



INNOVATION FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET

Office of the Provost

## PROCEDURES FOR NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & PROGRAM REVISIONS

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# I. An Overview of the Process

## A. Introduction

The University of New England (UNE) encourages the ongoing development of and revisions to majors/programs, minors, concentrations, specializations, tracks, certificates, and badges, knowing that they are critical components to programmatic and institutional growth.

This handbook describes the required process faculty, administrators, and other stakeholders need to follow to propose ideas and shepherd them through to approval and implementation. Each step—from initial idea to market analysis and preliminary proposal to feasibility study and pro forma budget—requires various levels of review. Most ideas arise from faculty and/or administrators in a program, department, school, or college. University and college faculty and administrators assess the proposals through a shared governance process.

This handbook uses the word “programs” to refer to all majors/programs, minors, concentrations, specializations, tracks, certificates, and badges. For information on non-credit bearing offerings and their development process at UNE, see the next section. Also, for definitions of all of the various types of programs referenced in this handbook, see Table 1.

Typically, the review entails three phases:

- 1) Lead planners need to first attain the dean’s and provost’s approval of the program idea (Table 5).
- 2) Upon approval of the program idea, and under the guidance of the applicable dean, lead planners complete a market analysis and preliminary proposal (Table 6).
- 3) Upon approval of the market analysis and preliminary proposal, lead planners develop a feasibility study and related pro forma budget (Table 7). Use the university’s template to complete the pro forma budget.

As the market analysis and preliminary proposal, and feasibility study and pro forma budget move through the various levels of review, UNE administrative offices, including the Office of Financial Planning and Analysis (in the Office of Finance and Administration), Admissions, the Registrar, Student Financial Services, Student Affairs, Library Services, Student Academic Success Center (SASC), and Information Technology Services (ITS), need to be consulted in the planning process. Some offices, such as Financial Planning and Analysis, Admissions, and Student Financial Services, need to provide support throughout the entire process. Other offices, including the Registrar (Table 8) as well as Admissions (Table 9), need to prepare for the changes as they get approved. Upon the program’s final approval, those offices also ensure the administrative details are completed and reflected in all relevant internal documents and externally-facing promotional materials.

Again, this handbook details the main steps to develop new programs and revise existing programs, yet each proposal might need to follow an individualized process that includes more or fewer steps than are outlined here. For example, new programs typically require a more comprehensive review

than existing programs that seek to make minor curricular and/or administrative revisions. An existing program that wants to establish a new admissions model or a new enrollment track might only need to complete a pro forma budget. Thus, a proposal may follow a different pathway to approval. To confirm the required steps of the approval process, lead planners should consult with the dean of the college that administratively houses or will potentially administratively house the program. The dean will then consult with the provost. Furthermore, all stakeholders should strive to maximize communication with others throughout the process so that any concerns, problems, or issues can be identified and addressed as early as possible to avoid delays.

### **1. A Note on Non-Credit Bearing Offerings**

Non-credit bearing offerings provide students with opportunities to learn a new skill or deepen existing skills, enrich their understanding of specific topics, and advance their personal or professional development. Such offerings might include, but are not limited to, continuing education courses, fellowships, certificates, or badges.

The development of non-credit bearing offerings (with the exception of badges\*) rests largely with individual programs and their college dean. It is within the disciplinary purview of the lead planners and the program, department, and/or school to identify and propose to their dean non-credit bearing opportunities for their related fields. Thus, lead planners who propose the offering need to confer with the dean to affirm the department's, school's, and college's capacity to run the offering. The dean decides whether to implement the offering. Generally, no further approval is required. Because non-credit bearing offerings do not lead to a degree, they do not require involvement of the Registrar or Financial Aid offices.

\*Please note that badge proposals need to undergo an established review and approval process. For information on the badging process, see [UNE Badging Program](#).

## **B. The Review Process**

See Appendix B for all of the tables and charts discussed in this section.

### **1. Levels of Review for Proposals (Tables 1-2)**

Tables 1 and 2 outline the level of review needed for typical proposals. Table 1 provides information on new program proposals; Table 2 on program revision proposals. Lead planners must involve applicable UNE offices, including Financial Planning and Analysis, Admissions, Registrar, Student Financial Services, Student Affairs, Library Services, SASC, ITS, Facilities Management, Office of Institutional Research and Data Analytics (OIRDA), and Institutional Advancement, and external regulatory agencies and/or accrediting bodies, such as state, federal, or specialized associations, as early as possible in the process. For instance, Financial Planning and Analysis needs to be involved in the creation of the program's pro forma budget. Student Financial Services also needs to be consulted regarding the proposal's potential impact on the award and dispersal of financial aid, and/or the university's Program Participation Agreement

(PPA) with the Department of Education (DOE). Lead planners must also consult with the programs, departments, schools, and colleges that will provide support courses. If any questions arise about whether a level of review is required in any given instance (e.g. as noted by “TBD” in Tables 1 and 2), that office or individual should be consulted for clarification.

For more detailed definitions of programs from the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), see Appendix C. NECHE regularly updates its “Policy on Credits and Degrees” and posts it on its website. To ensure you have the most up-to-date file, also search for the policy on the [NECHE web page](#).

## **2. Timeline for Proposals (Tables 3-4)**

Tables 3 and 4 provide recommended timelines for the three phases of review (i.e. idea, market analysis and preliminary proposal, and feasibility study and pro forma budget), and the required deadlines for Student Financial Services, Admissions, and the Registrar to support the program’s launch. Table 3 applies to the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), College of Dental Medicine (CDM), College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM), and Westbrook College of Health Professions (WCHP). Table 4 applies to the College of Professional Studies (CPS/UNE Online). Note that these deadlines do not preclude earlier action. Programs are encouraged to submit proposals to develop and revise programs throughout the year and start the review process of those proposals for review at any time.

## **3. Decision-Making Steps in the Three Levels of Review (Tables 5-7)**

From idea to market analysis and preliminary proposal to feasibility study and pro forma budget, new programs in development and existing programs in revision undergo several levels of review. Table 5 illustrates the decision-making steps involved in reviewing the idea. Table 6 illustrates the decision-making steps involved in reviewing the market analysis and preliminary proposal. Table 7 illustrates the decision-making steps involved in reviewing the feasibility study and pro forma budget.

## **4. Involving UNE’s Other Administrative Offices (Tables 8-9)**

As the market analysis/preliminary proposal and feasibility study/pro forma budget move through the levels of review, various UNE administrative offices need to be involved in the process. Again, communication is key. Moreover, upon the proposal’s final approval, UNE’s administrative offices ensure that the changes are reflected in all relevant internal documents and externally-facing promotional materials. Table 8 illustrates the Registrar’s responsibilities of coding the program and notifying other administrative offices and stakeholders. Table 9 illustrates the annual timeline Admissions follows for key marketing and promotional activities.

## C. Guidelines for the UNE Catalog's Spring Addendum

Because of accreditation and regulatory changes, and CPS/UNE Online's potential need to launch new programs three times a year, the Registrar's office will include an addendum in the spring semester, if needed, to that calendar year's catalog. Submissions to the spring addendum are due on September 15. To launch new programs in the summer and fall semesters, CPS/UNE Online must meet the April 1 catalog deadline.

The spring semester addendum can be used for making the following:

- CPS/UNE Online new program launches
- Accreditation changes
- Regulatory changes

The addendum cannot be used for making:

- Curricular changes
- Typographical corrections
- Any other requests at the discretion of the Registrar

## II. Market Analysis and Preliminary Proposal

### A. Introduction

Following the program idea's approval, the next steps entail: (1) conducting a market analysis, and (2) writing a preliminary proposal.

