

Office of the Provost

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New Degree/Certificate Program Development Process

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1. Overview

Washington University strongly supports curricular change and innovation. Because of the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of many new areas of study, programs often do not fit solely within one school.

All new programs (including joint and dual degree), changes to existing degree programs that meet certain criteria, and any new certificate that requires HLC approval require Provost-level approval. Schools can propose the creation of new degree programs by following the process outlined below. For any new degree program, there are a number of compliance-related steps, including approval from accreditation bodies and the federal government for student visas that require significant lead-time before students may enroll in a new program. Please carefully read the Timeline Considerations section and begin this process with ample time before the desired first admission cycle.

Please consult the Office of the Provost for the following situations:

- **Changes to existing academic programs** may require approval depending on the proposed changes. See the Major Modification Checklist for additional information.
- **Changes to Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes** require review and administrative setup.
- **New minors** (i.e., those offered under a current major (same 2-digit CIP code) and not resulting in standalone credentials) do not require approval, but they do require administrative setup and will follow portions of this process.

- **New certificates** that fall under certain criteria require HLC screening notification and could possibly require approval. The HLC screening form may be required for any new certificates where 50% or more of the courses were NOT derived from an existing degree AND are Title IV eligible. The HLC requires the screening form submission first and then they will send a response stating that the application will need to be submitting.

2. **Timeline Considerations**

The New Degree Program process is largely spent on proposal preparation, compliance, and internal school processes. Once the final proposal is submitted to the Provost for approval, notification can generally occur in about a month. Due to the below considerations, it is recommended that the initial proposal for a new program be submitted to the Office of the Provost *at least* 12 months prior to the intended semester of launch.

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requires that the HLC New Degree Program Screening Form be submitted for all new degree programs. This is *mandated by the U.S. Dept of Education*. The HLC will review the inquiry form to determine if pre-approval will be required. The pre-approval process takes approximately 3-6 months. If pre-approval is required, schools may take steps designed to make their constituents, including prospective students, aware that an application for a new program “has been submitted to the accreditor and is pending HLC approval.” Schools may not take any other steps to actively recruit or enroll students into the prospective program until HLC has issued formal approval of the program in an official Action Letter.

The WashU Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) must submit information about a new program to the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) for approval by the federal government. This process has historically taken between 12 and 18 months. Setup is also required to appropriately publish and encode new programs in student systems to be accurately reported to the Veterans Administration to be available for benefits-eligible students to apply for funding.

The semester calendar is the primary academic calendar at WashU. Any consideration of an alternate calendar must be reviewed in advance by the Office of the University Registrar, Student Financial Services and WashU IT to determine whether it is possible to support such a calendar in terms of federal regulations.

Finally, appropriate policy, course and requirements details for all new programs must be submitted to the Bulletin in accordance with the annual publication schedule.

