

## **Steps in the Graduate Program Approval Process** **Office of Graduate Studies May, 2002**

### **OVERVIEW:**

Faculty with an interest in developing new graduate programs or developing new delivery methods for current graduate programs should first meet within the College to review the program's goals and its "fit" within overall Department/School and College priorities. Once reviewed at the College level, a meeting should be arranged with the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies to review the steps involved in the approval process and potential obstacles to program approval. This process also applies to all new programs generated in cooperation with Life Long Learning and/or Regional Higher Education. Programs that currently exist, but are being re-formatted for distance/external delivery will need to consider the Graduate Council's policy on New Delivery Approaches for Previously-Approved Graduate Programs, appended to this document. In addition, if current programs are extensively revised, or name changes are planned for degree programs, these need to be evaluated to determine whether submission to the Board of Regents is required.

### **PROPOSAL PROCESS**

The approval of a new graduate program involves oversight by various units, beginning with the program faculty, and including college deans, the university graduate council and curriculum committee, the Provost, the Board of Trustees and the Ohio Board of Regents. Beyond initial review at the Department/School and College level, the mechanism for approval is basically a four-phase process for those proposals requiring OBOR approval: (1) A Program Development Plan; (2) a Full Proposal that takes into account PDP review commentary; (3) a "Response Document" that acknowledges the concerns raised in a review of the Full Proposal; and (4) a Formal Presentation at a meeting of the Regent's Advisory Committee on Graduate Study (these phases are detailed further below).

A Program Development Plan or **PDP** is submitted for preliminary feedback from the involved units as it moves from the faculty through the Dean's office, the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Graduate Council, the Provost's office and ultimately the Board of Trustees and the Regent's Advisory Committee on Graduate Study (RACGS). If the feedback is supportive of further program development, a Full Proposal is prepared that is again evaluated by the respective units. The steps of program approval are described below. It typically takes from 18 months to two years for a new graduate program to receive formal approval and begin admitting students.

A more specific outline of steps follows:

1. Program faculty and dean/associate dean meet to review the goals of a new program proposal. Once approved as a project that can go forward, the faculty and/or dean/associate dean meet with the associate provost for graduate studies to review the basic requirements for submitting a new proposal to the Graduate Council, and then complete the New Graduate Program Proposal Form and program development plan (PDP). A preliminary budget outlining program costs and potential income should be prepared at this stage (see p. 8 of this document for sample budget format—the Associate Provost will review this with the Provost to determine if there are major concerns prior to the development of a written PDP. Sample PDP's submitted to RACGS can be obtained from the Office of Graduate Studies.
2. Heads from all units making a contribution to the program review the PDP and sign the face page indicating their approval and intent to provide resources as proposed in the document.
3. All college deans who have units participating in the proposed new program review the PDP and sign the face page indicating approval and a college commitment to providing college resources as proposed in the document.
4. The PDP is forwarded to the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies. The Assoc. Provost will consult with the provost regarding the new program proposal, with a specific focus on financial feasibility.
5. The Associate Provost submits the approved PDP to Graduate Council and the University Curriculum Council for review and approval. The Curriculum Committee of the GC reviews the proposal, consults as needed with program faculty, and makes a recommendation for approval or denial to the full Graduate Council. Submission to GC and UCC may be concurrent or sequential.
6. If Graduate Council and the UCC endorses the proposal, the PDP is submitted to the Provost for approval. The Provost, once approval is granted, submits the proposal to the Ohio University Board of Trustees.
7. The Board approves submission to the Ohio Board of Regents.
8. The PDP is sent by the Office of Graduate Studies to the Regents Advisory Committee on Graduate Study (RACGS).\* RACGS is composed of representatives from OBR, graduate deans from each of the Ohio public Universities that offer graduate degrees and the graduate deans of two private universities, Case Western Reserve University and the University of Dayton. The graduate deans solicit reviews of the PDP materials from their faculty experts. These reviews along with a general statement of each dean's level of support for the proposed program are sent to all RACGS members and the chancellor's staff at OBR. If feedback from the RACGS members is generally positive, a Full Proposal may be developed. Feedback is requested from RACGS's reviewers within four-six weeks of receipt of the PDP materials. The Associate Provost will

monitor compliance with a reasonable deadline and will forward reviews as/when received. Following receipt, the Associate Provost will meet with the faculty/dean's office as needed to review the responses/concerns.

\*Under normal circumstances this would be the sequence; if permission is granted from the Provost, RACGS approval may be sought as the proposal is moving through the campus process, following GC and UCC approval, but prior to BOT approval.

9. The Full Proposal must address concerns identified in the RACGS's reviews. It is more detailed than the PDP with respect to supporting materials such as faculty vitae, course descriptions, letters of support and other documents that address the need for and quality of the program.

