

NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Graduate Program Approval Process

The approval process for graduate programs requires a more extensive external approval process through various bodies including the New Mexico Graduate Deans Council (NMGDC), the Academic Council (AC), the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED), the New Mexico Higher Education Review Board (NMHEDRB) and the State Board of Finance (SBOF). See the New Mexico Graduate Deans Council webpage, <http://infohost.nmt.edu/~grad/NMCGD/homepage.html> , to obtain meeting dates, financial template and other information that will be helpful in planning your submission of a proposal for a new graduate program.

All new graduate programs except for post-baccalaureate certificate programs are required to follow the process outlined in 5.5.2 NMAC <http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmac/parts/title05/05.005.0002.htm> . Post-baccalaureate certificate programs require institutional approval and a CIP Code Request from NMHED, but do not require formal approval through the various external reviewing and approving bodies.

5.5.2 NMAC is designed to provide guidance to institutions in preparing graduate program proposals and understanding the approval process. It is also intended to guide the various approving bodies for graduate programs (the NM Council of Graduate Deans-NMGDC, the Academic Council-AC, the New Mexico Higher Education Department Review Board –NMHEDRB and the State Board of Finance-SBOF).

Steps	Action	Timeline	NMHED Action
1	Complete internal institutional reviews	3 months to 1 year	
2	Submit intent to submit a proposal to NMHED and NMGDC	Halfway through the process of internal institutional reviews	Staff documents proposed program and estimated date of arrival at Department
3	Submit Proposal to NMHED and NMGDC	9 months prior to anticipated date of implementation of program	Deputy Secretary of Academic Affairs and NMHED Staff review proposal and identify strengths and weaknesses

Steps	Action	Timeline	NMHED Action
4	Institution presents proposal to NMGDC	After approval by the Board of Regents and before implementation or advertising of program	Deputy Secretary of Academic Affairs or designee attend NMGDC and provide input to institutional representatives and the NMGDC
5	NMGDC approves proposal and forwards recommendations to the AC and NMHED or disapproves and decides to not move proposal forward or requests additional information and reschedules presentation for following NMGDC meeting	Program Proposal approval process ends if disapproved or Proposal is presented at next AC (if approved) or NMGDC meeting (if additional information is needed), normally the following month.	Deputy Secretary of Academic Affairs or designee attend next meeting of AC or NMGDC
6	AC approves proposal and informs NMHED that the proposal is ready for state consideration		NMHED staff prepare NMGDC and AC recommendations and comments for presentation to NMHEDRB and makes recommendations to Board to approve or disapprove
7	NMHED and institutional representatives present proposal to NMHEDRB	Scheduled one month after AC recommendation has been forwarded to NMHED	NMHED staff prepares summary page with AC and NMGDC recommendations and general program description, copies of proposal are sent to NMHEDRB members

Steps	Action	Timeline	NMHED Action
8	NMHEDRB approves program proposal	Presentation is scheduled for next State Board of Finance meeting	Deputy Secretary prepares presentation for SBOF meeting and invites institutional representatives to be present at meeting
9	SBOF approves program		NMHED Staff sends letter to institution notifying them that the program has been approved
10	Institution submits CIP Code Request	Within one month after the program has been approved	NMHED enters CIP Code information in inventory of programs

Proposal Requirements

A comprehensive proposal addressing the required areas should be submitted to the New Mexico Graduate Deans' Council and can be simultaneously submitted to the New Mexico Higher Education Department. The institution should have completed the internal approval process and subsequently include documentation of approval by the Governing Board. Documentation can include a signed cover letter by the president of the board and/or a copy of the minutes addressing approval of the program.

A. Program Description and Purpose

- The proposed program must have a clear purpose that is consistent with the mission of the proposing institution.
 1. What is the primary purpose of the proposed program?
 2. What are its secondary purposes, if any?
 3. Is the proposed program consistent with the role and scope of the institution as set forth in its mission statement and interpreted by its governing board?
 4. What is the institution's priority for the proposed program, as indicated in its most recent plans, funding requests or other institutional documents?
 5. What is the curriculum for the proposed program? What types of courses and other degree requirements are needed for degree completion? What types of skills or competencies will students develop as a result of completing the degree program?

