



Tab 12

Plan for Comprehensive Review of Academic Program Proposals

Coordinating Board for Higher Education
June 7, 2018

BACKGROUND

The Higher Education System Review Task Force in its report to the Coordinating Board recommended the process for reviewing and approving proposals for new academic programs be updated to allow institutions to meet state workforce needs. MDHE staff and institutional representatives developed a three-tiered approach to new academic program review, which included a comprehensive review path for institutions to propose programs outside their mission. In anticipation of pending legislation removing certain statutory restrictions on degrees offered at public institutions of higher education being enacted, MDHE staff has developed guidelines for submitting proposals under the comprehensive review umbrella. These guidelines discussed below have been excerpted from 6 CSR 10-4.010, which the Coordinating Board approved in December 2016 and is now in the final stages of the rulemaking process.

CURRENT STATUS

The 2018-2019 review cycle commences on July 1, 2018, and institutions must submit preliminary proposals for new academic programs requiring comprehensive review by that date. As this is year two of the revised program review process, the CBHE will consider as many as five proposals, with no more than three proposals from either public universities or public two-year institutions.

Preliminary Proposals

In order to avoid unnecessary expenses associated with a full comprehensive review, institutions will submit by July 1, 2018, a preliminary proposal for consideration. The preliminary proposal is a statement of the institution's intent and provides MDHE staff an opportunity to assess which programs should be considered for a full comprehensive review. The CBHE, in its sole discretion and in consultation with MDHE staff, will determine by its September meeting which of the preliminary proposals to evaluate through a full comprehensive review. Proposals selected for a full comprehensive review will submit the additional elements to submit a complete proposal for comprehensive review. The Coordinating Board will take action on these proposals in March 2019.

Timeline for Conducting Comprehensive Reviews

May-June	MDHE strongly encourages institutions to notify the Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs prior to submitting a preliminary proposal for comprehensive review to assess informally the appropriateness of the institution's request and its capacity to comply with the requirements and expectations of the comprehensive review.
July 1	Preliminary proposals for new academic programs requiring comprehensive review due to the MDHE.
July-September	MDHE staff will determine which five proposals of those submitted received will be evaluated fully through the comprehensive review process.
September-February	MDHE staff will work with each institution with a proposal undergoing comprehensive review to ensure the proposal is complete and the CBHE has all the information and data necessary to approve or disapprove the proposed program.
March	The Coordinating Board for Higher Education will take action on the proposals considered through comprehensive review.

Elements of a Complete Proposal for Comprehensive Review

Each institution seeking approval for a program requiring comprehensive review will submit a complete proposal for the Coordinating Board's approval. A complete proposal will be submitted and reviewed over two phases, a preliminary and final phase.

Phase I

An institution seeking approval for an academic program requiring a comprehensive review will first submit a preliminary proposal to MDHE staff by July 1, 2018. The MDHE will provide forms for this initial step. The preliminary proposal will include the following:

- A. Evidence that the proposing institution has explored the feasibility of collaboration with other institutions whose mission or service region encompasses the proposed program. At a minimum, the proposing institution must include letters from the chief academic officers of both the proposing institution and other institutions involved in exploring the feasibility of collaboration attesting to the nature of the discussions and explaining why collaboration in this instance is not feasible.
- B. The proposal should identify and explain in detail which of the [Blueprint for Higher Education](#) goals the new program will advance.
- C. The proposal must include evidence that the institution has the capacity to launch the program in a high-quality manner. This should include:
 1. An assessment of the offering institution's capacity to offer the new program in terms of general, academic, and student service support, including faculty resources that are appropriate for the program being proposed (e.g. faculty credentials, use of adjunct faculty, and faculty teaching workloads);
 2. A comprehensive cost/revenue analysis summarizing the actual costs for the program and information about how the institution intends to fund and sustain the program;
 3. Evidence indicating there is sufficient student interest and capacity to support the program, and, where applicable, sufficient capacity for students to participate in clinical or other external learning requirements, including library resources, physical facilities and instruction equipment; and
 4. Where applicable, a description of accreditation requirements for the new program and the institution's plans for seeking accreditation.

Phase II

If the proposal is accepted for further evaluation, the institution will be asked to prepare materials for a complete proposal.

- A. The proposing institution will consult with MDHE staff to identify an external review conducted by a team that includes faculty experts in the discipline of the program to be offered and administrators from institutions already offering programs in the discipline and at the degree level proposed. If appropriate, the external review team may include employer or industry experts. The exact size of the external review team may vary depending on the nature of the proposed program but generally will consist of five to nine individuals. The proposing institution will bear all costs associated with the external review.

B. The proposal must provide clear and compelling evidence that the proposed program is needed.

This will include:

1. An explanation with supporting documentation demonstrating that the program does not unnecessarily duplicate other programs in the applicable geographic area, as described in subsection (10)(C) of the administrative rule;
2. In consultation with MDHE staff and with consideration of input offered by the external review team described above, the proposing institution will present a rigorous analysis demonstrating a strong and compelling workforce need for the program, which might include data from a credible source, an analysis of changing program requirements, the current and future workforce and other needs of the state, and letters of support from local or regional businesses indicating a genuine need for the program;
3. The institution will provide a clear plan to meet the articulated workforce need, including:
 - a. Aligning curriculum with specific knowledge and competencies needed to work in the field(s) or occupation(s) described in the workforce need analysis in part (II) of this subparagraph;
 - b. Providing students with external learning experiences to increase the probability that they will remain in the applicable geographic area after graduation; and
 - c. A plan for assessing the extent to which the new program meets that need when implemented.

The Coordinating Board will apply the same comprehensive review criteria and standards used to approve baccalaureate degree programs at four-year public institutions in the comprehensive review process when considering proposals from two-year institutions to offer baccalaureate degrees.

RECOMMENDATION

This is an information item only.