10. The Full Proposal does not need to repeat steps #1 through 8 as described above. Copies of the full proposal are made by the department/college and forwarded to the Associate Provost for mailing to RACGS members.

11. Once RACGS's reviews of the Full Proposal have been received, the faculty proposing the new program prepares a Program Response Document. The Response Document responds to questions and criticisms raised by RACGS's reviewers and is sent to all RACGS members prior to formal presentation of the Full Program Proposal before RACGS in Columbus (see #12 below).

12. Following the distribution of the Response Document, a formal presentation to RACGS is made by program faculty (supported by college and university administrators) at the OBR in Columbus. Each RACGS member has an opportunity to ask questions following the presentation. Following questions, the guest presenters and administrators are excused and the RAGCS members vote to recommend or not recommend approval of the proposed program to the chancellor of OBR. The chancellor then takes this recommendation to the OBR for final approval. RACGS meets every month except August and December. The OBR meets monthly.

**Proposal Sections:** based on Regents PDP outline**I. Program Designation**

A. Provide a title for the new program, a rationale for that designation (why this title and not others that might be employed?), and a brief statement of the new program's purpose.

**II. Educational Objectives/Proposed Curriculum**

A. Describe the educational objectives of the proposed program including the career paths that will likely be pursued by program graduates.

B. Describe the program curriculum including formal course work, program requirements, program milestones and required and optional research and professional experiences. How is the curriculum linked to the educational objectives?

C. Describe how students are advised and mentored through the program.

D. Describe the nature of all thesis, dissertation or other capstone experiences.

**III. Administrative Structure**

A. Describe the administrative arrangements for the new program—the units responsible for delivery and oversight. If interdisciplinary, list all units involved and indicate that support from respective Deans (if more than one college is involved) has been acquired.

**IV. Demonstration of need for new degree program**

A. Provide evidence for program need (e.g., published materials from disciplinary organizations, professional societies or funding agencies that identify a need and/or survey data you have collected that demonstrate a need for the program).

B. What evidence can be provided that there is student demand for the program at Ohio University (provide information regarding program inquiries, local, state and/or national projections of labor market for program graduates, etc.)?

C. Describe other programs in the State of Ohio that are similar to the proposed program. Will the proposed program compete with existing programs in the State? Identify the needs this program will fill in the State of Ohio.

D. Describe other programs in the region from which potential students might be drawn that are similar to the proposed program (e.g., Appalachian region). Will the proposed program compete with existing regional programs? Please explain.

**V: Program Recruitment & Admissions**

- A. How and to whom will the program be marketed?
- B. Estimate the number of applications and both full and part-time enrollments over the first five years of operation. What percentage of program enrollees are likely to be recruited from local, regional, national and international applicant pools?
- C. Describe the application materials that are required (e.g., transcripts, test scores, letters of reference). What are the admission criteria?

**VI: Special Recruitment Efforts**

- A. Describe special efforts that will be made to recruit applicants from underrepresented groups.

**VII: Proposed Program Support by Current Faculty, Staff, Facilities**

- A. List all current faculty and staff who will contribute to the proposed program, their current titles and terminal degrees, their roles with respect to the program, and percent effort devoted to program support. Describe how the workload of the faculty will be adjusted to accommodate the proposed program.
- B. Provide a description of current facilities/equipment availability for the new program.

**VIII. Need for additional facilities and faculty/staff and plans for meeting this need.**

- A. Describe plans to add new faculty and staff that would support development of the proposed program. Include a description of the backgrounds and credentials sought.
- B. Describe new facilities and space needs associated with development of the proposed program, and plans for acquiring these.

**IX: Financial Plan**

- A. Provide a narrative description of the projected cost and subsidy and other income adequate to meet the projected costs. Describe the methods used to estimate program income and expenses as appropriate (including assumptions about annual increases in tuition and stipend costs, adjustments for inflation and credit hour enrollment for part time students).

BOR Financial Impact Statement Form: this is a “prototype” form—it can be adapted as needed to reflect financial issues/feasibility.

<b>New Graduate Program Financial Spreadsheet</b>					
	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
<b>Projected Enrollment</b>					
Head-count full time					
Head-count part time					
Full Time Equivalent (FTE) enrollment					
Total Credits per Year per student *note Qtr (Q) or Sem (S)					
<b>Program Income</b>					
In-state tuition (paid by student or sponsor)					
Out-of-state tuition (paid by student or sponsor)					
State Share of Instruction—MA only					
Ph.D. – impact on institutional share (0)					
Externally funded stipends					
Other income* (describe below)					
<b>Total Projected Income</b>					
<b>Program Expenses</b>					
New Faculty (report # and/or antic. Expense)					
New Staff (report # and/or antic. Expense)					
New facilities/space renovation					
Internal stipend support – Departmental					
Internal stipend support – College/University					
Tuition Scholarship support—resident					
Tuition Scholarship support – non-resident					
Additional library resources					
Other expenses* (describe below)					
<b>Total Projected Expense</b>					
<b>Net Program Income or Expense</b>					

\*Explain and/or describe items included.

