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## BOARD OF REGENTS

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## Policy 4J: Policy and Procedures for Approving New Degree Program Proposals <sup>[1]</sup>

### Introduction

The Board of Regents and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) approve all new degree programs offered at the University of Colorado. By statute, the CCHE reviews new degree programs only to ensure that they are consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission, although for undergraduate programs the CCHE also must approve any waivers of inclusion of the GT-Pathways curriculum or the 120 credit-hour limit. Each campus shall develop processes to implement this policy.

### Part I. Proposal Review Process

A proposed degree program shall be consistent with the applicable academic strategic plan and shall appear in the annual Academic Planning and Program Review Report that is sent to the Board of Regents.

#### A. The Campus Process

A proposal is developed by the faculty of any academic unit and forwarded to the dean of the school/college for review and approval. Where proposals involve more than one school or college, all participating units shall participate in the review process. Faculty within the college/school shall be notified of the proposed program. Graduate degree program proposals shall also be reviewed and approved by the dean and the executive committee or council of the campus Graduate School.

While developing a proposal, the campus shall work closely with the System Office of Academic Affairs to ensure compliance with CCHE and regent policies. Additionally, the campus shall provide the proposal to other CU campuses for review and comment. Proposals for new coordinated programs shall follow the processes in this policy. When a coordinated program is extended from one campus to another, the campus to which the program is being extended shall have responsibility for initiating the proposal and seeking appropriate review and approval.

Every graduate and professional proposal (above the level of baccalaureate) shall be evaluated by an external consultant. With the approval of the provost, the campus selects a highly qualified, independent evaluator to review the quality of the proposed curriculum, the qualifications of the faculty to offer the program, and the adequacy of resources to support it.

Proposals approved by the dean(s) are forwarded to the provost and chancellor for further review, approval and submission to the system office. A record of campus reviews and approvals shall be included with the proposals.

#### B. System Review

The system office shall verify compliance with **CCHE** and regent policies. The vice president for academic affairs shall review the proposal and associated documents before the proposal is forwarded to the president. Upon his or her approval, the president shall forward the proposal to the Board of Regents.

#### C. Review by the Board of Regents

After the president has approved the degree proposal, the vice president for academic affairs shall place the proposal on the agenda of the next available board meeting as a discussion item. Following the board's discussion of the proposal, it may then be placed on the next board business agenda for final approval.

If the Board of Regents approves the proposed degree, the vice president for academic affairs shall notify **CCHE** and coordinate placement of the proposal on the next **CCHE** agenda.

#### D. Program Implementation

New degree programs approved by **CCHE** shall be operational within two years. Each year, the System Office of Academic Affairs shall report to the Board of Regents on programs approved within the past five years, comparing current enrollment and graduation totals with the projections provided in the original proposals.

### **Part II Guidelines for Program Proposals**

All proposals shall cover the topics outlined below.

#### A. Description of Program

1. Describe the basic design of the proposed program, including its degree level (baccalaureate, masters, doctoral, professional), the field of study, and whether it is an interdisciplinary program.
2. Explicitly state the student learning goals of this program, i.e., what will a graduate of this program have learned and be able to do? The goals must be sufficiently specific so that they can be assessed; should the program be approved, the learning goals shall be a basic component of future program review.

#### B. Bona Fide Need: Student Demand and Workforce Demand

1. Student Demand: Describe the target market and demonstrate evidence of student demand for this program.
  - a. Provide realistic enrollment projections for the program for the first five years in Table 1, following the definitions and directions specified in the table. Should the program be approved, the enrollment projections will be the basis for comparison of actual enrollment and graduation rates in future reviews. Include explanations of the methodology and assumptions used to project enrollment and completion data. Relevant information might include national or regional enrollment trends in similar programs and projected new demand from industry in the service area.
  - b. For graduate and professional programs, identify the annual pool of potential applicants. Useful information might include the number of qualified undergraduates in the institution's undergraduate program and/or the current percentage of undergraduates, regionally or nationally, continuing on to the graduate level.

c. If applicable, explain how the program design will address the needs of part-time, working students. Describe specific efforts that will be made to recruit and retain under-represented groups enrolling in the program.

2. Workforce Demand: Supply evidence of workforce demand for graduates of this program.

a. For programs that prepare students for graduate or professional school, describe the opportunities for admission to graduate or professional programs. Supply evidence that graduates of the proposed program will be qualified for these openings.

b. For programs that prepare graduates for specific occupations or professions, provide demand and potential employment information.

C. Role and Mission Criteria. The proposed program shall be congruent with the role and mission of the campus.

Describe how it supports the mission and fits with the applicable strategic plan of the campus. Identify particular institutional strengths in the proposed program area.

D. Duplication. Address duplication issues with other institutions in the CU system or elsewhere in the state of Colorado. Describe any unique characteristics or features of this program that are not duplicated elsewhere in the state that would justify the program. Explain how its implementation will affect other institutions in the CU system.

E. Statutory Requirements. Describe how the proposed program conforms to statutory requirements, such as the 120 credit hour limit for undergraduate degrees, GT Pathways and the Student's Bill of Rights.

