

# New Academic Program Approval and Existing Program Removal Policy ACA 5.0 Academic Affairs

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Policy type: Institutional  
Applies to: Faculty and Administrators

## POLICY DATES

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Issued:  
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This document outlines the processes for new academic program approval and existing academic program elimination. The document provides detailed steps of the process following the policy outlined in the shared governance decision matrix. The purpose of the document is to explain the processes to the campus community and to provide proposal sponsors clear expectations.

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## PROCEDURE

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### I. Overview of Process Developing New Programs

This process governs the development and approval of new degrees and new academic programs including new undergraduate majors, new minors, new graduate programs, and new comprehensive educational programs. There are five steps in the process, as described below. Changes to the curriculum within existing majors or minors, such as new tracks or new concentrations can be proposed directly to the Curriculum Committee (CC) and need not follow this process. Questions about the applicability of this process should be addressed to the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA).

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*Step 1. Draft Concept Paper-* The sponsor(s) of a proposed new program prepares a Concept Paper which is reviewed by members of their department(s), the Associate Academic Dean (AAD), and VPAA. The sponsor(s) is provided feedback from these groups to make adjustments before submitting to the formal review process.

*Step 2. Concept Paper Submission -* The sponsor(s) submits the Concept Paper to the Chair of the Curriculum Committee (CC), the Chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Resources and Planning (FSCR), and the VPAA. CC, with the AAD and the VPAA, review both the concept paper and feedback from the campus community and provide guidance to the sponsor. The guidance is intended to provide the sponsor with an understanding of whether the University is positively disposed toward the proposal or not.

*Step 3. Feasibility Study Preparation -* The sponsor(s) prepares a Feasibility Study, the details of which are described below. The feasibility study shall include input from the VPAA, the President's Council, and the President. The Feasibility Study is first reviewed by the host academic department(s) (if applicable), AAD, and the VPAA for feedback.

*Step 4. Feasibility Study Submission, Review, and Approval -* Evaluation of any new program proposal begins with the Curriculum Committee. CC reviews the Feasibility Study and any comments from the VPAA, the President's Council, Faculty Senate Committee on Resources and Planning (FSCR), Committee on Assessment (CoA), and the President. CC shall consider the Feasibility Study, work with the sponsor(s) to resolve any issues and eventually submit the proposal as an action item to the faculty, whether or not CC supports the proposal. FSCR shall assess the feasibility study from a resource perspective and submit its evaluation to CC. The faculty vote shall be forwarded to the President for consideration. The President will develop a recommendation and both the faculty recommendation and the President's recommendation will be presented to the Board of Trustees. The details of the review and approval by the President and the Board of Trustees and the process for resolving any differences among the faculty, President, and Board of Trustees are provided in the section below entitled "Review and Approval of the Feasibility Study Proposals."

*Step 5. Curricular Approval -* If the Board of Trustees approves a Feasibility Study the sponsor(s) creates a **program/curriculum proposal** in consultation with the affected academic areas and the academic administration and the President. When completed, the program curriculum proposal shall be submitted for approval through the applicable review and approval process for curricular approval.

#### A. Developing New Program Process in Detail

##### The Concept Paper (Steps 1 & 2)

- a. A Concept Paper (1-3 page summary) will be prepared by the individual proposing a new program (sponsor) which includes:
  - A short summary of the proposed program
  - A statement on how the program is mission centered
  - A justification for offering the program
  - An illustration of how the proposed program fits with the University of Mount Union strategic plan
  - The level at which the program will be offered (graduate, undergraduate, non-degree, etc.)
  - The degree to be offered, if applicable (BA, MS, MBA etc.)
  - The delivery format (face-to-face, off-site, on-line, international, etc.)
- b. The Concept Paper will be submitted to the VPAA and Chair of CC. The CC Chair will arrange to have the Concept Paper posted on the UMU internal public site. An announcement soliciting comments on the Concept Paper will be sent to all faculty and staff. The VPAA will inform the Chair of the Academic Policies Committee of the Board for information purposes only.

