FACULTY HANDBOOK FOR THE PREPARATION OF NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Office of Academic Affairs
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I. BASIC GUIDELINES FOR NEW PROGRAM APPROVALS
I. BASIC GUIDELINES FOR NEW PROGRAM APPROVALS

A. Introduction

The academic programs offered by the City University of New York represent a broad and diverse spectrum of educational opportunities provided to tens of thousands of students at every degree level. Currently, the University offers nearly 2,000 degree-granting programs. As of this writing, 55 programs are offered at the doctoral level and 679 at the master’s level. There are 675 baccalaureate programs and 236 associate degree programs. In addition, there are more than 277 certificate programs from the pre-associate to the post-graduate levels. The University’s vast curricular offerings are a tribute to the immeasurable talents of its faculty.

The University takes justifiable pride in its established academic programs, but it cannot afford complacency. The ongoing development of new academic programs is vital to the University, its students and the communities it serves. Academic programs shape the intellectual efforts of both faculty and students, and they reflect each college’s mission and goals.

As mandated by the Board Bylaws, the development of new academic programs is the prerogative of the faculty on each campus. Faculty expertise provides the best guarantee that the education process will be dynamic and that the colleges will grow and change to meet society’s challenges and students’ needs.

While the faculty has the responsibility for initiating new academic programs and revisions to existing programs, the college administration, led by the President and the Chief Academic Officer, also plays a key role in academic program development. The college administration is responsible for creating an environment that provides for ongoing review, constructive change, and appropriate additions to the college curriculum. It is through this collaboration that the college’s unique mission and goals are fulfilled.

The University’s process of program approval is designed to maintain the highest standards of excellence. The following guidelines are meant to serve as a concise reference for new program planning, development, and approval. They are intended to promote the efficient processing of proposals from the colleges to the University’s central administration and Board of Trustees, through final approval by the New York State Board of Regents.

Before any new program can be offered at the University it must undergo qualitative reviews and receive approval from appropriate governing bodies at three levels:

- the College;
- the Board of Trustees (BOT); and
- the New York State Education Department (SED).
As a result, the entire process of program approval is often a lengthy one; up to two years may elapse between the time a program is first proposed by a college’s faculty and its registration by SED. The Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) is committed to facilitating this process and moving each proposed program toward its final goal as quickly as possible. To that end, this document sets forth information on general evaluation criteria; the letter of intent (content and procedure); and the final proposal (content and procedure).

B. General Evaluation Criteria

The criteria used to evaluate a program proposal will vary depending upon the program itself and are also determined by the role of each governing body reviewing the proposal. Nevertheless, certain criteria should apply to the review of all academic programs.

By the time a program is recommended for approval by OAA to the Board Committee on Academic Policy, Program, and Research (CAPPR), it will have been evaluated according to the following standards:

- Academic quality;
- Justification of needs (to include societal needs in terms of regional, state and national needs; career opportunities for graduates; and student interest);
- Relationship to other programs at CUNY (e.g. possible duplication);
- Relationship to other campus programs and to college and University missions;
- Resources available to implement the program;
- Conformity with the standards of accrediting agencies (necessary for the professions); and
- Conformity with the regulations of the SED.

C. The Letter Of Intent

The primary purpose of the Letter of Intent (LOI) is to notify the University community of the College’s plan to offer the proposed program. Distribution of the LOI among the University’s constituent colleges provides opportunity for comment on the proposed program’s academic and financial feasibility. The colleges are encouraged to offer advice for improving and ensuring the proposed program’s academic rigor, suggestions for collaborative arrangements, or other information that might be useful.

Generally, the LOI should be between 10 and 15 pages and should encapsulate the final proposal. Indeed, the proposed program should be relatively advanced in the planning process before the LOI is submitted to OAA.
Contents of the Letter of Intent

The Letter of Intent must be informative, clear, and concise. Detailed information should be reserved for the later proposal. Here, basic information is essential.

The LOI’s title page should include:

- the college name;
- the name of the department(s) sponsoring the program;
- the official name of the program;
- the degree or certificate to be awarded;
- the anticipated date for implementation of the program; and
- the date of College governance approval (please include as well the name of the appropriate governance body or bodies).

