Approval Process for New Graduate and Professional Programs

Final Approval

Overview

New graduate and/or professional studies programs undergo a two-tiered process of review at Saint Mary’s College. The review involves two steps:

1. Provisional approval (previously called "Fast Track Approval") by the GPSEPC as well as School and College administration. After submitting a proposal for provisional approval, if the proposal is accepted, the new program can be implemented on a trial basis. The Guidelines for Provisional Approval can be found on the Saint Mary’s College Website.

2. Final approval (previously called "Initial Program Review"), involving a full review by GPSEPC, followed by the approval of the Academic Senate and College administration. This step requires the submission of a full proposal, similar to the self-study required for the Program Review Process. This document provides the guidelines for that proposal.

Guidelines for Final Approval

The purpose of the Final Approval process is three-fold. First, it is to provide the GPSEPC an opportunity to evaluate the overall value and relative success of the program after it was granted provisional approval by the GPSEPC. Further, this process also affords a formal opportunity to identify needs and argue for institutional support (e.g., new tenure track faculty, lab equipments, library resources). Finally, because the process is intended to include a self-evaluation to help maintain the highest standards of education, full department participation is expected.

The guidelines below offer a list of all the areas that should be addressed.

Proposal

Name of Proposed Degree or Program:
School:
Primary Contact Person:
Other Involved Faculty:
Date:

I. Introduction and Mission

A. What is the mission of your program?
B. How is your program consistent with the mission of the College?

C. Include a one to two paragraph history of your program.

D. Describe in one paragraph the process your program used to prepare your proposal.

E. What is your action plan for your program in the area of mission?

II. Curriculum

A. How does the program compare with its peers in the discipline in terms of curriculum (emphases, approaches, perspectives)?

B. How does the program compare with its peers in quantitative terms (e.g., number of students, course offerings, faculty size, facilities)?

C. Has your curriculum changed in substantive ways since Provisional Approval? If not, why not? If yes, how and why?

D. What are your program’s learning goals and outcomes? Have they changed since your last provisional approval? Explain.

E. Explain how you evaluate the degree to which your students achieve the educational goals of your program (i.e., learning outcomes). Provide evidence.

F. Have your measures of assessment changed since your last provisional approval? Explain.

G. Are there professional or accreditation standards in your field? Is your program accredited? Why or why not?

H. What is your response to recommendations made by your subject librarian in the “Review of library resources and information literacy” for your program?

I. Describe the results of your assessment of the educational effectiveness of the program, based on the learning goals and outcomes. Detail the ways in which feedback and assessment along the way have led to program enhancements or revisions.

J. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of your curriculum in the light of the information above. What are your conclusions?

K. What is your action plan for your program’s curriculum?
Please provide the following as supporting documents in Appendix D:

i. Sample syllabi with learning objectives. (Please make sure to include a statement on services for student with disabilities in the syllabus)
ii. List of courses & specializations
iii. Enrollments since the beginning of the program.

III. Student Outreach, Advising, and Services

A. What additional services do your provide your students beyond curriculum? (e.g., advising, student clubs, internships, alumni organizations, mentoring, networking).

B. How important are these services for student success and program viability?

C. What is your plan of action for student outreach, advising and services?

IV. Faculty

A. What are the faculty changes that have occurred in the last five years and how have they affected your program?

B. Do you have the faculty expertise to cover the programmatic and curricular needs?

C. What do you anticipate as your major faculty needs in the next five years?

D. Briefly discuss any challenges your faculty are facing since provisional approval, and if applicable, solutions you have already implemented?

E. What is your program’s approach to faculty mentoring, development and evaluation?

F. How is your program addressing issues of diversity? To what extent has it changed the way it operates due to faculty diversity? Explain.

G. Analyze your faculty strengths and weaknesses in the areas of teaching, scholarship and service. Please tell the committee about any special awards or recognition your faculty has received.

H. What is your plan of action with respect to the issues you raised in addressing A through G above? Please include any short and long range plans for faculty replacement because of retirements, reduced services, administrative assignments, and leave.
Please provide documentation of the following in Appendix E:

i  Number of faculty – tenure track, adjuncts, lecturers  
ii  Ratio of tenure track to non-tenure track  
iii  Ethnic diversity of faculty  
iv  Gender distribution of faculty  
v  Academic qualifications of faculty  
vi  Faculty participation in Seminar and Jan Term  
vii  Faculty curriculum vitae  

V. Program Infrastructure  

A. Analyze your program’s strengths and weaknesses with respect to its infrastructure. Issues that you may wish to cover in this section might include: student recruitment services, program budget, office space, administrative assistance, technical support, instructional materials and equipment, library collection and other learning resources, and information technology hardware, software and services.  

B. Does your program share any interdependencies with other programs at the College of which the College needs to be aware. For example, the program may be a prerequisite for other graduate programs.  

C. What is your plan of action regarding the issues identified above?  

VI. Summary Plan of Action  

Please extract the action items and recommendations from the body of the report and list them here in order of priority with notes regarding the resources needed, the likely consequences to the program of not implementing each action item, barriers to implementation and the proposed timeline for completion.  

VII. Appendices  

A. Copy of College Catalog entry  
B. Brochures and/or advertising materials  
C. Review of Library Resources and Information Literacy  
   This is a service provided by the Library upon request.  
D. Supporting materials for Section II. Curriculum  
E. Supporting materials for Section IV. Faculty  
F. Other supporting materials deemed pertinent.