

Academic Program Development Process

Letter of Intent Guidelines

The Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost serves as the gatekeeper for the program proposal process. The Office of Academic Planning and Accountability (OAPA) within the provost office coordinates the required reviews with the university's Faculty Senate, Undergraduate and Graduate Council (if applicable), the UofL Board of Trustees, and the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE). All contact and interaction with CPE related to the program proposal process must be coordinated through OAPA. Any additional approvals and reports to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) are handled by OAPA staff. In addition to the CPE's degree program approval process, the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) must approve all teacher and school personnel certification programs.

All templates and information can be accessed on the program approval website:

<https://louisville.edu/oapa/program-approval/new-academic-program-approval-page/new-academic-program-approval>

**Submit materials for new programs to the
[Program Approval Service Account \(PROGAPPR@louisville.edu\)](mailto:PROGAPPR@louisville.edu)**

The Letter of Intent (LOI) is the initial stage of new program development for all proposed programs (undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, professional, certificates).

The LOI ensures that any program expansion serves to support the objectives of the university's strategic plan and the academic mission of the sponsoring unit and facilitates review and discussion of proposed programs with all appropriate parties **prior** to the start of the academic unit's internal approval process for new academic programs.

The Provost Proposal Review Committee reviews letter of intent (LOI) submissions and makes recommendations to the Provost. If the committee's recommendation is to proceed, the proponents are notified to begin the process of developing a complete program proposal. Otherwise, the LOI may either be placed on hold pending receipt of additional information or not recommended for further development.

Once the unit's internal program approval process is completed, the program proposal should be forwarded to the Program Approval Service Account (PROGAPPR@louisville.edu). OAPA staff will then begin the process for the required university constituent reviews and any related external reporting. The approval process includes several postings to CPE, state-wide review by other state institutions, and internal reviews by the Faculty Senate, Board of Trustees, and other groups as needed.

Once the CPE approval process begins, all approval steps (both internal and external) must be completed within 12 months. To optimize the CPE clock, OAPA will not initiate the CPE or the UofL internal approval processes until the program proposal and all supporting documentation have been received. OAPA's goal is to further streamline the process toward approval within 8-10 months from the receipt of the LOI. Attaining this goal will require timely internal communication and responsiveness from all those involved in the development of the program.

OAPA will notify the unit as milestones toward final approval are completed.

New Certificate Programs

New Certificate programs must also complete an LOI to initiate the approval process. Upon approval by the Provost Proposal Review Committee, the proposed Certificate program completes a different proposal template and undergoes internal university review only.

Letter of Intent—Template

The LOI must be approved by the unit dean (upon recommendation by the chairs of all departments that will participate or offer coursework in support of the proposed program) before it is submitted to the Provost Office.

Send the completed LOI to the New Program Approval Service Account (PROGAPPR@louisville.edu) to start the review process.

OUTLINE FOR THE LOI

Cover page that includes the following:

- Program Name
- Degree Designation
- Contact Person
- Department
- School/College
- Implementation date (Date program is projected to begin)
- Accreditation or licensure requirements (if applicable)
- Lead Fiscal Officer's Confirmation and Signature. The LOI must include a statement to confirm that the unit's lead fiscal officer has reviewed the budget calculations in the letter of intent.
- Dean's Confirmation and Signature. The LOI must include a statement to confirm the unit dean's approval of the letter of intent and the related financial commitments.

I. **Program Abstract** (250 words or less). Describe the program's focus and purpose, primary area of study, intended audience, academic level (undergraduate, graduate or professional), length of the program, goals/objectives, the rationale for the program, the skills or knowledge that students will acquire, and the relationship of the proposed program to the general field. This abstract may be used for external reporting and should provide a concise programmatic overview.

II. **Educational Program Objectives** - Description of the academic program, including:

- The objectives of the proposed program (i.e., what will the program prepare students for or help them to know and be able to do?)
- Admissions requirements (provide specifics)
- Graduation requirements (provide specifics)
- Curriculum. Please label new courses to be developed (general description of anticipated new courses)
- Potential for collaboration with other units at UofL and/or articulation with other institutions

III. **Linkage with the Mission and Strategic Plan.** Describe how the proposed program supports the university and unit mission/strategic plans.

IV. **Diversity and Inclusion.** How will the proposed program promote accessibility and equity for strategic populations (underrepresented minorities, underfinanced students)? Consider the intersectionality of strategic populations when addressing the inclusivity, diversity, and equity of the new program.

V. Student Demand. Specify evidence of student demand and projected enrollments for the first five years of the program.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Full-Time					
Part-Time					
Projected <u>new</u> tuition revenue (\$\$)					

VI. Market Demand. Explain why this program is needed. Workforce objectives or employment opportunities should be clearly delineated. Evidence of market demand is essential. Please also provide source for market demand information. Note if the proposed program replaces another program on campus.

VII. Employer Demand. If the program is designed for students to enter the workforce immediately, please complete the table in Appendix A at the end of this template.

VIII. Academic Demand

1. If this is not a program that is designed for students to enter the workforce immediately after graduation, please indicate the skills that graduates will attain, the types of graduate programs the graduates are most likely to attend, and the types of jobs graduates will eventually seek.
2. Will this program replace or enhance any existing programs(s) or tracks, concentrations, or specializations within an existing program? If yes, please specify.
3. In the table(s) below, provide information about similar programs in Kentucky based on CIP codes. Institutions may list other programs that are similar but may be classified in a different CIP code. A search for similar programs by CIP can be conducted at <https://dataportal.cpe.ky.gov/KYAcademicProgInventory.aspx>. Please contact the Program Approval and Review Coordinator, [Leslie Harper](#), for assistance in determining a CIP code. Copy the table below as needed to address all similar programs. Note: Although this information is required by CPE for degree programs, certificate programs should also complete this table so that they can better consider how competition will effect enrollment projections.

