



Policy: Procedure for Curriculum Changes

Effective: February 23, 2024

Policy Type: Faculty

Responsible Department: Academic Affairs

NEW OR CHANGED COURSES AND PROGRAMS

Policy: New and revised curriculum, whether initiated by the department, school, or the administration, is evaluated and endorsed through a faculty reviewed process prior to its implementation.

The procedures below describe the details of the faculty review process to be completed by the end of fall semester prior to the academic year during which curriculum will be implemented.

Procedures for Submitting Changes to Existing Department-Specific Courses:

Departments are encouraged to update their courses based on assessment of student learning, changing best practices, and alignment with the mission, vision and values of Grace College. Generally, revisions to existing courses within a discipline will be managed within the department and through the school dean. Faculty who make changes to courses will consider the following checklist:

1. Make sure changes are documented in annual Program Learning Outcomes Reports or Program Reviews. =
2. If the course is taught online in any version, then consult the School of Professional Online Education (SPOE) to assure continuity of course offerings.
3. If changes may affect library collection development or student/faculty research needs, then notify the library.
4. If changes will affect other disciplines, such as a major, minor, or concentration from another department, then consult with the Academic Affairs Committee and the Registrar's Office, in collaboration with the affected discipline.
5. If the course revisions do not require a new course name and number, and points 1-4 are addressed, the change process is complete.
6. If the modifications are substantial enough to merit reclassifying the course with a new name and course number, then submit a New or Changed Course Request Form to the Registrar's office, and, if necessary, meet with them.

Procedures for Submitting Changes to Core Courses:

1. Notify the Director of General Education, who will inform the Core Committee.
2. Following a summary of the changes by the Director of General Education or the Core lead faculty, the Core Committee will determine whether notification is sufficient or whether more information is needed.
3. If more information is requested, then the following will occur, in order:
 - a. The Core lead faculty will collaborate with the Director of General Education on a short document that describes the old and new learning outcomes, the reasons motivating the changes such as assessment, best practices, program reviews of the Core, or program reviews of the department of the Core Lead Faculty.
 - b. The Core Committee will discuss whether the changes align with Core Program Learning



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Outcomes as well as assessment or program reviews, and then vote on the matter.

- c. The Director of General Education will notify the Chief Academic Officer, and then the full faculty.

Procedures for Submitting a Request for a New Course:

1. Department chairs proposing a new course will submit a New or Changed Course Request Form to the Registrar. The Registrar will also send a copy of this form to the chair of the Academic Affairs Committee.
2. New courses, particularly those that may affect the requirements of other majors, minors, or concentrations will be approved by faculty of affected Schools before the change is submitted to Academic Affairs (i.e., if a course services another discipline or is serviced by another discipline).
3. New courses with an online component or proposed as part of online degree programs will confer with the Dean of the School of Professional Online Education (SPOE).
4. Faculty will confer with the Director of Library Services for new courses as they may affect collection development and student/faculty research needs.

Procedures for Structural Changes to the Core

Structural Changes to the Core include any changes such as those that would affect checksheets or information for advising students.

1. The Director of General Education will provide written documentation of the proposed structural changes to the Core, explaining motivations such as assessment, program reviews, etc.
2. The Core Committee will vote on the changes. If the changes pass, then the Core Committee will notify the Chief Academic Officer and the Academic Affairs Committee Chair to determine, based on the scope of the changes, whether it is necessary to do one or all of the following:
 - a. Convene a meeting between the Director of General Education and the Registrar's Office
 - b. Notify each school, including SPOE, during a school meeting and request feedback
3. If there are no substantial modifications required, then the changes will be voted on by the full faculty as presented by the Director of General Education.

Procedures for Submitting Changes to Existing Programs (Majors, Minors and Certificates):

1. Departments may make changes they deem necessary to existing programs to ensure that they best meet the academic needs of students and include the most current and relevant content.
 - a. Generally, revisions to existing majors, minors, and concentrations within a discipline will be managed within the department and through the school dean. Changing the name of a course, modifying content, reduction in credit hours from 4- to 3-credits, or combining existing courses are examples of changes that departments may make without submitting the change to Academic Affairs or the Deans' Council, as long as any affected programs agree with the change. These changes will, however, be communicated to the Registrar's Office using the New or Changed Course Request Form with consequent changes made on Check Sheets and in the catalog the next academic year.



