UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
PROCEDURES FOR UNIVERSITY APPROVAL OF NEW ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAMS, PROGRAM CHANGES, AND PROGRAM TERMINATION

PREAMBLE

This document sets forth the substantive and procedural requirements which govern the review and approval of proposals for new Academic Degree Programs, proposed changes to existing programs and the termination of existing programs proposed by any of the five University of Massachusetts campuses as well as new joint Academic Degree Programs proposed by two or more of the campuses. It is intended to provide clear instruction concerning the required content and format of proposals as well as clear notice regarding the criteria under which proposals will be reviewed. The policy has been written to conform to the fullest extent possible with the relevant program approval policies of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education.

The requirements of this policy demonstrate a recognition that the President's Office has a central role to play in the planning and coordination of Academic Degree Programs at the five campuses and reflect an understanding that effective planning and coordination involve the thorough and careful evaluation of program proposals within the broad contexts of social need, institutional mission attainment and efficient resource allocation. Implementation of these requirements should be guided at all times by these general principles.

I. DEFINITIONS

The following words or phrases shall have the following meanings whenever used in this document, unless the context in which they appear clearly indicate to the contrary:

"Academic Degree Program" shall mean an undergraduate or graduate certificate of 30 semester credit hours or more, or a major or degree at the undergraduate or graduate levels, including a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study.

II. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all proposals for new Academic Degree Programs, certain proposed changes to existing Academic Degree Programs, and all proposed terminations of existing Academic Degree Programs. Separate procedures are included for joint Academic Degree Programs in which one or more campuses already holds degree-granting authority.

This policy does not apply to proposals to offer new concentrations, tracks, options or the like within existing degree programs. It also does not apply to changes in the content or delivery of program curricula (courses) or in the graduation requirements of approved programs.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES: NEW ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAMS

The review and approval of new Academic Degree Programs will occur in two phases. A "Preliminary Application" consisting of a concise description of, and rationale for, the proposed program will be reviewed by the President and the Academic Advisory Council. The "Final Application" will fully address all relevant issues including those relating to need and demand, mission, resources, curriculum and faculty. The full proposal will be reviewed by the Academic Advisory Council and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and, if approved by the President, forwarded to the Board of Trustees for action. All proposals approved by the University Board of Trustees must be forwarded to the Board of Higher Education for approval.

Preliminary Application

The Preliminary Application should provide a succinct description of, and rationale for, the proposed Academic Degree Program and should be no more than five (5) single-spaced pages in length. It should be viewed as a vehicle by which the proponents of a new program can, in a general way and without significant expenditure of time and resources, "make the case" for their proposed program to the campus and system officials responsible for the approval of new programs. Its main purpose is to provide those campus and system officials with sufficient descriptive and contextual information about the program to allow those officials to make an informed judgment about whether the proposal has sufficient merit to warrant the preparation of a Final Application. Specifically, the Preliminary Application should address the extent to which there is a need for the degree program (including why existing programs at the same campus, on other University campuses, or at other public or private institutions within the campus' service area cannot meet this need). It should also explain the ways in which the proposed program is consistent with and serves to advance the stated mission and goals of the campus and the University.

The Preliminary Application should be forwarded to the President by the campus Chancellor. It will be circulated for comment to the members of the Academic Advisory Council. The Chancellor of the Board of Higher Education will also be invited to comment. Upon review, the President will advise the campus Chancellor as to whether to proceed with a Final Application and discuss any issues that merit particular consideration in that process. An instruction to proceed with a Final Application does not constitute assurance of approval of the proposed program.

Final Application

The Final Application should provide a comprehensive description of the proposed Academic Degree Program and should include an expanded analysis of the issues discussed in the Preliminary Application (e.g. purpose, need and relationship to mission) as well as a careful and thorough discussion of the more practical and technical issues raised by the proposal (e.g. resources, curriculum, admissions and faculty). It should contain all of the information necessary to allow campus, University and other reviewers to meaningfully evaluate the program and should provide all of the information requested under the nine (9) general subject headings set forth below.

The Final Application must also include a "Program Abstract" which should not exceed four pages in length. The program abstract should be a fair and concise summary of the proposal and the nine (9) items noted below. In the event the proposal is approved by the University's Board of Trustees and forwarded to the Board of Higher Education, the Program Abstract will be circulated by the Board of Higher Education to other public institutions for comment.

While it would be helpful if the main body of the application were organized under the same subject headings that are listed below, different formats may be used as long as the relevant information is provided. Persons preparing the Final Application should, in any event, be mindful that the cogency and realism of the proposal, and the succinctness and clarity of its presentation, will be considered good indicators of a campus' ability to mount a program of high quality.

The Final Application should include the following:

1. Proposal Development.

    -   Provide a brief overview of the process for developing the proposed program, including any use of outside consultants or assistance provided by prospective professional accreditation groups.

2. Purpose and Goals.

    -   Describe the program's purpose and the particular knowledge and skills to be acquired by program graduates.

    -   Describe the goals you hope to achieve within five years and specify the measures which would be used to determine the successful achievement of those goals.

