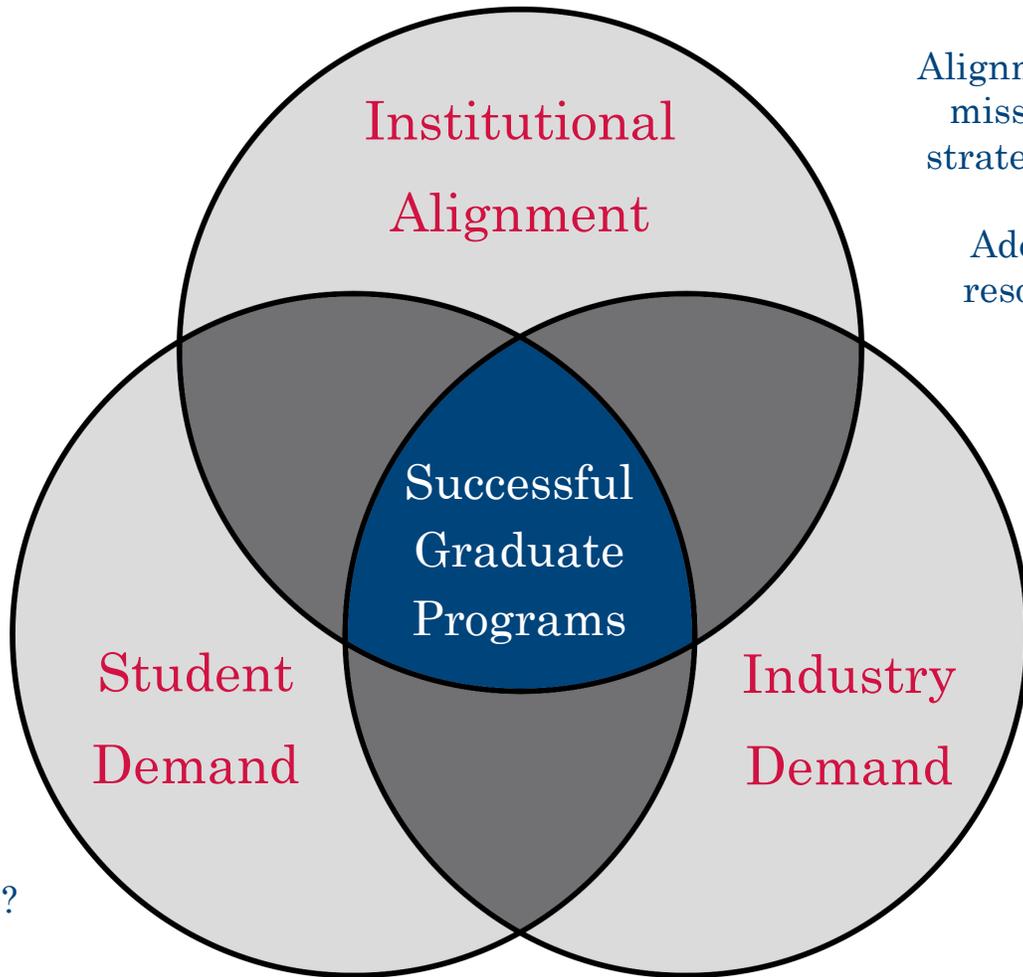


# Graduate Program Proposal



Alignment with mission and strategic plan?

Adequate resources?

How many new enrollments?

