

# Academic Program Approval Guidelines

## Introduction

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To maintain academic vitality and respond to new needs, opportunities and changes the University occasionally initiates, modifies or eliminates academic programs. This document presents the guidelines for the development, review, and approval of such changes.

### **Academic Programs**

An academic program is a combination of courses and related activities organized for the achievement of specific learning outcomes as defined by the University. This includes programming at both the undergraduate, graduate and professional level and consists of degrees, majors, minors, concentrations, specializations and certificates.

- **Degree Program**: An academic program of study leading to a bachelor's, master's, Ph.D. or professional degree. All degree programs require that a minimum number of semester credit hours be earned, as referenced in the official bulletins of the University that are produced each academic year.
- **Major**: A comprehensive course of study in a given discipline at the undergraduate level. A minimum of 30 semester credit hours must be earned in the major.
- **Minor**: A course of study in a discipline or interdisciplinary cluster at the undergraduate level that is other than the student's major area of study. A minimum of 18 semester credit hours must be earned in the minor.
- **Concentration**: A sub-set of a discipline organized in clusters of focused courses taken within an undergraduate major. A minimum of 9 semester credit hours must be earned in the concentration.
- **Specialization**: An integrated, coherent set of courses that define a limited topic or field of study at the graduate level that is taken within the degree program. A minimum of 12 semester credit hours must be earned in the specialization.
- **Certificate**: A post-baccalaureate or post-master program of study offered at the graduate level, in which a specific skill set is demonstrated at the end of the program, usually culminating in a capstone course. In order to earn a certificate, the program of study must be offered apart from a degree; however, the courses in a certificate program may be applied toward a graduate degree program. A minimum of 12 semester credit hours must be earned in a certificate program.

### **Resources**

Reallocation of resources is critical to the start of any new program. Although new resources may occasionally be required every effort should be pursued in maximizing reallocation of college or department resources to fund a new program.

### **Timeline**

Annually the Office of the Provost promulgates the [memorandum](#) that identifies the dues dates for: concept papers, proposals for new and terminated programs, program modifications and course changes.

## **New Program Ideas**

### 1. Idea Generation

Ideas for new academic programs come from many sources. They might be the outcome of student or community requests, college strategic goals, advances in a discipline or success of a similar idea at other institutions. Colleges and Schools are encouraged to hold periodic sessions for consideration of potential new programs by faculty, student, alumni or community groups.

### 2. Idea Screening

The number of new programs that could be developed generally far exceeds the resources of the University. Indeed, even good programming ideas often surpass the resources available or the strategic directions of the college or university. Thus, various ideas for new programs must be screened at the department and college level (or in the case of proposed interdisciplinary programs with a representative committee). The general criteria that should be applied in screening a new program idea are the following:

- Is the proposed program consistent with the mission and strategic plan of the University?
- Can it be delivered with high academic quality?
- Is it likely to be profitable, at minimum on a direct cost basis?
- Is it consistent with the strength and core competencies of the department?
- Is the program free from duplication or competition with a current or planned program within the university?
- Is the program sustainable on a long term basis?
- Does it have characteristics which are distinctive from similar programs offered by the competition?
- How will this program enhance the reputation of Marquette?

3. Deans will discuss the idea of the program with the Provost or appropriate Vice Provost.

4. If the idea addresses all of the criteria and has support of the Dean, Provost or appropriate Vice Provost a concept paper may be developed.

## **Concept Paper Development**

A concept paper should be developed for all new programs except a minor or concentration.

### 1. Content

The concept paper should not exceed three pages and include the following:

- Description of the academic program.
- Identify how new program is consistent with University mission and promotes strategic initiatives of the college and University.
- Capability of college/department to deliver the new program with high quality.
- How the new program is consistent with the strength and core competencies of the department and/or college/school.
- Program is not similar or competes with a current or planned program within the university.
- Sustainability of program on a long term basis.

- Are the characteristics of the new program distinctive from similar programs offered by the competition?
  - Detailed statement on enrollment goals and resource requirements and profitability.
  - Potential to enhance the reputation of Marquette.
2. Review
- a. The concept paper should be submitted to the Office of the Provost (attn: Special Assistant to the Provost) for review.
  - b. The concept paper review will include:
    - Academic Planning Team (APT) will review concept paper on meeting the criteria for a new program, review of overall resource implications and impact on other programs on campus.
    - Selected concept papers will be submitted periodically to the Dean's Council for review, discussion and recommendation.
  - c. The Office of Marketing and Communications will be provided a copy of the concept paper to assist the department or college in developing the market demand analysis.
  - d. Concept papers which meet the criteria have concurrence of the Provost and recommendation of Dean's Council will be invited in writing by the Provost to develop and submit a proposal. The Office of Finance will be informed of the concept approval.

### **Proposal/Review/Evaluation Guidelines**

The sections listed provide the proposal guidelines for the noted program and the process for proposal review/approval and program evaluation.