- First lead planners must contact UNE's [Office of Assessment](#) to complete a market scan, and then connect with Financial Planning and Analysis to get the financial projections and Admissions to get the enrollment projections.
- If the appropriate dean (or designee), in consultation with the provost (or designee), find the market analysis favorable, lead planners can then proceed to the preliminary proposal. Lead planners should discuss with the dean and the provost the various UNE units that should be consulted to complete the preliminary proposal. For instance, they might need to consult with the programs, departments, schools, and colleges that will provide support courses, and university offices, such as the Registrar, Student Financial Services, Student Affairs, Library Services, SASC, ITS, Facilities Management, OIRDA, and Institutional Advancement that will support the program and students.

### B. Market Analysis

The market analysis is an integral part of the review that provides a basis for the preliminary proposal (as detailed below in Part C) and the feasibility study and pro forma budget (as detailed below in Part III). It includes, for instance, trends on competitor programs, current labor market demands and job openings, and skills and qualifications employers are asking for to fill those

positions. The market data and analysis should be used to complete the preliminary proposal and, if approved, the feasibility study and pro forma budget.

Lead planners need to submit a request for a market scan to UNE's [Office of Assessment](#), which will then run the report and, if needed, review the data with the lead planners. The lead planners will then analyze the data and, with Financial Planning and Analysis as well as Admissions, discuss the trends and existing university resources and create financial estimates for the proposed new/revised program.

- To analyze data trends from the market scan, consider the following questions:
  - What is the market for this program? What are the regional and, if applicable, national enrollment trends of programs like this one? What are the regional and, if applicable, national trends of jobs that hire students from programs like this one?
- Then using those trends, analyze the ways in which the proposed new/revised program will meet those demands. For instance, provide estimates of annual program enrollments, expenditures, revenues, and anticipated faculty expertise. Consider, for example:
  - What are the start-up costs? What facilities (e.g. lab, classroom, and office space) and resources (e.g. library materials, advising, access center, and other student support services) will the proposed new/revised program need?
  - What are the typical longer-term operational costs of a program like this one?
  - What faculty expertise will the proposed new/revised program need? Will the program need to hire faculty to acquire that expertise?

Once the appropriate dean (or designee), in consultation with the provost (or designee), find the market analysis favorable, lead planners should then use the market analysis to develop the preliminary proposal.

## **C. Preliminary Proposal**

The following outline should be used to create the preliminary proposal.

- a. Lead planners
  - Include at least one point person of the proposal.
- b. Proposed new/revised program and its career paths
  - What is the proposed new/revised program? What degree will be offered? (See Appendix B, Table B, and Appendix C, for definitions of programs.)
  - Is the name of the program clearly linked to career opportunities? If the connection is unclear, explain potential career paths and opportunities from the degree. Use data from the market analysis (see above) to discuss those career paths.
- c. Proposed college and school/department/unit to offer the new/revised program
  - Indicate all established and/or potential collaborators across UNE.

- d. Proposed feasibility study committee
  - List members.
  - Include collaborations and consultations with internal and external partners, if applicable.
- e. Proposed new/revised program learning outcomes
  - List at least three expected program learning outcomes. For a certificate, list at least two outcomes. Use data from the market analysis (see above) to help draft the outcomes.
  - Describe how the program learning outcomes will be measured.
  - What evidence is available to support the rationale for choosing these? Use the market analysis.
- f. Proposed new/revised program concentrations or specializations, if applicable
  - What are the expected concentrations or specializations within the program? (See Appendix B, Table B, for definitions of concentrations and specializations.)
  - What are those learning outcomes? Use the market analysis (see above) to help draft the outcomes.
- g. Proposed new/revised program experiential learning opportunities
  - What, if any, experiential learning opportunities (e.g., a practicum, field experience, internship) will the program include?
- h. Specialized accreditation body approval of the program, if applicable
  - Discuss the specialized accreditation body and related timetable for granting initial (new program) or ongoing accreditation (revision of an existing program).
- i. Justification for the proposal
  - Provide a summary of justification for the proposed new/revised program.
    - How does the program fit into the department's/school's strategic plan, and the UNE strategic plan, *Our World, Our Future*?
    - How will the university benefit from the program or programmatic revisions?
    - How does the program fit with other current UNE programs?
    - Discuss any other information that would justify further planning for this proposal.

Submit the preliminary proposal with the market analysis to the dean, provost, SVPFA, and president. Then upon approval, proceed with the feasibility study and pro forma budget, and notify the following offices:

- Admissions office (For CPS/UNE Online, contact its Admissions team)
- Office of Financial Planning and Analysis (in the Office of Finance and Administration)
- Assessment office
- Registrar's office
- Student Financial Services
- The host college and the University Faculty Assembly (UFA)
- And any other offices that the lead planners have consulted with



### **III. Feasibility Study and Pro Forma Budget**

#### **A. Introduction**

The feasibility study requires the information described below, along with attachments of supporting documentation, including a pro forma budget using the university's current template. Lead planners should explain any unavailable or excluded information in the body of the feasibility study.

The lead planners must continue to involve UNE's academic and administrative offices, including Financial Planning and Analysis, Admissions, Registrar, Student Financial Services, Student Affairs, Library Services, SASC, ITS, Facilities Management, OIRDA, Institutional Advancement, the campus bookstores, enrollment management, and programs, departments, schools, and colleges that will provide support courses, to complete the feasibility study and pro forma budget.

#### **B. Feasibility Study**

The following outline should be used to create the feasibility study:

##### **a. Executive Summary**

The feasibility study begins with an executive summary (1-2 pages in length) that briefly discusses the content of the feasibility study. The executive summary should include, but is not limited to, the following elements:

- i. Lead planners' names and contact information
- ii. Proposed or revised program title and degree.
- iii. Proposed college, school, and/or department that will house the program.
- iv. Description of the program goals and curriculum (e.g., course content, sequencing, and student learning outcomes/competencies); methods of instruction; accreditation requirements (if applicable); and timeline for implementation.
- v. Rationale for the program; educational and/or social needs; conceptual fit with the university mission; placement of program in the university structure (e.g., college, school, department, unit); and enrollment projections based on distinctiveness of the program.
- vi. Summary of market analysis and pro forma budget.
- vii. Impact on university resources; income and expense projections; faculty, staff, equipment, and space requirements; academic support services (e.g., Admissions, Registrar, Student Financial Services, Student Affairs, Library Services, SASC, ITS, Facilities Management, OIRDA, Institutional Advancement, and programs, departments, schools, and colleges that will provide support courses).
- viii. Identify external or independent sources of funding.



