



MONTANA
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS HANDBOOK

PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC SUBMISSIONS
TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

CLAYTON T. CHRISTIAN, COMMISSIONER

2500 Broadway, PO Box 203201

Helena, MT 59620-3201

Phone (406) 444-6570

Fax (406) 444-1469

<http://www.mus.edu/>

Revised 4/14/2015

Contact:

Elizabeth Baker

(406) 444.0311

ebaker@montana.edu

Neil Moisey

(406) 444.0312

nmoisey@montana.edu

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DUE DATES AND TIMELINES

The most up to date Board of Regents (BOR) meeting schedule can be found at:

<http://mus.edu/board/meetings/meetingschedule.asp>

The general submission deadlines and approval schedule for Academic Proposals is as follows:

- Academic Proposals are accepted for submission at March, May, September and November meetings
- Academic Proposals are due to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education 4 weeks before the meeting date.
- Regular agenda items are due 3 weeks before each meeting date.
- The memorandums containing academic proposals will be sent via email to the Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) 3 weeks before each meeting.
- The CAO conference call will be held 1 week after the memorandums are sent.
- CAOs will have until the Friday following the CAO call to voice any final concerns regarding the Academic Proposals.
- Agenda materials are posted to the BOR website 1 week before each meeting date.
- The ARSA Committee conference call will take place the Monday before the Board meeting.
- All submission deadlines fall on Wednesdays. If the deadline falls on a holiday, proposals are due on the preceding working day.

For a complete timeline please visit: http://mus.edu/che/arsa/Forms/ARSA_Approval_Schedule.pdf

Note: *These deadlines are established for the submission of agenda items to OCHE only. The two flagship institutions are responsible for making sure their respective campuses are aware of any campus submission deadlines that fall before OCHE deadlines.*

Following the Board of Regents meeting, the Deputy Commissioner for Academic, Research and Student Affairs will send out a memo with his signature notifying the President and Chief Academic Officer of the items approved for their campus.

ACADEMIC PROPOSALS

Determining the Level of Involvement of the Board

Three factors determine the level to which the Board of Regents becomes directly and formally involved in the process of approving or denying the development, implementation, suspension and/or elimination of academic and research programs:

1. The degree to which the proposed program fits an institution's approved mission
2. The relationship between resources needed, resources available, and the projected benefit
3. The significance of programmatic impact on other institutions within the Montana University System and community colleges

The Academic Proposal Approval Process includes the following five types of submissions:

- A. [Notifications](#) – reported to the Board of Regents
 1. [Moratoriums](#)
 - a.) [Placement into](#)
 - b.) [Withdrawal from](#)
 2. [Intent to terminate](#)
 3. [Campus certificates-CAS/AAS \(29 or fewer credits\)](#)
 4. [BAS/AA/AS programs of study](#)
- B. [Level I](#) – approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education
 1. [Temporary Approval of CAS/AAS Proposals](#)
- C. [Level I with Level II documentation](#) – approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education
- D. [Level II](#) – approved by the Board of Regents
- E. [Campus Mission and Core Themes](#) – approved by the Board of Regents
 1. [Mission Statement Review](#)
 2. [Mission Statement Revision](#)
 3. [Revision of Core Themes](#)
- F. [Academic Program Reviews](#)

A. Notifications – Moratoriums, Intent to Terminate, Certificates (29 credits or less)

Notifications are announcements to the BOR and, as such, are part of the public record. They include the following types of proposals:

1. Moratoriums

a.) Placement of Program into Moratorium

Campus leaders may decide that they cannot offer the program under the current circumstances, but are reluctant to terminate the program entirely. This could be due to revision of curriculum needs, declines in student demand, faculty availability, workforce need, etc. The Board of Regents defers to local decisions by allowing the campus to put the program into moratorium without regent approval. The program in moratorium remains in the college catalog, and courses needed to continue the progression of existing students to degree completion are provided, but no new students are admitted

to the program. The Board of Regents does impose two restrictions for programs placed in moratorium:

- The campus must formally notify the Board of Regents of the decision to put the program into moratorium and the effective date of that decision. This notification “starts the clock” on the ultimate decision to terminate the program, which remains with the Board of Regents. It is the responsibility of the campus to monitor their programs in moratorium.
- If the campus has not withdrawn the program from moratorium within three years of the effective date of the moratorium, the Board of Regents considers the program to be withdrawn. However, the Board’s concerns about adequate notice to and alternatives for key stakeholders remain.

