

# ***Policies and Procedures***

<i>SECTION:</i> <b>Academic Concerns</b>	<i>NO.</i> <b>4.1.4.</b>		
<i>CHAPTER:</i> <b>General</b>	<i>ISSUED:</i> 11/15/12	<i>REV. A</i>	<i>REV. B</i>
<i>POLICY:</i> <b>Approval of a New Academic Program</b>	<i>PAGE 1 OF 3</i>		

## **PURPOSE**

This policy outlines the procedures, structure and approval requirements for new academic programs.

## **POLICY**

The new program approval policy and procedures provide a rational and effective process for program development, consideration and approval that will ensure that the University is making coordinated decisions for program development, resource allocation, and external regulatory compliance. This document provides a structure to assist in the planning and approval process of new academic degree programs at Creighton University. By requiring specific data and background information, the procedures are intended to ensure appropriate consistency and care in designing and presenting new academic program proposals. They are also intended to clarify the institutional procedures that govern internal and external approvals and thereby eliminate confusion and unnecessary delays.

This policy and accompanying procedures govern all **proposed new academic programs and new degrees** at Creighton University. The process also pertains to changes in format of delivery and to changes which have implications for one or more of the other Colleges. Whenever the phrase “new academic program” is used in this document, it refers to one or more of the foregoing categories.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Guidelines for Developing and Seeking Approval of New Academic Programs, Pre-Proposal Screening Document – Refer to Appendix A

New Academic Program Full Proposal Development – Refer to Appendix B

## **PROCEDURE**

### **Academic Governance and Review of Proposals**

#### **PHASE 1: College/School(s) Planning**

**Pre-proposal:** Initial steps for program planning and approval begin at the level of the College or School that will provide the primary program content. Because the responsibility for curriculum belongs to the faculty, it is essential that faculty members in the discipline(s) are involved in the planning and execution of a curriculum leading to a new degree.

All planning should be in concert with the Dean of the School or College(s) who will be responsible for providing resources for the new program. Initial planning should be done by developing a pre-proposal and using screening questions regarding the viability of such a program. (See Appendix A –Pre-proposal Guidelines)

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There should be an initial School(s) review of the pre-proposal and approval to develop a full proposal. The pre-proposal should be discussed by the Dean(s) and Provost (or his or her designee).

### **PHASE 2: Formal FULL Proposal Development and Internal Unit Approval**

**Program Proposal:** The second step in the process is the development and evaluation of a full program proposal that includes the fiscal impact of such a program which should include a five year pro forma budget. (Appendix B-Proposal Guidelines) The Dean discusses this with the Provost or his or her designee, who in turn discusses it with the President. If the fiscal impact is acceptable to the Provost and the President, the proposal may proceed to the next step.

**School or College Review:** The third step in the approval process is the evaluation of the full proposal by the School or College review committee or governing board. For example, the Graduate Board evaluates the proposal based on graduate policy related to such items as admission criteria and comprehensive examinations. In addition, the Board is concerned with whether the program will be able to recruit and retain qualified students in sufficient numbers to provide a critical mass and adequate interaction. While content is not generally examined in terms of specific disciplinary elements, the Graduate Board does attempt to determine whether there is a sufficient theoretical base in the discipline to provide for substantive content at a level befitting graduate study. Program goals must be explicitly stated and a plan for assessment must be present. The assessment plan for all new programs will be reviewed by the Associate Vice President for Academic Excellence and Assessment and concerns must be addressed.

### **PHASE 3: University Review and Approval**

**Academic Planning Review (APR):** Once a new academic program proposal is approved by the respective School or College's academic governance body, it proceeds to the **University Academic Planning Review**. The APR is charged with supporting the President in ensuring sound academic program development and maintaining programmatic excellence throughout the University. The APR reviews the proposal and makes a recommendation by majority vote to the President to approve, modify, or reject the proposal.

The Provost or his or her designee will assemble and chair an executive committee that includes **appropriate academic representation** for the proposal being reviewed, representation from academic administration, finance, assessment, libraries and institutional accreditation. The APR committee will review the proposal, school or college recommendation and any other accompanying materials. The APR will make recommendations to the President for prioritization of implementation as part of the University's academic plan.

Recommendations include:

- Approval
- Pending approval once specific recommendations for change and/or follow up
- Reject

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### **AMENDMENTS OR TERMINATION OF POLICY**

The University reserves the right to modify, amend or terminate this policy at any time.

## GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING AND SEEKING APPROVAL OF NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

### Pre-Proposal Screening Document

#### INTRODUCTION:

New program development is critical to the University and both encouraged and expected. New programs refer to any new degree program, graduate certificate program, or doctoral minors. These guidelines are intended to be helpful in the planning and implementation of new programs.