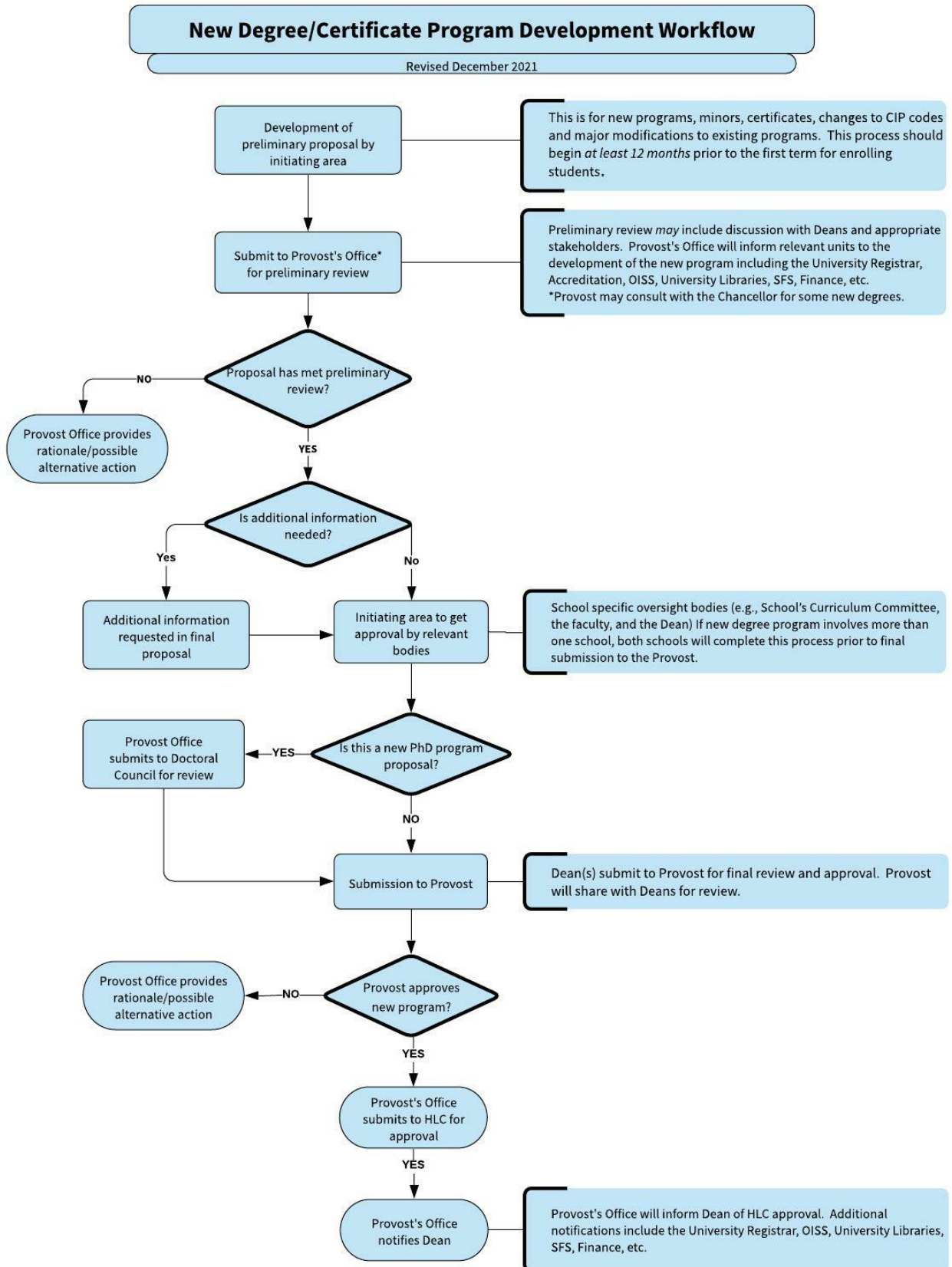
3. **Proposal Process**

- a. Development of Preliminary Proposal by School, Department or Program Area (follow Proposal Content Guidelines).
- b. Submission by Dean(s) to the Provost’s Office for preliminary review and *may* include

discussion with the Deans and other appropriate personnel. The Provost may need to consult with the Chancellor for some new degree programs.

- c. After preliminary review, the Office of the Provost will inform relevant units about the development of the new program including Office of the University Registrar, Accreditation, OISS, University Libraries, SFS, etc. Notification at the start of the development will ensure the necessary collaboration to efficiently and effectively implement the program in the desired timeline.
- d. Approval by school-specific oversight bodies, which may include the School's Curriculum Committee, the faculty, and the Dean. In cases of a degree program that involves more than one school, both schools will complete their school-specific process prior to submission to the Provost.
- e. For new PhD program proposals, the proposal is submitted to the Doctoral Council for review.
- f. Submission by the Dean(s) to the Provost for final review and approval.
- g. Once approved, the Provost's Office submits the proposal to the HLC for approval.
- h. The Provost's Office notifies all impacted units and stakeholders after notification of HLC approval.

4. Workflow



5. Proposal Content Guidelines

The proposal submitted to the Provost should address the following topics:

A. OVERVIEW

- List name of proposed degree program and name of the program sponsor(s).
- List name and email contact of dean's office representative(s) from sponsoring school(s).
- Indicate the desired start date for admitting students and the first desired date/term for enrolling students.
- Describe statement of philosophy/purpose (the degree program is designed to...).
- State how the degree program will contribute to the University's and the unit's academic mission and competitive advantage.
- Describe the department or academic unit's review and approval process.

B. NEED FOR NEW DEGREE PROGRAM

- Specify what need(s), opportunities or audiences exist to justify a new degree program.
- State clearly differentiations between this proposed new degree and existing program(s) if related (regardless of whether the existing program is in a different WashU school). Describe areas of productive overlap or plans to collaborate across units, if appropriate.
- Describe the distinctive competence of the unit and the University for offering this program.
- Provide estimate of how many students are expected to participate in the program in its early years and in its steady state. Describe what efforts have been made to determine if there is a demand for such a program.

C. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- Outline the proposed curriculum for the degree program. Describe areas of emphasis or concentration, if applicable.
- Provide detail on whether this program will call for the creation of new courses or rely on existing courses and whether any program components are off-campus or include online education.
- List and describe required core courses, electives, and prerequisites and concentrations, if applicable.
- Does completion of this program make students eligible for any professional licensure status?
- Describe time line for coursework and other requirements. What is the proposed total length of this program, and the typical anticipated course load for students in a term (e.g. full-time, part-time)? How many credits are required to graduate?
- Indicate which existing policies will apply to this program or if any new policies many need to be developed (E.g. "the current academic policies of the XX school will apply".)

