

**GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT, REVISION, ASSESSMENT, REVIEW
AND APPROVAL OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

Approved by Graduate Council at a meeting on May 6, 2004

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I. General Information

This document provides guidelines for the development and approval of new graduate degree programs as well as for the review and revision of existing programs. The initiation, review, and approval of graduate programs requiring a new degree designation must have a more thorough and extensive processing than relatively minor changes in existing degree programs. New degree programs and substantial revisions requiring new resources in existing degree programs must have the approval of the Kansas Board of Regents, as well as internal approvals as described in the following sections. The revision of existing graduate programs can usually be achieved through the internal curriculum change process; however, such changes may be submitted for Regent's approval at the discretion of the Graduate Dean or other higher administrators. The assessment and review of existing programs occurs through two processes: internal program assessment and external review by the Kansas Board of Regents.

II. New Programs

- A. GENERAL – Graduate Programs requiring a new degree or a new designation of a previously authorized degree are required to follow the procedure outlined herein before proceeding with the admission of any students or the offering of courses which are used only in such programs. Pending final approval, any such programs, when providing information to potential students (or other constituents), shall indicate the fact that the programs have not received the required approvals and may not actually be initiated.
- B. PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL – In order to prevent unnecessary expenditure of effort in preparing formal proposals, the program area should consult with the Graduate Dean to determine if a preliminary proposal is needed. In general, a preliminary proposal, outlining the intended new graduate program, shall be prepared by the faculty interested in such a new program. This preliminary proposal should contain the following information:
1. Subject area of field of the proposed program with a brief description of the specialty(ies) planned.
 2. Title of the proposed new degree.
 3. Brief general description of the rationale and need for such a program, its academic validity, and its relationship to other such programs in this geographic region.
 4. Specific steps taken to coordinate the proposed program with other departments within the University whose work and programs overlap with the proposed program.
 5. Estimate of the new resources required.

In general, the preliminary proposal should contain sufficient information to allow reasonable judgments to be made by review groups and University administrators as to the feasibility of encouraging serious work on a formal proposal. The judgments made concerning proposed programs will include an assessment of the ability of the proposers to implement and continue a quality graduate program as

proposed, the relationship of the proposed new graduate program to other commitments of the proposers and to the University, an assessment of the need for the program, an analysis of program objectives with regard to the stated needs, a realistic assessment of the budgetary implications of the proposed program, and the ability of the University to support the program.

The group or department preparing the preliminary proposal should submit it to their Academic Dean for consideration and recommendation to the Graduate Dean. At this point, the Graduate Dean may recommend proceeding with the preparation of a regular proposal or the termination of further planning. In general, this is the final review for the preliminary proposal. However, should the proposers disagree with a recommendation (written) to terminate further work, formal appeal for final review may be made to the Graduate Council. Each Dean reviewing the preliminary proposal for a new graduate program should keep the originating department or group advised of the status of the proposal. Rejection of the proposal should contain information on the reason for such action and suggestions of whether or not to resubmit the preliminary proposal.

A faculty group initiating a new graduate program proposal should consider the realities of obtaining Regent's approval of the new program, together with their own technical abilities to implement and continue the program. Such serious and realistic consideration can prevent excessive waste of time and effort, as well as the minimization of frustration due to fruitless efforts.

The review bodies considering a preliminary proposal for a new graduate program should recognize that they are screening a preliminary document for feasibility purposes and should expedite their action. Should favorable recommendations be given the preliminary proposal, any special accreditation requirements, inter-university cooperative arrangements, specific internal coordination steps, etc., that are needed should be noted in writing to the originating group.

- C. **COMPLETE PROPOSAL** – Upon receipt of a favorable response from the Graduate Dean, the department or group submitting the preliminary proposal should then prepare a complete proposal with documentation as required by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR). The format for the proposal may be obtained from the Graduate Dean or from Appendix G in the Kansas Board of Regents' policy manual available on line at (www.kansasregents.org/academics/policy/index.html). Additional KBOR requirements for requesting new doctoral programs may also be obtained from the manual (Chapter II, section D-7).
- D. **APPROVAL PROCESS FOR NEW PROGRAMS** – Review and approval of the complete proposal follows the sequence below:
1. Department and College Committees and/or other internal College(s) reviews as appropriate

2. Academic Dean
3. Graduate Dean and Graduate Council
4. University Graduate Faculty
5. Vice President for Academic Affairs
6. President
7. Kansas Board of Regents (includes external review by three consultants with expenses paid by the institution for new PhD proposals)

Each group reviewing a proposal for a new graduate program should keep the originating department or group advised of the status of the proposal. Rejection of the proposal should contain information on the reason for such action and suggestions of whether or not to resubmit the proposal.