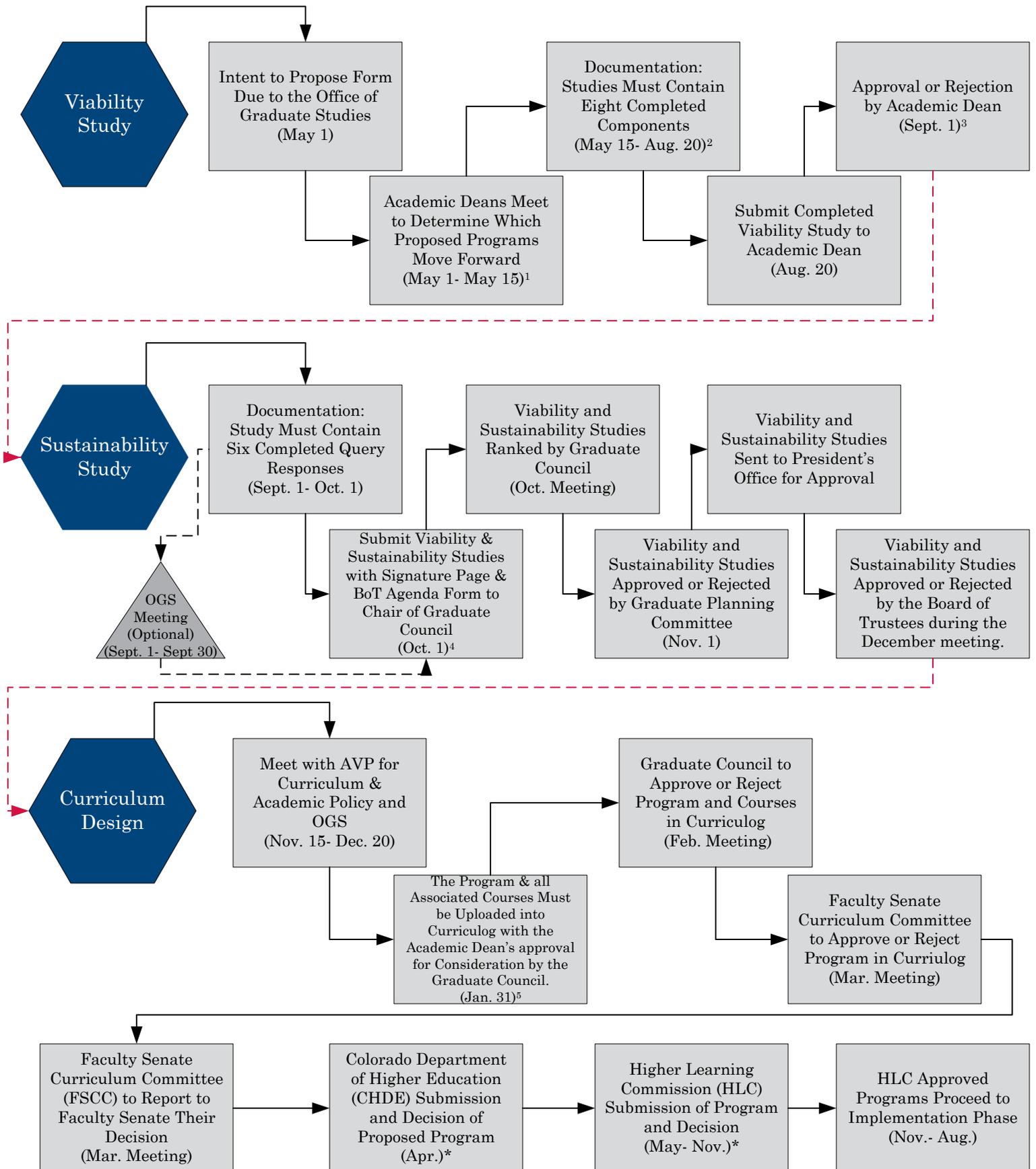
Competitors that already serve the market?

Right skills and the right time?

Employer demand?



# Approval Process Flow Chart



1. Academic Deans will identify programs selected to move forward in the approval process and notify applicants by May 15.

2. Request for information or assistance from the Budget Office and Business Intelligence must be made by Jun. 20.

3. If a viability study is rejected, please meet with the appropriate Academic Dean to determine the revision/resubmission process.

4. Academic Dean's will receive a courtesy copy of the Sustainability Study submitted by each of the programs from OGS.

5. Additional University-level deadlines will be applicable and announced via ASA Procedural Calendar. Please be mindful that there are 4 additional levels of approval (Department Curriculum Chair, Department Chair, Academic Dean, Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee).

\*These dates are good faith estimates based on feedback from the accrediting body. The actual amount of time for review may vary.

## VIABILITY STUDY Concept Review

**Purpose:** The purpose of this phase is to demonstrate the viability of proposed graduate programs through strategic development. To that end, the viability study represents the underpinnings for the success of newly proposed programs. The viability study ensures MSU Denver graduate programs will stand out, appeal to a sufficient number of students and have strong outcomes. In addition to the aforementioned, the viability study acts as a demand analysis, ensuring that new programs have growth potential by identifying competitors, while simultaneously ensuring that academic and/or professional objectives and accreditation standards are met.

