

Shepherd University

Overview of Academic Program Approval Process

The successful launch and ongoing sustainability of new academic programs require two essential components:

- The academic freedom and subject matter expertise of faculty to develop innovative curricula through established faculty governance systems.
- The sound fiscal management of academic leadership to support the short-term and long-term viability of new academic programs within the entire academic portfolio.

Shepherd University's program approval process is structured to protect both essential components, thus aligning the strategic development of innovative programs with the appropriate allocation of resources.

Intent to Plan

When faculty wish to propose an academic program, an Intent to Plan is developed by the dean in collaboration with program faculty and departmental or school leadership. The Intent to Plan documents the overall concept of a new academic program, including its strategic objectives and learning outcomes, marketability, and high-level financial pro forma. With the support of the academic leadership team, the Provost will present the Intent to Plan to the Board of Governors for approval at one of two semiannual Board of Governors meetings (September and February). The Board of Governors will review and issue one of the following three decisions: approve, deny, or request additional information.

Curricula Development and Faculty Governance

After the BOG issues an approval for a programmatic Intent to Plan, faculty will develop all program and course curricula as per the established faculty governance policies. Faculty will develop all course titles, course descriptions, and course sequencing necessary for curriculum action. Academic leadership within the appropriate college will engage in curricular action to ensure that the new programs are developed within the budgetary frameworks established within the Intent to Plan.

Final Authorization

Following the approval of Shepherd University faculty, the Provost will bring forward the fully-developed program to the Board of Governors for final authorization, as required by Higher Learning Commission policy. If appropriate, the Provost will document any changes to the program proposal since the original Intent to Plan.

Shepherd University, Intent to Plan Template

The Intent to Plan document is to be submitted for all new academic credentials requiring additional curricula and instructional cost.

Section I: Overall Concept of Program (1 Page)

- Title, Level of Degree
- College/Department:
- Program Objectives
- Student Learning Outcomes (Competencies) Upon Completion

Section II: Market Analysis and Financial Pro Forma (Attachments)

- Market Data (e.g. Lightcast Subscription/PDF)
 - a. Overview of Program Market
 - b. Labor Market Demand/Target Occupations
 - c. Projected Market Growth
- Financial Proforma (5 years)
 - a. Summary of High-level P&L
 - b. Enrollment and Revenue Projections
 - c. External Funding (If Applicable)
 - d. Preliminary Cost Estimates

Section III: Timeline and Contingency Planning (1-2 pages)

- Timeline for Implementation
- Contingency Planning
 - a. Enrollment growth fails to meet or far exceeds expectations
 - b. External funding sunsets