Placement of programs into moratorium should be submitted with an [Item Template](#) and [Academic Proposal Request Form](#).

b.) Withdrawal from Moratorium

To withdraw a program from moratorium the campus must submit notice to the BOR of their intent to reinstate the program.

This notification is to be submitted with an [Item Template](#) and [Academic Proposal Request Form](#).

2. Intent to Terminate

In order to terminate a program, adequate notice of the decision to terminate must be disseminated to the public, and key stakeholders – faculty, business/industry and students – must have the opportunity to respond to the arguments for elimination of the program and make alternative plans. For this reason, termination of the above mentioned items is a two-meeting process. The first meeting provides notice to the Board and the public while a subsequent meeting effectively terminates the major, minor, option, or certificate.

A campus must notify OCHE of their intent to terminate an existing major, minor, option or certificate as Step 1 of the termination process. At this time, Phase I of the Program Termination Checklist is required for submission. To complete the termination process the campus must file a Level I proposal to terminate the existing major, minor, option or certificate at a subsequent meeting.

This notification requires an [Item Template](#), [Academic Proposal Request Form](#) and Phase I of the [Program Termination Checklist](#).

3. Campus Certificates, CAS/AAS

Certificate programs of 29 credits or fewer may be implemented by the individual campuses of the Montana university system without approval by the Board of Regents. All such certificates shall be reported to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, however, and listed on the official degree and program inventory of the system.

These notifications require an [Item Template](#), [Academic Proposal Request Form](#) and possibly additional supporting materials.

4. BAS/AA/AS Area of Study

Units of the MUS are authorized to award the Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree, a specialized baccalaureate degree that builds on an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree. Because an AAS degree is ordinarily considered a terminal credential, guidelines for the BAS degree are appropriate. Areas of concentration are customized to connect the student's AAS degree and educational/occupational goals. The Associate of Arts (A.A.) and Associate of Science (A.S.) degrees are general transfer degrees. Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees do not officially include a major or minor course of study. All areas of study within BAS/AA/AS degrees shall be reported to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, however, and listed on the official degree and program inventory of the system.

These notifications require an [Item Template](#), [Academic Proposal Request Form](#) and possibly additional supporting materials.

The title of all notifications should always begin as follows: **Notification of...**

For example: Notification of intent to terminate the English Major

B. Level I Proposals

Level I Proposals are those that may be approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education or the designee. The approval of such proposals will be conveyed to the Board of Regents at the next regular meeting of the board. Level I items include campus initiatives typically characterized by minimal costs, clear adherence to approved campus mission, and the absence of significant programmatic impact on other institutions within the Montana University System and community colleges. The following are Level I Proposals:

1. Re-titling an existing major, minor, option or certificate
2. Adding a new minor or certificate where there is a major or where there is an option in a major (Curriculum Proposal Form)
3. Revising a program (Curriculum Proposal Form)
4. Distance or online delivery of previously authorized degree or certificate programs
5. Terminating an existing major, minor, option, or certificate – Step 2 (Completed Program Termination Checklist)

*A new item number should be created for Step 2 of the Termination Process

All Level I proposals should include the [Item Template](#), an [Academic Proposal Request Form](#), specific requested materials such as a [Curriculum Proposal Form](#) as noted and possibly additional supporting materials.

The title of all proposals should always begin as follows: **Request for authorization to...**

For example: Request for authorization to establish a Minor in Chemistry

1. Temporary Approval of CAS/AAS Proposals

The Commissioner can grant temporary approval for CAS or AAS (Certificate of Applied Science Degree or Associate of Applied Science Degree) Programs that are offered in cooperation with and/or at the request of private or public sector partners when the decision point to offer the program is not consistent with the regular Board of Regents program approval process.

Temporary Certificate proposals should be submitted as Level I proposals and include an [Item Template](#), [Academic Proposal Request Form](#) and any additional supporting materials. Level I approval for programs under this provision is limited to two years. Continuation of a program beyond the two years will require the normal Level II program approval process.

