

COORDINATING COMMISSION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
STATE OF NEBRASKA

**GUIDELINES
for Submitting
PROPOSALS FOR NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS
and NEW ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS¹**

INTRODUCTION

Several parties share responsibility for the authorization of new instructional programs and new organizational units within public institutions in Nebraska, including the public colleges and universities, their governing boards, and the Commission. Goals common to the parties who authorize new programs are quality and the assurance of efficiencies in the use of institutional and state resources. Each party in the authorization process, however, emphasizes different aspects of a new instructional program or organizational unit. Each party in this process must be aware and respectful of the special emphasis and needs of the others. Effective review of proposals for new programs will result in stronger institutions and increased accountability to state government and the general public.

OBJECTIVES FOR REVIEW

Nebraska statutes require that the program approval criteria be designed to:

- (a) meet educational needs,
- (b) assure efficiency,
- (c) avoid unnecessary duplication,
- (d) assure adequacy of resources, and
- (e) assure new programs approved by the Commission meet minimum performance standards established by the Commission.

CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL, REVIEW, AND DISAPPROVAL

The Commission applies five primary criteria for the approval, review, and disapproval of programs:

1. Centrality to Role and Mission
2. Consistence with the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*
3. Evidence of Need and Demand
4. Adequacy of Resources
5. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication

Other considerations may apply. The Commission may also grant conditional approval or require that programs meet minimum performance standards.

¹ For definitions of programs, see Appendix A.

OPTIONAL PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

The purpose of optional preliminary notification is to provide an opportunity for the Commission to offer comments to the institutions regarding potential state-level issues and to inform other postsecondary institutions about proposed instructional programs to encourage collaboration and cooperation. The following are recommendations for submitting the notifications to the Commission:

- Include the title and a brief description of each new instructional program that is in an early stage of planning on the campus.
- Submit to the Commission twice each year:
 - Community colleges - July 1 and January 1
 - State colleges - September 1 and March 1
 - University - November 1 and May 1.

CONTENTS OF THE PROPOSAL: NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

The proposal consists of two sections: descriptive information and review criteria. The type of institutional response is identified below each section or subsection, including examples of evidence typically provided by institutions to assure consistency with the criteria.

I. Descriptive Information

- The name of the institution proposing the program
- The name of the program (major) proposed
- Degrees/credentials to be awarded graduates of the program (*e.g.*, diploma, BA, MA, etc.)
- Other programs offered in this field by this institution
- CIP code
- Administrative units for the program (*e.g.*, college, division, department, etc.)
- Proposed delivery site(s), and type(s) of delivery, if applicable
- Date approved by governing board
- Proposed date (term/year) the program will be initiated
- Description and purpose of the proposed program

II. Review Criteria

A. Centrality to Role and Mission

The institution offers assurances that the proposed program is consistent with its role and mission, as defined in the Nebraska statutes and in the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*.

B. Evidence of Need and Demand

1. Need for the program—in the institution, the community, the region, the state, or the nation

The institution provides information, such as data, surveys, or studies, regarding:

- workforce needs of business, industry, and employers,
- job and educational advancement opportunities for graduates, and
- potential for the program to contribute to society and economic development, where appropriate.

2. Demand for the program—the extent of student interest in the proposed program

The institution provides studies, surveys, or other evidence about student demand, including:

- the number of students expected to enroll in the program in each of the first five years of operation, and
- the minimum number of students required to make the program viable.

C. Adequacy of Resources

The institution offers assurances that the proposed program has resources adequate to develop and implement the program, provides a summary of the resources that will be available to the program, notes any special plans to encourage or maximize the efficient use of resources, and explains the basis on which a decision about the adequacy of the resources was made.

1. Faculty and Staff Resources

The institution provides:

- the number of faculty and staff required to implement the proposed program in the responsible unit, and
- any additional faculty and/or administrative and support staff required, including graduate assistants.

2. Physical Facilities

The institution describes:

- any additional physical facilities, such as classrooms, laboratories, and offices, that will be required for the program, and
- any plans for renovating existing facilities, constructing new facilities, or leasing additional facilities for the proposed program within the next ten years.

3. Instructional Equipment and Informational Resources

The institution describes the availability and needs related to informational resources and instructional equipment, including:

- computers,
- data services, and
- telecommunication connectivity.

4. Budget Projections—for the first five years of the program

The institution completes Tables 1 and 2 showing the projected incremental and total expenses, as well as the reallocation of existing resources and/or the revenue sources for those expenses. Appendix B provides instructions for displaying and explaining those projections.

D. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication

The institution:

- identifies other similar programs offered in the state by public or private institutions,
- identifies any similar programs offered within the states that are members of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, and
- for graduate and professional programs, identifies similar programs offered in contiguous states that would be reasonably accessible to Nebraska residents.

E. Consistency with the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education*

The institution explains how this program would enhance relevant statewide goals for education. This explanation may strengthen a program proposal, bolstering information regarding need and demand, or ameliorating concerns about unnecessary duplication. A summary of the major statewide goals can be found in Appendix C, including the use of instructional technology and cooperation and collaboration among institutions in the sharing of resources, facilities, and courses.

CONTENTS OF THE PROPOSAL: NEW ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

When the new program is a new organizational unit, including an “institute”, as defined herein, submission of the proposal need only include or address the following:

I. Descriptive Information

- The name of the institution proposing the new unit
- The name of the unit proposed
- Other programs offered in this field by this institution
- Administrative units for the new unit (*e.g.*, college, division, etc.)
- Date approved by the governing board
- Proposed date (term/year) the unit will be initiated
- Description and purpose of the proposed unit

II. Review Criteria (from above):

- A.
- B1. (third bullet only) and B2.
- C1., C2., and C4.
- E.

SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSAL

The Commission is aware that institutions provide their governing boards, and perhaps other state agencies, with evidence that may inform the Commission's review of proposals for new instructional programs or organizational units. Wishing to avail the institutions of any opportunity to reference similar information in existing documents, the Commission offers institutions a choice. Institutions may:

- develop proposals that correspond directly and sequentially to the Commission's criteria,
- append references to the criteria contained in accompanying documents, or electronically-transmitted documents compatible in format with the Commission's computer system, or documents filed previously with the Commission [Neb. Rev. Stat. § 85-1417 (Reissue 1999.)], or
- utilize a combination of these choices.