefits and pay out-of-state tuition for all following semesters. Most institutions will not require you to pay back tuition for the time you received ACM benefits.

Q: What if I am not officially admitted to the program until I am a junior or have completed pre-requisite requirements?

A: Residency certification for ACM benefits requires admission into an eligible program, so if admission to your program occurs at the junior level or higher, you must apply for certification at that time.

Q: Can Academic Common Market students double major?

A: ACM students are permitted to double major, but only if both programs are eligible.

Q: What if the program I am interested in is not on the list?

A: If you are interested in a program not included in the inventory for your state, it may be for the following reasons:

1. The program is offered at a public institution in your home state
2. The program has not been previously requested by a resident of your state.
3. The college or university may not participate in the ACM
4. State legislation may not allow for participation

For more information, please contact your state coordinator or visit the following websites for more details:

Southern Regional Education Board - www.sreb.org

THEC-Academic Common Market - www.tn.gov/thec/acm

ACM FAQs Southern Regional Education Board - www.sreb.org

View Program Offerings - Southern Regional Education Board - www.sreb.org

**Tennessee Higher Education Commission ACM Coordinator -
ACM.coordinator@tn.gov**

