

## **Program Proposal Guidance**

This document provides guidance on the preparation of proposals for programmatic changes to academic majors and minors and certificate programs. Uniform formats and contents of proposals expedite approval of programs by the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC). Proposals should be succinct with sufficient coverage of various portions to inform the AAC and others of new and revised programs' justifications, intents, and objectives; the exact nature of curricular changes; and new or additional resource requirements. Lengthy, verbose descriptions and arguments should be avoided whenever possible because many AAC members and administrators are busy with other duties.

### **Major/Minor Change Proposals**

#### **Requirements for an Undergraduate Major**

A student must have a minimum of 120 credit hours and 45 credit hours in the upper division to graduate. Most students meet these requirements by taking the statewide core courses, a major, and a minor. In some programs, the NMHU requirement for a minor is waived; however, the 120 and 45 hour requirements remain. Undergraduate majors are ultimately approved by the Board of Regents, after review by Academic Dean, Academic Affairs Committee, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

#### **Requirements for an Undergraduate Minor**

Most minors are within a single discipline and courses are those offered for majors. Typical number of credit hours required for a minor is 21-24.

#### **Requirements for a Graduate Major**

Graduate majors typically have about 34 hours of coursework with an additional professional paper or research thesis. Graduate majors are approved within NMHU by the same process as undergraduate majors. However, graduate major programs must get further approval from Higher Education Department groups.

### **Creation of Majors and/or Minors**

These are majors and minors that are new to NMHU. There are no current programs at NMHU that duplicate the proposed program of study. Whether similar programs once existed but were deleted needs to be verified through old catalogs and the Registrar.

**Proposals for creation of new Masters programs requires preparation following the format of the HED [http://infohost.nmt.edu/~grad/NMCGD/Submission\\_Process.pdf](http://infohost.nmt.edu/~grad/NMCGD/Submission_Process.pdf)**

### **Revision of Majors and/or Minors**

Revisions of majors and minors should be contemplated when:

1. There are changes to requirements for graduation from a major or completion of a minor
2. The content or courses of a major or minor are altered, such that a person in the “old” program will be unable to graduate from the “new” program
3. Required courses in a major or minor are changed
4. The name of the program on degrees or certificates is to be changed
5. There are a large number of courses to create, revise, or delete
6. Students are confused by major and/or minor requirements because of past and proposed course changes.

AAC is frequently confronted with course change proposals that make incremental changes of individual courses that eventually results in a de facto “revised” program. This should be avoided when possible. AAC may require that a Program Revision Proposal be submitted for programs that have changed, or seek to change, a number of courses.

### **Deletion of Majors and/or Minors**

Creation of a new major or minor may require the deletion of an extant major or minor. Deletion of programs is a separate action from approval of new programs in the AAC. Consequently, a separate proposal for deletion is required. Proposals for deletion can be abbreviated when submitted with a new or revised program proposal.

## **Certificate Program Proposals**

A certificate is a focused collection of courses consisting of a minimum of 12 core and elective credits which are successfully completed by students in a given discipline or a set of related disciplines. Students that successfully complete a certificate program will receive a completion statement on their official transcript and a formal certificate from New Mexico Highlands University. A certificate is not an official degree from New Mexico Highlands University. All the requirements for the certificate must be completed here at New Mexico Highlands University.

### **Requirements for Admission to a Certificate Program**

Certificate programs are available to students who are currently enrolled in NMHU degree programs and/or students that meet the admission criteria for a specific certificate program.

- Students applying to a certificate program must meet the respective program, department or school requirements for the certificate.
- Students who are currently enrolled in a degree seeking program at New Mexico Highlands University who wish to pursue a certificate must apply for admission to certificate program a year prior to their graduation. The student must apply to the Registrar for a “certificate status” and indicate that they wish to add a certificate program.
- The department or school will determine the minimum timeline for certificate completion.
- Each program, department or school will be responsible for submitting a proposal to Academic Affairs for any certificate to be offered by the university in accordance with Academic Affairs guidelines.

### **Program Change Procedure**

1. Initiation of a change in majors or minors will usually start within an academic unit. There should be open discussion amongst unit faculty about various aspects of the proposal in development. Course syllabi should be prepared by the faculty that will deliver the course whenever possible. Faculty within a discipline/department must vote on a program proposal prior to its submission to the respective school or college Dean.

In some instances (e.g., Nursing), programs are proposed that do not originate from an existing academic unit. In that case, the requirement for a discipline/department vote is skipped. However, it is then incumbent on the Dean to seek review and comment from University faculty knowledgeable in the general arena of the proposed program or to ensure that letters of support from outside the University are provided in the proposal.

2. The complete program change proposal should be submitted to the AAC in an electronic format. Program change proposals can be e-mailed to Germaine Alarcon at Alarcon\_g@nmhu.edu AAC is attempting to minimize the cost to units and AAC of paper copies. Original signature, hard-copies of cover pages are required to be submitted to Academic Affairs at the same time as the electronic package. Signatures through the Dean on all covers must be signed, or the package will be returned to the academic unit for completion. All required program change proposal contents and syllabi must be submitted as a single package. Lack of syllabi or proposal contents will result in AAC returning the entire package to a unit for completion. Once a proposal is submitted no further materials may be added to the proposal.