C. Level I with Level II Documentation

Level I proposals that have more significant impacts on curriculum, budgets and or other programs are required to submit the Curriculum Proposal Form so that this documentation can be circulated to all campus CAOs in advance. The Commissioner or designee may propose additional items for inclusion in the Level I process. For these items to move forward, the Commissioner or designee must reach consensus with the CAOs. When a consensus is not reached, the Commissioner or designee will move the item to the Level II review process. Level I with Level II Documentation Proposals are as follows:

1. Consolidating existing programs and/or degrees

Level I with Level II Documentation Proposals require an [Item Template](#), [Academic Proposal Request Form](#), and [Curriculum Proposal Form](#) for submission.

D. Level II Proposals

Level II proposals require approval of the Board of Regents. These proposals entail more substantive additions to, alterations in, or termination of programs, structures, or administrative or academic entities typically characterized by the (a) addition, reassignment, or elimination of personnel, facilities, or courses of instruction; (b) rearrangement of budgets, cost centers, funding sources; and (c) changes which by implication could impact other campuses within the Montana University System and Community Colleges. The following are Level II Proposals:

1. Retitling a degree (ex. B.A. to B.F.A.);
2. Adding a new minor or certificate where there is no major or no option in a major
3. Establishing a new degree or adding a major or option to an existing degree
4. Forming, eliminating or consolidating a college, division, school, department, institute, bureau, center, station, laboratory or similar unity
5. Re-titling a college, division, school, department, institute, bureau, center, station, laboratory or similar unit

Level II proposals come to the Board of Regents in a two meeting format. At the first meeting, these items appear as informational. At the next regular meeting, the Level II Items are listed on the consent agenda for approval by the Board of Regents. These items retain their original number throughout the two meeting process. Typically, no changes are made to these items unless specifically requested.

Level II proposals require an [Item Template](#), [Academic Proposal Request Form](#), and either a [Curriculum Proposal Form](#) or [Center Proposal Form](#) for submission (except when retitling or eliminating one of the above mentioned items).

The title of all proposals should always begin as follows: **Request for authorization to...**

For example: Request for authorization to establish a department of History

Policy Guidelines on Proposing New Research Centers and Institutes

The objective of this policy statement is to promote the orderly development of Research Centers/ Institutes through a written policy, including the acknowledgment of responsibilities of individuals and administrative units in their operation and appropriate notification to other MUS units about their function and operation. Research Centers/Institutes are consistent with and further the mission of an Institution and are established to promote scholarly activity and/or support teaching, research, diversity or the outreach mission of the institution.

Research Centers/Institutes differ from one another in focus, scope, and staffing, but each contribute in unique ways to the common goals of expanding knowledge, generating new discoveries and/or having a positive impact on society through informing policy and systemic change. Communities of researchers and staff in Research Centers/Institutes provide a stimulating environment that encourages early researchers and challenges the experienced researcher. Research Centers/Institutes also contribute to the education and training of the researchers of the future by serving as learning environments for students. Interdisciplinary collaborations are promoted by the Research Centers/Institutes both within the Institution and among MUS Institutions.

Definitions

An exact definition of a Center or an Institute is difficult to construct, due to the varied existing uses of the terms within the MUS, but the following working definitions should suffice for establishing these guidelines. Generally, a Research Center/Institute is created to establish, organize and set into motion a scholarly research or education program that exceeds the interests of a single individual, department or administrative unit. Administered by a "Director," Centers/Institutes serve as a catalyst, a place of concentrated activity and a focus for interdisciplinary scholarly activity.

Research Center - is a single or multi-disciplinary unit, organized to conduct research around a specific theme or topic, and may have some limited involvement in undergraduate and/or graduate education and/or community outreach activities. Centers are characterized by less autonomy and less independence relative to institutes and generally have a narrower scope of research interests, but may also include educational, clinical and/or community outreach activities of a narrow scope. Centers are typically focused on a specific issue, project, or policy concern but often encompass interdisciplinary work spanning various academic fields. The Center's lifetime is often limited by the time and financial commitment to completing the particular project. Centers are typically located within departments, institutes, and/or schools/colleges. Center directors typically report to chairs, deans and/or institute directors, but deans and/or chairs may recommend an alternative reporting structure, such as a 'liaison committee' or advisory board (if required by the sponsor), consisting of multiple chairs or directors from participating departments or divisions. Directors of interdisciplinary centers in which multiple schools/colleges are involved generally report to the dean of the school/college in which the Center director has his/her primary appointment.

