FAQ

1) *Why do new academic programs, program changes, and curricular changes require approval?*

OHSU reviews proposals advanced by faculty for new programs, program changes, and curricular changes to provide a broader institutional perspective and ensure programs meet established internal and external quality standards. For example: Does the department have the resource capacity to offer a new program? Is the proposed program aligned with OHSU's mission and strategic goals or does it stretch the boundaries of the institution? Is there student demand for the program? What are future employment prospects for a graduate?

In addition, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) requires its member universities to maintain carefully documented and enforced work processes related to ensuring program quality.

2) *What is the review of program/curricular changes, including new programs?*

OHSU has three review levels for proposal of program and curricular changes, depending on whether the proposed change is classified as minor or substantive, as stipulated by NWCCU.

- *Category I* proposals represent new academic program offerings by a school/college or department. Category I proposals require school or college level approval, an Administrative Review by the Office of the Provost, review by the Faculty Senate Education Policy Committee (EPC), approval by the OHSU Faculty Senate, approval by the Statewide Provost's Council and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Additional external approvals may be required for programs with specialized accreditation. If the proposed program will serve out-of-state students through distance education, individual state authorization may be required before enrolling students.

- *Category II* proposals represent Program Changes or Curriculum Modifications to existing Academic Programs. The modifications are considered significant changes and require the approval of the school or college, an Administrative Review by the Office of the Provost and the EPC. The modification may also require review by the Statewide Provost's Council and notification and approval of NWCCU. Additional external approvals may be required for programs with specialized accreditation.

- *Category III* proposals are reviewed and operationalized through the Office of the Provost. These include proposals to: (i) minor revisions in course catalog descriptions or designations including course number, credit hours, and level of study; (ii) minor updates to approved, course-level student learning outcome statements or competencies; or (iii) minor changes to graduation requirements.

3) *What is my role in the program/curricular change process?*

Responsibilities vary depending on your role within the school or program. Generally, faculty are responsible for developing program/curricular changes and sponsoring them during the school level review progress. Prior to school level review, the details of the change should be verified at the program level. For example, if a program is proposing a new course the faculty should confirm that no similar courses are offered by the program, confirm the details of the course, including the calculation of course credit hour, and the overall impact on the degree requirements, e.g. will the

new course result in an increase or decrease in credits required for degree completion. If so, what is the new credit requirement?

4) **What are the steps in the process for reviewing and approving new programs?**

If you are contemplating the development of a new program, it is important to speak with the dean before designing the curriculum and completing the required proposal. The dean will indicate when it is appropriate to notify the provost of the intent to begin planning a new program. The acceptance of the Notice of Planning Intent (NOPI) by the provost is the clear signal to begin. At which point, the faculty will complete the "early notification" template for consideration by the Statewide Provost Council. Following the notification of the statewide Provost Council, the proposed program will be notified as to whether they can begin the program development process by completing the *Category I* proposals templates.

After completing the Category I templates, the request must be reviewed through the school-level process, culminating in approval from the dean.

Following school-level approval, the appropriate associate dean will submit the proposal to the Provost's Office to initiate the institutional-level review process: (1) administrative review, (2) Faculty Senate Educational Policy Committee review, (3) Faculty Senate review and (4) provost review. Following the institutional-level review process, arrangements will be made for an External Review.

Following an External Review, the provost will carry the proposal forward to the Statewide Provosts' Council. Upon approval, the proposal will be advanced to NWCCU. NOTE: in some cases, Category II proposals may require the review and approval of the Statewide Provost's Council and NWCCU notification and approval.

5) **How long will it take to get a new academic program approved?**

The process may take roughly 12-24 months. Developing either a *Category I* proposal requires a significant investment of faculty time. But, faculty can take steps to accelerate this process. First, ensure the department chair and dean are supportive of the proposal and will act as champions. Second, the Office of the Provost will keep the review process moving by, initiating the Faculty Senate reviews and providing feedback once the proposal has advanced to the institutional level. Third, be aware of the organization's rhythms that can facilitate or delay reviews. For example, the Faculty Senate Education Policy Committee does not meet over the summer months. Thus, if the proposal completes the school-level review in June, the Faculty Senate would not initiate a review of the proposal until September or October of that year. Finally, as you go through each level of review, expect and respond to any feedback as quickly as possible.

6) **What should we consider when developing a proposal for a new academic program (Category I) or a substantive change (Category II)??**

Limit the length of a *Category I* proposal to 30-35 pages. This should include all supplemental forms. The length of the *Category II* proposal should be limited to roughly 5 pages. Addition information, such as the completion of the program side-by-side spreadsheet is required, but supplemental. The most important thing you can do is to address the criteria in the template clearly and provide context for all elements of the program design and/or program changes. Be direct and stay on topic.

Simple words will help you express your program clearly. Too many complex words slow reviewers down, and readers often skip over professional jargon and abbreviations they do not understand. Spell out abbreviations, acronyms and specialized language that are well known to you, every time it is used. These include the names of specialized accreditors, such as Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH); terms (e.g., student learning outcome statements over SLOs as well as names of unique things, e.g., name of the proposed program, faculty governance structures).

Remember, the Faculty Senate is comprised of individuals from across the university, and they are not likely experts in your discipline. Reviewers are likely to skim over anything they cannot understand and look to see if the proposal has done the required analyzing and designing needed to implement a new program. Always keep in mind what you would want to see and how much time you would have to spend on reading a proposal from another school or university.