3. AAC will schedule a hearing on the proposal during a regular committee meeting (first and third Wednesdays at 3 pm during Fall and Spring semesters). Program change proposals will be heard in the order they are received by Academic Affairs.

4. A program representative will be asked to present the proposal to the AAC. Programs will not be considered, and the hearing rescheduled, should a representative from the academic unit of the proposal not be available to present the proposal. The representative should be sufficiently knowledgeable about the proposal to explain and/or defend the various proposal elements and contents.

5. The AAC shall vote on the proposal, if not in the presentation meeting, then in the next AAC meeting. In some cases, AAC may request that the proposal be modified or that additional materials be obtained prior to approval.

6. Approved proposals are forwarded to the administration for its approval. Some proposals may require approval by the Board of Regents.

## **Description of Program Change Proposal Contents**

Program proposals shall follow the outline provided. The following paragraphs describe the contents of each section, and, indicate whether contents are required or optional.

Overview and Course List: This section should give a brief overview of the major revision, additions, or deletions, and should provide side-by-side lists of the current and proposed curriculum.

Summary. This is a one page executive summary of the proposal. The summary should highlight the justifications, purposes, curriculum attributes, and resources of the proposed program change(s).

Program History (Optional). This section should be included when changes to program(s) can better be conceived by reviewers with knowledge of program history.

Program Description for Catalog. This section contains the title of the program and the description of the program for the catalog. The listings of courses are not included in this section of the proposal. This section should briefly describe the program such that someone with no knowledge of the discipline can understand the program's topic, potential careers, and other relevant factors.

Academic Goal(s) and Objective(s). This is a description of the goal(s) and objective(s) of the program. Goals and objectives should be tied to NMHU's mission and strategic plan elements. [Section not required in the case of program deletion.]

Justification. This section should explain and justify the need for the new program or for the revisions to the program. The justification for new and revised programs should include the following:

- The international, national, state, or NMHU need
- A list and description of similar existing programs in New Mexico and surrounding states
- The expected number of students, credit hours, and graduates

- The opportunities for employment and advanced education that graduates of this program can anticipate

Program deletions need only address the reason for the deletion.

Curriculum. The section should state the required courses and electives and any other requirements for the completion of the program. The proposed curriculum should appear as it will in the catalog. Course descriptions should be placed in an appendix. An important aspect of the curriculum is determining student learning outcomes. Consequently, the initial outcomes assessment plan should be included in this section.

Resource Requirements. Any new program will usually entail additional faculty, a change or expansion in library resources, and additional offices, classrooms, storage, and specialized spaces. Other costs to the University can occur because of adjunct or visiting faculty positions, software, and course materials. A program revision may be an expansion of an existing program, or require specialized resources to deliver the curriculum. Consequently, this section contains descriptions of the personnel, impacts to University infrastructure and operations, and financial costs.

Bibliography (optional) A bibliography should be included whenever references to technical or professional documents are discussed in the preceding sections.

Appendices. Appendices should be used for the following supporting material:

- Courses to create (include course change proposal covers and syllabi) [Required]
- Courses to revise (include course change covers, and, old and new syllabi) [Required]
- Courses to delete (include course change covers; syllabi optional) [Required]
- Text for program's catalog entry; description of program, course lists, and course descriptions [Required]
- Letters of support and ancillary Information [Optional]

## **Outline of sections in a program change proposal.**

### **(Program Deletions require only a justification for the deletion)**

Overview and side-by-side list of courses

Summary

Program History (optional)

Program Description for Catalog

Academic Goals and Objectives

Linkage to NMHU Mission and Strategic Plan

Justification

International, national, state, or NMHU need [Required]

Existing Programs in surrounding states, and, within New Mexico [Required]

Expected numbers of students, credit hour generation, and graduates [Required]

Opportunities for employment and advanced education [Required]

Unique characteristics of proposed major/minor [Optional]Other [Optional]

Curriculum

Proposed major and/or minor program – courses and requirements [Required]

Existing major/minor program to be deleted or revised [Required if applicable]

List of courses from units outside the major/minor discipline [Required]

Student academic outcomes and outcomes assessment plan [Required]

Discussion of proposed changes [Optional]

Lists of courses for creation, revision, and/or deletion [Optional, see appendices below]

Advising considerations [Optional]

Specialty accreditation or program certification [Optional]

Resource Requirements List of existing faculty that will contribute to the program [Required]

List of new faculty positions and estimated costs [If applicable]

Need for Adjunct faculty, visiting faculty, and teaching assistantships and estimated costs  
[If applicable]

Library holdings and subscriptions [Required]

Office, classroom, laboratory or studio, and other space needs [Required]

Specialty equipment and costs [If applicable]

Distance Education [If applicable]

Transportation [Optional]

Recruitment [Optional]

Bibliography [Optional]

Appendix: Courses to create (include course change proposal covers and syllabi) [Required]

Appendix: Courses to revise (include course change covers, and, old and new syllabi)  
[Required]

Appendix: Courses to delete (include course change covers; syllabi optional) [Required]

Appendix: Text for program's catalog entry; description of program, course lists, and course  
descriptions [Required]

Appendix: Letters of support, and, Ancillary Information [Optional]