Approval Process for New Academic Degree Programs
University of Michigan – Ann Arbor Campus

All new academic programs leading to a new degree or new field of study (concentration or major) must go through a series of internal and external review and approval processes before the new program can be implemented and marketed to potential students. This document outlines the basic steps an academic unit must take to obtain the appropriate levels of approval.

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**Levels of Approval**

All proposals for new programs will require *some or all* of the following levels of approval in the sequential order listed:

1. Department and School/College
2. Rackham Graduate School (Rackham) (may be necessary, see detail below)
3. Provost’s Office
4. Board of Regents (may be necessary, see detail below)
5. Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan (PCSUM)

1. **Department and School/College:** An academic unit planning a new academic program will need to begin the process by following the prescribed internal procedures for obtaining approval within its own department/school/college.

   During this stage of the planning and approval process, the Dean of your school/college should discuss your plans with the Provost (and the Provost’s Office). If the new program represents a major change in academic programming such as a new degree level for your unit or a new degree designation, the discussion should focus on how the new program fits into the long-range directions of your department and school/college. These academic planning discussions should cover issues related to resource needs and allocations, program size, impact on other U-M programs or units, the appropriateness of the intended degree designation or level for your unit, and the like.

   If the proposal is for a new concentration/major within an existing degree that your school/college is authorized to award, discussions with the Provost will focus on issues such as the fit of the new program with planned directions for your unit and whether it is duplicative of other existing programs in other units on campus.

2. **Rackham:** *If the new program will fall under Rackham's administrative umbrella,* the next step is to submit your proposal to the Rackham Graduate School.
   See **Guidelines for Developing and Revising Rackham Graduate Programs** at [rackham.umich.edu/faculty-staff/information-for-programs/directors/developing-graduate_programs/](rackham.umich.edu/faculty-staff/information-for-programs/directors/developing-graduate_programs/)
3. Provost’s Office: The next step in the process is to **submit your proposal to Glenna Schweitzer, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Budgetary Affairs, who coordinates the approval process in the Provost’s Office** (763-9954 or glenna@umich.edu). The Provost’s Office is then responsible for seeing that your proposal is moved forward through the final two steps in the process.

4. Board of Regents: Board of Regents approval **is needed only if you are proposing a new degree level for your unit** (e.g., a new bachelor’s degree program in a unit that previously offered only graduate degrees) or **a new degree designation** (e.g., recent new degrees in this category include the Master of Health Informatics and Master of Entrepreneurship). Proposals for new concentrations/majors within an existing degree do not need Regental approval.

5. Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan (PCSUM): The last stage of approval is at the state level through the Academic Affairs Officers Committee of the Presidents Council (PCSUM). The Academic Affairs Officers Committee includes representatives from all of Michigan’s 15 public universities. All required steps for internal approval need to be completed before a program can be submitted to PCSUM for review. Once you have received notice of approval by PCSUM, you can move forward with implementing the new program and advertising it.

If you have any questions about what levels of approval are needed for your proposal, contact Glenna Schweitzer (763-9954 or glenna@umich.edu).

**Submission Procedures**

**Proposal Content**

The first step in the approval process is to write a proposal for your new program. PCSUM requires that each proposal address, at a minimum, each of the following elements:

1. What related programs exist?
   Please describe any programs similar to yours at other universities nationally and within the State of Michigan. It is particularly important to note related programs at the other Michigan public universities, as there is a concern at PCSUM about program duplication.
2. Rationale for the program
3. Curriculum design
4. New course descriptions
5. Projected enrollments
6. Course scheduling plans
7. Program costs
   Please include a brief statement on how the new program is being funded (e.g., through reallocation within the unit, some additional funding from the Dean’s Office or the Provost’s Office, etc.)
8. Description of available/needed equipment
9. Faculty resumes (new masters and doctorates only)
   Full resumes are not needed. Each resume/CV should be no longer than two pages.
10. Internal status of proposal
11. Planned implementation date
12. Library and other learning resources
13. Space
14. Accreditation requirements
For additional PCSUM guidelines for reviewing academic program proposals, see the Presidents Council Policy Statement and Procedures for Reviewing Academic Program Proposals at provost.umich.edu/programs/new_program_approval/pres_council_policy.html

The same proposal can be submitted for both Rackham approval and PCSUM approval if you make sure the proposal covers all elements required by both Rackham and PCSUM.