B. Justification for the Program

- The proposed program must meet one or more specified needs within the state or region; must not duplicate existing programs unnecessarily or inappropriately; and, to the extent feasible and appropriate, should benefit from cooperative arrangements with other institutions.

1. Need

- The proposed program must meet one or more specified needs within the state or region. Clear and convincing evidence must be provided of the reality and extent of such need.
 - a. Why is the program needed? Will graduates of the program help meet some specified state or regional workforce need? Have specific potential employers requested or expressed interest in the program? What, if any, internal institutional needs will also be met by the program?
 - b. Evidence of need might include results of employer surveys, current labor market analyses and projections, or long-term need projections prepared by a relevant professional organization. Summaries of student interest also are appropriate but will not by themselves be considered sufficient evidence of need.
 - c. Although academic and research interests of institutional faculty may be met through implementation of the proposed program, such interests by themselves are unlikely to persuade NMHED of need for the program. However, institutions of higher education may build programs around their areas of excellence. A clear demonstration of such excellence is expected in the proposal.

2. Duplication

- The proposed program must not duplicate existing programs unnecessarily or inappropriately. A proposal for a program similar to one (or more) that already exists within the state must present clear and convincing evidence that need for the program cannot be met by the existing program(s).
 - a. Is the program, or are similar programs, offered at any other public or private institutions within New Mexico?
 - b. If so, what is the remaining capacity of the program(s)? How many students could the existing program(s) accommodate without additional resources for faculty, equipment, facilities and other needs?
 - c. In light of the above information, why should the proposed program also be approved? What programmatic, geographic

or other factors warrant approval of the program as an addition to the existing educational resources in the state?

- d. Do New Mexico students have access to a comparable program in another state through either the WICHE professional student exchange or the WICHE regional graduate program?
- e. As evidence, the proposing institution must assemble and display data listing each similar program offered by regionally accredited public and private universities in New Mexico; the numbers of students admitted to each of those programs during each of three recent, consecutive years; the numbers of degrees/certificates awarded during each of those years; and each university's estimated remaining capacity of its program(s).
- f. To the extent feasible and appropriate, statements from representatives of the existing programs should be attached to the proposal, articulating their positions with regard to the proposed program.
- g. The purpose of this requirement is twofold: (1) to assure that communication has taken place with existing programs, as an element in planning the proposed program, and (2) to aid reviewers in assuring that there is need for the program that cannot be met through existing programs.

3. Inter-institutional Collaboration and Cooperation

- The New Mexico Higher Education Department strongly encourages collaborative relationships with other programs within New Mexico, so that state investments can be shared and students can benefit from expanded opportunities across institutional boundaries.
 - a. Are there programs at other institutions, and particularly programs already supported by the state, through which shared instruction, collaboration with faculty or other means of broadening student options and experiences can be arranged as part of the proposed program?
 - b. If the proposed program is related to other programs operating at public institutions in the state, the proposal should document how collaboration will be achieved with those programs. For example, if it is feasible and productive to share faculty, instruction or other assets with an existing program at another institution, the proposal should outline how that collaboration will take place. If other arrangements for expanding students' experiences can be made with other institutions, those arrangements should be summarized.

C. Clientele and Projected Enrollment

- The proposal must clearly describe the population of students who will be recruited for the proposed program and must include a detailed projection of enrollment and credit hours anticipated during the first five years.

1. Clientele

- a. Who are the students to be served by the proposed program? Will the program concentrate its recruitment upon students representing some particular geographic area, students from some special employment sector or some other identified group?
- b. What academic or experiential qualifications will be set for admission?
- c. Will the proposed program be consistent with state goals for equitable representation of all students? How will the program assure equal access and success of students from groups historically underrepresented in graduate education or in the fields of employment for which the program is intended to prepare its graduates?
 - At a minimum, the proposal also should include information about representation of diversity in ethnic and sex/gender groups of (a) undergraduate students and (b) graduate students at the proposing institution and should articulate the methods that will be used to assure equity in access and success in the proposed program.
 - To the extent possible, the proposal also should include information about representation in the fields of employment for which the program is intended to prepare students and other information relevant to assessing the capacity of the program to help redress underrepresentation.

