

# Academic Program Approval Guidelines

## Introduction

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 levels and consists of degrees, majors, minors, certificates, concentrations, and specializations.

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Accelerated Bachelor's/Master's Degree Program:** Designed to provide a more efficient means to obtain a master's degree. Allows students to begin accumulating credits towards completion of a master's degree while still enrolled as an undergraduate.

### 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 due 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 that are distinctive from similar programs offered by the competition?
- How will this program enhance the reputation of Marquette?

3. Deans 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 degree, major and certificate programs. Concept papers are not required for new minors, concentration, specializations or accelerated degree programs.

### 1. Concept Paper Content

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

- A description of the academic program.
- Identify how new program is consistent with University mission and promotes strategic initiatives of the college and University.

- How the new program is consistent with the strength and core competencies of the department and/or college/school.
  - Capability of college/department to deliver the new program with high quality.
  - Program is not similar to or does not compete 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, resource requirements and net revenue projection.
  - Potential to enhance the reputation of Marquette.
2. Concept Paper Review
- a. The concept paper should be should be approved by the Dean and 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 the 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 as determined by the APT will be submitted periodically to the Dean’s Council for review, discussion and recommendation.
  - c. Concept papers that meet the criteria and have concurrence of the Provost will be invited in writing by the appropriate Vice Provost to develop and submit a proposal. The Office of Finance and Office of Marketing and Communication will be informed of the concept approval. The Office of Marketing and Communication once informed of concept paper approval will assist the department or college in developing the market demand analysis.

**Proposal/Review/Evaluation Guidelines**

The sections listed below provide the proposal guidelines for the noted program and the process for proposal review/approval, and program evaluation. Program proposal should be submitted online via [CourseLeaf](#).

**Section 1:** New degree or major

**Section 2:** New minor

**Section 3:** New certificate

**Section 4:** New specialization

**Section 5:** New concentration

**Section 6:** Accelerated degree programs

**Section 7:** Expanding enrollment of existing program

**Section 8:** Modifying an existing program

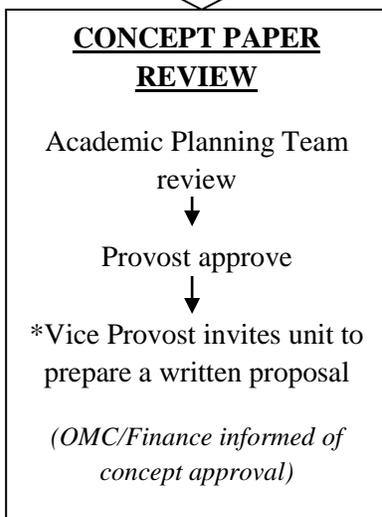
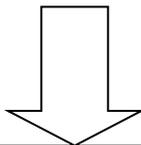
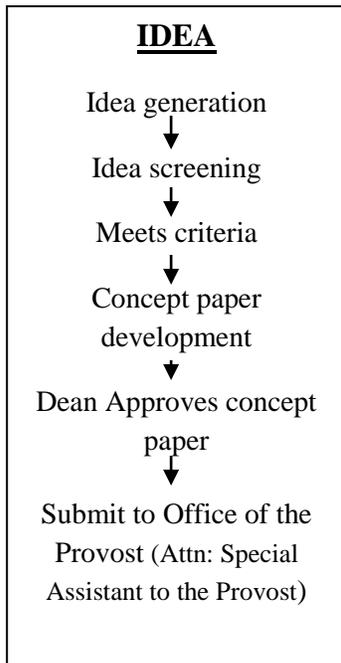
**Section 9:** Terminating an existing program

**Section 10:** Proposal approval/review process

**Section 11:** Periodic program review

**Flow Chart for  
Academic Program  
Idea and Concept Development**

**Concept Papers are  
required for:**  
  
Degree Program  
Major  
Certificate



\*For Undergraduate programs:  
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs and Teaching  
\*For Graduate or Professional Program:  
Dean of the Graduate School

**Proposal Flow Charts**  
See new degree/major and certificate sections for review/approval process for proposal