    -   Identify in general the strategies for achieving these goals and for ensuring the continuing quality of the program.

3. Mission Context.

    -   Describe in detail how the proposed program supports the mission and current priorities of the campus. Also comment on whether and how the proposed program supports the mission and priorities of the University and the system of public higher education in Massachusetts.

    -   Explain the general impact of expanding the campus' academic degree offerings through the addition of the proposed program as well as the likely effect of the new program on the quality of the campus' existing offerings.

    -   Describe whether students will be drawn from enrollments in existing program offerings or whether new students will be attracted to the campus by the program (if the latter, describe what evidence supports this conclusion).

4. Need.

    -   Provide evidence of student demand and current career opportunities for graduates of the program.

    -   If the proposed program is similar to a program in existence at the University, or at another public or private institution in Massachusetts, describe how the program differs from, and how it complements, that (those) program(s). If there are similar programs within the University, explain why the purposes of the proposed program cannot be

achieved through these related, existing programs or through modifications to those programs.

5. Students.

  - Provide an estimate of full-time and part-time student enrollment by year, for the first year and for the year (which should be specified) in which it is expected that the program will be fully implemented. Indicate if students will be drawn from existing programs or from attracting new enrollments.

  - Describe the kinds of students to be served (e.g., traditional/non-traditional, minority and non-minority students, members of a particular profession) and any special recruitment efforts planned.

  - Discuss the types of student retention strategies that will be utilized, and the support services that will be offered, which are different from existing institutional practices and procedures.

6. Administration and Operation.

  - Describe the organizational structure for the administration and operation of the proposed program and strategies designed to ensure its continued quality.

7. Curriculum and Faculty.

  - Include a complete description of the curriculum and plans for delivering the proposed program, including a semester by semester sequence of courses and other requirements.

  - Explain how the program makes sense academically and how the proposed curriculum adequately covers the subject areas. Provide evidence that the program is considered a legitimate academic discipline. If the program is interdisciplinary, provide a rationale for the inclusion of the relevant disciplines and faculty.

  - Show course numbers, titles and a brief description of each with an indication of which courses already exist (either on that campus or another campus) and which are to be newly developed. Include a summary by course category (major, cognate areas, general education, electives). If applicable, describe the procedures for any required independent exercise and for any required internship or clinical experience. In the latter case, describe the proposed arrangements for the placement of students.

  - Submit current curriculum vitae for all participating faculty.

  - If applicable, provide information concerning certification, licensure, and specialized accreditation.

8. Admission and Graduation.

  - Describe standards for admission to the program and degree requirements in detail, such as general education requirements, major requirements, required academic work in

related fields, electives, practical experience, internships, clinical practices and the like. Include admission requirements for transfer students, if applicable.

- Explain how the proposed matriculation requirements provide assurance of the likelihood of student success in pursuing the program to completion, and project percentages of such degree completion rates and expected times from admission to graduation for successful full-time students.

- Describe procedures and criteria for evaluation of student progress, for initiating, implementing and evaluating any required independent activity or for internship experience.

- Describe any aspects of the program that are intended to attract students from underrepresented groups into the field, or to prepare graduates for service to diverse populations. Also address the program's potential to increase the diversity of the faculty.

- Detail any collaborations with other campuses (or with other colleges and universities) and explain what opportunities or benefits the program offers for University students and faculty at the other campuses.

9. Resources, Program Delivery and Budget.

- Describe the amount and kind of faculty and staff, facilities, equipment, and library resources (and field and clinical resources, if applicable) necessary to offer the proposed program for the first year and for the year (which should be specified) in which it is expected that the program will have arrived at a steady state.

- Describe funding sources by source, such as external grants and contracts or internal University budget. If external funding sources are not committed, identify the sources of the reallocated internal funding and describe the impact of such reallocation on the programs which will lose funding and on the mission and priorities of the campus.

- Include detailed program delivery information to show the anticipated date of implementation, location of program facilities, and equipment to be utilized. In the event that additional space or specialized facilities would be needed for the program, indicate clearly what these are and what binding agreements have been obtained to provide and fund them in the event that a program is approved.

- Include detailed budgets to show the first-year implementation costs and, for the year (which should be specified) in which it is expected that the program will have arrived at a steady state, the budget at that time. The term "budget" includes that for any and all resources, including personnel, facilities, equipment, library, and other resources. Include budget projections of the campus' internal contribution through reallocations, expected external support and sources and, if any, new internal funding to be requested through the University budget process.

The Final Application must be approved by the appropriate campus governance bodies and reviewed and approved by the campus Chancellor before being forwarded to the President. The President will solicit comments on the proposal from the Academic Advisory Council. If, after a careful and thorough review by staff, the President decides to recommend approval of the program, the President will forward a

written recommendation to the University Board of Trustees. The President may require that the proposal be reviewed by a team of external evaluators qualified to comment on issues of faculty, quality, curricular coherence, and adequacy of resources. External evaluations will normally be required when graduate programs are being proposed and may entail a visit to the campus by the evaluators. All expenses for external evaluators will be borne by the requesting campus. If the Final Application is approved by the Board of Trustees, it will be forwarded to the Board of Higher Education.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES: JOINT ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAMS

This section shall apply to proposals to establish joint degree programs between two or more campuses of the University of Massachusetts where at least one of the campuses already holds specific degree-granting authority. Proposals for collaborative degree programs in fields in which no participating campus has degree-granting authority, and proposals to develop joint degree programs involving colleges or universities outside the University of Massachusetts, must be developed in accordance with the requirements of the section of this policy document applicable to new Academic Degree Programs. This approval process is not required for programs in which an authorized degree is conferred by one campus onto students enrolled through another campus by special agreement.