The narrative should follow a simple outline:

1) Purpose and Goals: Describe the program’s purpose in a succinct statement. Remember that the audience for the LOI may not possess expertise in the particular field of study. Include an explicit statement of how the program meets students’ educational goals and career objectives. This section should also briefly present the rationale for the program. Issues that might be addressed include: national or local educational trends; faculty interest and commitment; the program’s relation to existing departmental or college offerings; or other compelling factors.

2) Need and Justification: Relevant needs include those of the students, the college, the university, the community, the economy, and the nation. Not every need will pertain to all Letters of Intent. For example, an LOI for a program that is vocationally or professionally oriented should provide an overview of post-completion employment opportunities (with job titles). For liberal arts programs, this section should focus on student needs. The proposed program’s relationship to the mission of the College should be described. A brief discussion of its place in the College’s planning process might also be included. In this context, it is also appropriate to cite any planning documents in which the program is mentioned.

3) Student Interest/Enrollment: Explain the evidence for student interest in the program and the sources for potential enrollments. Provide a numerical estimate of enrollments anticipated for each of the first five years of the program’s existence. Present projected enrollment in a table showing how many students will attend full-time and how many part-time. The anticipated attrition rate should also be indicated, along with a discussion as to how it was determined. Discuss the factors that produced the estimates including student interest, employment trends and needs, and/or enrollment(s) in similar programs at the College or at other campuses within the University.
Similar programs already in place at other campuses of the University should be identified. If duplication issues exist, provide an explanation for going forward despite such duplication. A college administration that is proposing a duplicate program is advised to begin discussions early with the college(s) already offering the other program(s).

Indicate clearly special admission requirements. Describe any steps the College intends to take to prepare students to qualify for admission. Specific groups such as local union members or specially prepared students from “feeder” schools should be identified.

4) **Curriculum:** Present and discuss a rationale for the curriculum. Include the complete curricular design, listing all course titles with credit requirements and indicating new courses (which must be accompanied by descriptions). Identify any relevant accrediting or licensure requirements. Indicate any non-course requirements, such as a thesis or comprehensive exam.

Articulation prospects with other programs in the University or with private colleges should be described. If articulation agreements are necessary for the program’s implementation, discussions with other colleges should take place before the LOI is submitted, and should be mentioned within that document. With the exception of AAS degree programs, articulation agreements are required for all undergraduate programs.

5) **Faculty:** Describe current full-time faculty available to teach in the program. Specify the number of new full-time faculty that will be needed to implement the program and also the anticipated number of adjunct faculty that may be required. Be sure to account for how the department will staff its existing offerings when the program is instituted. Proposals for new programs that draw full-time faculty away from established programs are not viewed favorably.

6) **Cost Assessment:** While all new programs incur expenditures, it is expected that they will also generate revenue. A new program’s financial impact on its college is often gauged by comparing the anticipated costs with the anticipated revenue. Each LOI should include a table showing the anticipated cumulative costs and anticipated revenues for the new program during the program’s first five years. Provide a narrative to accompany this table that indicates the source of funding to pay for the costs, including the reallocation of funds. Explain how the college will ensure that these funds remain available for at least the first five years of the program’s existence.
**Procedure**

Once the LOI has been approved by the appropriate College governance body, the following steps must be taken:

1) Forty copies of the document must be submitted with a cover letter signed by the President of the College, addressed to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and University Provost (EVCP), with a copy to the University Director of Program Review, Articulation and Transfer.

2) The LOI will be acknowledged and circulated to the Presidents of the CUNY colleges with a request for written comments to be returned to the OAA within 30 days (except during summer session or intersession). The Presidents should also send copies of their comments directly to the President who submitted the LOI.

3) Graduate program development includes a review by the Graduate Advisory Council (GAC). Chaired by the President of the Graduate School and University Center, the GAC is comprised of the deans of graduate studies or other appropriate administrators from the University’s colleges that offer graduate-level programs. The Council’s purpose is advisory only; it has no authority to approve or disapprove program proposals. (Please note that Letters of Intent for doctoral programs require a further level of review at this stage. They are presented to CAPPR and then to the full Board for approval.)

4) The Director of Program Review, Articulation and Transfer and other appropriate OAA staff will review all comments from the colleges and consult with the EVCP concerning the proposed program. In certain circumstances an outside review may be solicited.