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- b. If the proposed change results in conflict with another department or requires the second department to add courses or faculty to compensate for the change, the proposal will be sent to the Academic Affairs Committee and Deans' Council with details about the points of conflict for resolution.
2. For majors, minors, concentrations and certificates earned from partner institutions that do not require adjustments to Grace programs or courses, but are designed to complement these programs, no full proposal is necessary. Instead, the abbreviated proposal is to be completed and submitted to Academic Affairs and the Deans' Council for consideration, followed by approval by the faculty.
3. For partner institution programs that are designed to be combined with Grace programs, and require adjustments to Grace programs (for instance, combining a Masters degree from another institution with a Grace degree), the abbreviated proposal is required. Contact the Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee and the Accreditation Liaison Officer for details. Faculty making changes that involve an online component more than basic Web-facilitation of a course will confer with the Dean of SPOE.
4. Changes to majors that are outside the guidelines provided by the institution (e.g., changes that increase the number of credit hours needed to complete the major to more than 120 credits, or modifications that mean a major may no longer be completed in 3 years) will be submitted to the Academic Affairs Committee and Deans' Council prior to communicating to appropriate offices (i.e. Admissions, Marketing, etc.).

Procedure for Requesting a Major, Minor, or Concentration to be Eliminated:

1. The request to eliminate an existing major, minor, or concentration may be initiated by the department or by administration based on enrollment, employment trends, changes in educational focus, financial, or other reasons.
 - a. If the request is initiated by the administration, the Chief Academic Officer will discuss the rationale with the school dean and, if applicable, the department chair. If the decision is final, the dean or chair will notify the appropriate campus offices, including the Registrar's Office and the Accreditation Liaison Officer, of the change so that at the earliest possible date, the Web site, marketing, catalog, admissions office, and other offices can be updated to accurately reflect the department's offerings.
 - b. If the request to eliminate a major, minor, or concentration is initiated by the department or school, the chair will submit the request and rationale to the Academic Affairs Committee for evaluation against the offerings and curricular needs of other departments. The committee's recommendation is sent to the Deans' Council for final approval. If the request is approved, the dean will notify the appropriate campus offices of the change so that at the earliest possible date, the Web site, catalog, admissions office, and other offices so publications can be updated to accurately reflect the department's offerings.
2. Concurrently, the Accreditation Liaison Officer will be contacted to discuss the program that will be canceled or suspended in order to determine whether prior HLC approval or notification is required. If prior approval is required, submit a provisional plan for teaching out students in the program. See HLC's Teach-Out Procedure for details about this process and instructions for creating and submitting a provisional plan.



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Procedures for Submitting Proposals for a New Program:

1. New academic programs are defined as including majors, minors, concentrations, specializations and certificates. These may be initiated by the department, school, or by administration. In all situations, the Academic Affairs Committee and the Accreditation Liaison Officer will be contacted as soon as possible in the process to provide guidance and oversight in the development of the program. Prior HLC approval or notification is required for all new degree programs. Be aware that all new programs must be fully approved by the end of the Fall semester for launch the next academic year (see point 7 for details).
2. The proposal of a new program that is already closely aligned with an existing major, minor, or concentration, will not require new courses, and will not require new faculty may not need a full proposal. The department making the proposal will consult with the Academic Affairs Committee chair and Accreditation Liaison Officer, however, before proceeding.
 - a. If the new program does not represent a substantial expansion requiring additional resources (it is a new concentration in an existing major or a new minor or certificate, that doesn't require new resources or additional faculty), an abbreviated proposal is to be submitted to the Academic Affairs Committee (see Abbreviated Proposal Guidelines). The committee will provide feedback and notify the Deans' Council and faculty of the new program; no approval votes for such programs are required. Submission is primarily to assure proper information dissemination. The abbreviated proposal must be presented to all groups by the end of the Fall semester (see point 7 for rationale).
3. If it is determined that a full proposal is required, the department desiring to begin a new degree program will work with the faculty in their department and school to develop the concept of the program. Once approved by the department and school, a full proposal will be submitted to the Academic Affairs Committee and Deans' Council. The format of this proposal is described below (see Full Proposal Guidelines for New Programs).
4. The Academic Affairs Committee typically reviews the proposal with the chair present at the committee meeting. The committee may choose to request additional information before making its final recommendations.
5. The Academic Affairs Committee brings its final recommendations to the Chief Academic Officer and Deans' Council for considerations related to budget and resources. Following approval by the Chief Academic Officer and Dean's Council the proposal will be brought before the entire faculty for discussion and approval. The proposal can go to the faculty without a favorable recommendation from the Academic Affairs Committee.
6. Upon receiving final approval from Faculty, Deans, and regional and specialized accreditation (e.g. Higher Learning Commission), the department chair works with the dean and others to develop a plan for recruitment, promotion of the program, and implementation.
7. Proposals must be approved by the Faculty and the Deans' Council by the end of Fall semester prior to the academic year curriculum will be implemented. The process of implementing new programs requires the actions of many departments, including the Registrar, Admissions, and Marketing, which will occur during the Spring term. This also allows time to include new programs in the annual Spring update processes for the academic catalog, course offerings, and checksheets among others.



