MSU DENVER Graduate Studies

GUIDELINES

for

NEW GRADUATE PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Last adjusted August 2023

GUIDELINES FOR NEW GRADUATE PROGRAM PROPOSLAS

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MSU DENVER GRADUATE PROGRAM APPROVAL STEPS & TIMELINE

Documents and Proposer Tasks	Communication	Dates/ Time	Processed √

Frequent Abbreviations:

Grad. Studies: MSU Denver Graduate Studies; **AVP-CAEPD:** Associate Vice President for Curriculum, Academic Effectiveness and Policy Development (Shaun Schafer);

DCC: Director of Curriculum and Catalog (Erica Buckland); **BOT**: Board of Trusties; **GPC**: Provost chaired Graduate Planning Committee; **OOP**: Office of the President **Gray highlights indicate proposer tasks!**

PART 1 (before BOT Approval)

Documents and Proposer Tasks	Communication	Dates/ Time	Processed √
1) DCC: Intent to propose new graduate program	This form from the **Office for Curriculum, Academic Effectiveness and Policy Development** is submitted electronically to DCC. DCC alerts Grad. Studies.	When idea is conceived	
2) Grad. Studies: Proposing new degree program or non- degree program	This form is sent to the AVP for Graduate Studies.	When idea is conceived	
3) 8-Component Viability Plan	Proposing department submits proposal draft/viability study to its **College Dean** for approval		
4) Viability Study/ Dean Signature Page	College Dean sends form with approval or rejection note to Grad. Studies,	3 weeks	
	If approved by College Dean, Grad. Studies sends proposal draft to *all Academic Deans*. Grad. Studies will pass on questions to proposing department. College Dean notifies department and Grad. Studies via email about approval/rejection by Academic Deans. Grad Studies informs proposing department.	3 weeks	
5) Break-even Budget Form	Proposing Department develops breakeven budget with support from **Budget and Business Intelligence Office.**	3 weeks	
6) Sustainability Study/Graduate Planning Committee Signature	Proposing Department develops 6-component Sustainability Plan	3 weeks	
	Graduate Studies passes Viability *and* Sustainability Study plus all signature forms on to **Graduate Council.**	3rd Thursd./ month	
	Grad. Studies sends Grad. Council decision to **Graduate Planning Committee**	1 week	
7) Sustainability Study/BOT Agenda Form	Graduate Planning Committees sends approved Viability and Sustainability Study incl. all signature forms to Office of the President**,** with notification to Grad. Studies. **Office or the President** sends documents to **BOT** for discussion in in BOT meeting with notification to Grad. Studies	BOT meets four times a year	
	Provost shares BOT vote with Grad. Studies and AVP-CAEPD		
	Grad. Studies alerts proposing departments about plan rejection or approval		
	Grad. Studies sends BOT form to DCC		