- ix. Feasibility study sign-off sheet verifying accuracy is required from all parties who reviewed the study throughout the planning process. (See Appendix A for an example of a sign-off sheet. Customize for each feasibility study.)
- b. Program Goals and Learning Outcomes
    - i. Proposed or revised (if applicable) degree and program description
    - ii. Explanation and/or definition of program
    - iii. General program goals and objectives (roughly 3-5)
    - iv. Competencies/program learning outcomes (maximum 8-10 for a degree, and maximum 3-5 for a certificate)
    - v. Measurement process of the competencies/program learning outcomes
  - c. Program Rationale
    - i. Discuss the program's conceptual fit with the department's/school's strategic plan, the [university strategic plan](#) (i.e., its mission, vision, core values, and strategic priorities), and its place in the university structure. Indicate affected and collaborative colleges and schools/departments/units. Include collaborative offices and structures.
    - ii. Discuss graduates' career opportunities and employment outlook. Include data from other potential employers (e.g., with help of the market analysis) and published studies.
    - iii. Cite appropriate studies and include key sources as attachments. Include documentation of educational, economic, and social needs; key sources (e.g., studies or documents); and citations of specific studies or authorities consulted.
  - d. Prospective Students
    - i. Include a list of competitive programs in the state, region, and beyond, as applicable. For example, include other institutions to which students may apply. For each program, list the institution name, degree name, concentrations or specializations (if applicable), tuition rate, total tuition, regional accrediting body, specialized accrediting body (if applicable), admission requirements, program length/credit hours, and competitors' reputations.
    - ii. Include the application experience of other programs for the past three years (e.g., number of applications, number accepted, and number enrolled), if available.
    - iii. Include data from multiple external sources on the number of students who have indicated a preference for the program for the past three years at the undergraduate level and at the graduate level, if available.
  - e. Model Curriculum
    - i. Outline and describe required and elective courses, indicating total credits required for degree. Include measures of student learning outcomes.
    - ii. Provide a diagram of the curriculum structure and a sample curriculum outline indicating a possible course schedule for each year of the program. Explain how the sequencing of courses, prerequisites, concentrations, practicum experiences (if applicable), and length of program is scalable to the proposed student population.
    - iii. Where applicable, describe the nature of field experience, independent study, competency-based education, clinical rotations, and assignments employed in curriculum design.

- iv. Cite specific ways the curriculum may be integrated into existing course offerings. If applicable, see “g. Educational Requirements and Capacity” (below).
  - v. Describe the value proposition of the program curriculum, i.e. how the curriculum is unique and distinctive from those of competitor institutions.
- f. Accreditation Requirements
- i. If the program requires specialized accreditation or can achieve specialized accreditation, describe specific requirements and their effect on the institution (e.g., faculty, curriculum, and resources).
  - ii. Describe any programmatic plans that have potential effects on institutional accreditation.
  - iii. Describe NECHE requirements and include any required NECHE documentation.
  - iv. Describe Maine Department of Education (DOE) requirements, if applicable, and include any Maine DOE required documentation.
- g. Impact on Internal and External Support Units
- i. Discuss the impact of the proposed new/revised program on existing programs. Include impact of increasing the number of students in service/support courses. Include undergraduate general education learning outcomes for all undergraduate degree programs. Obtain data on required increases in sections of courses, development of new courses, and personnel required to meet increased demand.
  - ii. Discuss impact on academic support areas, such as the Admissions, Registrar, Student Financial Services, Student Affairs, Library Services, SASC, ITS, Facilities Management, OIRDA, Institutional Advancement, the campus bookstores, enrollment management, and programs, departments, schools, and colleges that will provide support courses.
  - iii. Discuss the impact of additional students on student support services, such as the Student Health Center, Student Affairs/Student Life, Student Counseling Center, Student Financial Services, Dining Services and meal plan, and the campus bookstores.
  - iv. Discuss the impact of new student demographics (e.g., age, commuter/resident, gender, race, and ethnicity) on the existing student populations, parking, Athletics, and the areas listed above. Consider and describe special needs of non-traditional students and, if applicable, online learners.
  - v. For those programs requiring field-based experiences, include data on availability of field or clinical sites for student placement as well as mechanisms and cost for student supervision (e.g., program faculty or placement faculty supervision).
- h. Facility Requirements and Capacity
- i. Discuss the primary mode of instructional delivery (e.g., face-to-face, hybrid, fully online).
  - ii. Describe any needed renovations of classrooms, laboratories, clinical spaces, and/or research spaces.
  - iii. Describe any additional space requirements, such as faculty offices, professional staff offices, new classrooms, laboratories, and clinical and research spaces. (Provide projections for five years.)
  - iv. Additional academic support area space requirements, such as in Admissions, Registrar, Student Financial Services, Student Affairs, Library Services, SASC, ITS, Facilities

Management, OIRDA, Institutional Advancement, the campus bookstores, and enrollment management.

- v. Residential life capacity.
  - vi. Online learning and ITS support.
- i. Program Resources
- Personnel, including:
    - Position requirements of faculty and professional staff who will assume major responsibility for the program (include as an attachment). Describe specialty roles needed and include an explanation/justification for all positions. Consider the availability of faculty with the needed expertise and standard salary requirements.
    - Specific impact on existing programs, if current faculty members are reassigned to new program.
    - Administrative assistance and staffing needs.
  - Equipment, including:
    - New equipment required for program and a plan for its acquisition, i.e. year-by-year plan and potential grants, donations, and unique revenue sources.
- j. Timeline for Marketing and Implementation
- i. Provide an overall timeline, indicating the major events/activities from initiation through admission and enrollment of the first class.
  - ii. Attach the timeline to the feasibility study.

## **C. Pro Forma Budget**

Use the provided pro forma budget template to make enrollment and financial projections and incorporate those data into the feasibility study. While developing the feasibility study and pro forma budget, consult with Admissions as well as Financial Planning and Analysis.

- a. Enrollment projections
- i. Project full time equivalent (FTE) enrollment for years one to five, including the estimated total number of new and returning students for each term or semester.
  - ii. Calculate an appropriate attrition rate per year for the first three years of each class and include justification.
  - iii. Indicate the addition of transfer students to each class.
- b. Financial projections
- i. Include five-year financial projections with rationale for each item.
  - ii. Include five-year financial projections of costs to other academic areas that are proposed to provide support courses for the program. Identify costs of offering cross-college courses, if applicable.
  - iii. Include in narrative an estimate of start-up commitment prior to revenue generation and at what point (in months) it is expected that the proposed program's revenue is projected to exceed its expenses or reach a steady financial state.

- iv. Include program cost computation for proposed new program and for existing programs.
- v. What additional funding is required beyond projected income to support the program during any given year? Identify the sources of that funding.
- vi. Identify potential outside or independent sources of funding that may be available to the program.

## **D. Notes on the Final Steps of the Review**

- a. The college's and UFA's roles in the review
  - i. As Table 7 illustrates, the university's senior leadership decides whether to approve the proposal, while the applicable college (and its academic and financial affairs committees) and UFA assess the proposal and decide whether to recommend it for approval.
- b. Upon the final steps of review (as illustrated in Table 7), download the Registrar's [New or Revised Program Request Form](#) to collect the required signatures, and attach it to all of the materials.
- c. Following review by shared governance bodies as appropriate, the president, provost, and SVPFA will re-review all of the materials, consider evidence of current economic and educational trends, and determine the viability and sustainability of the proposal.
- d. Once the president, provost, and SVPFA approve the proposal, Student Financial Services might need to attain approval from the Department of Education (DOE) and add the program to the university's Program Participation Agreement (PPA). Not all programs need to undergo this process. But if they need to proceed through these steps, the university must attain approval and add the program to its PPA in order to award and disburse financial aid. The PPA can take up to six weeks to attain approval.

## **IV. Three-Year New Program Review**

All new programs (including new majors and minors) must undertake an evaluation following their third full academic year in the university catalog. If a new program is housed in a school/department/unit that is scheduled to conduct an internal program review within a year of this three-year new program review, the provost's office will consider scheduling the reviews during the same time frame and adjust the timeline accordingly. This new program review needs to follow the format of the feasibility study and focus on comparing the data and projections in the original study and its related pro forma budget to the actual data and findings in this three-year period.

