

Curriculum Change Guide for Creating a New Academic Program or Changing a Program's Name or Degree Title

This guide applies to curriculum changes that create new academic programs, including new graduate and undergraduate programs. These include new degrees, majors, minors, concentrations, and certificate programs. Note: We often use the words “tracks,” “options,” “focus areas,” and others to refer to concentrations. Regardless of the label employed, such choices are treated as concentrations for the purpose of review at WMU and by the Presidents Council of State Universities of Michigan.

This guide also applies to proposals that change the name of an academic program, including a change in a degree, such as a change from a master of arts to a master of science.

These proposals can be started at a fall semester only.

- 1. Obtain faculty approval in the department that will offer the program.** Departments vary in how this approval is obtained, according to their policy statements. If the proposed program is interdisciplinary, approval must be obtained in each participating department. Interdisciplinary proposals must also identify the policies on administering the program.
- 2. Prepare a formal curriculum change form.** In most departments, this is done through consultation with the department chair and the faculty members who initiated the proposal. For the proposal to be complete, all sections must be filled in. A proposal for a new academic program must include the exact catalog language requested. If the proposal requires creating new courses or revising existing courses, those proposals should be approved at the same time as the proposal for a new academic program. Separate course proposals will be required. A proposal for a new academic program often includes a detailed proposal as an attachment to the curriculum change form. Some of the detail requested on the curriculum change form may be addressed in the detailed proposal, instead.
- 3. The department chair signs the proposal and forwards to the college curriculum committee.** In some colleges, this is managed through the dean's office. In others, the chair should send the proposal directly to the college curriculum committee chair. Before doing so, the chair should determine that the proposal is complete. The chair may consult with college advising offices, in particular, to complete the section related to transfer articulation. Proposals for new academic programs require extensive documentation and a long approval process. Chairs and faculty are encouraged to consult with the curriculum manager and with the appropriate deans, including the graduate dean if it is a new graduate proposal. Deans should advise the provost on proposals that are being developed.
- 4. The college curriculum committee chair schedules the proposal for review by the college curriculum committee.** That committee is composed of faculty

representatives from the departments, according to the policies of the college. Before an undergraduate proposal is reviewed by a college curriculum committee, the proposals section on transfer articulation should be completed.

5. **The college curriculum committee chair sends approved proposals to the dean.**
6. **The dean should consult with the provost regarding market studies and resource allocation.** This consultation is required at this step, but the dean is encouraged to engage in this consultation as early as possible.
7. **The dean should consult with the Dean of University Libraries and obtain a letter of support from that dean, indicating that library resource issues have been reviewed.**
8. **The dean should obtain the approval of the graduate dean for graduate proposals, including the graduate dean's signature on the proposal form.**
9. **If the dean approves the proposal, the dean will send four copies of the proposal to the curriculum manager.** The dean should indicate how resource issues have been resolved. These actions are the responsibility of the dean in whose college the proposal is initiated.
10. **The curriculum manager will review the proposal for completeness and will forward the proposal to the Graduate Studies Council or the Undergraduate Studies council, as appropriate.**
11. **If the new academic program is to be part of a teacher education program:** It may be necessary for the proposal to be reviewed by the curriculum committee of the Professional Educator's Board. In that instance the curriculum manager will send the proposal to the College of Education for that review. Exception: A new academic program proposal originating in the College of Education and which will be part of a teacher education proposal, will be reviewed by the curriculum committee of the Professional Educators Board *before* it is sent to the curriculum manager.
12. **The curriculum manager prepares documents for approval by the provost, president, Board of Trustees, and the Academic Officers Committee of the Presidents Council of State Universities of Michigan.** All of these approvals are required for new graduate programs, certificate programs, and majors. New undergraduate minors and new concentrations have final approval with the Board of Trustees. Students cannot be admitted to the new program (or the renamed program) until all of those approvals are required. Approval by the state must occur by April for a new program to start in the fall. A program cannot be included in on-line and paper admissions applications until it has this approval. The curriculum manager will work with the department and the dean on any additional documentation required for state approval.

