

Program Closure Process in Detail

A proposal to terminate an existing program or degree may originate from the

- Provost
- Dean
- Program/department faculty

Step 1: No matter where the proposal originates, a Preliminary Rationale to Close Degree Program is drafted by the originator and is immediately provided to the program/department faculty, academic unit curriculum committee, dean, and provost for discussion and consideration.

The Office of Admissions and the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Faculty Advancement are notified of the proposed closure and consulted in the preparation of the Preliminary Rationale for Program Closure, so that they may provide the proposer with information about the closure process that will need to be addressed and should be included in the Preliminary Rationale.

It is recommended that the following be notified in writing of the Preliminary Rationale for informational purposes and to provide assistance as needed in proposal preparation:

- Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education/Graduate Education
- Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Faculty Advancement
- Enrollment Services/Registrar
- Strategic Marketing & Communication
- EVP/COO (if proposal is an international or joint program with another school)
- Legal Affairs (if proposal is an international or joint program with another school)

This Preliminary Rationale to Close Degree Program must include:

- An explanation of the reasoning or situation that has initiated the proposal to close the program
- A brief impact analysis the effect of the proposed closure, including:
 - Expected impact on current students
 - Expected impact on current applicants
 - Accreditation issues that will arise from program closure
 - Expected impact on all faculty, with specific attention to how current tenured faculty will be affected
- Preliminary plans to address each of the situations above
- Discussion of economic factors that either are a part of the decision for closure or will be created by the program closure
- Discussion of how closure aligns with university strategic plan
- A clear timeline for program closure addressing deadlines for each step in the process, including any steps that need to be immediately taken depending on when the closure process is initiated, such as suspension of admission process.
- *In a situation in which the timeline for the decision on closure needs to be expedited for a legitimate and agreed upon reason, the proposer may ask the program/department faculty, curriculum committee, councils and SEB to reduce the timeline for the process as much as is possible, and still allow for faculty consultation into the closure process.*

No form is provided for the preparation of the Preliminary Rationale to Close Program but the proposer should follow the outline above in its preparation.

Step 2: A meeting is called by the proposer with program/department faculty, the academic unit curriculum committee, the dean, and the provost to allow for open discussion by these parties regarding the Preliminary Rationale. Questions, concerns, objections to, and support for the closure of the program should be brought to this discussion, so that information may be provided, if available, or will be made available following the meeting in the Proposal to Close Program. (Note: this meeting is for program/department faculty, curriculum committee, and administration and is designed to facilitate the process. It is not an open meeting, which can happen later in the process if needed.) At this meeting, a timeline is established for the development of the Proposal to Close Program, and for the response by the program/department faculty, academic unit curriculum committee, and dean to the proposal.

Step 3: Following this meeting, if the proposer wishes to continue with the closure proposal, a comprehensive Proposal to Close Degree Program is prepared and submitted to the program/department faculty, academic curriculum committee, and dean. This full proposal is an opportunity to address concerns, answer questions and provide more detailed information to all members of the academic unit that may have arisen in the prior meeting, as well as provide substantive information on the reason for and process to close the program. This document becomes the primary document reviewed by members of the academic unit and all subsequent reviewers. The Proposal to Close Degree Program must contain, at a minimum:

- An explanation of the reason for or situation that has initiated the proposal to close program, and rationale for the benefits to the university of the program closure
- Discussion of economic factors that either are a part of the decision for closure or will be affected by closure
- Discussion of how closure aligns with the University strategic plan
- A timeline for program closure, including any steps that need to be immediately taken, depending on when the closure process is initiated (such as suspension of admissions if practicable or necessary)
- A detailed impact analysis of closure, including:
 - A teach-out plan to allow current students to complete their degree program
 - A plan for notification of current applicants
 - An explanation of accreditation issues to be addressed and processes to be followed
 - The impact of program closure on other programs in terms of faculty, students, and curriculum shared with or contained within any other program(s), including on general education and interdisciplinary majors and minors, if undergraduate program
 - A discussion of how current faculty will be affected by the closure, including current part-time, full-time, tenure track and tenured faculty, and any specific plans for those faculty, specifically tenured faculty, as a result of the program closure
 - A discussion of how current staff will be affected as a result of the program closure
- Any additional information requested or that can be provided to assist the program/department faculty, dean, councils, senate executive board, faculty senators and

provost to understand the reason for the proposal to close the program and impact of the closure.

- The Proposal to Close Degree Program form can be found in the [Appendix-Forms](#) found at the end of this Handbook.

Step 4: Upon receipt of the full Proposal to Degree Close Program, and within the time agreed upon in Step 2, the program/department faculty, the curriculum committee, and the dean provide a response to the proposal with a recommendation for or against closing the program. It is recommended that a rationale for the recommendation is provided by each party when appropriate.

Any party may request information from students and alumni, which may be incorporated into the recommendation reached. In situations in which such parties may have a strong reaction to the proposed closure, it is recommended that students, alumni, and/or other parties with a stake in the decision be provided an avenue to express their concerns, whether in a public meeting or in writing, and that such concerns become a part of the record of the Proposal to Close Degree Program. At the end of this period, all recommendations and other documents created are collected and posted. While it is recommended that the program/department faculty and college/school curriculum committee each provide a separate group response, any individual in the academic unit may submit a separate individual response to the recommendation for approval/non-approval of the Proposal to Close Degree Program.

Step 5: All recommendations and other documents created are available to be reviewed by the program/department faculty, academic unit curriculum committee, dean, and the originator (if outside the academic unit) during the subsequent 5 business days/1 week. Comments and responses may be posted in response and should be limited primarily to omissions or corrections to statements of fact.