FCAS Guidelines for New and Online Major and Degree Proposals

Note: During the 2011-12 Washington state legislative session, the Legislature transferred the roles and responsibilities of the state’s Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) to a new agency, the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC). As part of that change, the Legislature also eliminated the HECB’s authority to approve new undergraduate majors and degrees at all the state’s public higher education institutions. While the WSAC retains authority over significant changes in location and mission of public higher education institutions, the Council does not have regulatory authority over individual academic programs. The guidelines below are intended to take the place for those previously required by the HECB for all proposals for new and online degrees and majors to be offered by the university. Section 28B.77.020 of the Revised Code of Washington explains in more detail the responsibilities of the WSAC.

A) 1503 Form – including rationale and proposed catalog copy

B) Proposal as attachment including the following:

- General Overview – Describe the program including any faculty planning or discussion as appropriate.

- Relationship to Institutional Role, Mission, and Program Priorities - Rationale for the program related to how it fits the priorities and mission of the unit and the university. Include discussion of how program may affect other offerings from the unit.

- Demand for Program – Describe indications of student interest in program, including surveys and other measures. Describe projected student career and employment outcomes.

- Relationship to Other Campuses – Similar programs at any of the three campuses. Include similar off-campus programs if relevant.

- Curriculum
  - General Education Requirements (whether existing or new)
  - Admission Requirements and admission process to the degree or major (If applicable, also describe how students will be admitted to the university.)
  - Program Requirements including core courses and program electives
    - Note: if specific courses from an outside department are program electives, the concurrence of the other department should be included in the proposal.
  - Continuation Policy
    Note: FCAS has policies concerning requiring specific course grades and cumulative GPAs for admission requirements, program requirements, and continuation policies. See UW Curriculum Office’s webpage for details.

- Transfer – General policies towards community college transfer including transfer associate degrees and/or specific transfer agreements.

- Faculty Governance – Describe how faculty will oversee the major or degree program.

- Student Services – Indicate the administrative home and discuss resources that will be leveraged or added for program such as libraries, advising, and outreach.
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- Accreditation – Describe relevant accreditation body and process if applicable.
- Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment – Describe learning goals (aka learning outcomes) for students in the major and how they will be assessed.
- Program Assessment – Describe what procedures will be used for assessing the program overall, including the timeline for reviews.

Additional Criteria for Approval of Provisional Online Program

Note: these are based on the guidelines on waiving residency in the University’s policy handbook: http://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/SGP/ScholRegCH114.html

In addition to form 1503, the criteria below apply to the extension of any undergraduate major or degree, whether new or as a version of an existing program, to an online delivery method. For proposed new online undergraduate majors or degrees, the criteria above apply as well. For the extension of an existing program, the proposal should document how the online version provides substantially the same education as the on-site program, and provide explanations for any differences in admission and program requirements. The proposal should also provide information about other differences in the criteria above, including demand, governance, infrastructure needs (such as advising or library resources), and student and program assessment.

- Describe how students will be admitted to the university and what, if any, restrictions will be placed on them.
- Rationale for offering a major or degree online based on audience, access, and/or unit academic mission
- Relationship of program to existing degree programs
- Justification of content delivery method and proposed oversight mechanisms to assure that institutional standards are met.
- Proposed review process for program in its six year as required by Scholastic Regulations which will be submitted to FCAS (Chapter 114.1.B.2). The department should propose the measures and process that the program will be evaluated on, but they should include qualitative and quantitative measures such as the following:
  - Comparisons of online program with on-site program, including
    - Graduation rates
    - Faculty satisfaction/retention/promotion/research productivity/service
  - Comparison of online courses with on-site courses, including
    - Course completion rates
    - Grade distributions
  - Student employment/career/licensure outcomes
  - Student assessment of online program via course evaluations and/or exit interviews