

GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSING NEW DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

These guidelines outline the steps necessary to develop a proposal and to obtain the approvals prerequisite to Provost's consideration and Trustee approval for new degrees or Provost approval for new certificate programs. The term "certificate programs" refers to those programs which offer academic course credit that is recorded on an official Tufts transcript. Other certificate programs, such as Continuing Medical Education credit or similar programs, are not subject to this review process. If the degree program involves other universities or entities, the development of the new academic program should be coordinated with the review and ultimate approval of an Affiliation Agreement between or among the participating institutions and Tufts. In particular, a completed but unsigned Affiliation Agreement should accompany the final version of the proposed degree or certificate program at the time that the Provost's approval is requested.

New programs enable the university to maximize the use of educational resources, and also help to keep the university current in the educational marketplace. Ideas for new degree and certificate programs may arise in response to the emergence of new disciplines or changes in existing disciplines, or to help realize the potential for new interdisciplinary and interschool programs. Regardless of who initiates a proposal for a new degree or certificate program, it must pass through a formal approval process before it can be implemented. After approval through the appropriate committee processes at each participating school, new degree or certificate programs must be reviewed and approved by the Provost before they can be advertised, students recruited, or the program implemented. New degree programs have the added requirement of approval by the Trustee Academic Affairs Committee before they can be advertised, students recruited, or the program implemented.

New degree or certificate programs, either within an existing academic unit or in an interdisciplinary area, must be designed to ensure that the new programs fit the mission of the university, have potential for excellence, and have strong intellectual leadership and adequate resources. Key criteria are:

- Cadre of strong faculty advocates and leaders within the department or program,
- Critical mass of committed faculty members, who are to be involved in the program and who have an established record of collaboration,
- Distinguishing mission and niche or fulfillment of unmet or strategic need,
- Ability to leverage other strengths at Tufts,
- Administrative support in the department(s), program(s), and school(s) involved,
- Undergraduate research component, if the opportunity exists to integrate undergraduate and graduate education, and
- A comprehensive financial plan that addresses the viability and sustainability of the program.

Joint, interdisciplinary, or combined degree proposals (see Glossary) must fully explain the details of how academic and administrative responsibilities will be shared among the academic units involved, including academic governance, research infrastructure, and financial models, etc.

The following steps are applicable in their entirety for degree programs. For questions or assistance, contact: Kevin Dunn, Vice Provost (kevin.dunn@tufts.edu or 617-627-5018) or Melissa Stevenson, Special Projects Administrator (melissa.stevenson@tufts.edu or 617-627-0578)

REQUIRED STEPS:

1. Program Conceptualization

The key faculty members should discuss their program concept with the appropriate department chair(s) and the dean(s) of the school(s) that will award the degree/certificate and/or that will provide core program components. Note that while in many cases only one school will award the degree/certificate, multiple schools may be critical in the content delivery and program implementation. Once every relevant dean affirms his/her support of the concept, the program concept leaders should:

- a. Establish preliminary versions of program goals and objectives, develop a timeline, approximate program costs, and administrative structure;
- b. Address how the key criteria stated in the preamble of this document are to be addressed;
- c. Discuss the degree/certificate proposal with the chair(s) of the department(s) that will play a central role in the content development and delivery;
- d. Identify members for a Planning Committee; and
- e. Contact one of the Associate Provosts to discuss the program concept.

At this point, one of the Associate Provosts will be designated as the principal Provost's Office contact for the proposed program. It is expected that the Planning Committee will consult with the Academic and School Dean throughout the process, including the program conceptualization phase.

2. Form a Planning Committee to develop a formal and detailed program proposal.

The designated Associate Provost will assist the Academic Dean and the Planning Committee with the planning and submission steps. The Associate Provost will also inform the Research and Graduate Programs Council at this stage. The Planning Committee should also consult key administrative units (e.g. Registrar's Office, Student Affairs Office, Financial Aid Office, Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation, etc.) about specific issues as they develop the plan.

The planning committee should:

- a. Decide on formal program and degree or certificate titles (it is advisable to discuss the proposed titles with your Registrar's Office to avoid title duplication or confusion with existing degree/certificate programs).
- b. Prepare a concise "mission statement" to guide the planning process. What are the educational and societal goals for the program? What needs does it meet? Why does it make sense for Tufts at this time?
- c. Gather information to support the rationale for the program. Here are some typical Provost and Trustee questions that should be anticipated:
 - 1) How does the program advance the university's goals of academic excellence and leadership?
 - 2) How does the program relate to the school's (or schools') strategic directions?
 - 3) Is the proposed degree based on a coherent body of knowledge and scholarly literature with depth and breadth sufficient to justify concentrated/advanced study?
 - 4) What professional societies and accrediting groups are allied with the degree specialty?
 - 5) What special career qualifications will the program confer on its graduates? Is there a job market for graduates?
 - 6) Does Tufts have enough faculty with appropriate expertise and sufficient interest to support the curriculum? If this is a graduate research degree, is the quality and amount of Tufts' faculty research on relevant topics sufficient to support the projected number of student thesis projects?
 - 7) Does Tufts have sufficient academic resources, including but not limited to laboratory facilities and library and information technology, to support the degree/certificate

program? A specific assessment of library needs should be documented using the appended University Library Council Library Resources Evaluation Form.