**Intent:** The viability study gives the academic Dean the information needed to make a data driven decision regarding this phase of the approval process. If results of the study indicate a new program will indeed be viable, the new program may be approved by the academic Dean. Approval of the viability study permits applicants to proceed to the next phase, the sustainability study. Approval of the viability study does not guarantee that the new program will be approved in the next phase (sustainability study) or subsequently. If the study results fail to indicate the viability of a new program, the academic Dean will reject the proposal and the programmatic approval process ends. Rejection at this phase does not preclude programs from revising and resubmitting a viability study to the academic Dean in subsequent years.

**Documentation:** Academic Deans will only review completed viability studies submitted by the submission deadline.<sup>1</sup> A complete viability study must contain the following components:

- I. **Intent to Propose**
- II. **Overview**
- III. **Capacity Analysis**
- IV. **Revenue Generation**
- V. **Mission and Vision**
- VI. **Competitive Scan<sup>2</sup>**
- VII. **Market Demand<sup>3</sup>**
- VIII. **Signature/Approval**

**Submission:** College/School Dean

---

<sup>1</sup> It is highly recommended that representatives from the proposed graduate program work with the Office of Graduate Studies while completing the viability study for guidance and assistance.

<sup>2</sup> The Office of Graduate Studies will provide applicants with the most up-to-date list of peer and aspirational institutions.

<sup>3</sup> Applicants are only required to complete a Job Market Demand by Country if the proposed graduate program draws heavily from an international student pool

# VIABILITY STUDY

## Checklist

### I. Intent to Propose

- Provide the AVP of Graduate Studies with a completed Intent to Propose form
  - Note, the Intent to Propose-Non-Degree Option form should be used for programs that lead to graduate certificates and/or micro credentialing, and other structured graduate coursework that is directive-driven but does not culminate with the award of a Master's degree.<sup>4</sup>

### II. Overview

- Provide (1) the name of the program, (2) the college or school in which the program will be housed and (3) the non-degree or degree option (Master of Arts, Master of Fine Arts, Master of Science, etc.)
  - Note, the Master of Arts degree is a degree option that is focused on areas such as the humanities. Types of subjects where most Master of Arts degrees are available are: communication, English, teaching, literature, linguistics, art and languages. The main method of learning for a MA degree option is through seminars, which are heavily discussion based regarding the subject matter. The Master of Fine Arts is an academically recognized terminal degree and is awarded to practitioners in the fine arts and performing arts. The Master of Science degree option is usually for programs that are more focused on scientific and mathematical subjects. These types of subjects include: computer science, biochemistry, engineering, economics, mathematics and public health. Students that undergo a MS degree option can expect to be heavily immersed in lab work, scientific research analysis and evaluation.

### III. Capacity Analysis

- Will the program launch require additional faculty?
  - Yes/No
    - o If yes, how many? Please make note of any accreditation mandates (HLC and programmatic). For example, must faculty teaching in the graduate program hold a terminal degree in the field?
    - o If no, describe how the proposed program will impact teaching loads of current faculty.

---

<sup>4</sup> Do not proceed to the second step of the viability study (overview) without expressed consent from the appropriate academic Dean.

- Will the program launch require additional staff?
  - Yes/No
    - If yes, identify staff needs by title/role and duties/responsibilities.
    - If no, how will the time of current staff be reallocated to ensure the success of the proposed program?
  
- Will the program launch require additional resources?
  - Yes/No
    - If yes, identify specific resources for space needs and note how the program will meet those needs. Identify programmatic student service needs and note how the program will provide those services. Note equipment (hardware and software<sup>5</sup>) needs and how the program will fund those.
    - If no, detail how current resources (space, student services and equipment) will be used to adequately cover the needs of the proposed program.

#### **IV. Revenue Generation**

- All Master's programs are self-supported and are expected to become revenue generating entities for MSU Denver. All graduate programs are required to generate a profit by the end of the first four years.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, proposed graduate programs are expected to create a realistic projection of program size. A representative from the Division of Administration, Finance and Facilities will work with applicants from the proposed program to produce an anticipated revenue generation estimate based on the realistic projection of program size determined by the academic unit.
  - Applicants must base size projection on (1) local, state, national and online competitors with similar programs and (2) appropriate primary and secondary data.<sup>7</sup>

#### **V. Mission and Vision**

- In addition to providing a mission and vision statement for the proposed program, this portion of the viability study must also include a statement illustrating how the proposed program's mission aligns with the mission of the Office of Graduate Studies and the mission of MSU Denver.