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ABBREVIATED PROPOSAL GUIDELINES FOR NEW PROGRAMS

The abbreviated proposal is to include all of the following elements:

1. A description of the new program including program learning outcomes, explaining how it is different than existing programs
2. Rationale for the new program formation: will this primarily benefit recruitment efforts, marketability of graduates, or departmental organization?
3. A statement verifying that the Accreditation Liaison Office has been consulted and the CIP code is included, and no HLC proposal is required for the new program.
4. The checksheet(s) for the new program(s)
5. A description and course learning outcomes of any new courses required
6. If new courses are required, a description of how these will be taught with existing faculty (if new faculty are required, then a full proposal needs to be completed).
7. Based on information provided, the Academic Affairs Committee, the Deans' Council, or the Accreditation Liaison Officer may decide that a full proposal is required.



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FULL PROPOSAL GUIDELINES FOR NEW PROGRAMS:

The proposal from the department is an explanation about what the new or revised program is and will do (e.g., the program’s goals and outcomes, activities, resources), including how resources and activities link to results. Guiding questions are supplied to help construct the proposal, but are not meant to be exhaustive. The assumptions and beliefs that influenced the development of each component will be explicitly stated as a part of the explanation, including relevant biblical principles, institutional values, and the norms and values of the discipline or profession connected to the program. Completion of the proposal is designed to involve cooperation with other offices on campus (Accreditation Liaison Officer, admissions, finance, etc.). Please use the following format for the proposal:

TITLE OF PROGRAM AND NATURE (MAJOR, MINOR OR CERTIFICATE):

PROJECTED START DATE:

CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRAM:

1. Identify the basic characteristics of the proposed educational program as indicated below:
 - a. The full name of the proposed program, the specific degree (if applicable) or the instructional level (if not a degree program), and the six-digit 2020 CIP code XX.XXXX of the program (CIP codes, program name, and additional description [optional])
 - b. Total credit hours for completion of the program
 - c. Normal or typical length of time for students to complete the program
 - d. Proposed initial date for implementation of the program
 - e. Primary target audience for the program (e.g., full-time, part-time, traditional college age, working adults, transfer students, military personnel, or particular ethnic group)
 - f. Whether the program will be part of contractual arrangement (see HLC’s website for a [definition of contractual arrangements](#))
 - Yes
 - No
 - Important:** If yes, complete the Contractual Arrangement Screening Form for each planned involvement to determine whether additional HLC approval is required.
 - **If Contractual approval is required:** Complete the full contractual application and submit it in conjunction with this application.
 - **If approval is not required:** Attach the confirmation email from HLC to this application.
 - g. Whether the program will be offered as distance education or correspondence education (see HLC’s website for [definitions of distance and correspondence education](#))
 - Yes
 - No

Important: If yes, check the institution’s distance delivery stipulation in its [Institutional Status and Requirements Report](#). If this program does not fit within the institution’s current stipulation, submit a distance delivery application in conjunction with this application.



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2. Identify if the institution is requesting new stipulations for the proposed program and provide a rationale for this request. Note: A change in stipulation requires an on-site visit by HLC peer reviewers. If the institution is requesting a new stipulation, please complete Section 1, Question 7.

