

Guidelines for Preparing New Graduate Program Proposals

The New Programs and Program Review Committee (NPPR) of the Graduate Council recommends that the originators of proposals for new graduate programs follow these guidelines. The guidelines ask proposal originators to provide thorough information on all aspects of the proposed program and to address issues most commonly raised during the review process of new programs. Additionally, the guidelines explain the approvals needed to initiate a new graduate program, and timelines for the approval process.

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New Program Proposal Preparation

In preparing the proposal, the writer should follow the guidelines' numbered sections in sequence, so that the proposal presents all relevant information in the order suggested. If some subsections do not apply to a specific proposal, the writer should state this. Or, the writer may wish to combine two or more subsections into one paragraph; in that case, the numbering of the paragraph should indicate that subsections have been combined (e.g., 2.3.1 - 2.3.3).

In all instances, if the proposal includes practices that deviate widely from traditional conventions of graduate education, the proposal should provide a clear rationale. Typically, proposals for new master's programs are twelve to fifteen pages long; certificate proposals are shorter. Special materials may be placed in appendices.

Proposal Sections

Introduction:

- Identify the program
- Name of the program
- Title of the major
- Title of the degree
- Unit that will offer the program
- School/college in which the program will be housed
- Proposed inception date
- A brief abstract or executive summary of the proposal

1.0 Program Rationale

This section should address the reasons for offering the proposed program.

1.1 Need.

- 1.1.1 Discuss the need for the program, using documentation from appropriate national, state, local, professional, and disciplinary resources.
- 1.1.2 Explain how the program will meet the need described above.
- 1.1.3 If the proposed program will compete on a national or regional level for students, the proposal should address the issue of need at the appropriate level.
- 1.1.4 Include evidence of current and future needs of the state and nation for graduates of the program.
- 1.1.5 Discuss indicators of student demand for the program.
- 1.1.6 Describe how the program will further the University's mission and initiatives in the Strategic Plan, as well as the more specific Plans of the unit(s) involved.

1.2 Projected Enrollment. Indicate the projected enrollment in the program, the probable source of students, and the projected number of graduates of the program for the next three to five years.

1.3 Similarity to Other Programs.

- 1.3.1 Describe similar programs offered in the state, especially in southeast Michigan, and how the proposed program relates to these. Include several samples of catalog descriptions of similar programs.
- 1.3.2 Describe any overlaps with other programs at WSU, and justify any duplication of programs. If overlap exists with another unit, that unit should be invited to prepare a commentary on the proposal for the new program. Describe any cooperative relationships, if appropriate.
- 1.3.3 Describe the uniqueness or distinctiveness of the program.

1.4 Advisory Resources. Discuss the sources and extent of advice and consultation that have been used in formulating the new program (e.g., industry, professional, or business advisory groups).

2.0 Program Description and Objectives

The Graduate School provides minimum criteria for admission, acceptable academic standing and progress toward the degree, and graduation. Many programs, however, have standards that exceed these basic minima, and, in some cases, standards are imposed by national accreditation organizations. This section of the proposal should describe the exact criteria the new program will use. If the Graduate School requirements will be used, that policy should be clearly stated.

2.1 Objectives. Discuss the overall objectives and goals of the program.

2.2 Admission Requirements.

- 2.2.1 State the grade point average required for regular admission to the program. Indicate whether qualified admission is possible and the acceptable grade point range. (Graduate School minimum GPA requirements are: for doctoral programs, 3.0 upper division; for master's and Graduate Certificate programs, 2.75 for Regular admission and 2.50-2.74 for qualified admission.)

2.2.2 Identify any required background experience or credentials, such as course work in specific disciplines; any required degree, certificate or licensing; any professional or field experience required.

2.2.3 Describe any other specific admission requirements, such as letters of recommendation, statement of objectives, personal interview, or special exams (such as the GRE).

2.2.4 For Graduate Certificates, indicate whether students may be admitted while concurrently enrolled in a graduate degree program or not.

2.3 Graduation Requirements.

2.3.1 Number of Credits. Indicate the total number of credits required for the degree as well as their distribution among core/required courses, concentrations/tracks, cognates/minors, and any special requirements such as research, field work, internship, etc. (The specific courses for the program are to be listed in Section 2.4.1.) For master's programs, indicate whether Plan A (thesis), Plan B (essay) or Plan C (course work) options will be available and describe the requirements for each. (Graduate School minimum credit requirements are 90 credits for doctoral programs; 30 credits for master's programs; 12 credits for Graduate Certificate programs.)