5) When all reviews are completed, the EVCP will send a formal response to the President either authorizing the College to proceed with the development of the program proposal or requesting further information and discussion.

6) In order to facilitate the development of the proposal, the Provost and appropriate faculty may be invited to meet with members of the OAA staff. Full proposals must be received within two years from the date of the letter authorizing the college to proceed with the development of the proposal. After two years, the EVCP may request that a new LOI be circulated if the College wishes to proceed with the program.
D. The Proposal

Approval of the LOI authorizes the college to proceed with the development of a comprehensive proposal. As noted above, the College has two years following the approval of the LOI in which to develop the proposal and may, at any point during this period, consult with OAA staff. Experience suggests that almost all proposals require some discussion with OAA before submission and some revision before they are ready for presentation to the Board of Trustees. Generally, the proposal addresses the same issues as those outlined in the LOI, but in greater detail and with documentation. **The final proposal should not exceed 25 pages, excluding appendices.** A checklist reviewing the proposal components can be found in Section IV of this Handbook.

The audience for the proposal includes: the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and University Provost; the Director of Program Review, Articulation and Transfer; staff members of the Office of Academic Affairs; staff members of the University Budget Office; the members of the Board Committee on Academic Policy, Program and Research; and ultimately, staff at the New York State Education Department. Thus, the document should provide a comprehensive justification for implementing a new academic program at the University and must delineate a plan that is carefully focused and well-defined in terms of the College’s and the University’s needs and goals.

**Contents of the Final Proposal**

The proposal’s **title page** must include:

- the college name;
- the name of the department(s) sponsoring the program;
- the official name of the program;
- the degree or certificate to be awarded;
- the anticipated date for implementation of the program;
- the date of College governance approval (please include as well the name of the appropriate governance body or bodies);
- the signature of the Chief Academic Officer, which certifies the date of College governance approval; and
- the name, title, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address for the proposal’s chief contact person.

Please consult Section V of this Handbook for an OAA template of a sample title page.

The proposal’s second page should comprise the **table of contents**, indicating the narrative portion of the proposal as well as the appendices. All pages must be sequentially numbered throughout. The program proposal is going to be reviewed by many parties. It should be presented in a way that facilitates finding key elements. Please consult Section V of this Handbook for an OAA template of a sample table of contents, including a model for presenting documentation in appendices.
An abstract of the proposal (approximately 250 words) must also be included, and will inform the resolution presented to the Board for approval.

Main components of the narrative should follow this outline:

1) **Purpose and Goals**: Begin this section with a clear statement of the program’s purpose. Include an explicit statement of how the program meets students’ educational goals and career objectives. Also describe national or local educational trends, and discuss the faculty’s expertise and commitment. Address the effect the establishment of the proposed program will have on the college; the relationship of the program to the mission of the college (specifically, the program’s relationship to the college’s priorities); and the extent to which the proposed program complements existing programs at the college. The potential quality of the proposed program in relation to comparable programs within and outside CUNY should be discussed as well.

2) **Need and Justification**: In the first part of this section, the proposal should consider the needs of the students, the college, and the community. Will the program, for example, contribute to specific State and societal needs? For proposals with professional or vocational orientation, please discuss employment opportunities and include specific job titles with salary ranges. Any relevant local demand for individuals possessing the knowledge, skills, and credentials conferred by the program may also be referenced. The more specific the information that documents the need and employment prospects for graduates of the proposed program, the more credible the proposal will be. Brief excerpts from articles and letters may be cited. Letters of support from prospective employers or experts may be included in an appendix. The second part of this section should reference similar programs that already exist at CUNY and at other local colleges. Any issues of overlap and duplication must be addressed straightforwardly. Duplication concerns from fellow CUNY colleges should be resolved before the final proposal is presented.

3) **Student Interest/Enrollment**: What is the present and projected student demand? A numerical table projecting enrollments, both full and part-time, for the first five years of the program’s existence must be included. State clearly the underlying assumptions about sources of potential students that led to these projections. Indicate the anticipated rate of attrition and state the underlying assumptions for this conclusion. Sources for projected students should be described in specific terms, with special attention to programs on the campus and at nearby units of CUNY that might send students to the program. Standards required of students seeking admission to the program must be spelled out in detail. Also include: the selection process for admitting students; arrangements for advising and counseling students; and any special support services that will encourage timely completion of the program.