---

<sup>5</sup> Be sure to include a schedule for hardware and software updates.

<sup>6</sup> During the sixth year of operations all graduate programs are required to participate in a revenue sharing agreement, whereby a percentage of their revenue will be transferred to the institution to support undergraduate programs and other initiatives.

<sup>7</sup> Provide a minimum of two comparison universities per category (local, state, national and online). If necessary, Business Intelligence (if available) will assist with data generation and analysis for the revenue generation report.

- Remain mindful of the following when completing this portion of the viability study: mission and vision statements answer questions about who you are, what you value and where you are going. A mission statement communicates the proposed program’s reason for being and the ways in which the program aims to serve its key stakeholders. A vision statement helps describe the program’s purpose and also includes its values. The vision statement can provide behavioral direction while also providing inspiration.

## VI. Competitive Scan<sup>8</sup>

- Complete a review of literature examining a minimum of eight comparable domestic and international programs.<sup>9</sup> Incorporate a best practices approach to the competitive scan by detailing undertakings that cause comparable programs to thrive. Include approaches, activities, structure, etc. from thriving programs that can be implemented into the proposed MSU Denver program. In addition, make note of gaps that exist in the programs analyzed and describe how the proposed MSU Denver program can/will fill any gaps.
  - Utilize the following sites for assistance with the competitive scan:
    1. US News and World Report: Best Graduate Schools  
<https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools>
    2. Times Higher Education & Wall Street Journal World University Rankings  
<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings>
    3. National Center for Education Statistics: College Navigator  
<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

## VII. Market Demand

- Justify the viability of the proposed program by providing data regarding employment trends for future graduates.
  - **Required:** Assess Job Market Demand—National Level
    1. Employ Google search for job market demand (i.e. “employment demand fine arts,” “employment demand data science”)
    2. Bureau of Labor Statistics—Occupational Outlook Handbook  
<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>
  - **Required:** Assess Job Market Demand—State/Regional Level
    1. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Occupational Employment Statistics by State  
[www.bls.gov/oes](http://www.bls.gov/oes)

---

<sup>8</sup> If the proposed program is ground-breaking and/or takes a pioneering approach to a discipline and therefore has few or no comparable programs with which to compare, applicants are permitted to use parallel or related programs for the competitive scan.

<sup>9</sup> Not all competitive scans require an examination of international programs, only ones that draw heavily from an international student pool. Note, the programs analyzed for the competitive scan may be the same as those analyzed for revenue generation.

2. Projections Central

[www.projectionscentral.com](http://www.projectionscentral.com)

3. State Department of Labor website

<https://www.colmigateway.com/vosnet/lmi/default.aspx?pu=1&plang=E>

4. Career One Stop

[www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)

5. United States Census Bureau

[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

- *Optional:* Assess Job Market Demand – By Country

1. Going Global

[www.goingglobal.com](http://www.goingglobal.com)

### VIII. Signature/Approval

Academic Dean signs and dates Viability Study Approval Form.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> If an academic Dean denies approval of a Viability Study the Dean is required to provide applicants with a rationale for the denial in writing.

This Page Intentionally Left Blank



This Page Intentionally Left Blank



This Page Intentionally Left Blank



## VIABILITY STUDY

### Dean Signature Page

This form must be completed and attached to the Viability Study for progression through the programmatic approval process.

- Approval of Viability Study:** I hereby approve the attached Viability Study designated for the proposed graduate program in \_\_\_\_\_ within my college/school at Metropolitan State University of Denver. This approval is made pursuant to guidelines established by the Office of Graduate studies and is based on my determination that the attached Viability Study is consistent with the mission and vision of my college/school and Metropolitan State University of Denver.
  
- Approval of Viability Study with Revisions:** I hereby approve the attached Viability Study designated for the proposed graduate program in \_\_\_\_\_ within my college/school at Metropolitan State University of Denver. This approval is made pursuant to guidelines established by the Office of Graduate studies and is based on my determination, that upon completion of mutually agreed upon revisions, the attached Viability Study will be consistent with the mission and vision of my college/school and Metropolitan State University of Denver.
  