INSTITUTION'S HISTORY WITH PROGRAMS

3. Does the institution currently offer a program at the same instructional level and with the same 4-digit 2020 CIP code (XX.XX) as the proposed program? If so, identify the program currently offered and whether it is a degree program. Will the proposed program replace the program currently offered?
4. Does the institution currently offer two or more programs at the same instructional level with the same 2-digit 2020 CIP code (XX.) as the proposed program? If so, identify the two such programs with the highest numbers of graduates during the past year, along with their numbers of graduates.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

5. What impact might the proposed program have on challenges identified as part of or subsequent to the last HLC review and the institution's strategy for addressing these challenges?
6. Describe the planning process for determining the need for this new program, including the role of faculty in the planning and approval process.
7. What are the physical facilities and equipment needed to support the program? Indicate the impact that the proposed change will have on the physical resources and laboratories that currently accommodate existing programs and services, or identify new laboratory and preceptor needs.
8. What is the evidence that a market for the new program(s) exists? How has estimated program demand been factored into realistic enrollment projections? How has this evidence been used in planning and budgeting processes to develop a quality program that can be sustained?
9. If the program request is approved, what future growth do you anticipate (e.g., in the next six months, three years) and how do you plan to manage this growth?
10. How does the proposed program compare with offerings at comparison schools, including Crossroads League schools?
11. How does this program fit into the current and expected financial picture of the institution? In particular, will the program be financially self-sufficient within three years? If not, when do you expect the program to be financially self-sufficient and how do you expect the program to operate until then? Submit a three-year budget projection for the proposed program with the application.
12. What controls are in place to ensure that the information presented to all constituencies in advertising, brochures, and other communications will be accurate?

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

13. Please submit a checklist that lists all the courses that comprise the program and identify if the program will include any new courses. Include course descriptions and number of credit hours for each new course. Be aware that undergraduate majors must include at least 39 credits, and required prerequisites not listed will not significantly expand the required credits for the major.
14. If the program is to be completed in 3 years, provide an example of course sequencing of all major (and if applicable, any required minor) courses demonstrating that current and projected course schedules will allow completion in 3 years. Including existing courses as well as projected sequencing of new courses. If it won't be possible to complete the degree in 3 years, provide a statement explaining the rationale behind this.



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15. If there are any additional admissions or retention policies for this program (special standing or academic achievement required to be admitted to the program, maintenance of GPA above the institutional expectations, etc.), describe these and provide a rationale for the policy.

INSTITUTIONAL STAFFING, FACULTY, AND STUDENT SUPPORT

16. How many and what types of faculty (full-time or part-time) will be employed in the program? Why is the number and type of faculty sufficient to support the program? How many, if any, new faculty will be hired for the program?
17. What is the evidence that a market for the new program(s) exists? How has estimated program demand been factored into realistic enrollment projections? How has this evidence been used in planning and budgeting processes to develop a quality program that can be sustained?
18. For graduate programs, document scholarship and research capability of each faculty member; for doctoral programs, document faculty experience in directing student research.
19. Provide a brief attachment that inventories each faculty member currently employed to teach in the program, including names, a description of each faculty member's academic qualifications, their prior instructional responsibility and other experiences relevant to the courses they will teach in the program, each faculty member's course load in the new program, and the course work each currently teaches at the institution. If faculty have yet to be hired to teach within the program, a general position description including expected qualifications will be included, specifying whether the faculty to be hired will be full or part time.
20. What library and information resources—general as well as specific to the program(s)—and staffing and services are in place to support the initiative? If the proposed new program is at the graduate level, document discipline-specific refereed journals and primary source materials.

EVALUATION

21. Describe the process for monitoring, evaluating and improving the overall effectiveness and quality of the program, and articulate program-level learning outcomes.
22. Describe the process for assessing and improving student learning, including student persistence and completion, in the new program.

