Process for Proposing

New Degree Programs, Certificates, and other Education Programs[1]

Process in Brief
- **Concept Approval** by the Office of Education
- Two-stage **Proposal**
  - Discussion of preliminary written proposal with the Education Planning Committee.
  - Incorporate feedback for final proposal. As necessary, approval of new program by appropriate school-wide governance bodies (e.g., Committee on Educational Policy).

- Should **plan well ahead**; new degrees for example need several years of lead time.

Background. Ideas for new education programs are welcomed and necessary for the growth and development of fields and of the school. These ideas may arise in response to the emergence of new disciplines or changes in existing disciplines, to help realize the potential for new interdisciplinary and interschool programs, or new learner markets.

New programs, though, need to fit into the complex landscape of existing educational programs at Harvard Chan. Each one represents not just opportunities, but opportunity costs (if we do this new thing, it may foreclose the ability to do another new thing), and there can be many direct and indirect implications for staffing, faculty teaching, advising, classroom space, etc. such that a new program can impact existing programs in unintended ways such as "cannibalizing" applicants, or making it more difficult for students to get into courses that already have waitlists.

This document outlines how the School evaluates and approves new major educational programs (e.g., new degrees, certificates, and non-degree programs that are large and/or resource intensive). This process is not designed to be obstructive and overly bureaucratic, but to ensure that new programs are set up for success, individually and for Harvard Chan as a whole. Whether an idea for a new program originates from a single individual or a group within the Harvard Chan community, is to be offered within a department or spans departments, it must meet several benchmarks before approval. This process is designed to ensure it will fit the mission of the School; meet academic, enrollment and

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[1] This approval process applies to all education programs that have school-wide implications, which is virtually all programs. New degree programs refers to new degrees and also new tracks or fields of study within degrees. Certificates can be for degree or non-degree learners and may certify participation or mastery; all represent the school and have implications for the school. Almost all new education programs have implications for classrooms, OSS staff time, etc. So, although there will be small, department-based new programs that do not have school-wide implications, we recommend opening a dialogue with the Office of Education about any new program.

financial goals; has strong leadership and adequate resources; and that the implications for changes across all of the School's educational offerings have been fully thought through.

To initiate discussions about a new education program, please be in touch with the Dean for Education, Erin Driver-Linn, edriver-linn@hsph.harvard.edu.

I. Principles for assessing proposals for new educational programs

Note: These principles were discussed and approved by the Committee on Education Policy in 2021.

1. **The program aligns with School priorities and strengths.**

   The proposal clearly articulates the strategic vision for the program, showing:

   - How the program aligns with the mission and strategic priorities of Harvard Chan.
   - The School has strong expertise in the focus area of the program, and has or can create a rigorous, high-standard program in this area.
   - The program has a clearly articulated and distinct focus that specifies:
     - The knowledge, competencies, and skills graduates will gain;
     - The target learner and why educating these learners is important for public health and the School; and
     - How the program relates to and is impacted by accreditation requirements.
   - The program is distinct from other existing programs at Harvard Chan (and, if relevant, elsewhere at Harvard).

   The proposal identifies clear lines of responsibility and a model for sustainability, showing:

   - The Department and/or Program sponsor(s) have a well-defined plan to take ownership and responsibility for the program.
   - The Department and/or Program sponsor has a well-defined model for the long-term viability of the program, including financial viability, academic relevance, a clear view of the competitive landscape, and a strategy for generating and sustaining student interest.
   - There is a clear framework for governance and decision-making about the program.
   - There are one or more faculty members who will lead the program and will devote sufficient time to this activity to do it well (including reducing, as necessary, other activities).
   - There is strong faculty interest in teaching, advising, and mentoring students in the program.
   - There is administrative capacity and expertise to ensure the program can succeed, given all the other activities underway in the department and/or program, and across the School.

- There are clear communication, collaboration, and coordination mechanisms between the leaders and administrators of the program with Office of Education.

2. **There is evidence that the program has the intellectual, financial, and administrative context required for it to be successful.**

   <u>The proposal shows how the program meets student and graduate goals:</u>

   - By providing evidence that there is (a) strong demand for the program in the market and (b) for degree programs, that graduates will be able to obtain relevant jobs that require the knowledge and skills they learn in the program.
   - By providing analysis that shows how this program fits into the current competitive environment for the program and that Harvard Chan is likely to be successful in this environment.
   - With evidence that there is sufficient demand for the program such that we will get high-quality applicants and attract enough students to have a reasonable program size. This requires having a marketing and recruitment plan.