- Denial of Approval for Viability Study:** I hereby deny approval for the attached Viability Study designated for the proposed graduate program in \_\_\_\_\_ within my college/school at Metropolitan State University of Denver. This denial is based on my determination that the attached Viability Study lacks the necessary information to establish its consistency with the mission and vision of my college/school and/or Metropolitan State University of Denver. Please provide rationale on the following page.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name (please print)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature* *Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*College/School*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Email* *Phone*

#### Denial Rationale:

This Page Intentionally Left Blank

## SUSTAINABILITY STUDY Concept Review

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to provide an analysis and evaluation of the impact of a potential graduate program. To that end, the sustainability study identifies factors that will make a proposed program successful. The sustainability study is designed to augment and enhance the viability study. It not only helps to determine if a program is technically sustainable, but also helps in predicting if the proposed program will be profitable. Ultimately, the sustainability study is an assessment of the practicality of a proposed program. Upon completion of the sustainability study, the program proposal (containing the viability and sustainability study) is first presented to the Graduate Council<sup>11</sup>, then to the Graduate Planning Committee and finally to the Board of Trustees for approval.<sup>12</sup> Please note, the decision to terminate the approval process can occur during the sustainability study phase by either the Graduate Planning Committee or the Board of Trustees.

**Intent:** As the second phase in the approval process, the sustainability study serves to bring more depth to the viability study. The analysis that occurs during the sustainability study will provide the Graduate Council, Graduate Planning Committee and Board of Trustees with the information needed to make a decision regarding whether or not a new master's program shall proceed to the Curriculum Development and Design step in the proposal process. If results of the study indicate positive sustainability; the Graduate Council, Graduate Planning Committee and Board of Trustees may confirm approval of the new program by completing a signature or vote page. Approval of the sustainability study by all three approving bodies allows proposed programs to proceed to the next step, Curriculum Development and Design. Subsequently, if study results fail to indicate the sustainability of a proposed program, the approving bodies will reject the proposal and the programmatic approval process ends. Rejection at this phase does not preclude programs from revising and resubmitting the viability and sustainability studies in subsequent years.

---

<sup>11</sup> Graduate council will share the study with the appropriate Academic Dean as a courtesy

<sup>12</sup> It is highly recommended that representatives from the proposed graduate program work with the Office of Graduate Studies during the sustainability study phase for guidance and assistance.

**Documentation:** The Graduate Council, Graduate Planning Committee and Board of Trustees will only review completed viability and sustainability studies submitted by the submission deadline.<sup>13</sup>

A complete sustainability study addresses the following queries:

- I. **Is there sufficient demand for the program and or clinical services in the region/state?**
- II. **What are the financial demands of creating a program; what funding opportunities can the proposed program capitalize on to address those demands?**
- III. **Is there a sufficient applicant pool of academic/clinical faculty?**
- IV. **Is there a potential pool of students who will enroll in the program?**
- V. **Will students have sufficient opportunities for experiential learning?**
- VI. **Will this program appeal to working professionals?**
- VII. **What are the program details?**
- VIII. **Is the Board of Trustees Agenda Form complete?**
- IX. **Are all three signature pages filled out and included?**

**Submission:** Graduate Council → Graduate Planning Committee → President's Office → Board of Trustees

---

<sup>13</sup> Note: The approved viability study with the Dean Signature Page must be attached to the completed sustainability study.

## SUSTAINABILITY STUDY

### Checklist

- I. Is there sufficient demand for the program and or clinical services in the region/state?**
- Check Department of Labor statistics for the degree at the state and national levels.  
-Bureau of Labor Statistics: Occupational Employment Statistics  
<https://www.bls.gov/ooh>
- II. What are the financial demands of creating a program; what funding opportunities can the proposed program capitalize on to address those demands?**
- Provide a qualitative & quantitative local employer analysis. (1) Identify relevant local employers, (2) provide the number of employees with graduate degrees and (3) note if the organization offers tuition assistance (and at what level, certificate, bachelor's, master's, etc.).<sup>14</sup>  
-Business Intelligence will assist applicants with the development of quantitative tools and with data analysis.
- III. Is there a sufficient applicant pool of academic/clinical faculty?**
- Yes/No-provide details
- IV. Is there a potential pool of students who will enroll in the program?**
- Identify current enrollment levels for similar programs
  - Is there a local demand for employees with the proposed graduate degree?<sup>15</sup>  
- Bureau of Labor Statistics: Occupational Employment Statistics  
<https://www.bls.gov/ooh>
- V. Will students have sufficient opportunities for experiential learning?**
- Supply qualitative & quantitative data on the availability of clinical/applied/practical opportunities for students enrolled in the program

---

<sup>14</sup> Include a minimum of three local employers in this analysis

<sup>15</sup> Applicants must contact local employers as well as utilize Labor statistics

## VI. Will this program appeal to working professionals?

Yes

- If yes, describe how the proposed program will appeal to a minimum of one type of working professional and provide a minimum of three unique characteristics inherent in the proposed program that will appeal to the working professional.