- 8) What evidence is there for a market for the program? What kind of students and how many are likely to apply?
- 9) Are there similar (competing) programs at other institutions, and if so, why should Tufts offer the degree? How might the Tufts program be different? Will the Tufts program be of distinctive quality or unique in some way?
- 10) How does the program differ from and fit in with other degree programs at Tufts? (identify connections and overlaps).
- 11) Does the program have constraints with regard to delivery via distance education and/or specific accreditation issues? If the program is being delivered via distance learning (on-line learning), have all the NEASC requirements been fulfilled? See http://cihe.neasc.org/standards_policies/commission_policies
 - i. Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Learning,
 - ii. Policy on the Review of Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate programs,
 - iii. Guidelines from the Review of Off-Campus and Distance Education during a Comprehensive Evaluation, and
 - iv. Guidelines for Preparing Substantive Change Reports on the Establishment of Academic Programming through Distance Education.

If a substantive change report is required, it will be the school or planning committee's responsibility to complete the requisite requirements. Any proposals involving accreditation should be discussed with the Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation (Dawn Terkla) during the development and approval process.

- 12) For certificate programs that will be eligible to have students receive federal financial aid (Title IV funds), the planning committee/school will be responsible to ensure that the program is in compliance with HEAO regulations (e.g., has a plan to gather and eventually disseminate gainful employment statistics).

d. Decide on the basic structure and implementation of the program. Typical Provost and Trustee questions might include:

- 1) What student audience will be targeted and how will they be recruited to apply? How many students are expected to apply, and how many will you admit each year?
- 2) Formal admission requirements: GPA? Work experience? Test scores? Prerequisite languages, courses or degrees? References?
- 3) Any options for part-time, evening, and summer study?
- 4) Satisfactory progress requirements?
- 5) How will tuition be set? Financial aid available?
- 6) Will applicants likely be competitive for external scholarships that can be brought to Tufts?
- 7) Program content? (core courses and elective options with objective/contribution to degree/certificate for each; degree/certificate requirements and student schedule for completion)
- 8) Identify participating faculty (with their consent)? What are their qualifications?
- 9) Any impact on existing courses and programs, negative or positive? Are any new courses required?
- 10) Special resources required - start-up costs, space, IT, library collections (refer to University Library Council Form)?
- 10) Is there a sound business plan? Will the program be self-supporting?
- 11) Have accreditation aspects been considered and issues identified and resolved?

12) Are students eligible for federal financial aid? If yes, are mechanisms in place to ensure that the program is in compliance with federal regulations?

- e. Determine how the program will be administered:
Location? Director--who and what % release time? Staff assistance? Steering Committee? Student admissions, advising, and records? Financial management? Cost and revenue sharing across units?
- f. Determine how the achievement of the program goals will be assessed. Plan a timetable and process for evaluation, and for accreditation if applicable. Implementation of the assessment and evaluation plan must be scheduled before the end of the fifth year of program operation. The tracking of outcomes and external evaluation components must be included.

3. Prepare the formal proposal in draft form (Please include the required information using the section headings as follows):

- **Executive Summary:** title, description of the program and brief rationale (1/2 page)
- **Introduction:** Overview of program purpose and organization (1/2-1 page)
- **Rationale:** Why this program makes sense, why at Tufts, compare other programs, why now, market, etc. (1-2 pages)
- **Program Content:** Admission requirements, advising plan, curriculum, core and elective courses described and justified, qualified faculty identified with their consent, degree requirements, etc. (As long as necessary—use Appendices for course descriptions, abbreviated faculty CVs, descriptions of similar programs at other institutions, etc.)
- **Program Delivery and Accreditation:** If applicable, delineate steps that are being taken to comply with NEASC distance learning accreditation policies and federal gainful employment regulations.
- **Administration and Governance:** Program Director(s), faculty governance of curriculum. For interschool programs especially, explain which office is responsible for administrative/financial oversight, student records (applications, admission, advising, progress, degree certification, Registrar).
- **Plans for Roll-out:** Timetable for program development, advertising and application deadlines; projected enrollment for first and succeeding years.
- **3-5 Year Business Plan:** Show projected tuition income and its distribution to participating school units; other up-front school investment or grant income. All real costs including O&M, faculty and administrative compensation, financial aid, advertising, operating office expenses, start-up costs, IT and library resources (based on the completed ULC Library Resources Evaluation form), etc.
- **Evaluation:** Plan and timetable for periodic evaluation of program in relation to stated educational, enrollment, and financial goals. Include explicit steps for assessing milestones, utilizing feedback to improve the program and processes, tracking outcomes, an external evaluation component and any plans for professional accreditation. Propose a timetable for follow-up report to Trustees that uses specific measures to compare outcomes with expectations. The first full evaluation must be performed in five years or sooner from the time of the first students entering the program.
- **Appendices:** New course descriptions, charts, curricular plans, Library Resource Evaluation form, abbreviated faculty CVs, programs at other institutions, etc.