#### INITIAL PLANNING

##### STEP 1: Idea Generation

Idea generation for a new program can come from many sources. They may come from competing institutions, market needs, societal or community needs or individual/administrator or donor ideas.

##### STEP 2: Program Concept Pre-Proposal – Screening Questions

While there could be new program development in several areas, resources are limited at most institutions. A screening process is an important step before moving forward with development of a full program proposal. The following questions are meant to provide initial screening of the viability of new programs:

- 1) Will the proposed program contribute positively to the mission of Creighton University?
- 2) Can this program be delivered with sufficient academic quality at Creighton?
- 3) Will the program meet direct costs and/or be profitable?
- 4) Is the program consistent with the strengths of the department(s) and/or School?
- 5) Will the program require a substantive change report and possible visit from Creighton's institutional accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission?
- 6) Is this program sustainable on a long term basis?
- 7) Are there any program delivery formats that would be new or different?
- 8) Is the program similar to any other program on campus?
- 9) Are there characteristics that distinguish this program from other programs offered by competing institutions?

**If the answer to these questions (1-4,6,9) is yes, then developing a short concept proposal may be in order.**

##### STEP 3: New Program Pre-Proposal/Concept Paper

The next step stems from the answers to the screening questions. These should be summarized in a short pre-proposal that also includes a new program concept description (3 to 5 pages). **This concept description should be shared with the Dean and Provost or designee in the area for approval of the "concept."**

Key elements to address:

- 1) Provide a brief justification for why Creighton needs this program and why Creighton should offer the program.
- 2) Provide a brief description of whether and why students will enroll in the program.
- 3) Estimate start-up costs for the program and indicate possible funding sources.
- 4) Facilities -If additional facilities are needed, how they will be acquired.
- 5) Curriculum and delivery: Are there special characteristics of the curriculum (as compared to similar programs)? Will the program be attractive to under-served populations?
- 6) If there are similar programs in your service area, how will the proposed program affect them?
- 7) Do you plan a collaborative arrangement with other departments or another institution or entity?

Once the Pre-Proposal/Concept paper has been approved by the Dean and the Provost or designee, the department(s)/units will be invited to submit a Formal Proposal.

**NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM  
FULL PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT**

The formal program proposal should contain the following components:

1. **Program Description**
2. **Justification/Rationale for Program/Link to Jesuit institution/educational philosophy**

This section should include a description of the “history” of the idea and the planning process that led to the proposal. It should confirm that there is an unmet need and demand for the proposed program and that the proposal is likely to attract and maintain a sufficient number of enrolled, tuition-paying students to be financially viable. Data to support the need should include statistics and opinions by authorities about the external environment generally and about educational needs that Creighton University would meet by offering the program. Ideally, statistics should reflect both the current environment as well as the projected future environment.

3. **Market Demand Analysis**

The rationale should also include an assessment of the student market. Activities of local and regional competitors that directly or tangentially address this market niche/educational need should be analyzed. The discussion should explain how the new program would address the weakness of current competitors’ programs. It should also address the following concerns:

- Why would students opt to come to Creighton?
- Would this program or campus location draw students from other University programs or locations, or would it attract new learners? Competing programs?
- What is the anticipated impact of the proposed program on the wider community, and what is the basis for this conclusion?

4. **Learning Goals/Student Outcomes**

For all new academic programs, this section should include a statement of the broad curricular philosophy and rationale for the curricular architecture. List the learning goals/program outcomes. It should include a listing of all courses that constitute the proposed program with clear identification of all new courses and any cross listing of courses. The curricular cycle, including the timing and sequence of course offerings, the mode of delivery, and the proposed start date should be addressed.

Graduate Programs: For new graduate programs, the proposal should address how the course offerings relate to the University’s mission and the graduate philosophy statement. All new program proposals should describe learning outcomes and specify methods of assessing student learning.

All new graduate programs must meet the following curricular standards. The program:

- Includes a minimum of 30 semester hours; a curriculum exceeding 36 semester hours requires special justification;
- Includes a research component;
- Includes a thesis or applied project and substantive written report.

Describe any field or internships requirements

5. **Accreditation**

This section should address all accreditation implications raised by the proposal and any steps taken to satisfy them.

6. **Assessment Plan for Student Learning**

All new academic program proposals should describe learning outcomes and specify methods of assessing student learning.

7. **External Comparisons**

This section should include a comparison of the proposed program with similar programs in other regionally accredited institutions in Nebraska and elsewhere and comparable Jesuit institutions.