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- c. CC, in consultation with the AAD and VPAA and using feedback from faculty and staff will provide guidance to the sponsor regarding the university's level of interest in the proposal. (see note below). CC will report any of its actions to the full faculty in writing (action or informational) at the next faculty meeting.

Note: The purpose of the Concept Paper is to obtain feedback from key groups regarding whether the proposed program is likely to ultimately be approved so that resources are not wasted on preparing feasibility studies. However, it is expected that in most cases, feasibility studies will be prepared.

#### Feasibility Study Preparation (Step 3)

- a. If after receiving the feedback on the Concept Paper the sponsor chooses to continue to pursue the new program, a Feasibility Study of the new program must be prepared by the sponsor(s) and/or a member of the academic administration.
- b. The Feasibility Study will follow the guidelines below.

#### **B. Developing a Feasibility Study**

A thorough Feasibility Study prior to the introduction of new programs is essential to assure the quality, sustainability, financial responsibility, mission-centeredness, institutional support needed for the program. It also should show how the program is consistent with the mission, vision, goals, and strategy of the University. It must also demonstrate that the University has the structure to support the program, that there is sufficient student interest to attract new students in sufficient quantity to sustain the program over time. The study must also address resource requirements that the University can accommodate. It is important that there be consultation with administrators (academic, finance, student life, Registrar, Institutional Research, Admissions, and Financial Aid) during the process.

#### ***Feasibility Study Components***

*Executive Summary:* Provide a brief, but complete description of the new program. Include background so that readers can understand why Mount Union should offer the program, what degree or status should be awarded, length of program, what graduates are prepared to do upon completion, what additional resources (faculty, facilities, library, technology, equipment, etc.) would be needed, and why it is an appropriate program for UMU.

*Institutional Mission:* Describe how the proposed program is mission centered and would enhance the mission of UMU. Explain the impact of the proposed program on the University's character, heritage, liberal arts foundation, student life, etc. Describe external factors that call for the creation of the proposed program considering the UMU mission.

*Strategic Alignment:* How does the program advance the strategic direction of Mount Union? How does it support or align with other University strategic initiatives and plans?

*Market Need Analysis (prospective students, enrollment management and career placement):* Demonstrate what has been done to determine that there is a student market for this new program. This may include primary market research to measure prospective student interest or secondary market research from a variety of sources, Bureau of Labor Statics, governmental reports, professional organization reports, census data, College Board, state or regional data, UMU enrollment data. What are the employment and economic projections for the field? What is the ability to place graduates in professional positions upon completion? Cite sources. The VPAA can provide insight into possible internal and external resources faculty sponsor(s) may use.

*Enrollment projections:* Specify how many students in this new program would be new to UMU. Show

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data and justification for the projections. Project how enrollment would change/grow over a five-year period. Describe the total number of students that would be sustainable over time. Identify competitors for new proposed programs and address why students would attend Mount Union vs. a more established program. Provide sources for information from business, governmental, professional organization, or other sources.

Curriculum (program of study, credits, and admission criteria): An overview of the curriculum and admission criteria should be outlined in this section. Curricular information should include: draft program goals, draft curricular goals, course titles, credits, and length and course order of program. Demonstrate alignment with relevant institutional learning goals. Explain how the integrity, quality and appropriateness of the curriculum is to be developed and maintained? Admission criteria should include any changes to existing policy and a full justification for the change and the strategy behind what is proposed and how it betters Mount Union.

+ [While areas of the feasibility study/report overlap with the curricular process, approval of the feasibility study/report does not presume approval of the curricular process. Please see the CC Chair or AAD if you have any questions. A full curriculum proposal with learning goals, objectives, assessment plans will be required, if approved, using the existing governance processes.]

Faculty and Staff: Specify the numbers and qualifications of faculty and staff required to implement the program. Present research, benchmarking data and outside data. Include the following information.