Proposed programs must focus on attracting a minimum of one (out of four) types of working professionals identified below. These four types of working professionals represent students that are driving growth in graduate enrollment nationally. They include: (1) Career Starters, (2) Career Advancers, (3) Career Changers and (4) Career Crossers.



Applicants must also provide a minimum of three (out of six) unique characteristics inherent in the proposed program that will appeal to the working professional. The characteristics working professionals find most appealing include: (1) flexible delivery, (2) accelerated format, (3) stackable credentials, (4) interdisciplinary pathways, (5) practical experience and (6) professional development.



No

- If no, provide a one-page justification (1) elucidating why the proposed program is not designed to appeal to working professionals, (2) identifying the audience to which the program will appeal and (3) illustrating the ways in which the proposed program will appeal to its target public/proposed student body.

**VII. What are the program details?**

- Provide details regarding course delivery (traditional, cohort, online, hybrid, etc.), required credit hours, and capstone output (thesis, oral and/or written comprehensive exam, professional project, etc.). Include a list of core and elective courses.

**VII. Is the Board of Trustees Agenda Form complete?**

Yes

-Provide a one paragraph description of the **Background** of the program. In the first sentence identify the type of degree and title of proposed degree. Then identify and elucidate any options or sequences for the degree including the credit hours needed for completion.

-Provide a three to four paragraph **Analysis** of/for the proposed program. In the first paragraph include data about competing programs (locally, state-wide, regionally, nationally and online) and provide a brief description of the MSU Denver advantage. In the second paragraph briefly describe the current market or circumstances that will provide the underpinnings for the proposed program's success. In the third paragraph describe the proposed programmatic start-up needs (faculty, staff, equipment costs, etc.). The fourth paragraph is optional and should be used to add any additional information applicants feel the Board of Trustees needs to ensure they have a comprehensive understanding of the program proposal

-Add a brief description of the **Admission Criteria** for the proposed program.

-Provide a table containing all **Program Requirements**. The table must contain a minimum of two columns. The first column should be titled "Content Areas" and include the titles of all programmatic areas of concentration within the proposed program. The second column should be titled "Option 1" (if there are multiple content options or sequences for students within the proposed graduate program) or "Credit Hours" (if there is only one option for students). The column should contain the number of credit hours a graduate student will complete in each content area or area of concentration.<sup>16</sup> Below the

---

<sup>16</sup> If there are multiple content options or sequences for students in the proposed graduate program each content option or sequence will warrant separate columns. Each column should detail course requirements followed by a "Credit Hours" column. Please contact OGS for examples/assistance.

table provide a list of proposed courses for the graduate program and the number of credit hours each course fulfills.

-The final portion of the Board of Trustees Agenda form is a brief **recommendation statement** completed by the Graduate Planning Committee.

**VIII. Are all three signature pages filled out and included?**

Yes

-Graduate Council

-Graduate Planning Committee

-Board of Trustees



## SUSTAINABILITY STUDY

### Graduate Planning Committee Signature Page

This form must be completed and attached to the Viability & Sustainability Studies for progression through the programmatic approval process.

- Approval of Viability and Sustainability Studies:** The Graduate Planning Committee hereby approves the attached Viability and Sustainability Studies designated for the proposed graduate program in \_\_\_\_\_ at Metropolitan State University of Denver. This approval is made pursuant to guidelines established by the Office of Graduate studies and is based on the Graduate Planning Committee’s determination that the attached Viability and Sustainability Studies are consistent with the mission and vision of Metropolitan State University of Denver and is sustainable based on the University’s Strategic Plan.
  