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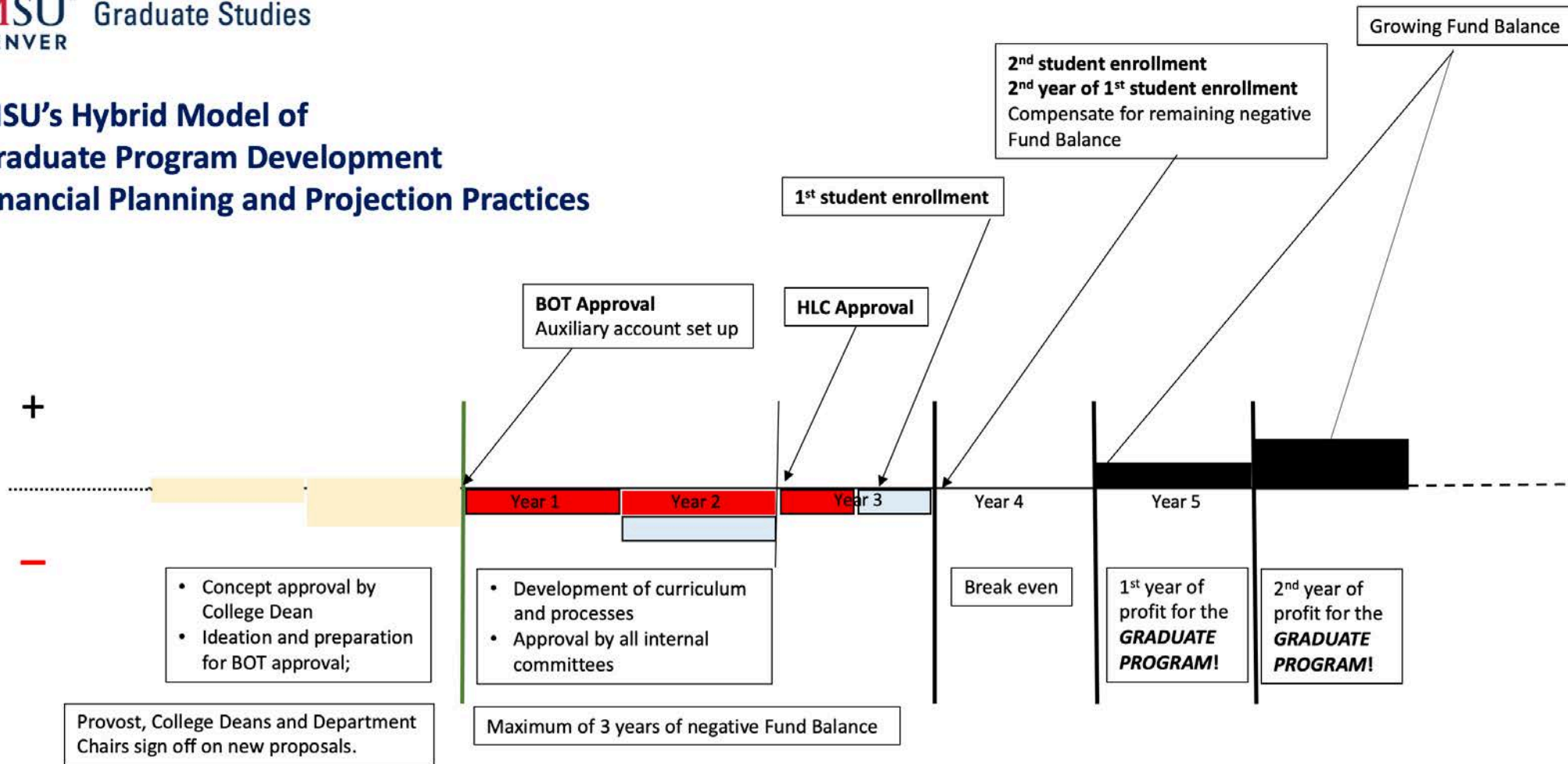
Part 2 (after BOT approval)

Documents and Proposer Tasks	Communication	Dates/ Time	Processed √
	Proposing Departments meet with AVP-CAEPD to discuss course selection and curriculum design		
8) Curriculum Design	AVP-CAEPD approves uploading of courses and curriculum in Curriculog and informs Grad. Studies.		
	Grad. Studies discusses Curriculum with **Graduate Council**–plan rejection or approval. Grad. Studies passes approved program plans on to Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee	3rd Thursday/ month	
	Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee discusses curriculum and informs Faculty Senate and Grad. Studies about plan rejection or approval	One/month	
	Faculty Senate discusses curriculum and informs AVP-CAEPD and Grad. Studies about plan rejection or approval	One/month	
	AVP-CAEPD proposes approved programs to **Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE)**; plan rejection or approval with Grad Studies notification	Varies- Can take up to six months.	
	AVP-CAEPD shares full proposal with **Higher Learning Commission (HLC)** and notifies Grad. Studies.		
	AVP-CAEPD shares decision of CDHE and HLC with Grad Studies via email.		
9) Marketing, Recruitment and Program Implementation	Grad. Studies informs proposing department about final decisions, and program moves on to set up program in system, including setting up an auxiliary fund for new free-standing graduate programs. Program cares for marketing and recruitment.		
10) Set up in Systems	Grad. Studies will work with the Registrar's Office and University Admission to have the new program set up in Banner/Workday and Slate and will discuss with programs communication strategies to invite and respond to student interest.		