- Faculty Plan- Number of new faculty FTE per year to implement the program over the first 5 years of program operation as well as on-going faculty requirements.
- Full-time to adjunct (FTE) faculty ratio
- Existing faculty with available time and the qualifications to teach in the program. (Explain how many full time equivalent faculty from existing faculty would be reassigned for this new effort)
- Faculty teaching or position expectations if they differ from UMU current model.
- Ease or difficulty in hiring qualified faculty with expertise needed for program
- Other information as needed

Program Effectiveness and Student Learning Outcomes – Continuous Academic Quality Improvement Program: Describe the overall assessment plan outlining the processes for monitoring 1) program effectiveness and 2) student learning. Discuss how faculty will conduct ongoing evaluation of what students learn from coursework, the curriculum, the co-curriculum and other experiences that make up the student learning. Describe the proposed measures of assessment (direct and indirect) that will be used to evaluate student learning and explain how the results will be used to modify and improve efforts in an effort to continuously improve. This should include a timetable that addresses program goals, student learning outcomes, quality, support, and institutional contribution. For program effectiveness, please share what outcomes will be measured, how often, what existing systems/processes will be used, who will measure them, and what will be the determinants of continuation or elimination of the program?

Accreditation: What external accreditation or approvals will be needed for the program? Is a specialized accreditation required or requested? If so, describe the timelines with all required approvals (Higher Learning Commission, Ohio Department of Higher Education, state boards, and professional accreditation).

Accountability: Who is responsible for the development and implementation of the program? Who will be accountable for achievement of the program's outcomes, the accreditation, the assessment, the quality, and sustainability?

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*Impact on Programs Currently Offered:* An in-depth study of the impact (financial, cultural, resources, etc.) should be explained using information gathered from constituents who will be most impacted by the addition of the program.

*Financial Analysis:* Faculty sponsor(s) should work with VPAA or Academic Affairs designee and chief budget planning officer to ensure this section is thorough and consistent with the assumptions used by the University for financial planning. The VPAA or AAD will direct the faculty sponsor(s) to appropriate areas of UMU to help with collecting accurate and actual costs. This section should include a 3-5 year financial forecast for the program. Areas to address include:

- New faculty salaries and benefits including search expenses
- Library Costs
- Faculty Development Needs
- Support Staff
- Facilities (classroom, offices, labs)
- Library
- Departmental Budgets
- Equipment and Technology
- Accreditation Costs
- Marketing Costs (including recruiting, especially if additional activities are required)
- International Services (student, recruiting, academic)
- Curriculum Development
- Consulting Costs
- Tuition for Projected Enrollment
- Revenue for UMU as a result of program (grants, gifts, in-kind services, etc.)
- Staffing costs (provide a detailed plan, over five years)
- Others?

This section will be reviewed by FSCR and they will provide feedback to CC and the VPAA.

*Institutional Capacity (facilities, supporting systems, resources)*

Describe the physical, library, and technical resources needed to support the program. Include what existing resources could be used and what new resources would be required? Describe the adequacy of the following resources for use in the program. This will require contacting each area so they may examine their needs given the program. (Where the new program will not depend on these resources or services, indicate by N/A.)

- Center for Student Success
- DWOC Studio
- Counseling Services
- Admissions Office and Processes
- Marketing
- Financial Aid Office and Processes
- Registrar's Office Services
- Residential Life Services
- Student Affairs Office
- Business Office (budgeting, purchasing, billing, etc.)
- Human Resources and Payroll
- Academic Administration
- Institutional Research, Assessment and Effectiveness
- Other

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#### C. Review and Approval of the Feasibility Study