Proposals for joint degree programs will also be reviewed in two phases. A Preliminary Application (meeting the requirements set forth below) should be submitted by the Provosts of the participating campuses to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who circulates it to the Academic Advisory Council. Once the Preliminary Application has been vetted by the Academic Advisory Council, the campuses can proceed to prepare a Final Application. All proposals for joint degree programs must go through normal campus approval processes before being submitted to the President in the form of a Final Application. The Final Application is submitted to the President jointly by the Chancellors of the participating campuses and reviewed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. If approved by the President, the proposal will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees. If the Board of Trustees approves it, it will then be forwarded to the Board of Higher Education for final action.

Preliminary Application

The initial proposal for a joint degree program should be succinct (not to exceed 5 pages) and should include: (1) a discussion of the reasons for the proposed collaboration, including an explanation of how the proposed joint program would complement, replace, or enhance any current stand-alone programs, and how it would contribute to the missions of participating campuses and the University as a whole; (2) a brief description of current degree program(s) on each participating campus that would contribute to the joint program (including program emphasis, size of faculty and students, etc.); and (3) a discussion of the need and demand for the joint program, including evidence of student demand and career opportunities.

Final Application

The Final Application should incorporate the proponents' discussion of the questions covered in the Preliminary Application and should, in addition, include the following:

1. A "Program Abstract" consisting of a "fair and concise summary" of the proposed joint degree program, i.e. a condensed version of the Final Application (Note: the Program Abstract is circulated by the Board of Higher Education to outside reviewers).

2. A projection of the expected size of the program, including full-time and part-time students enrolled, projected degree completion rates and the expected time from admission to graduation.

3. A detailed description of proposed curriculum and program emphasis (including changes to existing curricula where applicable). Include (in an Appendix) a semester by semester sequence of courses including course numbers, credits, and titles, clearly indicating which campus will offer the course as well as which of the courses are new.

4. A description of how curriculum will be delivered: who will teach courses, where and how (e.g., distance learning, travel between campuses), research and thesis supervision for graduate programs; in other words, the nature of the collaboration.

5. A description of the structure for program oversight, including admissions, curriculum development, graduation requirements, faculty hiring and assignment, quality control and program evaluation.

6. A description of mechanisms for distributing student credit hours and faculty effort among campuses for budgetary purposes.

7. A description of procedures for student registration, advising, and other administrative matters.

8. A discussion of the budgetary implications for each campus, including sources for required support and anticipated costs or savings. Please display by institution the amount and kinds of additional faculty/staff, facilities, equipment, and library resources needed for the first year and the first full year of implementation, indicating funding sources.

9. A discussion of the implications for programmatic accreditation and certification or licensure, if applicable.

Approval of a joint degree under these procedures requires that every diploma and transcript issued to students in the program reflect that the program is a collaborative offering of the campuses involved. Approval of a joint degree under these procedures does not constitute authorization for a campus to offer a stand-alone degree unless the campus holds independent authorization to offer such a degree. Should the joint degree program be discontinued at any time, campuses without independent authorization to offer the degree may not continue to offer such degrees without the approval of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Higher Education.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES: CHANGES TO EXISTING ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAMS

Once approved, an Academic Degree Program may not be materially and substantially changed unless and until it has been reviewed and approved under a process deemed appropriate by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. A brief written description should be submitted to the Vice President for Academic Affairs who will determine whether the proposed change should be reviewed under the same procedures applicable to new programs or under some less comprehensive procedure, as he or she shall specify. Proposals to offer new concentrations, tracks, options, certificate programs or the like within existing degree programs will not be considered material or substantial changes. However, campuses proposing such changes are required to send a written notice to the President and the Board of Higher Education 60 days prior to announcing the change.

A campus wishing to change the name of a program must obtain the approval of the President of the University as well as the Vice Chancellor of the Board of Higher Education. The request for approval should include an explanation of the reasons for the name change.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES: TERMINATION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS

Campuses must notify the President prior to, and the Board of Higher Education following, the suspension or termination of an existing Academic Degree Program. A campus may reactivate a suspended or discontinued program, with the approval of the President and the Board of Higher Education. The President may require that the reactivation proposal be reviewed under a process similar to that applicable to proposals for new programs, or some other appropriate process.

In the event that discontinuance, termination, or reactivation of programs would have a significant impact upon other campuses as determined by the President, such action will only occur after the President has obtained the advice of the Academic Advisory Council and subsequently the approval of the Board of Trustees.