Required Approvals for New Graduate Education Offerings

EDUCATIONAL UNIT	NEW/EXISTING COURSES	APPROVAL PROCESS
Master's Program	With existing and new courses	All steps in attached table
Master's Concentration	With existing and new courses	All steps in attached table
Master's Concentration	With existing courses	Steps 1-8 in table *Break-even budget can be developed with input from parental program*
Graduate Certificate	Graduate Certificate composed of four *existing* graduate courses	Steps 1-8in table *Break-even budget can be developed with input from parental program*
	Graduate Certificate composed of at least 50% *new* graduate courses, and/or unrelated to and exiting graduate program	All steps in table
Combined Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Programs (3+2)	With existing and new courses	All steps in table

MSU Graduate Studies
DENVER

MSU's Hybrid Model of Graduate Program Development Financial Planning and Projection Practices

Growing Fund Balance

2nd student enrollment
2nd year of 1st student enrollment
Compensate for remaining negative Fund Balance

1st student enrollment

BOT Approval
Auxiliary account set up

HLC Approval

+

Year 1   Year 2   Year 3   Year 4   Year 5

−

- Concept approval by College Dean
- Ideation and preparation for BOT approval;

- Development of curriculum and processes
- Approval by all internal committees

Break even

1st year of profit for the *GRADUATE PROGRAM*!

2nd year of profit for the *GRADUATE PROGRAM*!

Provost, College Deans and Department Chairs sign off on new proposals.

Maximum of 3 years of negative Fund Balance

MSU Denver Graduate Studies, July 2023

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PART 1 (before BOT approval)

I) VIABILITY STUDY/MARKET ANALYSIS

Purpose:

The purpose of the Viability Study/Market Analysis is to demonstrate through critical market analysis that, under the given conditions, the proposed program has a high probability to succeed. The viability study should show:

- that there is demand for such a new program,
- that the new program can succeed among competitors,
- that the new program can stand out through special features,
- that the new program appeals to a sufficient number of students,
- that the new program is likely to have strong outcomes regarding
- student employment,
- that the new program meets all academic and/or professional objectives and accreditation standards.

If the Viability Study/Market Analysis fails to indicate the viability of a new program, the Academic Dean of the College/School where the new program is planned to reside will reject the proposal and the programmatic approval process will end. Rejection at this phase does not preclude programs from revising and resubmitting a viability study to the Academic Dean in subsequent years.

Documentation:

A complete viability study must contain the following components:
1. Intent to Propose
2. Overview
3. Capacity Analysis
4. Revenue Generation
5. Mission and Vision
6. Competitive Scan
7. Market Demand
8. Dean Signature/Approval

Ib) Viability Study/Market Analysis Checklist

1. **Intent to Propose**

Provide the AVP for Graduate Studies with a completed form:

Intent to propose Graduate Degree Program
Intent to propose non-degree Graduate Program

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's or Graduate Certificate)

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 reside include: 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 and engineering subjects. These types of subjects include computer science, biochemistry, engineering, economics, mathematics, and public health. Students who select a MS degree option can expect to be heavily immersed in lab work, scientific research analysis and evaluation.

2. **Capacity Analysis**

a) Will the program launch require additional **faculty**? Yes/No
   If yes,
   - how many? Please make note of any accreditation mandates (HLC and programmatic). For example, faculty teaching in a graduate program must hold either a doctoral degree, a terminal degree or demonstrate substantial teste experience in the field.

   If no,
   - describe how the proposed program will impact teaching loads of current faculty.

b) Will the program launch require additional **staff?**
   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?

c) 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) 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.

3. **Revenue Generation**

All graduate programs are self-supported and are expected to become revenue generating entities that support their own sustainability. All graduate programs are required to generate a profit by the end of the first four years. Consequently, proposed graduate programs are expected to create a realistic projection of the program size. A representative from the **Budget Office** 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 and will use the break-even budget form.
Applicants must base size projections on:
a) local, state,
b) national and
c) online competitors with similar programs and
d) provide appropriate primary and secondary data.