- Denial of Approval for Viability and Sustainability Studies:** The Graduate Planning Committee hereby denies approval for the attached Viability and Sustainability Studies designated for the proposed graduate program in \_\_\_\_\_ at Metropolitan State University of Denver. This denial is based on the Graduate Planning Committee’s determination that the attached Viability and Sustainability Studies lack the necessary information to establish its consistency with the mission and vision Metropolitan State University of Denver and/or the University’s Strategic Plan.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Faculty Senate President (Print Name)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature* *Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Office of the President Representative (Print Name)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature* *Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Provost & Executive VP for Academic Affairs (Print Name)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature* *Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*VP for Administration/Chief Operating Officer (Print Name)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature* *Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*CIO & AVP for Information Technology (Print Name)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature* *Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*AVP of Curriculum and Policy Development (Print Name)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature* *Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*AVP of Online Learning (Print Name)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature* *Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*AVP of Graduate Studies (Print Name)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature* *Date*

This Page Intentionally Left Blank



## SUSTAINABILITY STUDY

### Board of Trustees Agenda Form

This form must be attached to the Sustainability Study for progression through the programmatic approval process.

Background (one paragraph)

Analysis (3-4 paragraphs)

Admission Criteria (1-3 Sentences)

Program Requirements: (Table and Course Titles with Credit hours)

Recommendation:<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> The Graduate Planning Committee will complete this portion of the Board of Trustees Agenda Form.



## SUSTAINABILITY STUDY

### Board of Trustees Agenda Form Vote Page

This form must be completed and attached to the Sustainability Study for progression through the programmatic approval process.

- Approval of Agenda Form:** The Board of Trustees at Metropolitan State University hereby approve the attached Agenda Form designated for the proposed graduate program in \_\_\_\_\_ at Metropolitan State University of Denver. This approval is made pursuant to guidelines established by the Office of Graduate studies and is based the Board's determination that the attached Agenda Form is consistent with the mission, vision and strategic plan for Metropolitan State University of Denver.
  
- Denial of Approval for Agenda Form:** The Board of Trustees hereby denies approval for the attached Agenda Form designated for the proposed graduate program in \_\_\_\_\_ at Metropolitan State University of Denver. This denial is based on the Board of Trustee's determination that the attached Agenda Form lacks the necessary information to establish its consistency with the mission, vision and/or strategic plan for Metropolitan State University of Denver.

Board of Trustees vote:

\_\_\_\_\_

Board of Trustees Vote Certification:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair- MSU Denver Board of Trustees (*Print Name*)

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

This Page Intentionally Left Blank

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN AS DETERMINED BY THE CURRICULUM &  
POLICY DEVELOPMENT AREA  
Curriculog Submission

**Purpose:** The purpose of this phase is to develop an overarching curricular approach for the proposed graduate program. To that end, applicants must generate the curricular pathways for students' graduation. The pathways should contain a breakdown of all courses required for degree completion including (but not limited to): course titles, numbers, descriptions, prerequisites and learning outcomes. Ultimately, the curriculum design phase elucidates the academic rigor and robust forms of inquiry inherent in graduate level learning.

**Intent:** This phase involves completion of the necessary steps for curriculum approval of the proposed graduate program. Completed curricular pathways must be formatted to appear in the MSU Denver Graduate Catalog and adhere to Curriculog proposal guidelines.

**Documentation:**

- I. AVP Approval
- II. Curriculog Proposal

**Submission:** Curriculog<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Reminder: Additional University-level deadlines will be applicable and announced via ASA Procedural Calendar.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN  
Curriculog Checklist

**I. AVP Approval**

Contact the Director of Curriculum and Catalog to schedule a meeting to discuss external accreditation requirements with her and the AVP for Curriculum and Policy Development. Upon approval from the AVP for Curriculum and Policy Development, applicants may proceed to the online Curriculog Proposal step.

**II. Online Curriculog Proposal**

Applicants may only proceed to the Curriculog site after meeting with the AVP for Curriculum and Policy Development and the Office of Graduate Studies regarding external accreditation requirements.

Applicants must be prepared to submit the following with the Curriculog Proposal:

- Required reading(s)
- Student Behavioral Learning Outcomes
- Course outline/content
- Evaluation method

Attach a copy of the Viability and Sustainability studies with corresponding a signature pages to the Curriculog Proposal.

**Upon successful completion of the aforementioned steps in the approval process, proposed graduate programs will be submitted to CDHE and HLC for approval as dictated by the Approval Process Flow Chart. Once approved, programs should begin implementation.**