At any stage of the review, the body considering the proposal may call outside consultants or other specialists for evaluations and recommendations. Additionally, each body may make priority recommendations based upon their considered judgment and knowledge of programs in their fields. The final priority assignment is made by the President before submission to the Regents.

III. Revision of Existing Programs

- A. **MINOR REVISIONS** – Normal updating of the content of existing graduate programs requires some amount of course revision to provide current and relevant content. Such course changes are to be proposed by the Department Chair, Graduate Coordinator, or other locally responsible administrator, on standard University Curriculum Change forms. Review of the proposed changes must be accomplished by the Academic Dean after receiving any other internal approvals required by the individual college or school. The recommendations of the Academic Dean must accompany any change requests submitted for consideration by the Graduate Dean. Decisions of the Graduate Dean may be appealed to the Graduate Council. In those cases, the judgment of the Council is final.
- B. **ADDING CONCENTRATIONS** – Occasionally it is desirable to provide additional concentrations for students in an existing degree program. Such changes, which do not require additional resources or a change in an authorized degree, should be proposed in a manner that gives an overview of the essential features of the new concentration as well as the details of the concentration. Relationships to the existing program should also be described. Concentrations, consisting of 9-12 hours, may be offered within existing degree programs where the 9-12 credit hours constitute a coherent academic topic or theme.

Concentrations are proposed using the standard University Curriculum Change form. The proposal for the new concentration should have the review and approval of the groups detailed above in section III A. Concentrations must have the approval of the Graduate Dean and the Graduate Council. As required by the

State Board of Regents, only new concentrations in areas where degree programs do not already exist on the campus must be submitted for Regents approval.

IV. Assessment and Review of Existing Programs

- A. **GENERAL** – In order (a) to allow periodic evaluation of all graduate programs, (b) to provide wider internal dissemination of current information on the nature and status of our graduate programs, (c) to facilitate the academic planning process, and (d) to provide information for the accreditation needs of the University as well as the State Board of Regents, each graduate program of the University is to undergo review on a regularly scheduled basis. This review consists of two aspects: Program Review as outlined by the Kansas Board of Regents (approximately every 8 years) and annual Program Assessment as outlined by the Graduate School.
- B. **KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS PROGRAM REVIEW** – is a formal, external review process established by the Board in 1997. Each program completes a self-study document addressing the following criteria:
- 1) Centrality of the program to fulfilling the mission and role of the institution
 - 2) Quality of the program as assessed by the strengths, productivity and qualifications of the faculty
 - 3) Quality of the program as assessed by its curriculum and impact on students
 - 4) Demonstrated student need and employer demand for the program
 - 5) Service the program provides to the discipline, the university and beyond

Appendix A contains examples of program information and data that may be used to support each of the above mentioned criteria.

If the self-study includes both the graduate and undergraduate programs, the graduate information must be clearly separated from the undergraduate. The self-study is completed by the graduate faculty in the department and reviewed by the Academic Dean, Graduate Dean and Graduate Council before being submitted to Academic Affairs. The Graduate Dean (in consultation with the Graduate Council and the Academic Dean) prepares a summary evaluation of the program including recommendations for improving the quality of the program. Final recommendations concerning the program may range from strong endorsement for continuation to phasing out of the program. In any event, specific statements concerning the condition and status of the program will be made in writing to all concerned parties. In the event of a recommendation for suspension of the program, a final appeal may be made to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. In the event of a recommendation for program discontinuance, university policies and procedures will be followed (see Section 2.10 of the University Policies & Procedures Handbook). Copies of the final report submitted by the Academic Vice President to the KBOR may be obtained from that office.

After the BOR review process is completed each year, the Graduate Dean meets with the department chair and graduate coordinator (for each program completing the BOR review that year) to review recommendations and to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding. The memorandum contains goals (and timelines for accomplishing

the goals) jointly agreed upon by the coordinator, chair, graduate dean, and academic dean. Initial discussion of possible goals is based on the recommendations developed by the Graduate Dean, the Academic Dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research in the review process.

Additional information regarding the criteria and process for BOR program review may be obtained from the Graduate Dean.

- C. **GRADUATE SCHOOL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT** – is an internal process for program improvement completed by the graduate faculty in the program and administered by the graduate coordinator. This review is based on a position statement approved by the Graduate Council on 2/7/02 (see Appendix B). Each program has a program assessment plan on file in the Graduate School and submits an annual report on the status of the program.