4. **Mission and Vision**

The vision will reflect the program's values and aspirations, and the mission will describe the programs objectives, the path, the means, and the time it might take to reach these goals. This part of the viability study must also include a statement illustrating how the proposed program's mission aligns with the mission of the university and remain mindful of the following when completing this portion of the viability study:

a) Competitive Scan

Complete a review of literature examining a minimum of eight comparable domestic and international programs. 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. 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.

Use the following sites for assistance with the competitive scan:
1. US News and World Report: Best Graduate Schools
2. Times Higher Education & Wall Street Journal World University Rankings
2. National Center for Education Statistics: College Navigator
https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/'

b) Job Market Demand
1 Justify the viability of the proposed program by providing data regarding employment trends for future graduates.
2 Assess Job Market Demand—National Level
3 Employ Google search for job market demand (i.e., "employment demand fine arts," "employment demand data science")
4 Bureau of Labor Statistics—Occupational Outlook Handbook; Assess Job Market Demand—State/Regional Level
  - Bureau of Labor Statistics: Occupational Employment Statistics by State
  - Projections Central
  - State Department of Labor website
  - Career One Stop
  - United States Census Bureau

  If possible, Assess Job Market Demand—By Country using Going Global

c) Signature/Approval
Signature form for Academic Dean

II) SUSTAINABILITY STUDY CONCEPT REVIEW

Purpose:

The purpose of the Sustainability Study is to provide an analysis and evaluation of the impact of a potential graduate program on the community or economy as well as related to the students' preparation to obtain gainful employment. To that end, the Sustainability Study identifies factors that will make a proposed program successful for all stakeholders. Ultimately, the Sustainability Study is an assessment of the practicality and profitability of a proposed program.

Upon completion of the Sustainability Study, the program proposal (containing the viability and sustainability study) is presented for approval to the

- College Dean
- the Deans of all colleges,
- the Graduate Council, the
- Graduate Planning Committee and finally to
- the Board of Trustees.

The document transfer between the approving entities is handled by MSU Denver Graduate Studies.

Intent:

As the second phase in the approval process, the Sustainability Study serves to bring more depth to the Viability Study. Its analysis will provide the Graduate Council, Graduate Planning Committee and Board of Trustees with the information needed to decide whether the development of the new graduate program shall proceed to the Curriculum Development and Design step in the proposal process. Approval of the Sustainability Study by all three approving bodies (Academic Dean, Graduate Planning Committee and Board of Trustees) and confirmed by signature allows proposing programs to proceed to the next step, i.e., Curriculum Development and Design. Alternatively, 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.

Documentation:

The Graduate Council, Graduate Planning Committee and Board of Trustees will only review completed Viability and Sustainability Studies.. A complete sustainability study addresses the following queries:

1. Is there sufficient demand for the program and or clinical services in the region/state?
2. What are the financial demands of creating a program; on what funding opportunities can the proposed program capitalize to address those demands?
3. Will there be a sufficient number of academic/clinical faculty?
4. Will there be a sufficient number of students who will apply to the program?

5. Will students have sufficient opportunities for experiential learning?
6. Will this program appeal to working professionals?
7. What are the program details?
8. Is the Board of Trustees Agenda Form complete?
9. Are all three signature pages filled out and included**?**

Submission Flow:
- College Dean of the college where the new program will reside.
- All College Deans
- Graduate Council
- Graduate Planning Committee
- President's Office
- Board of Trustees