4) **Curriculum**: Present this section in two parts, beginning with an overview of the curriculum and statement of the intellectual rationale for the proposed curricular design. All required and elective courses (including course prerequisites) must be listed by course
number and title, including credit allocations along with the total number of credits required for the program (a copy of the required SED form provided in Section V of this Handbook must be used here). Clearly state all non-course requirements for completion of the program, such as a thesis or comprehensive exam. In addition, provide a sample semester-by-semester sequence of a typical program (a copy of the required SED form provided in Section V of this Handbook must be used here). Complete course descriptions for all courses required in the major and complete course syllabi for all new courses must be included as noted in the OAA template for the Table of Contents.

The second part of this section must address the articulation needs of the proposed program (please consult Section II of this Handbook for guidelines on preparing CUNY articulation agreements). The discussions begun before the drafting of the Letter of Intent should have resulted in one or more articulation agreements, at least one of which should be with another CUNY college. Describe these articulation agreements in this section. **Copies of completed and signed articulation agreements must be included in an appendix.**

5) **Cost Assessment:** Because a comprehensive assessment is needed to delineate all anticipated costs, it is suggested that these be addressed in separate categories as follows:

a) **FACULTY:** Briefly summarize the qualifications of available full-time faculty who will teach the required courses for the proposed program and indicate which courses can be taught by each faculty member. Complete the required SED form, a copy of which is included in this Handbook. Specify the number of new full-time faculty that will be needed to offer the program. In addition, indicate whether adjuncts are needed to teach the proposed program and justify the use of adjuncts rather than full-time faculty. Please note that reliance on adjuncts for staffing new programs is strongly discouraged. It is also important to recognize that the use of existing full-time faculty to teach in the new program will affect existing programs. Explain how full-time faculty who will teach in the new program will be replaced in existing programs. Are there any replacement costs for full-time faculty or any release time needs, such as for a Program Director? Indicate any other support staff such as College Laboratory Technicians, College Assistants, etc. needed to offer the proposed program and justify the need for hiring such persons. Brief resumes (**not to exceed two pages**) of curricula vitae of faculty who will teach in the program must be included and referenced as an appendix as indicated in the Sample Table of Contents.
b) **Facilities and Equipment:** Describe any special space needs for the program, including the availability of computer centers or laboratories. If space will have to be added, leased, or renovated, estimate the costs of providing and maintaining such space and indicate the source of funding. Any special equipment needed to offer the program must be listed with estimated costs and funding sources.

c) **Library and Instructional Materials:** It will be necessary to consult with the College’s Chief Librarian to accurately prepare this segment of the proposal. Describe the library resources presently available to support the proposed program and then discuss any additional library needs that the program will create. Estimate the total annual costs for upgrading library support to offer the program. Address any needs for other instructional materials such as computer software and audio-visual materials.

d) **Budget Tables:** Three budget tables outlining the proposed program expenditures, revenues and capital expenditures must be included. The required SED forms for these should be referenced in the proposal’s Appendices F, G, and H. Please note that “Revenues” cannot be left as “zero” or “not applicable.” Revenues are calculated on the basis of student enrollment, taking into account tuition and state allocation.

6) **Evaluation:**

a) **Internal Evaluation and Outcomes:** Explain how the quality of the proposed program will be monitored during the first five years of the program’s existence. Include a discussion of the desired outcomes for students and for the program. Indicate the measures that will be used to assess these outcomes. State the criteria that will be examined, such as student achievement, placement of graduates, and faculty performance. Specify which departmental and college officials will participate in the process.

b) **External Evaluation:** **This section is required of all graduate program proposals.** The SED mandates that all new master’s degree programs be evaluated by one expert in the subject area who is from a college or university outside the New York metropolitan area. New doctoral programs need two evaluations from outside experts in the field. **CUNY, however, requires two outside evaluations for both new master’s and new doctoral programs.** In addition, all new graduate programs except programs in Education are reviewed by the GAC. In special circumstances, the EVCP may solicit an outside evaluation for an undergraduate program.