   <u>The proposal shows that adequate financial and administrative commitments exist and are aligned with the intellectual goals of the program, by showing:</u>

   - A detailed budget demonstrating that the financial and administrative commitments for the program are clear and realistic:
     - Note that not all programs are the same in this regard; occasionally a program may operate at a revenue loss because they further the School's mission in other important ways, others may operate at cost, and still others make a financial contribution to the School.
     - The commitment includes a plan to devote the necessary administrative and other resources to develop, implement, and run the program in the long-term. For example, the School should not have a program solely or primarily because of a training grant.
   - The program can be offered at a reasonable cost to learners (as determined by the market).
     - The cost of the program/tuition is aligned with the market and the program's operational costs (relevant comparisons should be included, for degree programs tuition is set using school-wide standards);
     - There is an appropriate availability of financial aid;
     - *For joint- and dual-programs*. Given the cost- and time- intensive demands of programs joint with other schools/units, the proposal should articulate a reasonable assessment of what is required administratively by all partner units. Additional consideration should be outlined to detail how (a) partner units/schools are committed to the success of the program with clear lines of responsibility and the necessary dedicated resources, (b) there is a coherent and feasible program of study given the requirements

of both programs and the schedule of both programs; and (c) that the administrative details of programs can be made to work for applicants, learners, and both units (e.g., coordinated application deadlines, admissions criteria, financial aid policies, teaching compensations, sharing of student information, course evaluations, etc.). Note that historically there is a high bar for joint- and dual- degree programs; these have in the past been hard to launch successfully.

II. Approval Process

Planning Overview

Submitting a proposal for a major new educational program is a three-phase process:

1. Concept Phase: A concept discussion and preliminary approval with the Dean for Education, who may involve other deans of the school before approving to move forward with planning.
2. Pre-Proposal Phase: A written pre-proposal (may be in the form of a slide deck), which is reviewed by the Office of Education and presented by the proposers to the Education Planning Committee and then a decision is made by the relevant deans whether or not to move forward to a full proposal stage.
3. Full Proposal Phase: A full proposal with all details and showing responsiveness to feedback from the pre-proposal phase. For new degree programs (and for some other major education programs), approval at multiple levels is required including:
    a. The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), Committee on Admissions and Degrees (CAD), and relevant Program Steering Committees (e.g., the MPH Steering Committee).
    b. Demonstration of broad faculty support (departmental faculty support, from Academic Council and Faculty Council, and often to the full Faculty).
    c. As necessary to the Office of the Provost and the Harvard Corporation (this is required for new degrees, rather than a field of study within a degree; or if requiring waivers, such as the residency requirement of the University).

While the timeline for the process varies by program and circumstances, in general, the full review and approval process for a **new degree program** typically *takes one to two years from inception to conclusion,* and timing considerations need to include marketing and recruiting for the new program. A **new certificate program, new area of specialization, new interdisciplinary concentration, or non-degree program** will likely take less time and require fewer steps of approval but still requires the three phases.

CONCEPT PHASE

Program Conceptualization
It is never too early to seek advice and guidance from others during the proposal process. Ongoing school/university-wide planning may provide important context and support that can enhance the process at the program level. Proposers are encouraged to meet with the Office of Student Services and

the Office of Educational Programs, faculty and chairs of other programs who may have developed similar proposals, and any others who can provide advice on what to consider for the proposed program and how to plan.

Concept Approval: It is expected that those developing the proposal, and/or the sponsoring department or program will consult with the Dean for Education and other relevant deans and offices throughout the process, including the program conceptualization phase. If the proposed program is a joint or dual degree, the department chair, faculty program director, and sponsoring faculty should also discuss the proposed program with the deans of the schools that will award the degree. The Dean for Education will ensure that the Dean for Academic Affairs and the Dean of the Faculty know about and are in favor of moving to a Pre-Proposal stage.

PRE-PROPOSAL PHASE

Development of a Pre-proposal: If the deans of the school have provided support for the concept, the sponsoring department should identify specific faculty and key staff members and ideally should form a Planning Committee. The champions and leaders of the program should work to develop a concise but comprehensive written Pre-Proposal**.** The Pre-Proposal should include the following sections:

1. **Executive Summary**: Title, description of the program, mode of delivery, and academic unit offering the program plus a brief rationale (alignment with institutional mission and strengths).
2. **Program Structure**: Overview of admission requirements, as relevant credit hours and/or time to completion, advising plan, curriculum, core and elective courses described, qualified faculty identified with their consent, milestone and culminating experience requirements, etc.
3. **Competitive Landscape Analysis and Evidence of Market Demand**: Include a competitive landscape analysis and/or other evidence regarding demand for the program such as local, state, regional need; summary of U.S. Department of Labor Data; analysis of job postings, etc. This should also include a preliminary analysis of the marketing and recruitment plan that will be required to meet the goals of the program given the competitive landscape.
4. **Preliminary Budget**: Even if in draft form, a budget should include expected expenditures for launching and sustaining the program and any expected revenues. The budget should have best estimates for direct expenditures (e.g., marketing, teaching, new administrative support) and indirect (e.g., additional time for existing administrative offices, classroom use). The budget should include estimates around financial aid and should project out in time (to show multiple cohorts).
5. **Plan for Ensuring Quality of the Program:** accrediting body as relevant, key program competencies or learning outcomes, plan for assessment of teaching, advising, metrics of student success (e.g., for degree programs, placement of graduates).