All submissions will be handled by MSU Denver Graduate Studies.
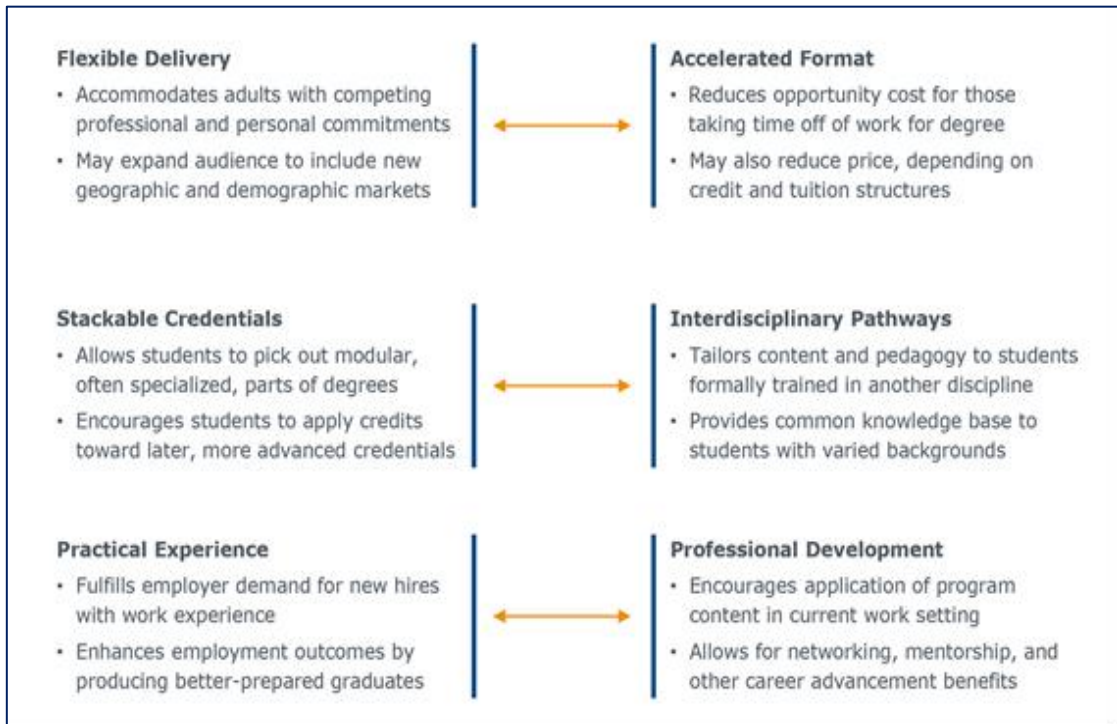
IIb) SUSTAINABILITY STUDY CHECKLIST

1. Is there sufficient **demand** for the program and or clinical services in the region/state?
   - Check Bureau of Labor Statistics: Occupational Employment Statistics for the degree at the state and national levels.

2. What are the **financial demands** of creating a program; on which funding opportunities can the proposed program capitalize 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.).
   - MSU Denver Business Intelligence will assist applicants with the development of quantitative tools and with data analysis.

3. Is there a **sufficient pool of academic/clinical faculty**? Provide details.

4. Will there be a **sufficient 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?
   - Bureau of Labor Statistics: Occupational Employment Statistics

5. 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.

6. Will this program **appeal to working professionals**?

- 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.

Flexible Delivery
- Accommodates adults with competing professional and personal commitments
- May expand audience to include new geographic and demographic markets

Accelerated Format
- Reduces opportunity cost for those taking time off of work for degree
- May also reduce price, depending on credit and tuition structures

Stackable Credentials
- Allows students to pick out modular, often specialized, parts of degrees
- Encourages students to apply credits toward later, more advanced credentials

Interdisciplinary Pathways
- Tailors content and pedagogy to students formally trained in another discipline
- Provides common knowledge base to students with varied backgrounds

Practical Experience
- Fulfills employer demand for new hires with work experience
- Enhances employment outcomes by producing better-prepared graduates

Professional Development
- Encourages application of program content in current work setting
- Allows for networking, mentorship, and other career advancement benefits

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.

7. 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.

8. Is the Board of Trustees Agenda Form complete?
   - Provide a one paragraph description of the **Background** of the program. In the first sentence identify the type of degree and title of the 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. Below the 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.