Similar Program 1:	
Institution:	
Program Name:	
Comparison of Objectives/Focus/Curriculum to Similar Programs: <i>Explain the differences in curriculum, focus, and/or objectives. If the proposed program curriculum does not differ substantially from existing programs, then <u>describe potential collaborations with other institutions.</u></i>	

<p>Comparison of Student Populations: Describe how your target student population is different from those at other institutions and explain how your program reaches this new population (e.g. the proposed program is completely online while other programs are face-to-face or hybrid).</p>	
<p>Access to Existing Programs: Explain how/why existing programs cannot reach your target population and/or provide evidence that existing programs do not have the capacity to meet current student demand (e.g. the number of students on enrollment waiting list).</p>	
<p>Feedback from Other Institutions: Summarize the feedback from colleagues at institutions with similar programs.</p>	

IX. Funding Sources

- 1. Will additional faculty be needed?** If yes, please explain how UofL will pay for the additional cost.
- 2. Faculty Workload**
Describe the impact on current faculty workloads. How will the new program be supported based on current faculty effort?
- 3. Budgetary rationale.** Provide the financial rationale or benefit to creating this new program. Explain how the program will be funded, what other programs will be affected, and why this program is considered both an efficient and effective use of funds.
- 4. Please provide a reasonable estimate of program expenditures related to marketing and outreach, as well as expenditures incurred by additional personnel needed to provide faculty training and/or assistance with instructional design.** This estimate should include expenditures incurred by other administrative units (e.g., Delphi Center for Teaching & Learning). Note that although this program will not bear the full burden of additional personnel in other administrative units, these costs should be considered.
- 5. Financial Resources and Program Impact.** The LOI should be developed without the expectation of special financial agreements with the Provost. If no internal allocation or reallocation has been committed to the new program, leave that row blank. Projected tuition revenues should go in the “Other revenues” row of the table (and label it as tuition).

Projected Revenues	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Five-year Total
General Funds (internal reallocation)						
Grants or Gifts, list each one						
Other revenues, list each one						

Total Projected Revenues						
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6. New Resource Requirements – Describe the need for any new or additional resources necessary to implement the proposal. Document the expected cost/expenditures in the table below:

Projected Expenses	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Five-year Total	
	#	Cost \$	#	Cost \$	#	Cost \$	#	Cost \$	#	Cost \$	#	Cost \$
Faculty Lines (full-time, adjunct or part-time faculty)												
Graduate Assistant Positions												
Library Support												
Facilities, technology or equipment												
Other (please describe below the table)*												
Total Projected Expenses												

**Please provide a reasonable estimate of program expenditures related to marketing and outreach, as well as expenditures incurred by additional personnel needed to provide faculty training and/or assistance with instructional design. This estimate should include expenditures incurred by other administrative units (e.g., Delphi Center for Teaching & Learning). Note that although this program will not bear the full burden of additional personnel in other administrative units, these costs should be considered.*

X. Online Delivery

Academic units wanting to create new online degrees or certificates will be required to complete the following section demonstrating that the program will meet the criteria for online programs at UofL. If you cannot agree to the terms outlined, please make a case for why you cannot or should not agree to certain elements, although the reasons must be substantiated with evidence. Units wishing to create a program that is not online do not need to complete this section.

- 1. Distance Education (describe plans)**
- 2. Library Resources.** Are adequate library resources available to support an online version of your program? Please provide a letter from the Dean of Libraries addressing their ability to support the program.
- 3. Please complete Appendix A.**
- 4. Online Program Best Practices**

Please indicate whether the academic unit will design the program in accordance with the following best practices for online programs by placing an “X” in the appropriate column. Please give serious consideration to each recommendation understanding that online programs are primarily intended for adults who are working, have a family, or other potential commitments or circumstances that would

make it difficult to attend a program on campus or a program with designated meeting times.

Yes	No	Online Program Best Practice
		8-week courses <i>For undergraduate programs, this would be major classes at a minimum although also recommended for general education classes</i>
		Allow part-time enrollment
		Admit students at least two times/year
		Asynchronous classes (no regular required meeting times)
		100% online (in-person experiences that can be done off-site do not affect this factor, meaning it would still be considered 100% online even if the student has to do in-person assignments where they live)
		Graduate-level programs will not require the GRE, GMAT or other standardized tests for admission

5. Quality Program Practices

Please indicate whether the academic unit will design the program in accordance with the following best practices for online programs by placing an "X" in the appropriate column.

Yes	No	Quality Program Practice
		Require all faculty who will be developing and/or teaching in the program to go through Delphi U or have gone through an equivalent training
		Require all faculty developing online courses to partner with an instructional designer in the Delphi Center and adhere to established deadlines for course creation

6. Academic units that cannot agree to recommendations in Sections 3 and 4 above should explain why and provide substantiation.

Appendix A. Employer Demand.

1. If the program is designed for students to enter the workforce immediately, please complete the following table (see resources below the table)
2. Please provide source of employer demand information and time frame for the projections:

Type of Job	Regional Avg Wage	Regional # of openings	Regional Growth Projections (%)	State Avg Wage	State # of openings	State Growth Projections (%)	National Avg Wage	National # of openings	National Growth Projections (%)

Employer Demand Resources:

- Please note the timeframe for the projections.
- [Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook](#)
 - [Kentucky Center for Statistics](#)
 - Kentucky, Bridging the Talent Gap
 Document - <https://www.bridgingthetalentgap.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/KY-Statewide.pdf>
 Interactive website: <https://bridgingthetalentgap.org/dashboards/>