

Program Innovation and Review Committee

In order to maintain and elevate the status of Howard University as a premier academic institution, it is essential that programs offered at Howard University are of the highest academic quality and provide contemporary and exceptional educational experiences to our students. Innovation for new degree, certificate and other programs arise in response to the emergence of new disciplines or changes in existing disciplines, and they help realize the potential for new interdisciplinary movements in and across our schools.

Howard Forward strategic pillars provide a focus to enhance academic excellence, inspire new knowledge, serve the community, improve efficiency and effectiveness, and achieve financial sustainability. In an effort to assist in the actualization of the strategic pillars, the Office of the Provost in collaboration with the Program Innovation Review Committee (PIRC) will work as partners to support the development of new and cutting edge programs that will strengthen the university's overall academic program portfolio, facilitate utilization of best practices in the development of new program offerings, and ensure effective alignment of resources with University initiatives and priorities. Priority is given to new program applications that are;

1. Aligned with the strategic pillars of Howard Forward;
2. Interdisciplinary;
3. Innovative in focus;
4. Sustainable; and
5. Able to address a strategic Howard University academic need.

It is anticipated that the submission of new program proposals will enable evidence-based decisions related to program development, continuation or discontinuance, and that support strategic planning within academic units and the university at large. All such proposed programs must have been through a process of deliberation by faculty and bear the written approval of the school or college dean and governing body when they come to the PIRC for consideration. All proposed new certificate and degree programs recommended by the PIRC must be reviewed and receive the approvals of the Provost and Chief Academic Officer, President and Board of Trustee members. Inquiries may be made to the Associate Provost for Academic Innovation and Strategic Initiatives.

What is an Academic Program?

Academic Programs are broadly defined as educational offerings provided to any population using institutional resources (including faculty, websites, brand, space, etc.). Each of the following qualify as "Academic Programs" and fall under the scope of these guidelines.

Two other categories are also in scope and described below: (1) substantive changes to existing Academic Programs and (2) Grants, MOUs, or contracts with third parties impacting or soliciting the development or operations of Academic Programs.

New Academic Programs

New Program or Change	Type	Focus
Degree	Bachelor's Doctorate	Masters Specialist
Certificate	Certificate Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study	Post-Bac Certificate Post-Graduate Certificate
Expanded Campus Learning	Athletics Conferences Continuing Education Executive Education Bridge Year Licensure	Lifelong Learning Open Enrollment Pre-College Pre-K-9 Programs Workforce Training Workshops
Off-Campus Programs	Affiliations Exchanges Faculty-Led Trips	Short-Term Study Abroad
Other Academic Programs	Centers Consulting Fellowships Volunteer Residency	Internship Post-Doc Research (Program) Clinic
Substantive Change	Curricular Refresh Intensive Timeline Online Adaptation Structural Refresh	New Major New Minor New Track

Process

1. Letter of Intent to Establish Academic Program

All proposals for new academic programs require the submission of a short letter of intent addressed to the Provost and Chief Academic Officer and sent to oai@howard.edu copying any relevant Deans, Associate Deans, and Department Chairs. A template has been provided in this document. At this stage, ideas for new programs require approval from Department Chair, School Curriculum Committee, Executive Committee, and School/College Dean. It is strongly recommended that each of these stakeholders are included in developing ideas for the proposed program. Upon receipt of the Letter of Intent Establish Academic Program, the Office of the Provost and PIRC, members of PIRC will communicate further instructions to the proposer of the letter within four weeks. It is estimated that most programs will take approximately 9-10 months from submission of Letter of Intent to Establish Academic Program to final approval and approximately 24 months until the first cohort matriculates from the program. Please see the Timeline Section for details on when to submit a Letter of Intent to Establish Academic Program.

For certificate and degree programs, the letter of intent will form the basis for conversations between the proposer and the PIRC to help the proposer develop the idea, ascertain its appropriateness to Howard's mission, locate potential redundancies with other programs, conduct marketing research, create a business and marketing plan and generate other necessary features of a successful proposal.

2. Consultation with PIRC

The PIRC will meet with proposers to discuss the ideas contained in the Letter of Intent. If the ideas are consonant with Howard's mission, have strong educational and intellectual foundations, have the potential to be financially sustainable or profitable, and do not duplicate other university programming, the group will work with proposers to begin developing the proposals. Support for concept development as well as light market research are appropriate at this point. The PIRC will also share examples of strong formal proposals approved in the past and any guidelines, policies or processes specific to the type of Academic Program being proposed. The proposers may need to revise their Letter of Intent based on this feedback.

3. Program Strategy Meeting

The PIRC will convene quarterly) with deans, associate deans, and chairs to evaluate the updated Letters of Intent, deciding which to invite for formal proposals. Proposals will be evaluated on a rolling basis, so that proposers not chosen in one round may nonetheless be selected in the next. If a proposal is chosen, the proposer will be given the approval to proceed to the formal proposal (with further support from the PIRC) by the dean and associate deans of the School.

4. Formal Proposal

When given the approval by the PIRC, proposers should proceed to creating a formal proposal. The PIRC will review with the proposer the specifications for the type of proposal they will be developing and provide guidance and support on the consultations, market research, and approvals required. The PIRC will also facilitate completion of certain pieces of the proposal including the Marketing Analysis, Financial Statements, and Evaluation Plan.

When given the approval by the PIRC, proposers should proceed to creating a formal proposal (a template proposal is provided attached). The PIRC will review with the proposer the specifications for the type of proposal they will be developing and provide guidance and support on the consultations, market research, and approvals required.

5. Approvals

Approval from Department Chairs / School Curriculum Committee/Executive Committee/ Deans is considered to be conferred upon the receipt by the PIRC of a signed Letter of Support, addressed to the Provost, indicating: (A) how this program fits into strategic priorities (e.g., academic, research, hiring, financial, administrative, other), and (B) that they understand the proposal, specifically the financial targets and Exit Plan.

Approval from the Provost and VP Finance is considered to be conferred upon the receipt by the PIRC and all school-level participants of an email indicating approval. Note that the Provost and the VP Finance will not review the proposal until the Letter of Support and Proposal is received from the Dean of the school/college.

Approval from the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee is considered to be conferred upon the associate provost's email notification of the school/college deans or, in the case of university-wide programs, the appropriate faculty director of a positive trustee vote.

6. Review

The Evaluation Plan Section of the Proposal will establish review timelines for the program for academic, business, and, in some cases, legal or other administrative functions. The PIRC will work with relevant functional areas to ensure reviews are completed on the stated timelines. Results will be reviewed with Deans during their regular meetings.

The next academic review process is scheduled for 3 years after the approval of a new program. Evaluation tools for the 3-year review process will be posted on the website of the Office of the Provost.

Timeline

Given the time and effort required to complete a formal proposal and the risk to Howard University if programs launch with insufficient time for development, Letters of Intent should be submitted to the PIRC as soon as possible via the Office of Academic Innovation & Strategic Initiatives at oai@howard.edu.