The review needs to evaluate the extent to which the new program has met the benchmarks in the feasibility study and pro forma budget. It needs to address any modifications the new program has made or will make, and if applicable, explain the ways in which the university can help the new program achieve its goals. (Some questions to consider include: What has changed since the development of the feasibility study and pro forma budget? What do the data over the last three years reveal? What is the status of the new program now? Does the new program have the

resources it needs from, for example, Admissions, Registrar, Student Financial Services, Student Affairs, Library Services, SASC, ITS, Facilities Management, OIRDA, Institutional Advancement, the campus bookstores, enrollment management, and/or programs, departments, schools, and colleges that provide support courses?

In addition to undertaking a financial evaluation of the program, this three-year review needs to evaluate the program's curriculum. The evaluation should address, for example, the curriculum's alignment to the program learning outcomes, the program's ability to offer all of the classes that students need to complete the degree, and/or the relevancy of the courses to disciplinary needs and market demands.

Finally, the three-year review needs to address the new program's plans for the ensuing years until the next scheduled internal program review. In what ways does the new program align with the department's/school's strategic plan and the [university strategic plan](#)? The review needs to include a revision of enrollment and financial projections to use as reference points for the coming years.

While new programs might not yet have sufficient data to undergo a comprehensive evaluation, they should provide as much available data as possible at the time of this review. For example, undergraduate majors or minors may not yet have graduation data at this point. Low or non-enrolled programs may also not have sufficient data. It is important to consider that undergraduate students sometimes flow in and out of majors, move into other programs, and find other pathways into or out of the new program. To the extent possible, these new programs need to submit an update that references their original feasibility study and pro forma budget, their current findings, and their plan for moving forward. They should follow the procedures detailed in this document to report the available numbers, consider their resources, discuss the value they add to their department, school, college, and the university, and explore the level of competency students can achieve from completing the program.

Once the program submits a three-year review to their dean's office, the provost's office, and the assessment office, their dean's office decides on the next steps. Deans' offices need to look at the larger, college budget and decide the steps to take with the new programs as well as all of their existing programs.

In the event the three-year review indicates the program's non-viability and revisions do not forecast positive results, the review needs to identify a general process with anticipated difficulties for discontinuing the program. Include a timeline and plans for phasing out and teaching out the program, and reassigning or terminating faculty.

The assessment office will archive the reviews in a central electronic university repository that the University Assessment Committee, deans, provost, associate provost for academic affairs, and the president can access.

## **V. APPENDIX**

### **A. Feasibility Study Notification and Agreement Process**

Program:

College:

By signing below, you are indicating that you have read and/or discussed the above program feasibility study with the lead planners and that your suggestions and recommendations have been addressed.

(Below are examples of sign off areas.)

Office of Finance and Administration:

Admissions:

Registrar:

Student Financial Services:

Student Affairs:

Library Services:

SASC:

ITS:

Facilities Management:

OIRDA:

Institutional Advancement:

Programs, departments, schools, and colleges providing support courses:

**B. The Review Process in Tables and Charts**  
**Table 1: Levels of Review for New Program Proposals**

Type of Proposals	Definitions and Descriptions of Types of Proposals*	Market Analysis & Preliminary Proposal	Feasibility Study & Pro Forma Budget	FEASIBILITY STUDY: LEVELS OF REVIEW						
				Dean	Provost	SVPFA	President	College Assembly	UFA	Board of Trustees
New College	The development of a new UNE college.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No <sup>1</sup>	Yes
New Undergraduate Degree Program (Major)	A set of undergraduate-level curricular requirements of 120 or more semester credits, including at least 40 general education credits and 70 prerequisite, elective, and required courses, that lead to an undergraduate degree (e.g., B.A., B.S.). (See NECHE, 2021, Stds. 4.18, 4.19, 4.33.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
New Graduate Degree Program	NECHE states, “Graduate degree programs are designed to give students a mastery of a complex field of study or professional area” (Std. 4.20). “Doctoral-level programs build upon and challenge students beyond the levels of knowledge and competence acquired at the master’s level” (Std. 4.24). Master’s-level programs (e.g., M.S., M.S.Ed.) must require at least 30 semester credits (Std. 4.33). For a doctoral degree (e.g., D.P.T., PharmD), the program and/or accreditor set the minimum number of required graduate credits.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
New Undergraduate Minor	A set of undergraduate-level curricular requirements of 18 or more semester credits of required courses that typically provide undergraduate students with a secondary area of study to complement or expand beyond their major.	Yes	TBD <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
New Concentration or Specialization	A focused area of study attached to a specific major or program that requires generally 24 semester credits of coursework in addition to the major requirements. In some cases, a concentration is required to complete the major or program.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	TBD <sup>3</sup>	No
New Track	A set of curricular, credit-bearing requirements that offers student a different pathway to complete their major or program and earn an undergraduate or graduate degree. Tracks are not included on student transcripts or diplomas.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	TBD <sup>3</sup>	No
New Graduate Certificate	A set of curricular requirements of 12 or more semester credits designed for students who have earned a baccalaureate degree and are seeking a specific skill or area of study. Certificates appear on student transcripts and the university issues an official certificate of completion.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
New Post-Master’s Certificate	A set of curricular requirements of 12 or more semester credits designed for students who have earned a graduate degree and are seeking a specific skill or area of study. Certificates appear on student transcripts and the university issues an official certificate of completion.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
New Non-Credit Bearing Offering	A non-credit bearing offering (e.g., continuing education course, fellowship, certificate, badge) provides students with opportunities to learn a new skill or deepen existing skills, enrich their understanding of specific topics, and advance their personal or professional development. Because these offerings do not lead to a degree, they do not require involvement of the Registrar or Financial Aid offices.	Yes	TBD <sup>2,4</sup>	No	Yes	TBD <sup>5</sup>	TBD <sup>5</sup>	No	No	No

\*See Appendix C for NECHE’s definitions of programs.

<sup>1</sup> Inform and consult with the University Faculty Assembly (UFA) on the proposal for a new college.

<sup>2</sup> The president, provost, and SVPFA, in consultation with the dean, will determine if needed.

<sup>3</sup> If the concentration, specialization, or track has cross-college implications, the president, provost, and SVPFA, in consultation with the dean(s), will determine if an UFA review is needed.

<sup>4</sup> Badge proposals need to undergo a process that entails committee review, and the provost’s preliminary and final approval. For information on the badging process, go to the [UNE Badging Program](#).

<sup>5</sup> If the project merely involves existing, sufficiently enrolled courses and there are no other financial or high-level strategic implications, SVPFA and presidential approval is not needed. Otherwise, such approval is required.



**Table 2: Levels of Review for Program Revision Proposals**

Type of Proposals	Definitions and Descriptions of Types of Proposals	Market Analysis & Preliminary Proposal	Feasibility Study & Pro Forma Budget	FEASIBILITY STUDY: LEVELS OF REVIEW						
				Dean	Provost	SVPFA	President	College Assembly	UFA	Board of Trustees
Major Revision of an Undergraduate or Graduate Degree Program	50% or more changes to an existing program (determined by the provost and dean).	TBD <sup>2</sup>	TBD <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Minor Revision of an Undergraduate or Graduate Degree Program	Less than 50% of changes to an existing program (determined by the provost and dean).	TBD <sup>2</sup>	TBD <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	TBD <sup>5</sup>	TBD <sup>5</sup>	Yes	No	No
Major Revision of a Minor	50% or more changes to an existing program (determined by the provost and dean).	TBD <sup>2</sup>	TBD <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	TBD <sup>5</sup>	TBD <sup>5</sup>	Yes	No	No
Minor Revision of a Minor	Less than 50% of changes to an existing program (determined by the provost and dean).	No	TBD <sup>2</sup>	Yes	No	TBD <sup>5</sup>	TBD <sup>5</sup>	Yes	No	No
Major Revision of a Concentration, Specialization, Track, or Certificate	50% or more of changes to an existing concentration, specialization, track, or certificate (determined by the provost and dean). See Table 1 (previous page) for definitions of concentration, specialization, track, and certificate.	TBD <sup>2</sup>	TBD <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	TBD <sup>5</sup>	TBD <sup>5</sup>	Yes	No	No
Minor Revision of a Concentration, Specialization, Track, or Certificate	Less than 50% of changes to an existing concentration, specialization, track, or certificate (determined by the provost and dean). See Table 1 (previous page) for definitions of concentration, specialization, track, and certificate.	No	TBD <sup>2</sup>	Yes	No	TBD <sup>5</sup>	TBD <sup>5</sup>	Yes	No	No
Degree Change	Change of a degree designation to an existing program (e.g. B.S. to B.A., or B.A. to B.S.).	TBD <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

<sup>1</sup> Inform and consult with the University Faculty Assembly (UFA) on the proposal for a new college.