D. SELECTION OF CANDIDATES AND ADMISSION CRITERIA

- List admission requirements. Will you allow students to transfer work? If yes, how

- many credits may be transferred, who will review and how will it be recorded?
- What are the other student costs for this program (e.g., non-tuition fees, etc.)? Will this proposed program require financial aid resources?
- Identify who will review applications and make admission decisions.

E. RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

- State how this new program will draw on existing faculty and resources (including library resources) or will provide new resources (e.g., staffing, space, technology, leadership, etc.). Describe any impact this new degree program will have on other units in the university.
- List Core faculty who will oversee the program. Include rank and Department.
- Describe the financial plan, including issues of tuition and financial aid:
 - If a joint program across schools, describe how tuition and aid will be distributed. Ensure the financial impact and responsibilities are clearly identified (if any).
 - Identify the primary program (i.e., “prime division” in SIS) during joint/dual degree programs as this affects enrollment reporting by school, billing, and tuition allocation calculations.

F. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

- State which department or program will have primary administrative responsibility. If joint between two units, specify the division of labor.
- Identify Program Director or Coordinator.
- Describe process for evaluation of Student Performance.
- State plans for providing adequate advising, mentoring, and support of students in the program.
- Confirm this program will follow the semester-based calendar standard to WashU programs, or explain why an alternate calendar is critical to pedagogy and outcomes. Will this program use summer as a regular academic term, or will it constitute a break in the calendar?
- Will classes be conducted in any location outside of Missouri? If so, please indicate where. Will students be completing activities for credit (e.g. internships, externships, clinical or residency placements) outside of Missouri? If so, please indicate where.
- Depending on the nature and location of the program, the university may be required to secure state authorization before conducting activities outside of Missouri.

G. EVALUATION OF PROGRAM

- Describe how and how often program evaluation will be conducted. How do you plan to do reporting?

6. **Existing Degree Modification Checklist**

In order to assess whether modification of an existing degree program is substantial enough to merit a full-scale review, the following checklist should be consulted. Further, the HLC may require notification if changes to existing academic programs fall under some of the categories

listed below. This requirement is only a notification (no approval) and can be submitted within 30 days after the changes have been made.

Do the proposed changes:

- Make a substantial change to the philosophy/purpose of this degree?
- Suggest that review of the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code may be needed?
- Involve departments or academic units that have not been previously involved?
- Have a changed relationship to other degrees that may have been approved or modified since the existing degree was designed?
- Involve faculty from new or different departments or schools?
- Have access to new resources that present new opportunities for expansion of the degree, or face a loss of resources that requires downscaling?
- Propose shifting the administration of the degree to a different administrative unit?
- Change in clock/credit hours since the most recent accreditation review (2018)?
- Change of 25% or more to the content of a program, either in a single change or as the sum total of aggregate changes, since the most recent accreditation review (2018)?
Program content changes include changes to a program's curriculum, learning objectives, competencies, number of credits required, or required clinical experiences. This would include changes in the general education courses required for program completion and not merely the courses within the discipline, program or major.
- Result in a change in the method of delivery (i.e., extending an in-person class or program to online)?
- Involve the development of customized pathways or abbreviated or modified courses or programs to accommodate a student's existing knowledge from employment or military service and to close competency gaps between demonstrated prior knowledge and the full requirements of a particular course or program?

If the answer to one or more of these questions is “yes,” please consult with Office of the Provost about whether a new review is required. You may be asked to complete the [HLC Changes to Existing Academic Program Form](#).

7. New Degree Programs and International Students

To be able to issue visa documents for international students for an academic program, the program must be approved by the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) within the Department of Homeland Security. For any new degree programs, the WashU Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) must submit information about the new program to the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and the program must be approved by the federal government before visa students are permitted to be enrolled in that program. These governmental approvals usually take several months – historically, they have taken between 12 and 18 months – and the approval can be delayed by the fact that new updates cannot be submitted while other updates are pending in SEVIS. This federal governmental approval process does not mean that the program cannot begin, but SEVP has

indicated that visa students cannot be enrolled in any degree program until it has been approved in SEVIS.

The information that is required to request the approval in SEVIS includes:

- Program Name, Department, and School
- Program Start Date
- Program length in months
- Degree to be conferred
- Major program code(s) and name (s) and CIP code
- Program description (including format of program and any special features)
- Number of credits needed to graduate
- Normal number of credits per semester
- Minimum # of credits required for full time load each semester
- Tuition and fees (including cost per credit hour and any special fees)

Academic divisions that are considering a new academic program, *in particular programs that anticipate recruiting a large number of international students*, should be in touch with the Director of the OISS as early as possible in the process to identify the timeline for the governmental approval process. Questions specifically for OISS can be sent to oiss@wustl.edu.