The assessment plan (at a minimum) describes the following items (see Appendix C for further explanation of the items):

1. program mission
2. program constituents
3. program objectives
4. educational student outcomes
5. program objectives assessment activities
6. educational student outcomes assessment activities
7. feedback loop used by the faculty

The annual assessment report generally contains the following items :

1. results from data collection during the fiscal year (based on assessment plan)
2. record of dates the graduate faculty met to consider the assessment results
3. summary of the decisions made at the meetings by the faculty
4. summary of how assessment data was used to improve the program
5. the assessment plan for the next fiscal year
6. progress on items in the Memorandum of Understanding (if applicable)

The report is submitted to the Graduate Office by September 30 of each fiscal year. The report is reviewed by the Graduate Dean and the Graduate School Assessment Committee.

- D. **PROGRAM REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS** – While many groups may wish to offer graduate work, adequate resources to properly support all desired programs may not be available. Additionally, the University must document the nature and status of its academic programs for the State Board of Regents. Therefore, all programs should exhibit the following features:
1. Academic integrity.
 2. Sufficient demand as evidenced by the number of enrolled students and graduates.
 3. An adequate number of faculty qualified for and active in graduate education.

The program reviews should provide faculty and administrators with information that can serve as a basis for objective decisions relative to graduate programs. Factual information obtained as a part of such reviews may also provide support for administrators when they need to justify decisions that deviate from Regent's guidelines. Faculty should understand that suspension of some programs may be necessary when rational thought and review indicate that such action is in order.

The program reviews should be evaluative, not just descriptive. Rather than simply report data or describe the program, the graduate faculty make judgments about the quality of the program, the adequacy of its resources, and the student achievement of program outcomes. This evaluation (versus description) then leads to recommendations for changes in the program, resulting in actions taken by the faculty to improve the program. Thus short- and long-range planning becomes part of the review process.

The concept of 'quality' of a graduate program is not an easily measured feature in the sense of usual numerical measures. Nevertheless, it is essential that some form of evaluation of this feature be included in the review of graduate programs. Some of the aspects of programs which can be utilized as an indication of quality include:

1. On-going scholarly activity of the faculty and their recognition by peers in the field.
2. Ability to attract students because of the reputation for excellence of the program.
3. Quality of the students admitted to the program as measured by standardized national examinations, e.g., the Graduate Record Examinations.
4. Public and peer recognition through means such as publication of thesis work and research reports or artist recitals and exhibitions.
5. Activity of the students upon graduation, e.g., advanced work, notable professional contributions, or other scholarly activity.
6. Use of student assessment data to improve the program.

While other factors relative to quality of graduate programs are also appropriate, the groups reviewing specific graduate programs are expected to utilize the most appropriate factors for a given program.

Quantitative requirements for consideration in the review of graduate programs include:

1. Graduate School Guidelines:
Programs should have a sufficient number of majors and graduates for reviewers to consider the program a wise use of University funds, and a sufficient number of faculty to offer courses in a manner that supports timely progress of students through the program.
2. Board of Regent's Mandates:
 - a. Graduate Level I Programs should average each year (over a five year period) at least 20 majors, 5 graduates, and 6 faculty with the terminal degree.
 - b. Graduate Level II Programs should average each year (over a five-year period) at least 5 majors, 2 graduates, and 8 faculty with the terminal degree.

APPENDIX A

KBOR Program Review Content of Program Self-Study

1. Data sheets from Institutional Research.
2. Statement that describes how the program relates to the mission and role of the college and the university. (1-2 pages)
 - Address mission and role of both *graduate* and undergraduate programs
3. Statement that analyzes the quality of the program as assessed by the strengths, productivity, and qualifications of the faculty. (4 pages)
 - Indicate number (and percent) of faculty with graduate faculty membership
 - Analyze for the *graduate faculty* (as a subgroup of the faculty) their strengths, productivity and qualifications to be involved in graduate education
 - Indicate percent of *graduate* courses (in the graduate program) taught by full-time, tenured-track faculty.
 - State teacher/student ratio in the *graduate* program. Is this ratio conducive to quality graduate education?
 - How many *graduate* students are supported by external funding?
4. Statement that analyzes the quality of the program as assessed by the regularly offered curriculum and the effect of the curriculum on the students. (4 pages)
 - Are courses offered in proper sequencing with appropriate frequency to ensure timely student progress through the program?
 - What is the graduation rate from the program?
 - What is the average length of time to degree completion?
 - Do admitted students represent a diverse group?
 - What is the quality of admitted students (e.g., what are the entrance requirements and how many meet those requirements)?
 - Number of students presenting at National/Regional/State conferences.
 - State the program goals (student outcomes) and indicate how you know the students have/have not mastered those outcomes. Provide data on the number who master the outcomes.
 - Indicate how assessment data on student achievement of outcomes is used to improve the program.
 - Indicate compliance/noncompliance with curriculum guidelines set forth by appropriate national organization
 - Indicate compliance/noncompliance with accreditation guidelines/standards
5. Statement that addresses student needs, employer demands, and how well the program prepares students for their goals. (2 pages)
 - Provide data on student needs.
 - Provide data on employer demands for program graduates (e.g., number of graduate obtaining employment or going on to school, where employed, where going to school, survey data on demand, skills needed on the job).
 - Provide data on student satisfaction with the program.
 - Indicate how assessment data on student needs and employer demand is used to improve the program.
6. Statement that describes the service the program provides to the discipline, other programs at the university, the metropolitan area or Kansas, or other matters as appropriate. (2 pages)
7. Assessment of the program's cost effectiveness as measured by such matters as cost per credit hour, peer comparisons, and other indicators. (2 pages)

