**Consultation Process for New Fully Online Degree Programs**

Required for All New Fully Online Degree Programs

**Summary**

New fully online degree programs, like on-campus, in person degree programs, should create significant value for current and future Rutgers students. Programs should present a distinct alternative, and not simply a substitute for students already served through similar online and in-person options *across* Rutgers.

**Logic**

As part of its efforts to attain and maintain a high level of excellence across all aspects of the academic enterprise, the Office of the EVPAA seeks to strengthen central administrative support for education programs at Rutgers through the development of better processes for the development and approval of new programs. The consultation process for new fully online degree programs is among new program approval processes launched in fall 2022, including updated [**Notice of Intent** **and program proposal templates**](https://academicaffairs.rutgers.edu/academic-program-organizational-approvals) developed in Office of the EVPAA in consultation with the academic units.

In the case of fully online programs, the need for clear processes that govern the degree proposal and approval process is even more critical because programs in the online space lack the geographic and campus-based distinctions that “on-ground” programs use to differentiate themselves. The duplication or overlap of programs that is a reality for on campus programs within the university’s chancellor-led units is more evident—and likely, more confusing—in the online space, where place is less of a determining factor and where prospective students may struggle to identify the distinct value propositions that distinguish one of Rutgers’ fully online programs from another.

This lack of place-based limitations can also be an asset for the programs as well as the institution since the flexibility of the modality can allow us to approach program design in new and different ways. In appropriate fully online programs, for example, Rutgers might work to integrate areas that span distinct unit strengths, leveraging faculty and staff expertise across chancellor-led units to reimagine or expand the current suite of fully online offerings, positively impacting student recruitment, retention, and success.

By establishing this process, the Office of the EVPAA hopes to take the first step toward creating a more intentional set of universitywide processes, policies, and practices for fully online programs in support of fostering academic excellence and more effective and efficient coordination. As part of this effort, the Office of the EVPAA will seek to:

* align administrative policies, processes, and investment of resources; removing barriers and streamlining where possible
* limit internal redundancy and coordinate submissions from competitive or overlapping programs across Rutgers' units
* create opportunities for those involved in the development or management of new online degree programs to convene in order to foster collaboration, innovation, and the sharing of best practices

**Pilot Process for Consultation prior to Submission of Proposals for Fully Online Degree Program**

The consultation process, which will be facilitated by the Office of the EVPAA, is required for all new fully online degree programs and new online versions of existing degree programs. The process will commence at the request of a chancellor and/or their designee and must be completed *prior* to other stages in the new program approval process.

Units that aim to launch a fully online program must complete the form below and submit it to the designated point of contact within their Chancellor’s Office for review. Once approved, the Chancellor’s office will forward the completed Consultation Form to the Office of the EVPAA at [academicplanning@oq.rutgers.edu](mailto:academicplanning@oq.rutgers.edu).

* The Consultation Form will be reviewed in the Office of the EVPAA. The Consultation Form does not represent a decision point for the proposed degree program. Rather, it allows the Office of the EVPAA to alert chancellors and program leads of potential duplication in advance of the new degree program approval processes and provide an opportunity to provide feedback to the unit. Through this process, submitting chancellor-led units and program leads will receive early feedback to aid efficient and successful new program development, well in advance of other stages in the new program approval process. Additional outcomes could include strategies to improve coordination and differentiation from other projects that are already established or under preparation. In this sense, the timing for the consultation process precedes that actual proposal submission and differs from the formal notice of intent stage, which is shared with other units after the proposal has been submitted.

Response time to form submission will vary and will not exceed 30 days from the date of submission.

**Consultation Form**

Name of Proposed Online Program

Enter the full name of the proposed online program. For example, Bachelor of Science in Data Science, Master of Arts in English, Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry, Graduate Certificate in Digital Humanities, or Undergraduate Certificate in African American Studies.

Proposing CLU(s)

Proposing School(s)

Proposing Department(s) *(if applicable)*

Proposed Effective Date of Program Initiation

Enter the proposed semester in which the program intends to first enroll students.

Program Abstract

Describe the program, purpose, goals, and major objectives.

Questions

1. Are there existing online or in-person programs at same degree level and in the same or similar academic discipline(s) at Rutgers outside the proposing CLU(s)? YES/NO
   * 1. If NO, please proceed to question 4.
     2. If YES, please answer questions 2-4
2. Provide a full list of existing online or in-person programs at the same degree level and in the same or similar academic discipline(s) at Rutgers outside the proposing CLU(s).
3. Please provide information relevant to differentiation of the proposed program to existing online or in-person programs at the same degree level and in the same or similar discipline(s) at Rutgers. Examples include:

Evidence of relevant relationship between the proposed program and a documented area of academic excellence in the proposing CLU(s);

Evidence of significant instructional differentiation from currently offered programs at the same degree level and in the same or similar academic discipline(s) at Rutgers;

Evidence of projected student population differentiation from currently offered programs at the same degree level and in the same or similar academic discipline(s) at Rutgers;

Evidence of student and community demand at the institution and in the region for the program, including, but not limited to, student and faculty surveys, enrollment trends, and documented capacity constraints within currently offered program(s) at the same degree level in the same or similar academic discipline(s) at Rutgers;

Evidence of projected sustainable cost savings for students compared with the cost of currently offered programs at the same degree level and in the same or similar academic discipline(s) at Rutgers;

Other considerations.

1. Were chancellors, provosts, or other senior leaders in non-submitting chancellor-led units consulted prior to Consultation Form submission? YES/NO; If YES, list those consulted.