2. Projected Enrollment

- a. The proposal must display, in clear tabular form, the projected enrollment in the proposed program during its first five years. This presentation must distinguish the number of new students (headcount) expected to enroll each year, the number of returning students expected to re-enroll in each year, and the methodology used to arrive at those projections.
- b.
- c. The proposal should indicate the number of students expected to enroll full-time and the number expected to enroll on a part-time basis and

must display the total number of student credit hours expected to be generated in each of the first five years.

D. Institutional Readiness for the Program

- The institution should have nearly all of the resources needed to initiate the program. The proposal should include a clear statement of the extent to which the institution is ready to initiate the program, citing the remaining needs and recognizing each of those needs in the cost analysis developed pursuant to Subsection E of 5.5.2.9 NMAC.
 1. Is the teaching faculty adequate in number and qualifications to initiate the program? If not, what additional faculty are needed? To what extent will the program rely upon graduate assistants to free faculty time for graduate instruction in the proposed program?
 2. Are the library and other academic support resources sufficient to initiate the program? If not, what additional resources are needed?
 3. Are the physical facilities of the institution adequate for the first five years of the program? Will additional space or modifications of existing space be required within the first five years of program operation?
 4. Are the institution's equipment and technological resources adequate for the first five years of the program? What if any, additional equipment will be needed?
 5. Are other operating resources adequate to initiate the program? For example will additional clerical or specialized personnel be needed?
 6. Are there existing external facilities that will be used? Have agreements been established to ensure use of those facilities? For example, if you are offering a nursing or allied health program have you established a partnership with local hospital(s) and other clinical settings?

E. Projected Cost of the Program

- The proposal must include a clear analysis of the projected cost of the proposed program and the sources of funding that will support it.
 1. New costs for program start-up. The proposal should provide a clear indication of new costs that must be met in order to begin the program and to sustain it during its first five years. The analysis must address at least the following cost categories:
 - a. Additional faculty needed for the program, full-time and part-time.

- b. Is the faculty adequate in number, experience and availability to offer a high quality program?
- c. How do the proposed academic admission standards for students entering the program compare with standards for other programs at the institution and with admission standards for comparable programs at other institutions in New Mexico or other states?
- d. How will the proposed program utilize current technologies to support program quality and delivery?
- e. What opportunities will be available to students to gain experiences relevant to work settings for which the program will prepare them?
- f. What academic support services are available to students, to assist them in succeeding in the program?
- g. What final integrating experiences or other features will be used to assure that graduate have acquired the knowledge and skills expected for the degree or certificate awarded?
- h. Has the proposed program been evaluated by any external reviewers or is there other external evidence or opinion regarding the quality of the program?
- i. When will the new program be proposed for accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association?
- j. Will specialized accreditation be sought for the program? If so, when?

G. Assessment of Operations and Impact

- The proposal must include a plan by which the proposed program will be assessed for its operation and impact over at least a five-year period.
 1. At a minimum, the plan must indicate methods that will be used to monitor program operations, progress of students and program completion rates.
 2. The plan also must include methods for obtaining evaluations from students, graduates or other appropriate sources and feeding that information into future operation of the program.

H. Administrative Responsibility for the Program and Institutional Commitment

- There must be a clear indication in the proposal that the institution is committed to the success of the proposed program.

1. The proposal should indicate where in the structure of the institution the program will be administered. For example, which department will have primary responsibility and which additional departments, if any will contribute to operation of the program?
2. The proposal should include a clear statement of administrative support for the program, sufficient to assure that resources will be provided during the first five years of the program. The proposal should also verify that all within-institution approvals needed for the program have been granted, including approval by the institution's governing board.