CC reviews the Feasibility Study including any comments from the VPAA, the President's Council, and the President. CC shall consider the Feasibility Study and work with the sponsor(s) to resolve any issues. Once any issues are resolved, CC shall present the Feasibility Study to the faculty as an action item with a recommendation which can be in support of, or in opposition to, the Feasibility Study proposal. The results of the faculty vote shall be presented to the President as a recommendation. If the President and the faculty agree on the recommendation, the President will make a formal recommendation for or against the new program to the Board of Trustees. This recommendation will also be communicated to the faculty. The Board of Trustees may approve or disapprove the recommendation, or return it to the President and the faculty for revision and resubmission. If the President does not agree with the faculty recommendation, either for addition of a new program or opposing addition of a new program, both the President's and the faculty's recommendations will be brought to the Board of Trustees for a decision. If neither the faculty nor the President support the new program, submittal to the Board of Trustees is not necessary.

#### D. Curricular Approval

If the Board of Trustees approves a Feasibility Study the sponsor(s) creates a program/curriculum proposal in consultation with the affected academic areas and the academic administration and the President. When completed, the program curriculum proposal shall be submitted for approval through the appropriate review and approval process for curricular approval as outlined in the University governance documents.

## II. Overview of Process for Elimination of Existing Programs

The process to eliminate existing programs shall be thorough, involve all stakeholders affected by the decision, and be based on financial viability, marketability, quality, mission centeredness, and any other relevant program-specific or external factors. It is staged by having an initial recommendation developed to solicit feedback and inform various groups, then a full recommendation is prepared. Elimination of a program requires input from the VPAA, the President, a final recommendation by the faculty, and approval by the Board of Trustees. Externally, the process to eliminate a program is reviewed by the Ohio Department of Higher Education (*Guidelines and Procedures for Academic Review*, p. 43).

#### A. Initiation

The process to consider elimination of an existing academic program can begin in one of two ways. Those are:

1. Faculty Initiated - A proposal to eliminate an academic program can be initiated by an academic department or other faculty body, such as an elected committee. A typical case when this might occur is as an outcome of a Program Review or accreditation review which raises concerns about the viability or quality of a program.
2. Administration Initiated - A proposal to eliminate an academic program may be initiated by the administration. When this occurs, a proposal will be provided by the administration to the Curriculum Committee (CC) for discussion and evaluation.

#### B. Faculty-Initiated Program Elimination

##### i. Initial Recommendation for Program Elimination

For faculty-initiated proposals for program elimination, the program being considered for elimination should be evaluated for financial viability, marketability, quality, mission-centeredness, and any other pertinent factors. The evaluation should be based on objective data to the extent possible.

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The process begins by preparing a brief initial recommendation. The initial recommendation must include the following:

- Summary of concerns about the program
- Identify program(s) proposed for elimination
- Identify key issue(s) driving elimination
- Provide any initial supporting evidence for elimination
- Identify proposed timing of elimination

The initial recommendation shall be submitted to the VPAA and CC. The VPAA will use the initial recommendation to inform other internal departments and the President. The Chair of CC will make the initial recommendation available to the entire Curriculum Committee so that further committee discussion can take place.

The VPAA and the Chair of CC will provide direction to the initiator as to the content of a final recommendation. Their direction may also include additional items to be included in the analysis and recommendation.

If direction to proceed with a program elimination is received from the VPAA and the Chair of CC, a final recommendation shall be prepared that includes an analysis and a plan for how in-process students will be managed.

#### ii. Recommendation to Eliminate a Program

Following direction from the VPAA and Chair of CC to proceed with a final recommendation for program elimination, the initiator shall prepare such a recommendation. Suggestions for the content of the recommendation are provided below.

While the final recommendation is being developed, the following groups must be notified by the VPAA and solicited for feedback regarding the impending recommendation. Their feedback must be included in the final recommendation.

- Office of Marketing, and
- Office of Enrollment Services, and
- Office of Academic Affairs, and
- all other academic departments affected by the elimination

The following outline is a suggested guideline for the content of a final recommendation for program elimination. It is not necessary to include all of the information below depending upon the specific circumstances of the program and the guidance provided by CC and the VPAA.