2.3.2 Grade Point Average. Describe the standard of performance expected, and any limitations on C grades that the program will impose (a minimum grade point average of 3.00 is required by the Graduate School for graduation). A grade of C represents unacceptable work at the graduate level; however, Graduate School policy permits a limited number of C grades to be used to meet graduation requirements, provided these are offset by sufficient A grades to maintain the required 3.00 average.)

2.3.3 Progress toward Degree. Explain whether full-time and/or part-time enrollment is expected of students. For Graduate Certificates, indicate whether the completion of a master's degree or a specific number of credits toward the master's degree is required before the Certificate is awarded. State the time limitation for earning the degree. (Graduate School time limitations for earning the degree are seven years for the doctorate; six years for the master's; and three years for the Graduate Certificate. Note also that no transfer of credit is permitted into Graduate Certificate programs, and that only nine credits earned toward a Graduate Certificate may be applied toward a graduate degree program.)

2.4 Curriculum.

2.4.1 Describe the curriculum, identifying major and minor options, concentrations or tracks, and any other specific requirements, such as research, fieldwork, internship, etc.; include discussion of any experimental or unique components. Indicate that the number of advanced courses (those open only to graduate students) is adequate to the level of the program.

2.4.2 List the required or core courses, cognates and electives for the program, indicating the course number and title, the number of credits, the frequency of the course offerings and a brief description of each course.

2.4.3 On the list of courses, differentiate between existing courses and new courses to be developed. Submit New Course Proposal forms along with the proposal.

2.4.4 Provide a typical plan of work for students in the program. Differences in concentrations, Plans A, B, or C, or full-time/part-time study may have serious impact on the plan of work; include separate plans of work where such differences occur.

2.4.5 If any required courses will be provided by another department, indicate arrangements made to accommodate your students.

2.4.6 For doctoral programs, describe the process for administering oral and written Qualifying Exams and their content areas.

2.4.7 Interdisciplinary programs should include a capstone seminar or course that integrates the materials from the various disciplines; the proposal should make clear the interdisciplinary nature of the program and how the interdisciplinary perspective will be achieved.

2.5 Monitoring and Advising of Students.

2.5.1 Discuss the advisory system to be implemented for counseling the students in their progress toward degrees.

2.5.2 For programs granting a research degree, describe the process by which students will be encouraged to identify appropriate research advisers (laboratory rotations, seminar series, etc.), and indicate the point in the program at which the adviser and committee should be identified. Describe also the expected frequency of meetings between the student and the research adviser and full advisory committee.

2.5.3 Describe the system of monitoring the students' progress toward their degrees and of their length of time to degree, and for identifying the need for special retention efforts.

2.6 Program Implementation. Describe the implementation, scheduling and recruitment plans for the program.

2.7 Bulletin Copy. Prepare the program description for the Graduate Bulletin; insert it into an appendix.

3.0 Program Standards

3.1 Quality of Existing Graduate Programs. Provide details regarding the quality of existing graduate programs offered within the department or unit. This may include data from studies of national rankings, data from most recent Academic Program Reviews, accreditation data, and/or other similar measures of quality.

3.2 Comparative Admission Standards. The proposal should clearly state how the admission standards of the proposed program would compare with similar programs at other universities.

3.3 Accreditation. If the program is in an area in which professional or specialized accreditation is available, indicate the basic achievements necessary to meet such requirements. If there are plans to seek such accreditation, indicate the timetable and the resource commitments needed to achieve accreditation.

3.4 Program Evaluation. Explain plans to evaluate the new program at the end of the first year and third year. Wayne State University requires a process of Program Review. By what standards will this new program review itself?

4.0 Assessment Plan

WSU Assessment's mission is to engage faculty, staff, administrators, and students from academic co-curricular programs in an effective, sustainable process of *continuous program improvement that*

enhances student learning throughout their time at Wayne State. Please describe the program assessment plan by addressing the following items.

4.1 What is the program's [mission statement](#)?

4.2 What are the program [learning outcomes/goals](#)?

4.3 How is the achievement of each of these [outcomes to be measured](#)?

4.4 What are the plans for evaluating and [assessing program data](#)?

4.5 What committees or structures within the department/school will be responsible for doing this assessment? (departmental assessment committee, graduate committee, etc.).

4.6 [Curriculum map](#).

5.0 Program Administration

5.1 Administrative Structure. Describe the administrative structure for oversight of the program, i.e., whether by the department as a whole, or by a special advisory committee, or by a director.

5.2 Specific Responsibilities. Describe the structure responsible for recruitment, admissions, student advising and progress, curriculum development, and program evaluation, i.e., whether there will be separate committees/individuals responsible for each area or committees/individuals with several responsibilities.

5.3 Selection Process. Describe the selection process for the above committees/ individuals and any special qualifications required. For interdisciplinary programs, describe mechanisms to assure representation of all participating units.