4. Approvals required prior to submitting to Provost

The designated Associate Provost should review the proposal before initiating the formal approval process. The faculty should consult with the **appropriate Academic School Dean** in order to incorporate their input and obtain the following approvals:

- a. **Faculty.** Faculty approval from each school involved, as required by school faculty bylaws (typically, a standing curriculum or program committee reviews and recommends action for full faculty vote at their next regularly scheduled meeting).
- b. **Executive Administrative Dean.** Written approval from the Executive Administrative Dean of each school involved.
- c. **Dean.** A cover letter from the dean of each school involved, addressed to the Provost documenting his/her support of the degree or certificate program.
- d. **V.P. for Finance.** Submit final proposal copy for signature approval of Business Plan by University V.P. for Finance or designate.
- e. **Designated Associate Provost.** A brief written recommendation to the Provost on the program.

5. University routing for Trustee approval of proposed degree programs.

All prior approvals must be in hand, and the proposal and any accompanying memos must be submitted in electronic form to the Provost's Office (to Boris Hasselblatt and Melissa Stevenson) in time for the Trustee Academic Affairs Committee mailing, at least six to eight weeks prior to the next scheduled meeting. Check with Provost's Office for exact deadline.

- a. Submit proposal (electronic and hard copy) addressed to the Provost with cover memo listing dates of any school faculty committee and full faculty approval votes, and attach written notice of support from School Dean(s), Executive Administrative Dean(s), VP for Finance (McGurty), and designated Associate Provost.
- b. Provost reviews and approves the proposal. In the case of degree programs, the Provost submits the program to the Trustee Academic Affairs Committee in time for the next scheduled meeting with his/her recommendation. In the case of certificates, the Provost informs the planning committee and relevant dean(s) of his/her decision, and reports the new certificate to the Trustee Academic Affairs Committee.
- c. Degree program proposals are discussed and voted upon by the Trustee Academic Affairs Committee. The principal advocate for the proposal and/or the Dean(s) of School(s) or designees involved in granting the degree may be invited to answer questions that the Trustee Academic Affairs Committee may have.

GLOSSARY (These definition are meant for general guidance. The use of particular terms should be verified for each specific proposal)

Certificate Program – for the purposes of this process, a certificate program refers to an education program consisting of several academic credit bearing courses offered by one or more schools

Dual Degree (sometimes called combined degree) – two degrees offered by one or more schools consisting of course and credit bearing project or research work from more than one school

Joint Degree – one degree offered typically by two or more schools. A joint degree program implies significant synthesis and collaboration. One variation on this theme is a joint degree involving two disciplines with overlapping, synthesized degree requirements (e.g. Psychology and Cognitive Science).

**University Library Council
Library Resources Evaluation Form**

The evaluation of resources available in the Tufts libraries to support a proposed degree or certificate program is an essential component of the review process. Once the scope of the proposed program has been defined, the faculty member making the proposal should provide a written program description to the campus library Director or appropriate Bibliographer and schedule a meeting to discuss the program's library-based needs. The library representative will then prepare a written assessment of its ability to meet those needs. In the event that the library's holdings are insufficient to support the proposed program, the evaluation will include a budget for additional support.

Please allow 3 weeks for this evaluation to occur. For this reason, it is required that the library evaluation be taken into account when developing the departmental review process timeline. If the evaluation shows the need for additional expenditures, further discussion by the library representative with the appropriate administrators will be necessary before the proposal is submitted for final review.

This form must be included with the proposal that is submitted to the Provost's Office.

New Program Title: _____

Department Submitting Proposal: _____

Contact Person/Phone: _____

Date of meeting with Bibliographer: _____

Signature of Faculty:

_____ Date: _____

Signature of Library Director or Bibliographer:

_____ Date: _____

This section to be filled out by the Bibliographer.

- Existing library resources are sufficient to meet program needs as outlined in the proposal.
- Existing library resources are not sufficient to meet program needs as outlined in the proposal.
- Library evaluation form is attached.