The evaluators’ names, positions, and institutional affiliations should be identified in this section. The full reports of the evaluators, along with their curricula vitae, must be attached in an appendix.
Procedure

1) Like the LOI, the proposal must be approved by appropriate college governance bodies. Four copies of the proposal, with a cover letter from the college President or Provost, should then be forwarded to the EVCP, with a copy to the Director of Program Review, Articulation and Transfer. Receipt of the proposal will be acknowledged promptly.

2) The proposal will be reviewed by appropriate staff in the OAA. Usually, this review is completed within 30 business days, and any issues or concerns that require clarification are communicated to the college in an expeditious manner.

3) After any necessary revisions have been completed, the OAA staff returns the final proposal to the EVCP with a recommendation that it be presented to CAPPR for approval.

   Please Note:
   Colleges should not expect new draft proposals submitted shortly before the CAPPR deadline to be included on the agenda for the next meeting. In most cases, this is unrealistic. Colleges should allow sufficient time for the OAA to review the proposal carefully and for the colleges to implement any necessary revisions. The OAA will not recommend to the EVCP any proposals deemed incomplete or unfinished. Should there be special reasons for concern about a proposal being ready in time for a particular CAPPR meeting the proposing college should consult with the OAA staff as early as possible in the process.

4) The EVCP will make the final decision as to whether to recommend the proposal to CAPPR. The college will be notified in writing when the proposal is placed on the CAPPR agenda. At that time the college will be responsible for providing 55 hard copies of the final version (double-sided and stapled but not bound) along with a diskette or CD with the electronic version. OAA staff will notify the college when to send these copies.

5) The President and/or Chief Academic Officer will be expected to attend the CAPPR meeting during which the EVCP presents the proposal and should be prepared to answer any questions that may arise. Faculty involved with the proposal may accompany the President/Provost and may also answer questions.

6) If CAPPR approves the proposal, a resolution incorporating that approval is placed on the calendar for the next Board of Trustees meeting. Once the Board has approved the program, the EVCP sends a copy of the proposal with a letter requesting registration of the program to the State Education Department.
7) The Regents of the State of New York have the legal responsibility to direct and coordinate the development of the post-secondary education system of the State. The SED is the administrative agent of the Regents and is responsible for educational planning and program registration in compliance with established State statutes, Regents’ Rules, and the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. The SED review may take from three months to six months or more, although in many cases this process takes less time. During its review the SED may request further information and, if necessary, the College will be notified accordingly.

8) Section 52.1 of the Commissioner’s Regulations, issued under the authority of section 207 of the Education Law, requires that every curriculum in institutions of post-secondary education be registered. **New programs may not be advertised nor enroll students until the College has received notification of registration from the State Education Department.** At registration the SED will assign each new program a unique five-digit NYSED program code and add the program to the State Inventory of Registered Degree Programs. SED will also assign the official Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS) code. A HEGIS code refers to a program’s academic area and does not uniquely identify a program. The proposing college may suggest a proper HEGIS code but final assigning authority rests with SED.
II. PREPARATION OF ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS
II. THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
PREPARATION OF ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

A. Introduction

Formal articulation agreements are common practice among colleges and universities in the United States. They facilitate the smooth passage of students from one college to another by: (1) detailing the course of study to be followed in order to transfer into a specific program; (2) ensuring the maximum number of credits upon transfer; and (3) spelling out the conditions under which transfer may take place. In addition, formal articulation assists faculty and administrators in establishing and maintaining communication, as well as sustaining an ongoing working relationship on behalf of the many students who transfer from one college to another each year.

The Board of Trustees’ 1993 Policy on Academic Program Planning contains two resolutions that emphasize the importance of articulation. The first reaffirms the importance of inter-college collaboration in offering academic programs and calls upon the colleges to pursue college-to-college articulation agreements. The second reaffirms the importance of strong and effective University-wide policies and procedures regarding articulation in order to ensure the maximum transfer of credits.

Though the Office of Academic Affairs has for many years required new programs to articulate with other CUNY institutions, it has never provided guidance about the content or the format of articulation agreements. This has resulted in agreements with varying degrees of specificity. Generally, the more specific the agreement, the more useful it is for both the students and the institution.