<sup>2</sup> The president, provost, and SVPFA, in consultation with the dean, will determine if needed.

<sup>3</sup> If the specialization or track has cross-college implications, the president, provost, and SVPFA, in consultation with the dean(s), will determine if an UFA review is needed.

<sup>4</sup> Badge proposals need to undergo a process that entails committee review, and the provost’s preliminary and final approval. For information on the badging process, go to the [UNE Badging Program](#).

<sup>5</sup> If the project merely involves existing, sufficiently enrolled courses and there are no other financial or high-level strategic implications, SVPFA and presidential approval is not needed. Otherwise, such approval is required.

**Table 3: Timeline for Program Proposals in CAS, CDM, COM, and WCHP**

Step	Action	Recommended Deadlines <sup>1</sup>
Idea for New Program or Program Revision <sup>2</sup>	Discuss idea with: (a) dean, and (b) provost	by June
Market Analysis and Preliminary Proposal <sup>3</sup>	Submit market analysis and preliminary proposal to: (a) dean; (b) provost; (c) president, provost, and SVPFA	by mid-July
Feasibility Study and Pro Forma Budget <sup>4</sup>	Submit feasibility study and pro forma budget to: (a) dean; (b) provost; (c) dean, president, provost, and SVPFA, as well as Registrar's office	by end of August
	Submit feasibility study and pro forma budget to: (a) College Assembly; (b) College Academic Affairs Committee; (c) College Financial Affairs Committee	October-November
	Submit feasibility study and pro forma budget to UFA	mid-November
	Re-submit feasibility study and pro forma budget to president, provost, and SVPFA	February
Step	Action	Fixed Deadlines
Student Financial Services, Admissions, and Registrar	Billing and financial aid needs	Consult with Student Financial Services <sup>5</sup>
	Common Application and Coalition Application deadline <sup>6</sup> ; marketing deadline	March 1
	UNE catalog final deadline <sup>7</sup>	April 1
	First cohort	Fall semester
Implementation	Soft launch (for students who change majors) <sup>8</sup>	September (year submitted to the catalog)
	Full launch (first recruited cohort) <sup>9</sup>	September (year following submission to catalog)

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> While these are recommended deadlines, the university encourages continuous program development/revisions, and thus lead planners should not wait to move forward if they have an idea.

<sup>2</sup> See Table 5 for a flow chart of the decision-making steps in reviewing the idea.

<sup>3</sup> See Table 6 for a flow chart of the decision-making steps in reviewing the market analysis and preliminary proposal.

<sup>4</sup> See Table 7 for a flow chart of the decision-making steps in reviewing the feasibility study and pro forma budget.

<sup>5</sup> Students are awarded aid packages up to eight months before their scheduled enrollment.

<sup>6</sup> March 1 is the Common Application and Coalition Application deadlines for the following recruitment/application cycle and academic year (e.g. March 2023 for the class entering Fall 2024).

<sup>7</sup> April 1 is the latest possible deadline to submit changes to the UNE catalog for the following academic year. The catalog is published on the last Friday of April.

<sup>8</sup> Soft Launch: New program is not on Common and Coalition Applications and is not marketed. It is listed on the UNE internal application and in the catalog to allow current UNE students to change majors into the new program.

<sup>9</sup> Full Launch: New program is listed on the Common and Coalition Applications and has been fully marketed by Admissions.

**Table 4: Timeline for Program Proposals in CPS/UNE Online**

Step	Action	Summer & Fall Terms Launch Recommended Deadlines <sup>1</sup>	Spring Term Launch Recommended Deadlines <sup>1</sup>
Idea for New Program or Program Revision <sup>2</sup>	Discuss idea with: (a) dean; (b) provost	by June	by October
Market Analysis and Preliminary Proposal <sup>3</sup>	Submit market analysis and preliminary proposal to: (a) dean; (b) provost; (c) president, provost, and SVPFA	by mid-July	by mid-November
Feasibility Study and Pro Forma Budget <sup>4</sup>	Submit feasibility study and pro forma budget to: (a) dean; (b) provost; (c) dean, president, provost, and SVPFA, as well as Registrar's office	by end of August	mid-February
	Submit feasibility study and pro forma budget to: (a) College Assembly; (b) College Academic Affairs Committee; (c) College Financial Affairs Committee	October-November	March
	Submit feasibility study and pro forma budget to UFA	mid-November	mid-March
	Re-submit feasibility study and pro forma budget to president, provost, and SVPFA	February	May
Step	Action	Summer & Fall Terms Launch Fixed Deadlines	Spring Term Launch Fixed Deadlines
Student Financial Services, Admissions, and Registrar	Billing and financial aid needs	Consult with Student Financial Services <sup>5</sup>	Consult with Student Financial Services <sup>5</sup>
	UNE catalog final deadline <sup>6</sup> / Spring addendum final deadline <sup>7</sup>	April 1 (UNE catalog)	September 15 (spring addendum to UNE catalog) <i>*Contingent upon president's approval</i>
	First cohort	Fall term	Spring term
Implementation	Soft launch (no marketing investment) <sup>8</sup>	N/A	N/A
	Full launch (full marketing investment) <sup>9</sup>	August	January

The timelines for summer/fall and spring launches of online programs are tentative and based on the requirements checklist for a full Bachelor's, Master's, or doctoral degree. Timelines may be shortened for certificates or shorter format programs. That said, the same fixed deadlines need to be followed.

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> While these are recommended deadlines, the university encourages continuous program development/revisions, and thus lead planners should not wait to move forward if they have an idea.

<sup>2</sup> See Table 5 for a flow chart of the decision-making steps in reviewing the idea.

<sup>3</sup> See Table 6 for a flow chart of the decision-making steps in reviewing the market analysis and preliminary proposal.

<sup>4</sup> See Table 7 for a flow chart of the decision-making steps in reviewing the feasibility study and pro forma budget.

<sup>5</sup> Students are awarded aid packages up to eight months before their scheduled enrollment.

<sup>6</sup> April 1 is the latest possible deadline to submit changes to the UNE catalog for the following academic year. The catalog is published on the last Friday of April.