**Section 1:** New academic program requiring new resources.

**Section 2:** New academic program developed from reallocating existing resources, program created from combining existing programs, or expanding existing program.

**Section 3:** Modification to existing program.

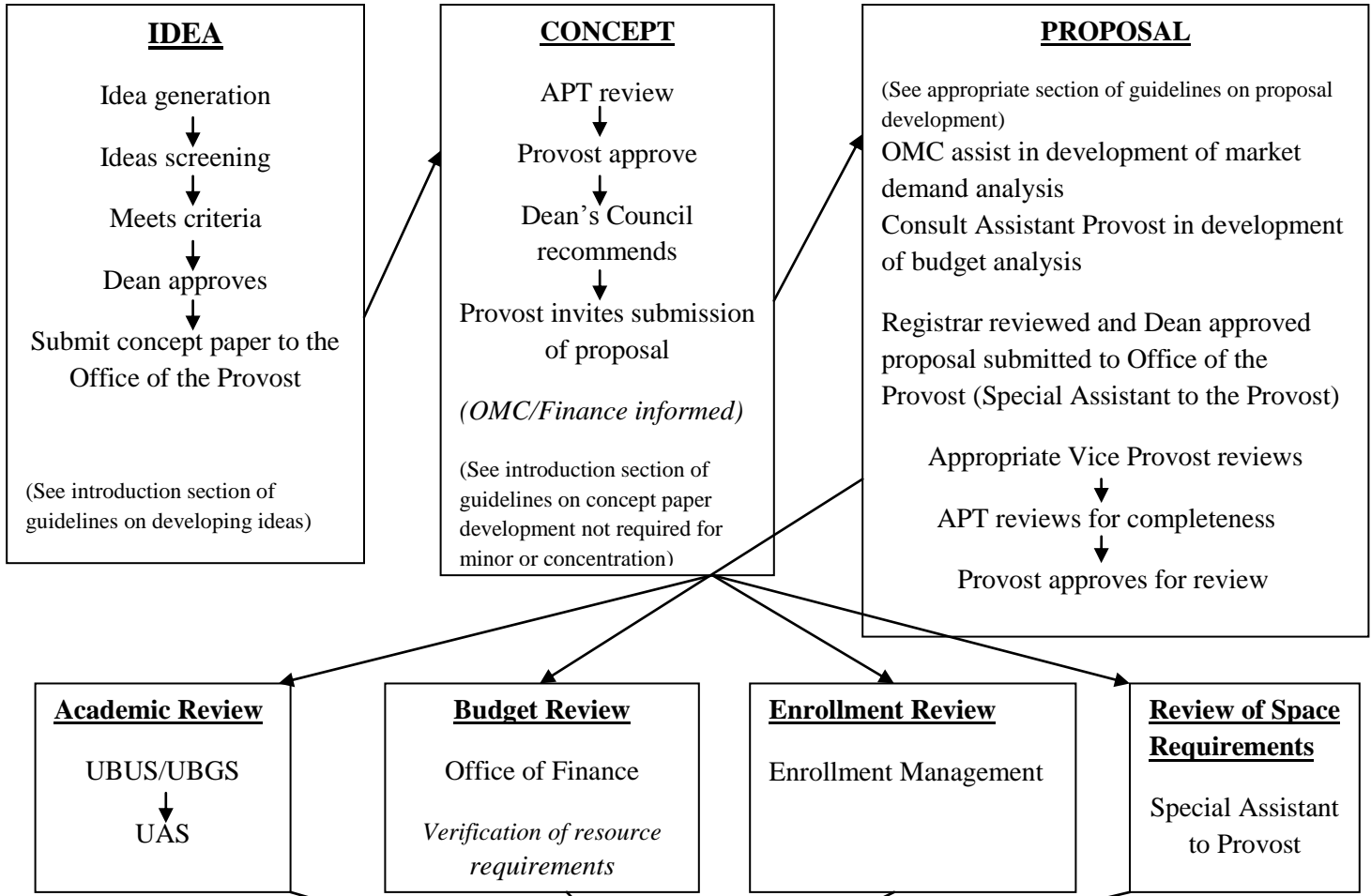
**Section 4:** Terminating an existing program.

**Section 5:** Proposal approval/review process

**Section 6:** Periodic program review

## Flow Chart for Academic Program Review/Approval Process

Process will vary based on type of program and extent of resource requirements



The Program Approval Grid (attachment D)  
Depicts the review/approval process for each  
type of program

**Approved Programs**

**Special Assistant to the Provost will:**

1. Forward to originating college approval and start/stop date (Provost Memo).
2. Coordinate campus announcement with Department of Marketing and Communications.
3. Forward original document to Registrar for recording and further distribution.

**Provost**

If Approved  
↓  
Informs President and  
Board of Trustees  
  
**Board of Trustees**  
must approve degree  
programs and core  
curriculums

**Program Modifications**

Modifications to existing programs are approved by:

- Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs and Learning for undergraduate programs and
- Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School for graduate and professional programs

(See modification section of guidelines on completing program approval form)