6.0 Program Resources

6.1 This is one of the most important sections of the proposal. The Graduate Council will approve only those programs that have a secure intellectual and financial base. All claims regarding financial resources and faculty allocations must be supported by appropriate documentation.

6.2 Faculty Resources. List all faculty, regular and adjunct, participating in the new program. Indicate their current teaching and advising loads. Describe plans to fit new program responsibilities within these loads.

6.3 Faculty Qualifications. Assess the ability of the unit to conduct the program, and describe the number and qualifications of the faculty, as well as access to resources outside the unit. Describe the qualifications of the faculty in sufficient detail to allow Graduate Council to evaluate their ability to sustain the program. If commitments for new faculty have been approved by the Provost those should be described in the proposal, along with an assessment of the availability of individuals to fill them.

6.4 Graduate Faculty. Provide a list of faculty and administrators associated with the program and clearly indicate the Graduate Faculty status of each individual. Attach the Wayne State University Professional Record of each faculty member associated with the program.

6.5 Physical Facilities. Describe the physical facilities and equipment available to support the new program. Particular attention should be given to facilities for graduate student research or professional training. If new educational equipment or training aids will be required, identify the source(s) of funding and provide letters of commitment to provide the required funding,

6.6 Library Support. Describe the library support that is available to meet the needs of the new program, indicating what new acquisitions will be required.

6.7 Interdisciplinary Programs. In the case of interdisciplinary programs, each department that will provide instruction should be asked to furnish a letter of support, which details the availability of

resources it will contribute, as described in the proposal (faculty, course scheduling, student enrollment, etc.), and assures that its courses used in the program will continue to be available.

7.0 Program Costs

The resources described in Section 5 will require a variety of costs including time, money, and effort. In this section, those costs should be described as completely as possible. Although the Graduate Council does not make budgetary decisions, the Council requires an understanding of how the costs of this program will be met.

7.1 Expenditures. Project the estimated expenditures of the next two-three years for the proposed program in terms of faculty and staff FTE's, library costs, supplies and equipment for both classroom and research activity. If faculty and staff who are currently performing duties in one program will also be responsible for the new program, then discuss their ability to adequately support the new program.

7.2 Revenue. Identify sources of revenue to support the program. Describe any special grants that may be sought to support the new program and the impact of these expenditures on any existing programs.

7.3 Student Financial Aid. If financial aid to students is necessary to maintain enrollment in the program, indicate how you will address the issue.

Approval Process for New Graduate Programs

I. Department and School/College Approval

The proposal that will ultimately be reviewed by the Graduate Council must be approved in its entirety by the departmental faculty and chair (in non-departmentalized colleges the proposal must be approved in its entirety by the school/college faculty), the school/college faculty governing body, and the dean before submission to the Graduate Council. The dean should submit a memo or approval page with signatures of the department chair, chair of the faculty governing body, and dean providing these approvals to the Secretary of the Graduate Council.

II. Graduate Council Approval

The Chair of the New Programs and Program Review Committee (NPPR) reviews the proposal for adherence to the Guidelines for New Graduate Programs and may request additional documentation from the proposal originators before submitting it to the New Programs Committee for evaluation.

The Committee reviews the proposal and transmits its concerns to the proposal originators for response.

When the New Programs Committee is satisfied that all concerns have been addressed, the proposal is scheduled for Graduate Council consideration and a summary of the proposal is distributed to all Council members.

At the Council meeting, the originators of the proposal make an oral presentation and answer questions that may arise. At the subsequent meeting, the Council votes on approval of the proposal, and, if approved, forwards the proposal to the Provost.

III. Provost and Board of Governors Approval

The Provost reviews the proposal summary and may request additional clarification.

The Board of Governors reviews the proposal summary and makes the final evaluation and authorization.

IV. External Approvals Required

Approval is also sought from the Academic Affairs Committee of the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan and North Central Accreditation's Higher Learning Commission

Once the program has been approved, it may be publicized. Admission, program, and course codes will be established for the program.

Timelines for the Approval Process

Generally, six to twelve months are required for the approval of new programs.

- The Graduate Council and the NPPR meet monthly during the academic year. The review by the NPPR requires at least one meeting, and may require more, depending on the complexity of issues to be resolved. The Graduate Council's review generally takes two meetings.
- Programs to be initiated in a Fall Term should receive Council approval during the preceding Fall and should reach the Office of the Provost by December or January.
- The Board of Governors considers new program proposals at its regular meetings, and such proposals should receive Board approval at least six months prior to the proposed startup date of the program.

Please direct questions regarding these guidelines to Mary Wood, Graduate School Program Director at (313) 577-0551 or mewood@wayne.edu