

Expedited Procedure for New Program Consideration in the Public Sector

The primary goal of an expedited review process is to decrease the amount of time needed for Board staff review of new programs while still assuring that program quality, need, demand, resources, and capacity are demonstrated. The procedure for an expedited review of new program proposals applies only to programs aligned with the mission of an institution and specifically identified as mission priority programs in a Board-approved state or community college implementation plan.

For campuses of the University of Massachusetts, Final applications for new programs received from the University and approved by the University Board of Trustees will normally be considered under the expedited procedure. New programs being proposed by campuses of the University undergo a system-level review at the President's office to demonstrate the relationship of the proposed program to the mission and strategic priorities of the campus. A Preliminary Application is circulated for comment to the Provosts of all University campuses as well as to the Chancellor of the Board of Higher Education. Upon review, the President advises the campus Chancellor as to whether to proceed with a Final Application. All programs must then undergo an external review. This process parallels the approval of implementation plans for the state and community colleges.

Application Procedures and Guidelines

Prior to Submission of an Application

Development of the Proposal: An institution should develop new program proposals through appropriate campus-based academic governance processes and within the context of its mission statement and implementation plan. (Preliminary Applications as required by the President's Office of the University shall be considered as comparable to the state and community college's implementation plan.) Institutional representatives are strongly encouraged to meet with BHE staff in the early stages of program development to discuss the proposed program and the documentation and supporting information necessary for a timely review. Approval by the local Board of Trustees (or the University Board of Trustees for University programs) is required prior to submission to the Board of Higher Education.

Letter of Intent: A two to three page letter of intent should be submitted by the President addressed to the DHE Commissioner via awilliams@bhe.mass.edu, at least one month prior to the submission of a complete application. The letter should provide a fair and succinct description and rationale for the proposed degree program and demonstrate that the program is specified in the campus implementation plan. Specifically, the letter should address the extent to which

there is a need for the degree program (including why existing programs at other public or private institutions within the campus' service area cannot meet this need.) The letter of intent should follow the format of the proposal outline. An outline of the proposed curriculum with course titles and credits should be attached. This letter and curriculum will be circulated to all public campuses for review for twenty business days so that campuses can express concerns as well as consider the potential for collaboration. As with all applications for new degree programs, the document will also be circulated to the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Massachusetts (AICUM) and to other appropriate parties. All responses will be shared with the applicant institution for its review and comment.

External Review: Prior to submission of the application, the proposed program must be evaluated by at least two external reviewers. The institution may decide whether the review should be a paper or on-site review. Questions for reviewers are provided by the Board and may be supplemented by the institution. The reviewers' report and the institution's response to the report must be submitted to the Board as part of the expedited application. The following should guide the selection of reviewers:

- Reviewers will be selected by the institution and approved by BHE staff.
- Reviewers shall be selected from among professionals with appropriate credentials and demonstrated professional experience in college-level teaching, research, and administration within institutions of higher education.
- Non-educator professionals and practitioners from appropriate fields may also be included.
- Reviewers shall have a disinterested professional commitment to the assignment of evaluation and to the task of rendering objective findings and recommendations based upon empirical evidence and informed judgments.
- No person shall serve on a visiting committee who has a present or recent official or unofficial connection with the institution or program under review or who the Board has reason to believe has independent or pecuniary interest in the outcome of the Board's final action.

Submission of Application and Review Procedures

Timetable for review: Under an expedited review, proposed programs will be reviewed by staff and forwarded to the Board for action within 30 business days or at the next Board meeting following the 30-business day period. The 30- business day timetable will begin as of the date of determination of completeness of the application by BHE staff. The determination of whether a proposal is complete shall be made no later than 15 business days following receipt of an expedited application.

Application Submission: Complete applications for expedited review are to be submitted during the period August 15-April 15. This period considers the schedule of Board meetings to ensure that programs may be approved within 30 business days or at the next Board meeting, if no meeting is scheduled within the two-month period.

Review Criteria: A proposed new academic program under the expedited review is evaluated by the Board on the basis of consistency with relevant academic standards, need, ability to mount the program, resources, and quality.

Board Consideration: Actions taken by the Board will continue to include Approval, Disapproval, Deferral, or Acknowledgement of Institution Waiver.

After Program Approval

Results Report: Each program receiving approval will be asked to report back to the Board one year after graduating its first class addressing its success in reaching program goals and objectives specifically in the areas of enrollment, retention, curriculum, faculty resources and program effectiveness.

Implementation of New Program: As with other program approvals, implementation of a new academic program normally will occur no later than the second fall semester following BHE approval. If implementation is delayed beyond that time, the institution is to provide an explanation to the Chancellor to either request a new implementation date or indicate the institution's decision not to offer the program. The BHE will act by vote on a new implementation date.

Guidelines for Expedited Program Consideration

Application: An application for expedited review should include the following:

I. PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

- Letter of Intent (two to three pages) with attached curriculum
- -Process for developing the proposed program
- Board of Trustees approval

II. PURPOSE AND GOALS

- Program link with campus mission priorities
- Program purpose
- Knowledge and skills to be acquired by program graduates
- Goals and demonstrable objectives for first five years of proposed program
- Strategies for their achievement
- Program assessment methods designed to ensure its continuing quality and effectiveness
- Measures or benchmarks to determine the accomplishment of program goals

III. NEED FOR THE PROGRAM

- Evidence of student demand
- Evidence of current career opportunities
- Identify similarities and differences of proposed program with other existing programs in the system and with independent institutions in geographical proximity to the institution.

IV. CURRICULUM

- Complete description of the curriculum
- Explain the program's academic integrity and how the proposed curriculum adequately covers the subject areas
- Summary display of credits by course category - e.g., major, cognate areas, general education and electives; Identify which courses are new or to be developed; Semester-by-semester sequence of courses
- Course descriptions
- Number of credits required to complete program
- Information concerning certification, licensures and specialized accreditation, if appropriate
- Describe procedures and arrangements for independent work, internship or clinical placement arrangements, if applicable

- Describe role and membership of external advisory committee, if applicable

V. FACULTY

- Identify current faculty and include vitae
- Display positions to be filled with qualifications

VI. STUDENTS

- Estimated enrollment first year (full-time/part-time)
- Estimated enrollment first year of full implementation (full-time/part-time)
- Students to be served
- Admission criteria for first-year and transfer students
- Expected time from admission to graduation
- Projected degree completion rates
- Transferability of program participants' credits to other institutions
- Parties and terms of transfer articulation agreements

VII. ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION

- Describe the organizational structure for administration and operation of proposed program

VIII. RESOURCES

A narrative and budget display reflecting comprehensive resource data, including the **number, type and costs associated with the new program**, for the first year of operation and for the year of full implementation.

- Faculty and staff
- Instructional materials (including library resources)
- Equipment and facilities
- Field and clinical resources, if applicable

IX. EXTERNAL REVIEW

- The report of the external evaluation of the design and substance of the proposed program and the capability of the institution to effectively initiate and sustain the program at an acceptable standard of quality.
- The institution's response to the report.