Research Institute - is a single or multi-disciplinary unit which is organized primarily to conduct research, but may also be actively involved in undergraduate and/or graduate education, community outreach, or clinical services. Such entities are characterized by organizational stability, program autonomy, and a broad program of study. Typically, institute funding is derived from multiple sources rather than a single source (e.g., one grant). They are expected to have substantial external funding, a dedicated administrative staff, commitments from faculty (FTEs), evidence of long-term sustainability, a program of research training and a substantial infrastructure that may include organized fund-raising (advancement) activities. Faculty and research/teaching staff in institutes usually participate in interdisciplinary graduate/undergraduate programs. Directors of Research Institutes based within a single school/college typically report to the dean or chair, although the dean and/or chair may recommend an alternative reporting structure. Directors of interdisciplinary institutes in which multiple schools/colleges are substantively involved, and for which substantial central resources (matching central funds) are committed, may have a dual line of reporting; for example, to a vice provost and (an) appropriate dean(s).

E. Campus Mission and Core Themes

1. Mission Statement Review

Board of Regents [Policy 219 – Mission Statements; Montana University System](#) requires that the Board review campus’ mission statements every three years.

Mission reviews are to be submitted as an Action item with the [Item Template](#) and [Mission Statement Review Template](#).

Mission Review Schedule

September 2017	MSU Bozeman UM Missoula
November 2017	MT Tech, MSU Billings, MSU Northern, UM Western
March 2017	Helena College UM Great Falls College MSU

2. Mission Statement Revisions

Board of Regents’ [Policy 303.1 – Curriculum Proposals](#) states that any revision of an institutional mission shall be reviewed and approved by the Board of Regents.

Mission revisions are to be submitted as an Action item using the [Item Template](#) and any additional supporting documentation.

3. Revision of Core Themes

The revision of an institutions core themes shall be reviewed and approved by the Board of Regents.

The revision of core themes shall be submitted as an Action item using the [Item Template](#).

F. Academic Program Reviews

All of the institutions that make up the Montana University System, except the three community colleges, are required by [Board Policy 303.3](#) to conduct internal reviews of their academic programs to ensure program quality and effective stewardship of resources. All programs listed in the MUS official degree and program inventory, except for certificates of 29 credits or less, must be reviewed at least once every seven years. The review schedules are filed with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and can be found at <http://mus.edu/che/arsa/ProgramReview/ProgramReview.asp>.

Academic Program Reviews for the previous academic year are to be submitted at each November BOR meeting according to the regular item schedule. The reviews are considered as an information item and should be submitted using the [Academic Program Review Template](#). An Item Template is NOT required for submission of Program Reviews.

FORMATTING AGENDA ITEMS

Agenda items should ALWAYS be prepared using one of the templates listed below and available online at <http://mus.edu/board/meetings/Forms/FormsInfo.asp>.

All items should include at least the Item Template. All supporting materials must be listed at the bottom of the Item Template under ATTACHMENTS. Additional materials must include the item number and a description of the document in the header, for example:

ITEM #147-1000-R0510
Attachment #1-Letter of Support

Please follow the formatting tips below for all items and supporting materials:

- Submit materials in Word.doc format when possible
- Use Calibri font size 11 (the templates and forms are defaulted to this)
- Utilize the least amount of pages necessary for easier displaying purposes-pay attention to spacing and margins

If you are unclear on formatting specifics look at an item submitted at a past meeting for examples

Please save the items using the item number, utilizing hyphens rather than periods. The filename for supporting materials should include the item number and a brief notation of what the document is. Please see below for examples of the filenames using an example from above:

Item Template	147-1000-R0510
Academic Proposal Request Form	147-1000-R0510_RF
Curriculum Proposal	147-1000-R0510_Curr
Program Termination Checklist	147-1000-R0510_Term
Attachment #1	147-1000-R0510_A1

FORMS AND TEMPLATES

[Item Template](#)

[Academic Proposal Request Form](#)

[Curriculum Proposal Form](#)

[Institute/Center Proposal Form](#)

[Program Termination Checklist](#)

[Mission Review Template](#)

[Academic Program Review Template](#)