Creighton University
Proposal Template: Transitioning an On-Ground Program to the Online Format

Overview

The following proposal template and action steps are designed to guide faculty and administrators in the transition of an existing on-ground program to an online program and to streamline the process for obtaining approval to transition an existing on-ground program to an online program. The Higher Learning Commission requires evidence of the following for distance education programs: (1) institutional capacity; (2) educational quality; (3) student learning and success; and (4) effective planning, evaluation, and improvement processes, including those for assessing and improving student learning, persistence, and completion. This proposal template is designed to assure evidence required for the Higher Learning Commission is considered and documented.

The Center for Academic Innovation is available to assist in the completion of the proposal. The Quality in Distance Education Policy (4.1.2) located at [http://www.creighton.edu/fileadmin/user/president/docs/Guide.pdf](http://www.creighton.edu/fileadmin/user/president/docs/Guide.pdf) will also be helpful to those proposing the transition of an existing program to an online format. A separate proposal template is available for development of new on line programs, those not already existing in an on-ground format. Proposals for transitioning existing on-ground programs to an online format are reviewed by the Distance Education Executive Committee which provides a recommendation to the Office of the Provost. Information about the Committee can be found on the Center for Academic Innovation website at [https://www.creighton.edu/celai/celai-team/advisory-groups](https://www.creighton.edu/celai/celai-team/advisory-groups).

Once the proposal is approved, the Center for Academic Innovation will work with the program Director to begin planning for the online version of the program.

Definition

This proposal process employs the Higher Learning Commission’s definition for distance programs.

“Distance-delivered programs are those certificate or degree programs in which 50% or more of the required courses may be taken as distance-delivered courses”.

A program is defined as a distance delivered program if a student may matriculate through a program by taking 50 percent or more of the required course work in a distance education format. In other words, if the program includes a number of required courses offered in a distance education format and a student may choose to take the distance required courses as part of her/his program of study, and by doing so s/he earns 50 percent or more of the program’s required credits in the distance education format, then the program is identified as a distance delivered program.
Scope

This proposal process applies to the transition of existing on-ground programs to the online format. If changes are made to the program’s learning goals or curriculum, then the New Program Proposal document must be completed.

Proposal to Transition Existing On-Ground Program to an Online Format

1. Rationale for Transitioning to an Online Format

This section includes a description of the “history” of the idea and the planning process that led to the proposal.

2. Market Demand Analysis

Evidence of a demand for the online program is needed to assure the time, talent, and treasure required to develop an online version of the program will yield a meaningful return on investment. The market demand analysis should include the following.

- Enrollment trends for the on-ground program for the last 3-5 years.
- If enrollment has been trending downward, evidence that offering the program online is likely to increase enrollment. The Center for Academic Innovation can provide resources to assist with this aspect of the market analysis.

3. Program Development Timeline

The timeline for development of the online program will include plans/timelines for:

- program marketing (to commence at least 6 months prior to program start date, and no sooner than program final approval date)
- online course development matrix (see example in appendices)
- student recruitment activities
- faculty recruitment if applicable
- faculty preparation for teaching distance courses

4. Changes in Course Delivery Schedule

Describe any changes in the schedule of courses within the program due to the transition to the online environment and provide a rationale for the changes. (e.g., course pre-requisites requiring completion of a residency activity).

5. Residency Requirements/Proctoring Requirements

Describe all campus-based requirements for the program (e.g., program orientation, practica). Describe all events (e.g., exams) which students will be required to complete in a proctored setting.
6. Accreditation

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

7. Resources

This section will describe how the University has organized and planned for adequate human, financial, physical, and instructional resources to initiate and support the proposed online program. 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 will 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 (e.g., writing center, academic support services)
  - 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 Schedule 5 New Program Request form must be submitted for approval to the Dean and Provost. (See http://www2.creighton.edu/adminfinance/budget/policiesprocedures/)
  - A sound business plan enumerating underlying assumptions that has been reviewed and approved by the School or College’s academic governance body.

- Instructional Resources
  - Identify the existing and/or additional library resources required to support the program
  - Identify the existing and/or additional instructional technology resources required to support the program’s learning outcomes and educational environment
8. Plan for Program Evaluation

Describe the strategies for regular evaluation of the online version of the program.

- Evaluation activities may include, but are not limited to
  - Faculty program review and reflection
  - Student end of course evaluations
  - Graduate exit survey data
  - Employer evaluations
  - Administrative monitoring or program success
  - Financial viability of the program, ability of the program to meet financial goals
  - Ongoing market viability of the program
  - Advisory board feedback
- Timeline for each evaluation activity
- Process for reviewing program evaluation data and making programmatic decisions. Evidence of faculty and administrative involvement is required.
### Appendix A: Course Development Matrix Example from the Master’s in Business Administration

Three terms to develop a new online course
Term designated with xxx is term course is completed and undergoes online course design review
Term designated with xxx is term payment for course development occurs
Term immediately after xxx, first term course is taught

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