

## GUIDELINES FOR THE NEW PROGRAM PROSPECTUS

**Purpose of the Prospectus:** A program prospectus is the initial submission of a potential degree and/or major that is consistent with the institution's mission and that the institution deems a priority. The prospectus is designed to allow institutions to submit program ideas for feedback without expending substantial resources toward the development of a full new program proposal.

The primary purpose of the prospectus is to "make the case" for submitting a formal proposal for the new program. There are three key criteria that should be addressed in the prospectus: 1) **Justification of Need**; 2) **Demand**; and 3) **Non-Duplication**. The prospectus requires institutions to provide clear evidence of how a proposed degree and/or major meets need, demand, and does not lead to unnecessary program duplication in the University System. All prospectuses are expected to include data or evidence to support the need and demand for the program. Of course, the stronger the evidence accompanying a prospectus, the greater the likelihood the institution will be invited to submit a formal proposal.

The prospectus will be reviewed by system office staff. After the prospectus is reviewed, an institution will be sent notification indicating whether a formal proposal is invited.

**Addressing the Key Criteria:** Suggestions for the kinds of data that may be used to address the three primary criteria are found below. Again, the three criteria are:

- 1) **Justification of Need for the Program;**
- 2) **Demand for the Program; and**
- 3) **Non-Duplication of other USG Programs**

1) **Justification of Need:** There are several factors that can serve as justification of need for a degree program.

a. **Employment or Industry Need:**

The most common reason to propose a new degree program is that there is a primary employment or industry need in the state of Georgia or the local/regional service area of an institution. This need could also be national or international.

When there is a clear employment or industry need, a prospectus should include relevant data or evidence to reflect this need. Sample data/evidence that could accompany the prospectus in this case include the following: (Please note that factors a.i., a.ii., and a.iii. below are required for all prospectuses based on employment or industry need. All other factors should be included as needed, but it is not necessary to include every type of evidence listed below. Bear in mind that the greater the evidence for need, the stronger the case for the new program).

- i. **Required - Clear ties to economic development in the state (e.g., Georgia Department of Economic Development)**
- ii. **Required - State and regional occupational projections**
- iii. **Required - Georgia Department of Labor data showing potential job placement opportunities**
- iv. Growth in industries that would employ graduates of the program
- v. Data from national, state-wide, or professional/industry specific studies
- vi. Economic forecasts
- vii. Evidence of new markets that are growing

- viii. Recommendations from employer/industry advisory groups
- ix. List of potential employers: local, state-wide, and regional, if appropriate
- x. Letters of support from employers or industry stating a need for graduates of a program
- xi. Sample job postings/advertisements, if applicable
- xii. Critical shortages in specific jobs or careers that have been identified in the state
- xiii. If the program is one that will prepare students for specific occupations or professions with current surpluses, provide data indicating that the need will increase. If surpluses are expected to persist, provide a rationale for investing campus and state resources into a program in this area.
- xiv. If the program is one that is designed to provide professional advancement of individuals, provide evidence of position openings at these higher professional levels, present evidence of industry trends or requirements indicating these positions will become available in the near future, or provide evidence that the program is necessary for employment or advancement in the field.

**b. Specific Programs Tied to USG Initiatives or Regional Needs that are not Directly Linked to Employment:**

There are times when institutions see a need for a new degree program that is not easily tied to specific employment or industry need. In this case, it may be difficult to provide the types of evidence listed above to justify the proposed program.

Institutions presenting a prospectus for these types of programs must still make a strong case for the particular need for the program, and must provide as much direct evidence as possible to justify the proposed program. Making the case for this type of program should still include relevant data that support the institution's logic and reasoning behind proposing the program.