APPENDIX B

Position Statement on Assessing Graduate Programs

(Endorsed by Graduate Council on 2/7/02)

Why assess?

The purpose of program assessment is twofold:

- 1) To improve academic programs and
- 2) To demonstrate to the public that the assessed programs are deserving of continued or enhanced spending.

Program assessment is crucial to maintaining the quality of the university. Curricula must constantly change to keep up with expansion in knowledge. Advances in technology offer new opportunities for both research and instruction. As leaders in the creation, integration, application and distribution of knowledge, universities must demonstrate that they themselves are learning institutions. Program improvement directly benefits students, faculty, employers and other external constituencies, and is constantly in process. Assessment is merely a tool to document what is already taking place.

Assessment is also the major tool for demonstrating accountability for the expenditure of public funds. Legislators have become more sophisticated in asking about the outcomes of public spending. They want evidence that students are acquiring knowledge and skills in order to assure the public that monies spent on higher education are an investment in the future of Kansas. Appropriate responses to requests for assessment of student learning provide accountability to our various internal and external constituents.

What's involved in assessment?

1. Each program should begin by declaring its mission: The purpose and nature of the program. Program missions should be congruent with the stated missions of the university and college, and be tailored to the unique functions of the specific academic program.
2. Program constituents should be identified in relationship to the Mission Statement. While the mission articulates the purpose and nature of program activity, constituents represent the target of the activity, (i.e., for whom is the program designed).
3. Each program should have stated objectives that address the requirements of the discipline and identified constituencies.
4. Each program should have educational student outcomes that stipulate what the student will know, believe and be able to do upon graduation.
5. Each program should have a process for the review of program objectives and student outcomes. The process should include a plan for ongoing assessment of these objectives and outcomes which uses the results to improve the effectiveness of the program.
6. Assessment is essentially the responsibility of the program's graduate faculty. The chair, graduate coordinator and/or designated faculty member are responsible for the assessment process.

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY FOR THE GRADUATE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PROCESS

A. Program Mission

State the purpose and nature of the program. It should be congruent with the stated missions of the university and college, and be tailored to the unique functions of the specific academic program.

B. Program Constituents

State the target audience of the program (i.e., for whom is the program designed).

C. Program Objectives

State what the program will accomplish to administer the program effectively and efficiently.

Sample program objectives:

- The program will hire and maintain a highly qualified faculty.
- The program will acquire and maintain quality laboratories.
- Less than 5% of admitted students will be admitted on probation (versus admitted in full standing).
- The program will achieve an employment rate (or further schooling) of 80% for graduates of the program within 6 months after graduation.
- 95% of the students taking the licensure exam will pass on their first try.

D. Educational Student Outcomes

Stipulate what the student will know, believe and be able to do upon completion of the program.

Outcomes should be observable and measurable.

Sample educational student outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate competency in the critical and analytical skills necessary for research, teaching and writing.
- Students will demonstrate report writing and presentation skills.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to complete independent research.
- Students will demonstrate competency in their areas of specialty.
- Students will integrate the principles and activities of clinic intervention with comprehensive patient evaluations.
- Students will articulate the process of developing new knowledge within their specific discipline.

E. Assessment of Program Objectives

State the process for gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence about the effectiveness of the program in terms of stated program objectives.

F. Assessment of Educational Student Outcomes

State the process for gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence about the effectiveness of the program in terms of stated educational student outcomes.

G. Feedback Loop

Indicate the plan for ongoing assessment of program objectives and educational student outcomes which uses the assessment results to improve the effectiveness of the program. Faculty establish a plan and procedures to evaluate the evidence collected each year to make reasoned changes in the program whenever necessary to enhance or improve the program. This evidence is used to make decisions about program changes and ensure continuous improvement.