**X: Proposed Community, Foundation, Government & Industry Sources of Support**

A. Describe any additional community, foundation, government or industry sources of support for the proposed program.

**XI: External Consultants and Advisors**

A. Describe input from external consultants and/or an advisory committee (if any) in the development of the degree proposal. Include copies of reports from consultants/advisory committees.

**XII: Relationship of the Proposed Program to Other Programs in the Unit and College**

A. Describe how the new program will related to and impact other programs (both graduate and undergraduate) in the proposing unit and (if appropriate) college. How will the resource needs of the new program be balanced against the resource requirements of existing programs? In addition, describe the potential impact of the proposed program on other units or colleges, if any.

**Appendices: *For PDP Proposals***

A. Abbreviated bio and/or C.V. information on the proposed program faculty.

B. A list of courses and a summary of how these would be integrated into, or phased in with, existing/new workload demands.

C. Consultant/Advisory reports (if any)

***For Full Proposals***

A. Biographical Sketches or Curriculum Vitae of the proposed program faculty

B. Detailed Course Descriptions

C. Demand and Need Assessment Materials

D. Consultant Reports (if any)

E. Letters of Support

**Note:** once the above materials are submitted to RACGS, the three primary review criteria that external reviewers are asked to respond to are:

1. Potential conflicts with any existing program at the RACGS member's own institution.
2. Concerns with any substantive elements of the PDP.
3. Suggestions that might help the submitting institution strengthen the proposal or refine its focus.

## **New Delivery Approaches for Previously-Approved Graduate Programs**

In 1999, the Graduate Council's Curriculum Committee adopted a set of requirements to be used when a unit proposes a new delivery format for an existing graduate program (e.g., some form of or mix of microwave, on-line web interaction that may be asynchronous or synchronous in nature). In this case, the unit should submit a document to the GC that, at minimum, responds to the following items:

1. A description of the current approved program and a description of how the new program delivery system modifies or changes the program (e.g., in terms of total class meeting time, class size, class requirements or assignments, etc.).
2. A description of the faculty who will deliver the program under the new format; if new faculty will be involved (e.g., from the regional campuses or as adjuncts hired for this purpose), describe their training/background/experience and their faculty status during the program's delivery.
3. A description of how the program will be delivered under the new format. How will each course requirement be delivered—the character of student involvement and student/instructor interaction, etc.
4. Indicate the requirements for admission to the "regular" program and how these compare to requirements for the new format.
5. Describe where students will receive instruction (homes, off-campus site) and whether colleges or universities in the immediate area have been consulted and/or informed.
6. Describe the procedures to be used to audit whether all requirements and standards have been met.
7. Describe the fees that will be charged for participants, how faculty will be compensated (e.g., level of reimbursement, on-load or off-load assignment) and whether the unit or college will receive any revenue (identify estimated amount) from participation in the program.

**New Graduate Program Proposal Form**  
**Office of Graduate Studies**  
**OHIO UNIVERSITY**

**NOTE:** this is an optional form that may be helpful in tracking the status of the proposal. Colleges may adapt this to their own needs.

This is a (check one):       Program development Plan       Full proposal  
    Certificate program                       Program name change

New degree title (e.g., Ph.D., M. A.) and name (e.g., English, Neuroscience):

Proposing unit(s) [department(s) or school(s)]:

Summary of proposed program (100 words or fewer):

**Proposal Endorsements** [Note: this endorsement page is optional – it may be used to track approvals as needed; Colleges may adapt this to meet their specific needs.

**Proposed Graduate Program Director\***- "I certify that this new graduate program proposal is endorsed by the proposed program faculty and that they have agreed, in principle, to participate actively in the program."

Printed name- \_\_\_\_\_

Signature- \_\_\_\_\_

**Unit Head\***- " The department will provide the departmental resources and support described in this document toward the development of the proposed new graduate program."

Printed name- \_\_\_\_\_

Signature- \_\_\_\_\_

**College Dean\***- "The college fully supports the development of the new graduate program described in this proposal and will provide college resources as described in this document."

Printed name- \_\_\_\_\_

Signature- \_\_\_\_\_

\*- attach additional endorsement pages with appropriate names and signatures when more than one program, unit and/or college is sponsoring the proposed program.