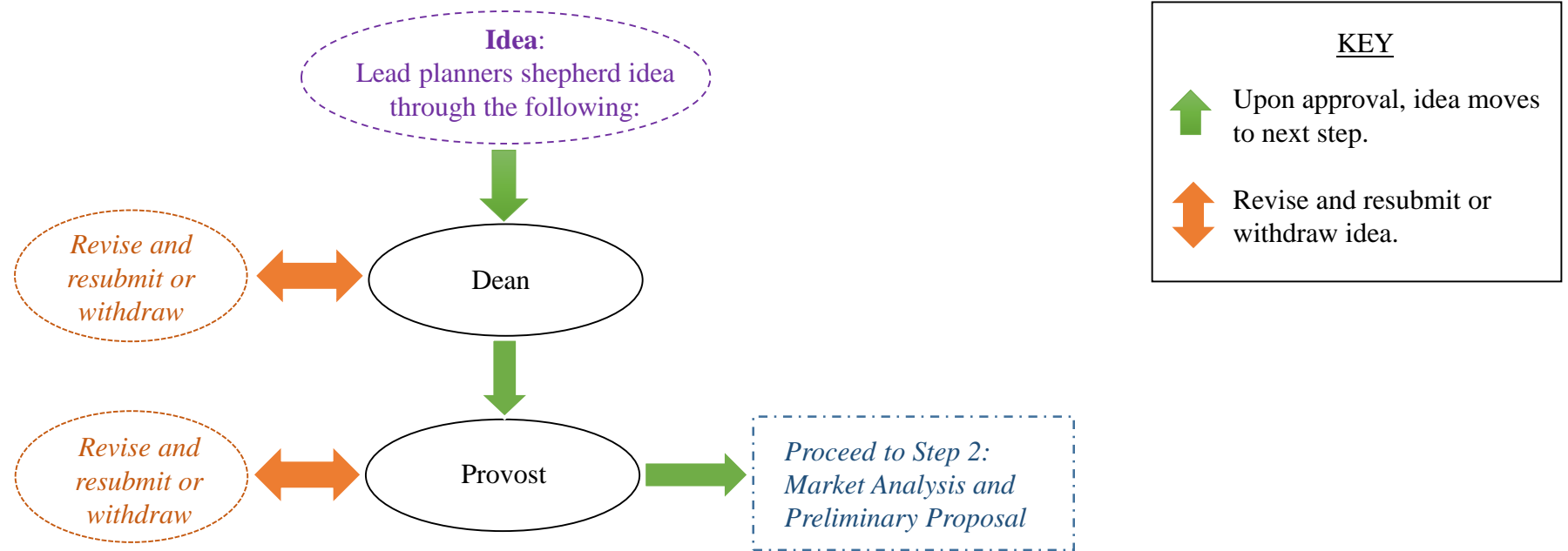
<sup>7</sup> Because of CPS/UNE Online's potential need to launch new programs three times a year, the Registrar's office will include an addendum in the spring semester, if needed, to that calendar year's catalog. September 15 is the deadline for submissions to the addendum.

<sup>8</sup> Soft Launch: New program is on CPS/UNE Online application and is not marketed.

<sup>9</sup> Full Launch: New program is listed on the CPS/UNE Online application and CPS/UNE Online has fully marketed it.

**Table 5:**  
**Step 1: Review of the Idea**

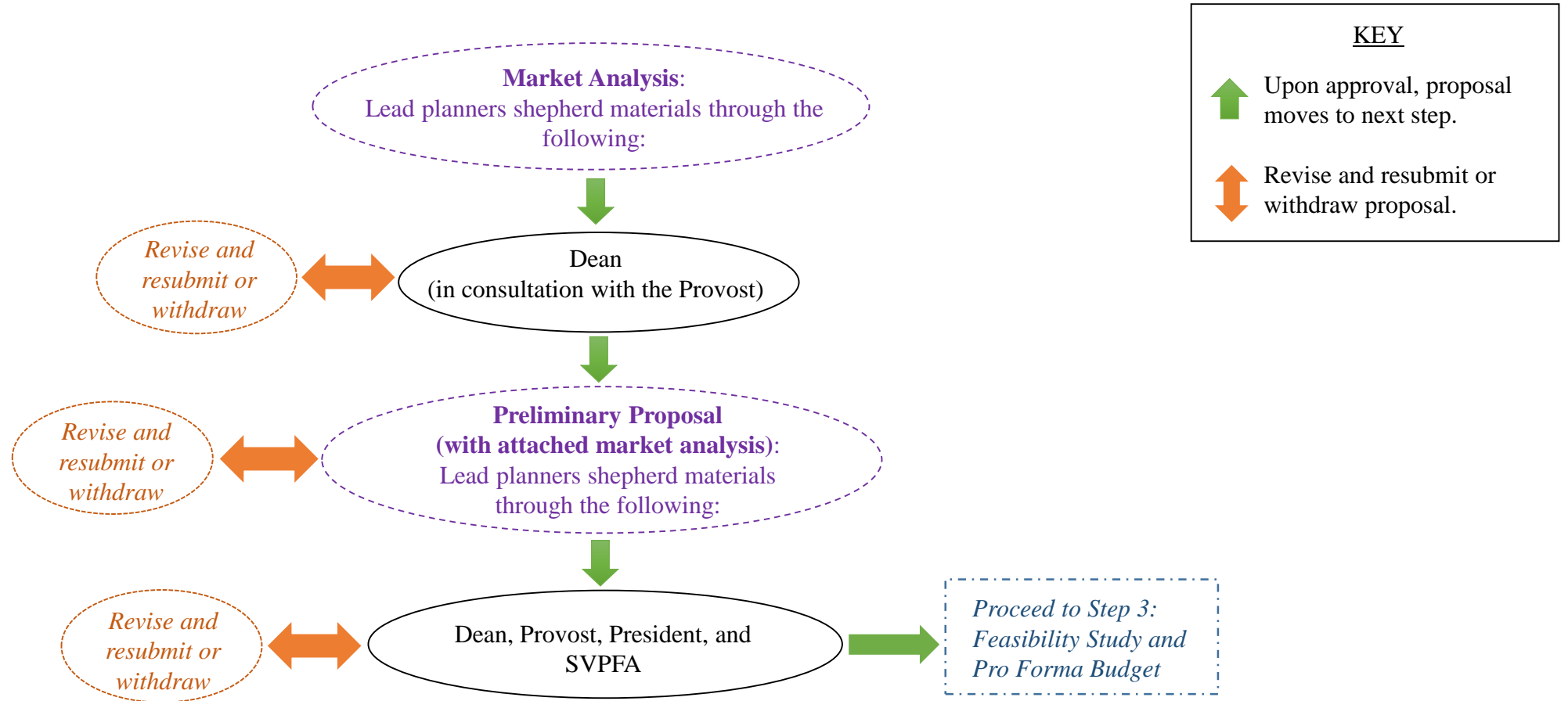
This flow chart illustrates the typical process lead planners need to follow to seek approval for an idea of most new programs and program revisions.  
If the dean and provost approve the idea, lead planners should then proceed to Step 2 (Table 6).