How to Complete the Curriculum Change Form, Page 1:

1. The proposed effective semester must be a fall term. Approval should meet the time deadlines indicated in section 16 of the general principles document, which specifies that all approvals (including the state approval) must be obtained no later than April of the preceding academic year. Generally, this means that college-level approval must be complete no later than the end of the fall semester. Some proposals, including proposals to offer a complete degree at a new location, may also require approval by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Departments should consult with the Vice-Provost for Institutional Effectives to determine if this will be required. Recruiting materials used by the admissions office require more advance notice, since those materials are created in March for the following academic year's recruiting cycle.
2. Check all of the boxes at the top of the form that apply. To create a new academic program, check one of the following: New degree, new major, new curriculum, new concentration, new certificate, or new minor. To rename an academic program, click "other."
3. Enter the title of the degree, curriculum, major, minor, concentration, or certificate.
4. If your proposal requires creating new courses or revising existing courses, those proposals will have to be attached and approved at the same time.
5. Skip the sections of the report that have to do with course change.
6. The chair must sign the form before sending to the Dean's office. The chair should check to see that all parts of the proposal are complete, including page 2.

How to complete the curriculum change form, page 2:

The narrative section of the curriculum proposal must also be completed. Here are some guidelines:

1. **Explain briefly and clearly the proposed improvement.** "This proposal creates a new concentration in stage management in the Theatre major." Catalog copy should be attached. Note that a proposal for a new academic program also requires changing the catalog copy for existing programs. In that instance, both old and new catalog copy should be attached. Be sure to use the most recent catalog copy from the on-line catalogs at <http://catalog.wmich.edu>.
2. **Rationale. Give your reason(s) for the proposed improvement.** The rationale needs to be understandable by someone outside your discipline. This may be contained in an attached proposal document. If so, indicate that here.
3. **Effect on other colleges, departments, or programs. If consultation with others is required, attach evidence of consultation and support. If objections**

- have been raised, document the resolution. Demonstrate that the program you propose is not a duplication of an existing one.** This section should consider the effects on others at WMU. Demonstrate that your program is not duplicative of others at WMU. If there are courses from other departments, that support should be documented (Note: Deans are required to deal with support issues within a college and letters indicating that support do not have to be forwarded to the curriculum manager. If inter-college support is required, those letters must be attached and must be signed by the dean [or the dean's designee] when the proposal is sent to the catalog manager. If the inter-college levels of support are not included, the curriculum manager will return the proposal to the dean's office.
4. **Effect on your department's programs. Show how the proposed change fits with other departmental offerings.** As with the other sections, this should be brief, but it should be explained.
 5. **Effects on enrolled students.** If this proposed new academic program is replacing a current program, indicate how students enrolled under current catalogs will be able to complete the program. Note: Students transferring from Michigan community colleges may graduate under catalogs in place while they were enrolled at the community college. Consult the admissions office or the transfer office for more detail.
 6. **Student or external market demand.** Compare this program to others already offered in Michigan or elsewhere. In what way is this program distinguished from others? What evidence is there that students will want this new program? What demand do you anticipate? What evidence is there that students will be marketable upon completion? You may choose to address these issues in an attached proposal. The dean or the provost may require an independent market study, so early consultation on new academic program proposals is encouraged.
 7. **Effects on resources.** Describe the resource needs (faculty, laboratory equipment and space, studio equipment or space, advising support, administrative support, library acquisitions, or other needs) for this new academic program. Before the proposal is sent to the curriculum manager, there must be a letter of support from the dean of University Libraries. These issues may be addressed in an attached proposal document. If so, indicate that here.
 8. **General Education criteria.** This section does not apply unless you are proposing a new academic major and you want completion of the major to count for one of the general education requirements. See the university's general education policy for more information on this.
 9. **List the learning outcomes for the proposed major, minor or concentration. These are the outcomes that the department will use for future assessments of the course.** You should work with the department's assessment committee or

director to see to it that the learning outcomes fit into the learning outcomes for the department's other programs.

10. **Describe how this curriculum change is in response to assessment outcomes that are part of departmental or college assessment/accreditation review.** It is expected that most curriculum changes are related to departmental or college assessments. You should describe how assessment/accreditation led to this change or indicate that it is not related. If this proposal was not prompted by assessment, then this section should state that.
11. **Describe, in detail, how this curriculum change affects transfer articulation from Michigan community colleges.** This step will take a lot of time, but will save time later on. In consultation with advisors, your department chair, or your college advising office, identify how students at Michigan community colleges can transfer into this program. The offerings of all Michigan community colleges should be reviewed for this purpose.