

SCHEV Responsibilities

(reprint from: <https://www.schev.edu/about/overview/schev-responsibilities>)

Virginia Code § 23.1-200 describes SCHEV's purpose:

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia is established to advocate for and promote the development and operation of an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated system of higher education in the Commonwealth and lead state-level strategic planning and policy development and implementation based on research and analysis and in accordance with § 23.1-301 and subsection A of § 23.1-1002. The Council shall seek to facilitate collaboration among institutions of higher education that will enhance quality and create operational efficiencies and work with institutions of higher education and their governing boards on board development.

In furtherance of the above-described purpose, SCHEV performs many functions and duties enumerated in Chapter 2 of Title 23.1 of the Code of Virginia, including 30 core duties listed at § 23.1-203. SCHEV's resulting responsibilities range over academic policy, private education regulation, finance and financial aid policy, data collection and analysis, research investment, Board development, and numerous planning and communication functions designed to advocate for, and improve the coordination of, higher education in Virginia.

ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic Policy and Approval Authority

The Council approves public institutions' new degree programs, instructional sites, degree escalations, and mission statements. It also coordinates state policy on transfer, student learning assessment, military-related students, and other topics. The Academic Affairs staff communicates and works with institutions on academic policy through the Instructional Program Advisory Committee, which consists of chief academic officers of public institutions and one private institution representative.

Authorization of New and Out-of-State Institutions

The Council authorizes certain private and out-of-state postsecondary institutions to operate in Virginia through SCHEV's office of Private and Out-of-state Postsecondary Education (POPE). POPE staff examines applications from institutions seeking certification, holds mandatory orientation sessions for applicant schools, conducts institutional audits to ensure compliance with Virginia regulations, and investigates and responds to student complaints (for all institutions). POPE administers the Student Tuition Guaranty Fund (STGF), which provides refunds to students—subject to certain conditions—when certified institutions close. POPE staff communicates and works with institutions through the Career College Advisory Board.

BUDGET AND FINANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Finance Policy Analysis and Recommendations

The Council makes recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly for state support for public higher education operations and capital needs. In addition, data analysis and policy recommendations are provided on an ongoing basis, especially to the Appropriations and Finance committee staffs of the General Assembly. The Finance Policy staff communicates and works with institutions through the Finance Advisory Committee, which consists of chief finance officers of public institutions.

Oversight of Financial Aid Programs

The Finance Policy section also administers most of the Commonwealth's programs for need-based financial aid and other state-funded student assistance. In this capacity, over \$70 million passes through SCHEV to public institutions for need-based aid, to qualified Virginia residents attending in-state private non-profit institutions, and to qualified students in non-need-based assistance programs. The guidelines and regulations governing nearly all state-funded and state-authorized student assistance are issued by SCHEV, which also makes aid/assistance funding recommendations.

DATA RESEARCH RESPONSIBILITIES

Data Collection and Dissemination

The Council maintains a comprehensive data system designed at the student level to meet the Council's need for information to inform policy decisions and budget recommendations. This data system comprises the core of the postsecondary component of the Virginia Longitudinal Data System and provides 20 years of data on Virginia college students. These data provide the raw material behind the extensive public reporting of student data on the SCHEV website.

GENERAL SYSTEM RESPONSIBILITIES

Boards of Visitors Orientation

SCHEV is charged with providing educational programs for newly appointed board members at the public institutions of higher education within the first two years of their service. The topics to be covered by SCHEV are contained in the Code of Virginia and range from best practices in governance to future and national trends. The orientation has traditionally been held during autumn in Richmond. This location and timing allows for the participation of key policy makers and government officials in a central location. Council is required to submit an annual summary of its BOV training activities to the General Assembly and Governor.

Communications

SCHEV provides information regarding Virginia higher education and its mission to external stakeholders via the agency website, newsletter, and in response to individual inquiries via email and telephone. The Communications staff also provides information to internal stakeholders, including Council members and staff, via the agency intranet and a weekly news summary.

Legislative Affairs

SCHEV creates and advocates for legislation that supports the agency's mission. Staff members respond to requests from the Governor and Secretary of Education for analysis of individual bills in the form of Legislative Action Summaries and Enrolled Bill Reports. Various staff members are also called upon to testify before General Assembly committees as their areas of expertise dictate. SCHEV staff responds to individual legislators' requests for information and coordinate reports mandated by legislation.

Grant and External Program Administration

- *Grant Administration:* SCHEV administers two U.S. Department of Education grants, the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs Grant (GEAR UP), and the Improving Teacher Quality/No Child Left Behind Grant (ITQ/NCLB). These grants support statewide educational goals and initiatives for college access, student achievement, college and

career readiness, teacher preparation, and STEM-H. Each of these programs fosters partnerships among federal, state and local governments, and with the K-12, higher education, and the non-profit communities in the Commonwealth.

- *External program administration:* The Academic Common Market (ACM) provides access and affordability to students seeking specialized degree programs not available at any of Virginia's four-year public institutions. Eligible students who meet residency requirements are granted discounted tuition by participating public institutions in other southern region states.

Institutional Performance Review

The Council is responsible for monitoring institutional performance in meeting the goals and objectives of the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act of 2005 and the Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011. SCHEV determines whether institutions are eligible to receive financial benefits specified in the Acts based on institutional performance based on measures developed by SCHEV and approved by the General Assembly. SCHEV also coordinates activities, such as the review of institutional Six-Year Plans, mandated in the Acts.

Statewide Strategic Planning

The Council is charged through Code to develop a statewide strategic plan that identifies a coordinated approach to state goals for higher education in the Commonwealth, which emphasizes unique institutional missions and anticipates future needs at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels. The current plan, referred to as the Virginia Plan for Higher Education was passed in 2021 with the objective of making Virginia the best-educated state by 2030.