**Table 6:**

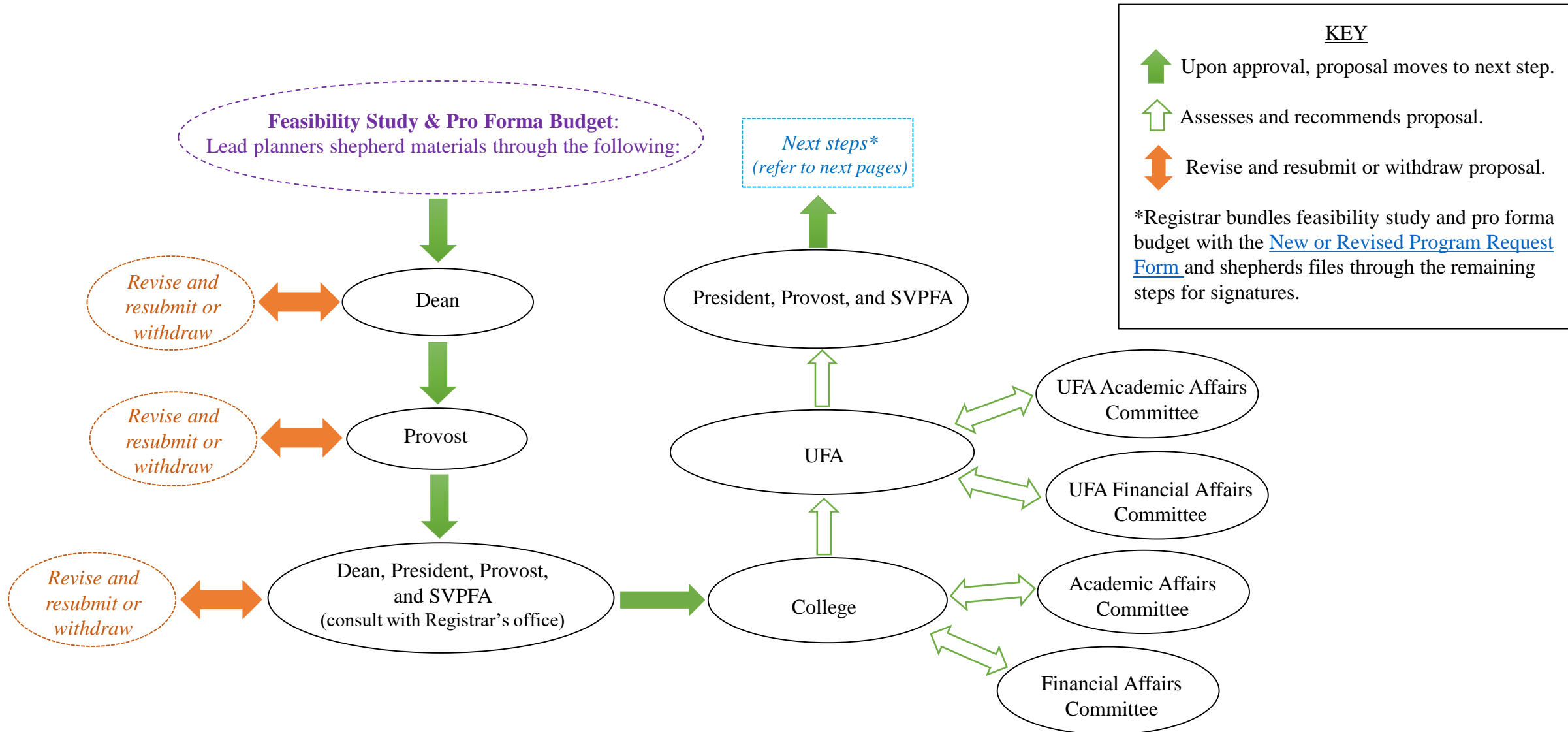
**Step 2: Review of the Market Analysis and Preliminary Proposal**

This flow chart illustrates the typical process lead planners need to follow to shepherd through most new/revised program market analyses and preliminary proposals. Refer to Table 2 for the specific programs that need to complete a market analysis and preliminary proposal and the specific stakeholders who need to be involved in the review. Consult with the Office of Assessment, Financial Planning and Analysis, and Admissions to complete a market analysis. To complete the preliminary proposal, it is expected that other relevant offices will be consulted, such as the Registrar, Student Financial Services, Student Affairs, Library Services, SASC, ITS, Facilities Management, OIRDA, and Institutional Advancement, as appropriate. If the dean, provost, president, and SVPFA approve the market analysis and preliminary proposal, lead planners should then proceed to Step 3 (Table 7).



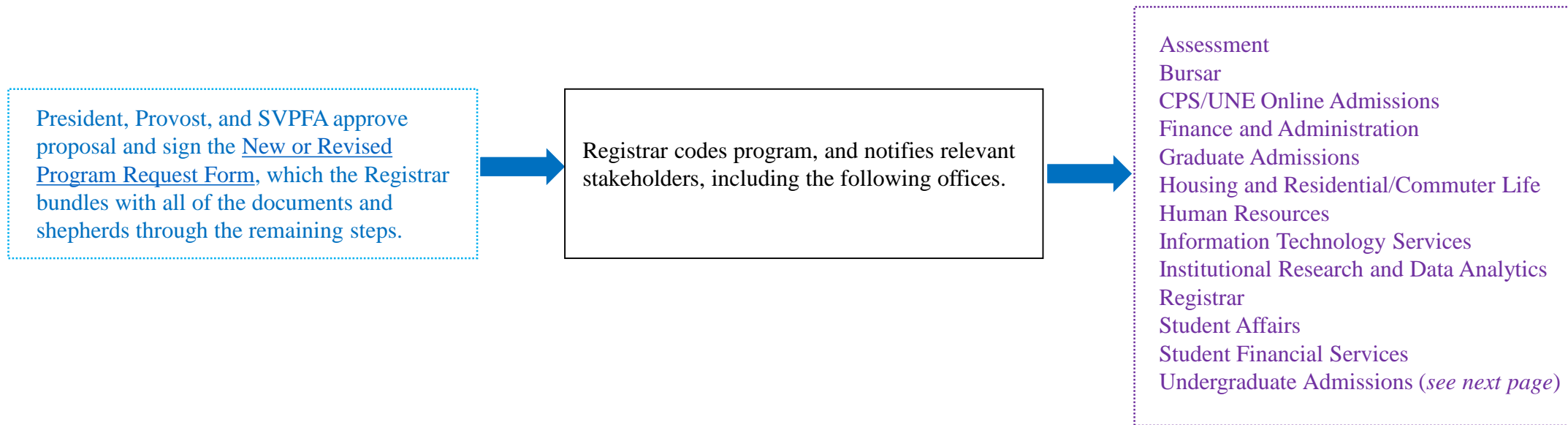
**Table 7:  
Step 3: Review of the Feasibility Study and Pro Forma Budget**

This flow chart illustrates the typical process lead planners need to follow to shepherd through most new/revise program feasibility studies and pro forma budgets. Refer to Tables 1-2 for the programs that need to complete a feasibility study and pro forma budget and the specific stakeholders who need to be involved in the review. Consult with the Financial Planning and Analysis to complete the pro forma budget. To complete other portions of the feasibility study, it is expected that other relevant offices will be consulted, such as Admissions, Registrar, Student Financial Services, Student Affairs, Library Services, SASC, ITS, Facilities Management, OIRDA, and Institutional Advancement, as appropriate.