A model format for faculty consideration is provided in Section V of this Handbook. The list of elements and the model format were derived from common elements in existing CUNY articulation agreements. They are not intended to limit the scope of the agreements, but rather to assist in their preparation.

Articulation agreements should conform to the relevant Board policies on transfer of credit. These are: 1973 Policy on A.A.S. Transfer; 1985 Policy on the Transfer of Liberal Arts and Science Courses (also administrative Guidelines for the 1985 Policy); 1993 on Academic Program Planning; and the 1995 Policy on Degree Credit Limitation.
B. New Program Articulation: Different Degree Programs

Ideally, institutions strive to facilitate a seamless transfer from one program to another. Some programs are, however, more difficult to articulate than others. For example, programs that have to meet professional accreditation requirements may have specific degree requirements that make a smooth transfer difficult or impossible.

The guidelines below for the submission of articulation agreements with new program proposals reflect these considerations, within the framework of Board policies:

**Undergraduate Liberal Arts and Science Programs (A.A., A.S., B.A., and B.S.):** At least one CUNY articulation agreement must be included in each new program proposal. Additional CUNY agreements are encouraged.

**Undergraduate Professional Programs:** At least one CUNY articulation agreement must be included in new program proposals. Professional programs that must meet certification or accreditation requirements may not be able to articulate seamlessly. These programs should, however, negotiate “best fit” agreements that ensure a maximum number of transfer credits toward the degree.

**Occupational and Career-Specific A.A.S. Programs:** At least one CUNY articulation agreement must be included in A.A.S. new program proposals that have parallel or related programs at the senior colleges. Those programs without parallel or related programs at the senior colleges are not required to submit agreements.

**Graduate Programs:** In general, graduate programs are not required to submit articulation agreements with new program proposals. Exceptions are: (1) doctoral programs that are integrally linked to master’s programs either through accreditation requirements or because they grant transfer credit for master’s or doctoral-level work completed in the master’s programs and, (2) master’s programs that are integrally linked to undergraduate programs either through accreditation requirements or because they grant transfer credit for undergraduate or master’s-level work completed in undergraduate programs.

**Unique Undergraduate Programs:** Programs that are unique to one institution, without related programs at other CUNY colleges, are not required to submit CUNY articulation agreements with new program proposals. Agreements with non-CUNY institutions are encouraged.
C. Developing Articulation Agreements

1. Letter of Intent
Discussions regarding the articulation of the proposed program with other CUNY institutions should have begun prior to drafting the Letter of Intent. The LOI’s Curriculum section should contain a brief statement of the intent to articulate the proposed program with a minimum of one CUNY program, and should report on progress to date, if negotiations have begun. The CUNY College, department and program with which the formal articulation agreement(s) will be negotiated should be named. Non-CUNY prospects for articulation may also be identified.

2. Proposal
The Curriculum section of the proposal should summarize the articulation agreement(s). Please append the actual agreement(s) to the proposal.

Minimally, articulation agreements should address the following areas:

- Names of articulating institutions, degrees, programs and departments affected by the agreement;
- Program admission requirements of receiving college, such as minimum GPA, auditions/portfolios, etc.;
- Total transfer credits granted toward the baccalaureate degree;
- Total additional credits required at the senior college to complete baccalaureate degree;
- List of lower division courses and credits, including general education and prerequisite requirements. Include course-to-course equivalency information (with transfer credit granted.) ¹ In some agreements, a block of credits may transfer instead of individual courses. In that case, there is no need to list course equivalencies.
- List of upper division courses (prerequisite and major courses as well as remaining general education requirements, with credits) for completion of the baccalaureate degree;
- Procedures for reviewing, updating, modifying or terminating the agreement (generally, this will occur when the programs undergo regular, periodic program reviews):
- Procedures for evaluating the agreement, e.g., tracking the number of students who transfer under the agreement and their success (generally, this will form part of outcomes assessment for the programs, departments, or college);
- Procedures developed by both sending and receiving colleges for publicizing agreements, (e.g., college catalog, transfer advisors, Websites);
- Effective date of the agreement; and
- Dated signatures of Department Chairpersons and Chief Academic Officers.

¹ Course equivalency information will be entered in the University Course Guide database and made available through the TIPPS Website.