8. **Resources**

This section should describe how the University has organized and planned for adequate human, financial, physical, and instructional resources to initiate and support the proposed program or site. For all resources, the proposal should clearly indicate which resources already exist, which resources must be acquired, and what strategies will be employed to acquire them. Proposals should include a discussion of the following:

Human Resources

- A person qualified by education and experience to administer the program
- An administrative structure through which appropriate control can be exercised
- The number and qualifications of administrative and support personnel needed to support the proposal
- Student support resources
- The number and qualifications of faculty needed to provide the instruction required by the proposal (include faculty CVs and/or proposed requirements)

Financial Resources

- A detailed account of the financial resources available and budgeted to cover all start-up costs as well as anticipated costs to maintain the necessary administrative, instructional, and support personnel over succeeding years
- An institutionally approved **projected budget for the first five years** of the new program including one-time start-up expenses, the anticipated sources for first-year funding, projected operating costs and income for at least five years, and a line item justification showing the derivation of each estimation of cost and revenue
- A sound business plan enumerating underlying assumptions that has been received and approved by the College's academic governance body.

Physical Resources

- Adequate classroom and office space

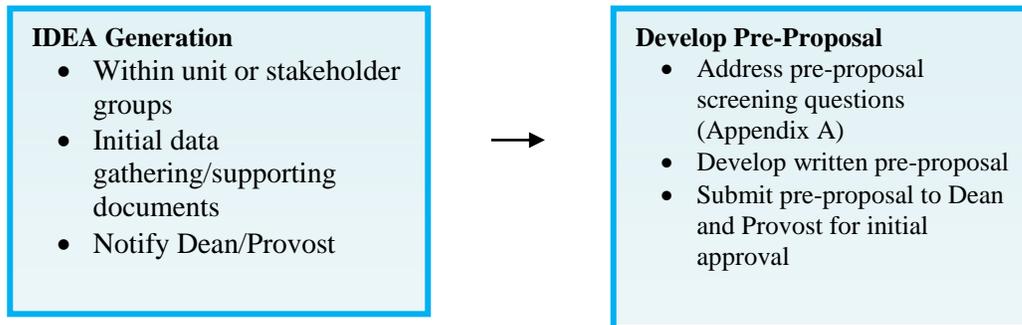
### Instructional Resources

- Admission and degree requirements for the proposal developed and approved by faculty.
- For new graduate programs, admission standards must include four of the following or their equivalents:
  - (1) Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university;
  - (2) Demonstration of satisfactory writing ability;
  - (3) Demonstration of appropriate academic preparation of applicant;
  - (4) Specification of required grade point average for admission;
  - (5) Minimum TOEFL score or personal interview to assure language proficiency for international students;
  - (6) Other: equivalent experience, testing, etc.
- Assurance that the library core collection is adequate for faculty course preparation and student use and plans for continued growth of these holdings.

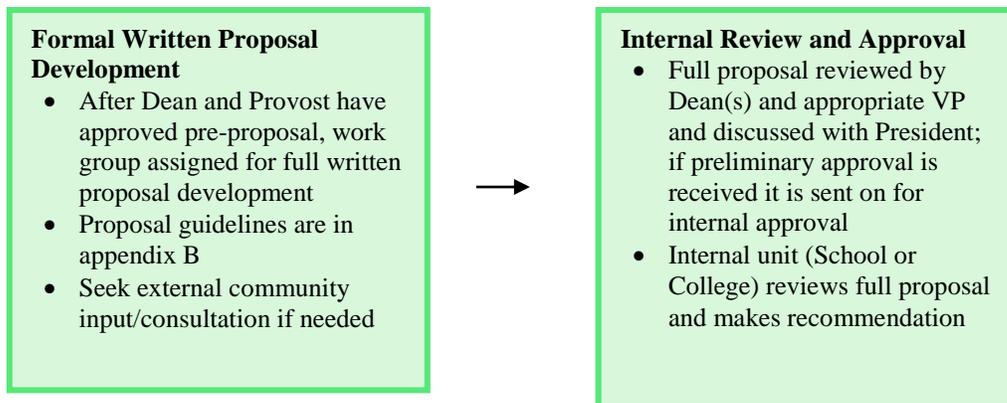
9. **Plan for Program Evaluation**
10. **Affirmative Action Considerations**
11. **Timeline**
12. **Outside Consultation** (if indicated).

# New Academic Program Review and Approval Process

## Phase 1: Preliminary Planning/Pre-Proposal Development



## Phase 2: Formal Proposal Development/Internal Unit Approval



## Phase 3: University Review and Approval