The pre-proposal includes information that will be in any full proposal and serves as a mechanism to provide prompt feedback before developing a full proposal. The pre-proposal review allows for the submission process to be significantly adjusted or terminated early if it is determined that the proposal will not be successful in the full proposal stage.

*Pre-proposal Review Process***:** All pre-proposals should be sent to the Senior Associate Dean for Educational Programs, Nancy Turnbull. Once Dean Turnbull and others (including for degree programs

the Office of Student Services) have provided initial feedback on the pre-proposal, the proposal team will be asked to submit the materials, with any required revisions, to the Education Planning Committee and schedule time to present to the group so that clarification questions can be asked, feedback provided, etc.

For most education programs, pre-proposals (with an understanding of the feedback that will be incorporated for a full proposal) will need to be endorsed by the Dean of the Faculty, the Dean for Academic Affairs, the Dean for Education, and the Senior Associate Dean for Educational Programs, with additional endorsement from the Associate Dean for Student Services for degree programs. The Deans will respond to a final pre-proposal submission as quickly as is practically possible, approving it to move to a more formal process, requiring changes and re-submission, or determining that the proposal should not move forward.

FULL PROPOSAL PHASE

Development of the Full Proposal: The full proposal will include all the sections of the Pre-Proposal but should provide greater detail about all aspects. Notably, the full proposal should include a comprehensive curriculum such as plan for the development of any new courses, plan for the sequencing of courses, and an assessment of capacity in any existing courses that are part of the program's curriculum.

Before submitting full proposals, the proposal development team should have <u>documentation</u> that they have had detailed discussions with relevant administrative offices and that those offices believe they can support the program. Importantly, new degree program proposals require consultation with all of the units within the Office of Student Services (Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar's Office, Office of Student Affairs, and Office of Professional Development and Career Services) each of which will need to implement and support any new degree. Any program with online courses will need to consult with the School's Instructional Design and Teaching and Learning Support Team, and other programs, even if not online, will strongly benefit from talking with that team. Any education program will also benefit from discussion with the School's strategic Communications team (who can provide advice about marketing and recruitment) and the Office of Financial Planning.

Approval of the Full Proposal: Once the full proposal is completed, the Senior Associate Dean of Educational Programs will review and submit it to the Education Planning Committee. The department chair and sponsoring faculty may be asked to present the proposal for further discussion, and/or additional revisions.

If the Education Planning Committee approves the full proposal, it will be added to the agenda for relevant groups. Leadership of the new program, including as relevant the department chair and other faculty involved with the program, will attend meetings to present the proposal and to provide answers to questions from these groups.

For new degree programs, approval from the Academic Council and program steering committees moves the proposal to the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) and the Committee on Admissions and Degrees (CAD). The department chair and faculty sponsoring the program will be asked to attend

CEP and CAD meetings to present the proposal and to provide answers to questions that committee members may have. The CEP and CAD will review the proposal and may make recommendations, or ask for additional information, for example suggesting that the proposal needs to be presented to the full faculty.

All review and approval bodies will be reminded of the principles outlined above and asked to review proposals with those in mind as criteria for evaluation. We call out in particular that proposals will be evaluated in terms of their:

1. Consistency with the School's mission and strategic priorities, with a distinguishing mission of the program or fulfillment of unmet need, and ideally the ability to leverage strengths at Harvard Chan and the University more broadly.
2. Demonstrated engagement of faculty advocates and leaders within the department or program, including a designated faculty program director who will devote sufficient time to the new program.
3. Engagement of a critical mass of committed faculty members with demonstrated teaching skill, who are to be involved in the teaching and advising of the program and have the interest and time to do so given their other academic and research commitments and without impairing other educational programs at the School.
4. Support from the sponsoring department and/or program and for degree programs from the Office of Student Services.
5. Attestation as to the financial viability and sustainability of the program, including, as relevant, support from the Office of Financial Planning.

Once granted final approval by the School, the proposal will be forwarded, if necessary, to the Vice Provost for Advances in Learning, the Provost, and the Corporation for their review and approval. This step is required only in the case of a proposal to create an entirely new degree (i.e., a degree other than those currently offered by Harvard Chan--SM, MHCM, MPH, or DrPH), or if the proposal requires a waiver of the University's residency requirement. If a new PhD program is being proposed, the process will involve significant collaboration with the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (the degree-granting school for all PhD programs at Harvard) and approval of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (within which GSAS sits).

Note that once the proposal has received all necessary approvals, there is still work that needs to be done to ensure successful launch of the program. For example, there are implications for housing, orientation, classroom space, school website, and more, and a clear recruitment plan must be in place.

Timing Considerations and Requirements

The above processes may take many months, if not years, and we encourage proposal development teams to build a timeline and have it reviewed by the Senior Associate Dean for Educational Programs and the Associate Dean for Student Services regularly throughout the Concept, Pre-Proposal, and Full Proposal phases.

For the purposes of the Admissions application, school catalog, and website, ***all program approvals, curricula, and materials for new programs need to be in place no later than March of the year prior to the year of entry.***