- Executive summary of recommendation
- Detailed analysis of the program elimination including:
  - Marketability and Employment Demand
  - Quality
  - Mission Centeredness
  - Financial Viability
  - Projected Savings and Benefits
  - Reasons improvement is not being pursued versus elimination
  - Enrollment History
  - Staffing Implications
  - Any effects on external stakeholders or constituents
  - Effects on any existing, on-going programs

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- Feedback from other internal organizations (see above)
- Timing of Elimination
- Treatment of in-progress students
- Other pertinent data and analysis
- Conclusion
- Specific recommendation and signatures of, or support statements by, those recommending elimination

#### iii. Evaluation

Once a recommendation for program elimination is developed it shall be submitted to the CC and FACRP (which would assess whether elimination would actually save money).

The CC will consider the recommendation and reach a conclusion through the normal committee deliberation and approval process. CC may seek assistance from others to help in the evaluation of the recommendation, as judged necessary by the committee. CC has the discretion to support the recommendation as written, request additional information or modification of the recommendation, or oppose the recommendation. Regardless of whether CC supports the recommendation, it shall ultimately present an action item to the faculty for action.

The CC shall establish an effective date for the program elimination in collaboration with Marketing, Enrollment Services, Academic Affairs, and the offering academic department.

#### iv. Approval

The faculty vote regarding the program elimination shall be presented to the President as a recommendation. If the President and the faculty agree on the recommendation, the President will make a formal recommendation for or against the program elimination to the Board of Trustees. This recommendation will also be communicated to the faculty. The Board of Trustees may approve or disapprove the recommendation, or return it to the President and the faculty for revision and resubmission. If the President does not agree with the faculty recommendation, both the President's and the faculty's recommendations will be brought to the Board of Trustees for a decision.

### C. Administration-Initiated Program Elimination

#### i. Recommendation to Eliminate a Program

The administration may initiate a proposal to eliminate an academic program. The content shall include the same information as is required for faculty-initiated final recommendation for program elimination. The recommendation shall be submitted to CC for action.

#### ii. Evaluation

Once a recommendation for program elimination is developed by the administration, it shall be submitted to the CC and FSCR. P.

The CC will consider the recommendation and reach a conclusion through the normal committee deliberation and approval process. CC may seek assistance from others to help in the evaluation of the recommendation, as judged necessary by the committee. CC has the discretion to support the recommendation as written, request additional information or modification of the recommendation, or oppose the recommendation. Regardless of whether CC supports the recommendation, it shall ultimately present an action item to the faculty for action.

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For programs recommended for elimination, the CC shall establish an effective date for the program elimination in collaboration with Marketing, Enrollment Services, Academic Affairs, and the offering academic department.

#### iii. Approval

If the faculty approves the recommendation, that approval shall be forwarded to the President for submittal to the Board of Trustees. The Board may approve, disapprove, or return the recommendation to the President for further action. If the faculty does not accept the recommendation, that decision and a rationale for the disapproval shall be forwarded to the Board of Trustees. In this case, the administration also shall provide its recommendation for program elimination, along with a rationale, to the Board of Trustees. The Board will decide which recommendation to approve or may choose to return both recommendations to the President for further development and/or other action.

#### Responsibilities

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Academic Affairs	VPAA and Assistant Academic Dean will review program proposals VPAA, Chair of Curriculum Committee, and the Faculty Senate Committee on Resources and Planning will review concept paper and provide feedback The VPAA must provide input when considering to eliminate a program
President's Office	President must provide input when considering to eliminate a program
Board of Trustees	Must approve the elimination of the program in questions
Faculty	Must provide a final recommendation when considering to eliminate a program

#### Contacts

Subject	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
Vice President for Academic Affairs	Academic Affairs	330-829-2690	<a href="mailto:academic@mountunion.edu">academic@mountunion.edu</a>

#### History

All changes must be listed sequentially, including edits and reviews. Note when the policy name or number changes.

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