9. **Are all three signature pages filled out and included?**
   - -Academic Dean
   - -Graduate Planning Committee
   - -Board of Trustees

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

Sustainability study - Board of Trustees Agenda Form and Vote Page
   This form must be attached to the Sustainability Study for progression through the programmatic approval process.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN
AS DETERMINED BY THE GRADUATE MANUAL and its APPENDICES
Curriculog Submission

Purpose:
The purpose of this component of a new program proposal is to develop a curriculum the proposed graduate program. To that end, program proposers must generate the curriculum pathway towards a student's graduation. The pathway should contain a breakdown of all courses required for degree completion including (but not limited to): course titles, numbers, course descriptions, enrollment pre-requirements and course learning outcomes. The curriculum design component 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. The completed curriculum must be formatted to appear in the MSU Denver Graduate Catalog and adhere to Curriculog proposal guidelines.

Documentation:
- AVP Approval
- Curriculog Proposal

Submission: Curriculog

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN CURRICULOG CHECKLIST

1. **AVP Approval**
   Contact the Director of Curriculum and Catalog and the AVP-CAEPD to schedule a meeting to discuss external accreditation requirements. The AVP-CAEPD informs MSU Denver Graduate Studies about the decision to approve or reject the proposal. Upon approval from the AVP-CAEPD, applicants may proceed to the online Curriculog Proposal step.

2. **Online Curriculog Proposal**
   Applicants may only proceed to the Curriculog site after meeting with the AVP-CAEPD and MSU Denver Graduate Studies regarding external accreditation requirements. Applicants must be prepared to submit the following with the Curriculog Proposal:
   - Program pre-requirements
   - Required reading(s)
   - Student Behavioral Learning Outcomes

- Course pre-requirements
- Course outline/content
- Evaluation method

Attach a copy of the Viability and Sustainability studies with corresponding the 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.

Combined Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Program (3+2)

Combined undergraduate and graduate programs, often referred to as 3+2 or 4+1, can provide a significant time and financial advantage to strong undergraduate students. While special accreditation requirements do not allow foregoing a specified number of undergraduate credits for all such 3+2 programs, in many cases, the student can save at least 9 undergraduate credits. The undergraduate student enrolls in a selected number of specified *graduate* courses, and these graduate courses, on which the undergraduate major program and the graduate program agree, will count towards both, the undergraduate degree and the graduate degree.

The following basic rules apply:

- No more than 32 % of *graduate* credit for a specific graduate program can be double counted towards the undergraduate and the graduate degree.
- It is the prerogative of the graduate program to decide if any and how many graduate courses (to a maximum of 32%) can be double counted for 3+2 students.
- Graduate programs decide on the pre-requirements that undergraduate student will have to fulfill to become eligible for enrollment in the graduate courses of the 3+2 program.
- The minimum undergraduate GPA that undergraduate students should have earned before admission to the 3+2 program is 3.0. However, graduate programs may require a higher GPA for such students.
- Once 3+2 students have earned a maximum of 32% of graduate credits from the program that they would like to join as graduate students, their account in Banner will be switched from undergraduate to graduate student level (UG to GR), and at that time, 3+2 students will *not* be eligible anymore for Financial Aid but only graduate student loans. During the 3+2 design process, to secure the student's eligibility for *under*graduate financial aid before the BS/BA degree is earned, programs are strongly encouraged to confirm with the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships that the combined program requires the sufficient number of *under*graduate credits while the student also earns graduate credits .
- For some disciplines, especially those that require practica/internships outside the academy, it is important that the BS/BA is awarded on the way to the Master's degree, while other programs might prefer and can afford to award the bachelor and Master's degree at the same time. Naturally the bachelor's degree may not be awarded with less than the number of credits that would be required for the bachelor's if the student were not enrolled in the 3+2 program. However, if the student is enrolled in a 3+2 and this 3+2 program does award the bachelor's before the Master's degree is earned, then this bachelor's degree can include graduate courses.

3+2 Development Process:

- Submit Intent to propose new program to the Director of Curriculum
- Email separate Intent to propose new Graduate Program
- Fill in the 3+2 Proposal form and submit to the AVP for Graduate Studies
- On invitation, major and graduate program director attend the Graduate Council meeting to be available for more questions.