Use common U-M acronyms only after you have fully spelled out what they stand for the first time they are mentioned. For example, “CoE” should be referenced first as the “College of Engineering (CoE)”. Please keep in mind that your proposal will be reviewed by individuals at each of the other 14 Michigan public universities who will not be familiar with our local terminology.

Your proposal may require editing by the Provost’s Office before it’s submitted for approval to the Regents and PCSUM. Usually such editing is minor. However, if there is a need for more substantive revision, the academic unit submitting the proposal will be contacted for their consent to the changes. Units will be sent a copy of the final version of the proposal that’s submitted to the Regents and PCSUM.

Proposal Format

In general, the version of the proposal submitted to the Provost’s Office must be in an electronic format that can be edited using software such as MS Word or MS Excel. It can be sent in separate parts if different electronic formats are used. For example, the main narrative document could be in Word and an appendix could be in Excel. A separate .pdf document is acceptable for anything that would not need editing, such as a cover memo confirming the approval of the proposal by the submitting unit and containing the signature of the dean.

Schedule and Deadlines

To determine the schedule and deadlines for obtaining approval for your program, you must first ascertain what levels of approval are needed. Once you know that, it is often easiest to figure out your timing by working backwards in time from when you would like to implement your program. Since the last step in the process prior to implementation is approval by PCSUM, you should start by viewing their meeting schedule. The Academic Affairs Officers meet only four times a year in October, January, April, and June. All new program proposals to be reviewed by PCSUM at a given meeting must be submitted six weeks prior to the meeting. In most years, their schedule will look like the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Proposal Submission Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-October</td>
<td>Early September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-January</td>
<td>Early December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-April</td>
<td>Early March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early June</td>
<td>Mid-April</td>
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See PCSUM schedule for the current year at provost.umich.edu/programs/new_program_approval/pres_council_sched.html

If Regents’ approval is not needed for your proposal, it should be sent to Glenna Schweitzer two weeks before the PCSUM submission deadline.
If Regents approval is needed, it should be approved at a Regents meeting that precedes the PCSUM submission deadline. Proposals requiring Regents’ approval must be submitted to Glenna Schweitzer six (6) weeks before the scheduled Regents meeting. This allows time needed to review the contents of the proposal and to make sure all required elements are there, to do minor editing if necessary, and to see that the proposal is placed on the Regents meeting agenda, which are finalized about 4 weeks before each meeting.

Regents meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month, except for August when there is no meeting.

See U-M Board of Regents Meeting Dates at regents.umich.edu/meetings/meetdates/

Don’t forget that you must obtain approval from your academic unit and Rackham (if necessary) before submitting your proposal to the Provost’s Office for its review and for subsequent action by the Regents (if required) and PCSUM.

Other Administrative Tasks and Follow-up

Before beginning the approval process for your proposal, consult with Vera Hernandez (763-5521 or vhernan@umich.edu) in the Office of the Registrar to discuss procedures for setting up your new program in the Student Administration System. Occasionally, there can be technical issues that need further discussion and resolution in order to properly reflect the intent of the program in our student data systems. It is better to identify these problems sooner rather than later in the process so as not to slow down the implementation of your program once it’s been approved. Also, the resolution of any issues or problems may affect the content of your proposal.

The Provost’s Office will notify you once the Regents (if necessary) and PCSUM have approved your proposal.

If you have any questions about approval process in general or the specifics of your proposal, please contact Glenna Schweitzer, Office of Budget and Planning, 523 S Division Street, Room 2225, campus zip 2912, phone 763-9954, or glenna@umich.edu.

This document can be downloaded from provost.umich.edu/programs/new_program_approval/approval_process.html

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