7) **How can we easily identify our budget needs to start up and sustain a program?**

With respect to new program requests, OHSU would like to review total direct costs – existing or reallocated costs as well as incremental or out-of-pocket costs – associated with implementing the proposed new program. The full cost of the program, which would include indirect costs or institutional overheads (for example, central university administration or library operations or utilities), need not be reported, unless the curricular change requires substantial new resources (i.e., the university library).

The Budget Outline is required as an attachment to the all *Category I* proposals, and some *Category II* proposals. The total direct costs of the program are reported under three categories: (1) the direct costs, such as salaries and benefits, associated with the existing FTE faculty who are in the department(s) as well as any new faculty lines needed to offer the program and who will teach courses in support of the program, (2) all other direct costs (e.g., support staff salaries, travel expenses, supplies) associated with existing resources that are to be used in support of the program, and (3) all incremental or out-of-pocket direct costs associated with implementing the program.

The revenues that will be used to meet the total direct costs of the program are reported under four categories: (1) internal reallocation within a school or OHSU, (2) new student tuition derived from students who would not otherwise attend OHSU, (3) other or non-state funding sources (e.g., federal funds, training grants, community contributions, and income from contractual arrangements with other institutions, private firms, or not-for-profit agencies), and (4) state appropriations through additions to the OHSU's base budget.

8) **Who has the final word on whether a new program can be implemented?**

At the institutional level the provost has the final authority on whether a new program can be implemented. The decision to approve (or disapprove) will be made at the conclusion of the institution-level process.

9) **If we already offer a master's degree in our department, do we have to get approval to offer another master's degree?**

Yes, you may seek approval for another master's degree if the proposal is to: (1) develop a new academic program (the unique combination of a specific degree/certificate as well as a specific

major); (2) establish a new school, department, center or institute; (3) change the name of any school, department, center or institute; (4) offer an existing degree or certificate program at new off-campus locations; or (5) develop a joint degree program with another university, you are required a develop a *Category I* proposal and submit it though the review process.

If the proposal is to offer a non-thesis option for an already authorized M.S. program, a *Category I* proposal would still be required. In this case, a non-thesis masters would be a new academic program (which could have the same major as an already approved M.S., but the degree itself would be different).

10) **If we already offer a master's degree in a major, do we have to get approval to offer a doctorate in the same major?**

Yes, as this is a different level of study, it is a new academic program and requires the development of a *Category I* proposal and review.

11) **Does a major curricular revision require a review and approval process?**

Yes, the major redesign of the curriculum including developing new courses, modes of delivery, different student learning outcomes and assessments requires a *Category II* proposal.

12) **My program would like to change its name. What do I need to do?**

A *Category II* proposal is required to initiate a name change. Following school and institutional approval, name changes require notification to the Statewide Provost Council, NWCCU, and external accrediting bodies, as appropriate.

13) **My program would like to transition from on-campus to online delivery. Are there any accreditation requirements that we need to be aware of? How do we seek approval?**

A *Category II* proposal is required to transition from on-campus delivery to online/distance delivery. Per NWCCU any program that offers 50% or more of program/course content at a distance is considered an online program. As part of the Category II proposal, programs are required to submit a side-by-side which documents which courses are offered at a distance and the total calculation of distance education for the program. Following school and institutional approval, changes to delivery require notification of NWCCU and external accrediting bodies, as appropriate.

14) **Can we market the program and recruit students before we have final approval?**

Yes, under some circumstances as outlined per [Policy 02-50-020, Marketing Proposed Academic Programs](). In advertising new academic programs that are still undergoing the review and approval process, the content in oral and written communications should be literally accurate and not capable of being misinterpreted:

- Programs approved by OHSU may be marketed as "Pending Statewide Provost's Council Approval" when the program has been approved by OHSU, and has been submitted for review by the Statewide Provost's Council.
- When the program has been approved by the Statewide Provost's Council and a notification has been submitted to NWCCU, the proposed program may be marketed as "Pending NWCCU Approval."

15) **Now that my program/curricular change is approved, what does this mean for students who are currently enrolled in the program and incoming students?**

Generally, program/curriculum changes are approved for a future catalog year. This means that program/curriculum changes are not applied retroactively to students who have already enrolled in their program. However, when the change does add requirements and pedagogically works for the benefit of the student, they may voluntarily decide to switch to the new catalog year. Students should be carefully advised by program faculty and staff before making this decision. Please note, students cannot be compelled to switch catalog years and the institution has an obligation to teach out those students who wish to complete their original program of study.

16) **Where can I find information about the requirements for dual degrees/certificates, sequential degrees/certificates, concurrent degrees/certificates and sequential stacks?**

[OHSU Policy 02-50-055, Enrollment of Students in Multiple Degree/Certificate Offerings](#) establishes the framework for the development and implementation of approved enrollment of students in multiple Degree/Certificate or Stacked Certificate offerings at OHSU. A school or college seeking to establish Dual Degree/Certificate or Stacked Certificate offerings shall consult the Provost. These Dual Degree/Certificate or Stacked Certificate offerings will require review and approval consistent with Policy 02-50-010, Proposing Curricular Changes. Once the offering has been approved at all required levels, a Memorandum of Understanding may be required to document the implementation and execution of the Dual Degree/Certificate or Stacked Certificate offering. Credit hours will not be allowed to apply to more than two academic programs. Students wishing to enroll in Concurrent Degrees/Certificates must obtain approval from the Office of the Provost prior to commencing enrollment.