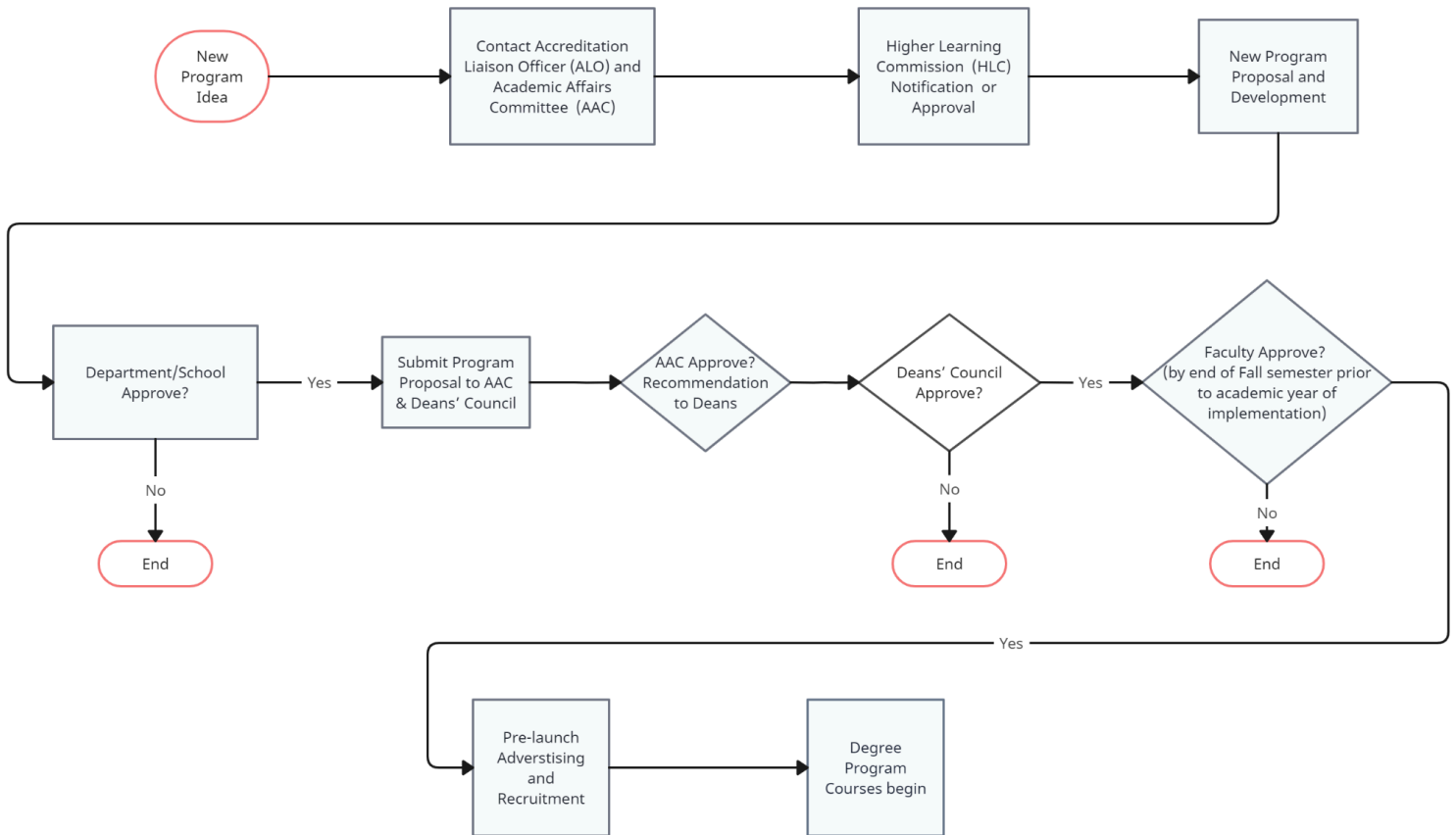
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New Degree Programs Process Map





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Revision Process and History

All revisions to the policy must be approved by the Chief Academic Officer

Date	Description of Revision
08/30/10	First Draft of policy
01/12/11	General updates and revisions
09/12/12	General updates and revisions
05/06/13	General updates and revisions
05/03/21	Updated policy to be in alignment with Grace practices and HLC substantive change application
02/23/24	Updated policy to include concentrations; updated the proposal guidelines; added an abbreviated proposal; added a flowchart; changed responsible department to Academic Affairs