F. Admission, Transfer and Graduation Standards

1. Identify the admission requirements of this program. If they are different from general campus or college requirements, describe how and why they are different.

2. Identify the admission requirements for transfer students. If specific articulation agreements are in place or being considered, these should be described.

3. If enrollments are to be limited, describe the restrictions on enrollments and the reasons for them.

4. Describe the standards for continuing in the program and the graduation requirements. If they are different from campus/college requirements, describe how and why are they different.

G. Curriculum Description and Assessment Process

1. Describe the program's requirements, including total credit hours, credit hour distribution, methods of delivering the program, field experience, and other pertinent aspects of the curriculum. Explain how this curriculum is like or unlike the usual curriculum in this field.

2. List all titles of courses that support the program, and explicitly identify all new courses being created for it.

3. Provide a sample curriculum that includes all required courses. In any curriculum where there are tracks or options, provide a completely specified curriculum for each one, i.e. an example of a curriculum a student in the track/option might follow.

4. Describe the assessment plan for the proposed degree. (This section should align with the student learning goals outlined in II. A.2.) The assessment plan shall include the goals and objectives of the program for student learning and the knowledge, and abilities and skills that will be developed by the curriculum. Describe the assessment tools that will measure the learning goals. Describe how the program will use assessment data and any feedback from

employers or a licenser and other testing scores to change teaching methods and/or the curriculum.

#### H. Professional Requirements or Evaluations

1. Where pertinent, describe any regional or professional accrediting association or licensing requirements that helped shape the curriculum of the proposed program. Specify the effect of these requirements on the length of the program, restrictions on program content or mode of delivery, and any budgetary requirements, such as minimal staffing levels, and equipment needs.
2. Identify timetables that have been established to meet the requirements, if needed.
3. Describe qualifications of the proposed program's faculty. Include in an appendix one-page vitae for faculty members who will regularly participate in educational aspects of this program. A program's faculty should include those who have explicitly agreed to be part of the program's success and not those simply providing elective courses the students might take.

#### I. Institutional Factors

1. Describe how this program will contribute to achieving the department's and campus's diversity goals.
2. Explain how the implementation of this program affects other instructional, research, or service programs in the institution. Explain how the implementation will affect other CU campuses.
3. Describe how the implementation of this program will affect existing resources, including library facilities, educational space (e.g. lecture hall or theater), and educational, computer, and laboratory resources.
4. When a new program fundamentally depends upon a department in a different school/college, a letter of support from that school/college's dean shall be included with the proposal.
5. Describe formal relationships with other parties that are anticipated, such as inter-institutional arrangements, resource sharing, cooperative programs, clinical affiliations, etc. Describe and explain the type and extent of the relationship and the resources that the affiliating institution will provide. A copy of any draft contracts or agreements shall be included in the Appendices.

#### J. Physical Capacity and Needs

1. Provide space estimates for program space requirements in Table 2. Base the projections on existing and five-year space planning assumptions and program size data from curriculum and student load projections and projected use of special or dedicated facilities, such as laboratories. The vice chancellor for administration, or other relevant campus officer, shall sign this Table to certify the accuracy of the information it contains.
2. In the body of the application, describe program delivery and space requirements, identifying additional space or equipment needs. When significant capital construction or equipment needs are anticipated, provide additional information and explanations.

#### K. Cost Description and Source of Funds

1. Report cost estimates and sources of funds for five years in Table 3, using the definitions and instructions provided with the table. All cost and revenue projections for the five years shall be given in constant dollars, i.e., do not include an inflation factor. The provost's office shall include and clearly identify institutional overhead costs. Specifically, when tuition is shown as a source of revenue, any component of tuition returned to campus must be shown as an expense.

2. Program costs shall include both operating and capital start-up needs. Estimates of operating costs shall be based on the delivery of the courses and services defined for the program. Administrative costs shall be factored in. Program budgets shall be calculated in a realistic manner. For example, additional work generated by the operation, management, and oversight of a new program shall not be claimed to be absorbed into the workload of existing staff and faculty without an explanation of what other work will be reassigned or discontinued to make room for the new workload.

A proposal shall include a written statement from the dean verifying adequacy of resources to support the new program, as outlined in the program's budget, and confirming that projected resources are reasonable.

#### L. Other Relevant Information

Campuses may include any other information deemed relevant to support new program proposals. The Board of Regents may request additional information pertinent to specific issues raised during their examination of new degree program proposals.

#### M. Reviewers Comments for Graduate and Professional Programs

A copy of the external evaluator's comments shall be included. Any changes that were made in response to the evaluation shall also be included. If program changes recommended by the evaluator are not being made, explain why.

The New Degree Proposal Template is attached as an appendix to this policy.

### **Glossary:**

Coordinated Programs ? any program that spans two or more institutions.

Last revised: September 11, 2015

History:

Approved by the Board of Regents, February 20, 1997, pg. 108-109, attachment 4. Revised August 12, 2004; and September 11, 2015

### **Attachments:**

[policy-4.j-new-degree-proposal-template-9-11-2015.pdf](#) [2]

### **Groups audience:**

Board of Regents

### **OG vocabulary:**

Regent Policies

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