**Table 8:**  
**Step 4A: Next Steps for the Registrar's Office**

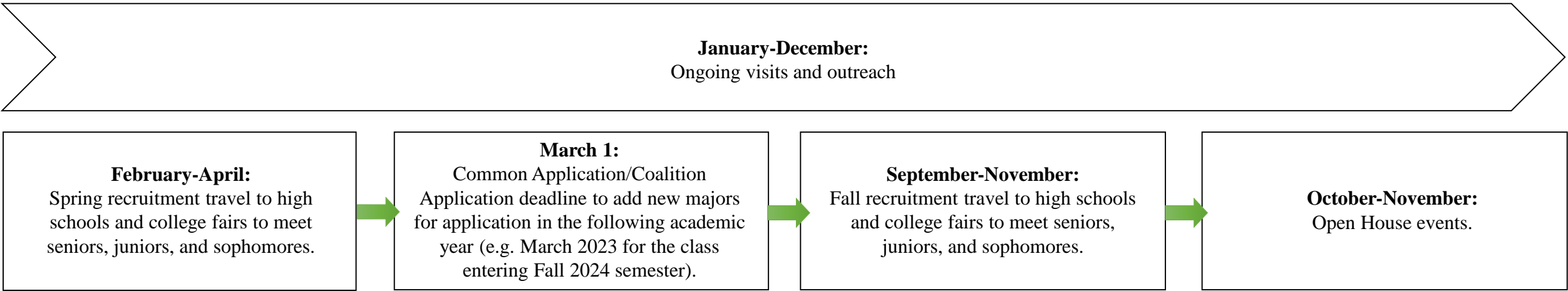
Once steps 1, 2, and 3 (Tables 5-7) are completed, and all noted parties recommend or approve the proposal, the files are complete, and the [New or Revised Program Request Form](#) is signed, the process then continues with UNE's other administrative offices and stakeholders. This flow chart illustrates the Registrar's responsibilities of coding the program, updating its internal documents, and notifying other offices and stakeholders.





**Table 9:  
Step 4B: Next Steps for Admissions**

This flow chart illustrates the typical recruitment timeline Undergraduate Admissions follows on an annual basis. Admissions engages prospective students with email communication flows and other opportunities up to three years prior to students entering college. Involve Admissions in the new program development process as early as possible to give the office time to prepare for the key promotional activities, including the following.



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## Policy on Credits and Degrees

The purposes of this policy are to provide guidance to institutions and evaluation teams on the Commission's expectations regarding credits and degrees.

### Background

The credit system was invented in New England, originally as a way to provide students with the opportunity to elect certain courses as part of their overall degree which had previously consisted of a fully required curriculum. Created to support academic innovation, the academic credit has provided the basis to measure the amount of engaged learning time expected of a typical student enrolled not only in traditional classroom settings but also laboratories, studios, internships and other experiential learning, and most recently distance learning. Students, institutions, employers, and others rely on the common currency of academic credit to support a wide range of desirable functions, including the transfer of students from one institution to another, study abroad programs, formalized recognition of certain forms and quality of non-collegiate study, inter-institutional cooperation on academic programs, and the orderly consideration of students applying to study at the higher degree. To support these functions, institutions offering competency-based or direct assessment programs are expected to record progress toward the degree as credits on the student's academic transcript. For several decades, the federal government has relied on credits as a measure of student academic engagement as a basis of awarding financial aid.

When applying the definition of the credit hour below, other considerations may also be relevant. For example, some institutions may require more academic time than the norms defined below, and such expectations are typical at the graduate level. Also, the Commission's Standards and practices welcome perceptive and imaginative innovation aimed at increasing the effectiveness of higher education, measuring student achievement directly rather than relying on academic engaged time. As stated in the Preamble to the *Standards for Accreditation*, "The institution whose policies, practices, or resources differ significantly from those described in the Standards for Accreditation must demonstrate that these are appropriate to higher education, consistent with the institution's mission and purposes, and effective in meeting the intent of the Commission's Standards."

### Definition and Commission Review of the Credit Hour

The Commission has adopted the federal definition of a credit hour: an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is consistent with commonly accepted practice in postsecondary education and that reasonably approximates not less than –

- (1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

- (2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

In determining the amount of work associated with a credit hour, the institution may take into account a variety of delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels.

At the time of the Comprehensive Evaluation, the Commission will review the institution's policies and procedures for determining the credit hours that the institution awards for courses and programs and how those policies and procedures are applied to the institution's programs and coursework. As part of its review, using sampling or other methods, the team will make a reasonable determination of whether the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education and will include the findings in their report.

### **Degrees**

The Commission's expectations are based on common institutional practice in New England and are consistent with practices of regionally accredited institutions elsewhere in the United States and with the Commission's Standard on *The Academic Program*: "The institution's degrees and other forms of academic recognition are appropriately named, following practices common to American higher education in terms of both length, content, and level of the programs" (4.33).

#### **Undergraduate degrees:**

**A.A., A.S., A.A.S, etc.:** An undergraduate degree normally representing the equivalent of two academic years of full-time study (and requiring a minimum of 60 semester credits) or its equivalent in depth and quality of experience. The A.S. usually implies more applied orientation and the A.A. more liberal education orientation, although these distinctions are not always clear. The A.A.S. degree prepares students to enter the workforce while A.A. and A.S. degrees prepare students for the workforce or for transfer to a baccalaureate program.

**B.A., B.S., etc.:** An undergraduate degree normally representing about four academic years (and requiring a minimum of 120 semester or 180 quarter units) of full-time study. The distinctions between the B.S. and the B.A. are similar to those between the A.S. and the A.A.

**Graduate Degrees:** Graduate degrees include a significant component of coursework in addition to any supervised research or practice.

**M.A., M.S.:** A first graduate degree, representing at least one year of post-baccalaureate study (requiring a minimum of 30 semester or 45 quarter units). The distinctions between M.A. and M.S. are similar to those between B.A. and B.S. and A.A. and A.S. Some M.A. and M.S. degrees are merely continuations at a higher level of undergraduate work without basic change in character. Others emphasize some research that may lead to doctoral work.

**M.B.A., M.Div., M.F.A., M.P.A., M.S.W., etc.:** Professional degrees normally requiring two or more years of full-time study. Extensive undergraduate preparation in the field may reduce the length of study to one year.

**Pharm.D., D.P.T., Au.D., etc.<sup>1</sup>:** Entry level clinical practice degrees normally requiring three years more full-time study than a baccalaureate.

**Ed. D., Psy.D., D.B.A., etc.<sup>1</sup>:** Degrees with emphasis on professional knowledge. These degrees normally require a baccalaureate for entry and three or more years of prescribed postgraduate work.

**M.D., J.D., D.D.S., etc.:** First professional degrees, generally requiring a baccalaureate degree for admission and three or more years of prescribed postgraduate work.

**Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>:** The standard research-oriented degree which indicates that the recipient has done, and is prepared to do, original research in a major discipline. The Ph.D. requires a baccalaureate degree or higher for admission and usually requires three years or more of postgraduate work including an original research dissertation.<sup>2</sup>

**Joint, Dual or Concurrent Degrees<sup>3</sup>:** While the nomenclature for various arrangements in which students study simultaneously from or for two degree programs is not entirely consistent among institutions, the definitions below will be used by the Commission for purposes of consistency:

**Joint degree:** A single degree awarded by two institutions.

**Dual or concurrent degrees:** Two degrees, awarded by one or two institutions to students who have been admitted to each degree program, based on the normal qualifications. At the undergraduate level, students must typically take the equivalent of a full year of study beyond the first baccalaureate degree to earn the second degree. At the graduate level, enrollment in a dual or concurrent degree program typically results in a reduction in time, for example, a reduction in total time of a semester for two degrees which if taken separately would require four years of full-time study.

#### **Terms of Study:**

**Quarter:** A calendar of ten weeks of instructional time or its equivalent.

**Semester:** A calendar 15 weeks of instructional time or its equivalent in effort.

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<sup>1</sup>Normally, doctoral degrees represent a minimum of 64 credits beyond the bachelor's degree. Requirements vary by field, with some areas having requirements of specialized or professional accreditors. Students in some doctoral programs progress by examination, dissertation defense, and/or field or clinical work in addition to credit requirements.

<sup>2</sup>The initiation of the Ph.D. is considered a substantive change.

<sup>3</sup>Institutions considering joint, dual, or concurrent degrees should consult the Commission's Policy on Substantive Change.