1. An example of such a program might be an undergraduate program in interdisciplinary studies. Certain areas of Georgia include residents who have earned some college credit but do not hold a college degree. If an institution's college completion plan includes specific strategies to target these types of residents, the institution may propose unique programs that are strategically designed to meet the needs of degree completers in the region. The type of evidence that should be included in this type of prospectus might include the following:
  - a. Local and regional population data that identify the number of residents with some college credit
  - b. Data or evidence that indicate these individuals would like to attend the institution to complete their college degree
2. Another example might be a proposed program that is designed to generate new knowledge and research in a given area. While the goal of this program may not be to produce graduates to fill specific jobs, it is intended to produce cutting edge research by students and faculty in the program and ultimately produce graduates with advanced knowledge and skills for the research field. Evidence that should be provided in this type of prospectus might include the following:

- a. Evidence of innovation and trends in the discipline that are driving the need for new research in the field. Such evidence might be found in reports from professional organizations, guidelines from granting agencies, etc.
  - b. Evidence of new markets in the discipline that are emerging
3. A third example of this type of prospectus might be a new degree program that is proposed to advance particular initiatives that are deemed high priority by the Chancellor or Board, but may not easily be tied to direct employment needs. For example, if advancing global learning is a key priority for the USG, institutions might propose new programs that are designed to accomplish this goal. Again, graduates from this program are not prepared for specific jobs, but are learning values, skills, and knowledge that will contribute to their professional and personal success in a global society. Evidence that should be included in this type of prospectus might include the following:
- a. evidence from measurable learning outcomes accruing from study abroad participation
  - b. evidence that graduation rates or grade point averages are increased by participating in global learning experiences
4. Other examples might include proposed new degree programs that address anticipated program objectives or outcomes related to academic, professional, personal, societal, research, or public service needs.

**c. Specific Institutional Needs that are not Directly Linked to Employment:**

There are times when institutions see an institutional need for a new degree program that is not easily tied to specific employment or industry need.

Institutions presenting a prospectus for these types of programs must still make a strong case for the particular need for the program at their institution and must provide as much direct evidence as possible to justify the proposed program. Making the case for this type of program should still include relevant data that support the institution's logic and reasoning behind proposing the program

An example of this type of program might be an institution that has been Board approved for a mission change and may need to propose new programs to build an array of academic offerings that is aligned with the new mission. The type of evidence that should be included in this type of prospectus might include the following:

- a. Academic programs offered at peer or aspirational institutions
- b. Student qualifications for being admitted or entering the new program
- c. Descriptions of how the proposed program provides clear pathways for students in existing programs to advance their credentials

***NOTE: Keep in mind that a program tied to a USG initiative or regional need or to a specific institutional need may also be connected to employment or industry need. If that is the case, please prepare the prospectus using the criteria in 1.a. (Employment or Industry Need).***

- 2) **Demand for the Program:** Evidence should be presented demonstrating there is sufficient unmet demand for the program in one or more of the following:

a. Student Demand:

Present evidence demonstrating student demand for the program and the extent to which that demand is not being adequately met by existing programs. Evidence could include survey data of prospective students, the results of focus group interviews, or enrollment trends that justify the proposed program.

b. Demand for Services or Intellectual Property of the Program:

Present evidence demonstrating the demand for the services (e.g., contracts, consulting, or community service) or the intellectual property (e.g., inventions and creative works) that would be produced by the students and faculty of the program and the degree to which this demand is not being adequately met by existing programs.

c. Employer Demand:

Present evidence of institutional partnerships/MOU's with specific agencies or companies.

3) **Non-Duplication of Similar Programs at USG Institutions:** List all newly approved and established programs (within the same or related CIP classification) at the same degree level offered at other USG institutions.

- a. Provide productivity data (degrees conferred over the last three years) for all listed programs (see the USG website for the Degrees & Majors Inventory for degrees authorized at USG institutions and Degrees Conferred Reports for productivity data).
- b. Indicate why the existing programs are not sufficient to address demand in the institution's service region or institutional sector.
- c. Identify any low-producing programs among those listed and explain why the proposed program will not fall into this category.
- d. If similar programs exist, please explain what the institution has done to explore partnerships or collaboration with other USG institutions and why an additional program in this field is necessary.

**Submitting the Program Prospectus:** The program prospectus should be submitted via the USG SharePoint website (password protected) located at [https://sharepoint.bor.usg.edu/team\_sites/academicaffairs/npr/SitePages/Home.aspx]. A prospectus form can be found at that site and should be limited to no more than seven pages (including appendices). If you have any problems submitting a prospectus please contact Dr. Marci Middleton at [marci.middleton@usg.edu](mailto:marci.middleton@usg.edu).

Institutions should expect a response from the Office of Academic Affairs to a submitted prospectus within 45 days of receipt. While we recognize there may be contributing factors that cause this review period to be extended, the goal of the Office is to respond within this time frame.