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# FRAMEWORK



## DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

# INTRODUCTION

Founded in 2005, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) was established as a government strategy to address the unique health needs of Northern Ontario communities by providing innovative medical education to improve regional access to quality care. Fast forward to April 1, 2022, NOSM became NOSM University, Canada's first independent medical university. **This transformation is positioning NOSM U to be the leader in medical and health professions education.** With strong connections to regional communities in the Northwest and Northeast, and with 90 communities dispersed between these two regions, NOSM University is uniquely positioned to make remarkable contributions to the healthcare and health research landscape.

As NOSM University continues to grow, it will capitalise on its strong foundation in medical education across the spectrum. It will continue being a leader in medical education and expand its academic program offerings to further address the health needs of Northern Ontario communities and to advance health research. NOSM University's academic programs are and will continue to be collaborative, transdisciplinary, grounded by our social accountability mandate and deeply committed to principles of equity, diversity and inclusion to meet the health needs of individuals, communities and society.

A structured approach rooted in NOSM University's social accountability mandate will be used to develop new academic programs to ensure the programs contribute to the university's mandate to address health equity disparities; and to generate new knowledge that will be significantly impactful to the communities we aim to serve.

Deciding what new academic programs to develop at NOSM University will follow a nine-stage process that considers a number of criteria to ensure a program's success and relevance to the institution's mission and vision. The following Process Chart, which provides an overview of the stages for the development of a new programs, also depicts the need for ongoing government relations throughout the development process in considering the financial viability and sustainability of the proposed programs. A detailed description of each stage and key criteria that will be considered are then presented.

# New Program Development PROCESS CHART

## Government Relations

### Stage 1 - Conceptual Development

#### STEP A - Preliminary Consultation

- Inform the Office of the Provost and VPA

#### STEP B - Statement of Intent (SOI) for New Program

- Program initiators to submit the SOI to the Office of the Provost and VPA

#### STEP C - SOI to be Reviewed by the New Academic Program Advisory Committee (NAPAC)

- SOIs received will be reviewed by the NAPAC who will help to advise the Provost and VPA on which proposed programs should proceed to Stage 2.

### Stage 2 - Budget & Resource Review

#### STEP A - Review of Projected Costs, Revenue and Resources Required

- Program initiators will be asked to submit a completed Budget and Resource Review template, which will be reviewed by the Finance Unit and Government Relations Team who will advise the Provost and VPA on the financial viability and sustainability of the programs.

### Stage 3 - Program Proposal

#### STEP A - Draft Full Program Proposal

- Program initiators will draft the full program proposal with the appropriate template and submit it to the Office of the Provost and VPA.

### Stage 4 - Initial Internal Review

#### STEP A - Review by Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) and Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC)

- AQAC will review proposals for new undergraduate and graduate studies programs.
- For new graduate studies programs being considered, GSC will review the proposal prior to AQAC.

#### STEP B - Response to Internal Review

- Program initiators will respond to the feedback from the internal review and make the required revisions.

#### STEP C - Review and Endorsement at Senate

### Stage 5 - External Review & Approval

#### STEP A - Application for Ministerial Consent to offer New Joint or Standalone NOSM University Degree Program

- For collaborative programs, the review process would be managed by the partner institution awarding the credential.

#### STEP B - Response to External Review

- Program initiators will respond to the feedback from the external review and make the required revisions.

### Stage 6 - Final Internal Review & Approvals

#### STEP A - Final Review and Approval at GSC and AQAC

#### STEP B - Final Review and Approval at Senate

### Stage 7 - Quality Council Informed

#### STEP A - Quality Council Submission

- Submission to the Quality Council to schedule cyclical review process.

### Stage 8 - Funding Approval

#### STEP A - Ministry Funding Approval

- Submission to the provincial government for funding approval

### Stage 9 - Recruitment

#### STEP A - Advertising & Enrolment

- Advertising can begin after Ministerial consent and Senate approval. Enrolment can begin only after budgetary approval.

## Government Relations

# **STAGE 1: Conceptual Development**

## **STEP A – Preliminary Consultation**

Individuals who would like to propose a new academic program at NOSM University are required to inform the Office of the Provost and Vice President Academic (VPA) by emailing [provost@nosm.ca](mailto:provost@nosm.ca). An initial meeting will be scheduled to review the program concept and discuss the overall process for new program development at the university.

## **STEP B – Statement of Intent for New Program**

Program Initiators (PIs) are those individuals who will be the primary contacts for the new program being proposed. At least one of the PIs requires an active faculty appointment at NOSM University. Depending on the program being proposed, e.g., partnerships or joint degrees, individuals from other institutions can work together with NOSM University faculty as PIs.

The PIs will complete the Statement of Intent (SOI) for a New Academic Program and submit it to the Office of the Provost and VPA. Letters of support from stakeholders can be included in this submission. The SOI template will be shared with PIs after the initial consultation meeting takes place with the Office of the Provost and VPA.

The SOI is intended to capture essential elements that are required for the university to consider a new program. Beyond a description of the program, the SOI will ask PIs to describe the feasibility, relevance, need, and alignment of the proposed academic program with the institution's mission, vision and values.

## **STEP C – SOI to be Reviewed by the New Academic Program Advisory Committee**

The SOIs received by the Office of the Provost and VPA will be reviewed by the New Academic Program Advisory Committee (NAPAC). Composed of faculty members from each of the divisions at NOSM University, representatives from the Academic Indigenous Health Education Committee and the Academic Education Committee on Francophone Health, and others from across the university, the NAPAC will advise the Provost and VPA on which proposed programs should proceed to Stage 2. Once the SOI for the proposed program has been reviewed by the NAPAC, the Office of the Provost and VPA will communicate with the PIs to inform them of the outcome and the next steps in the process.

A recommendation by the NAPAC to endorse a new proposed program does not commit the institution to develop the program, given the subsequent analyses and requirements involved in the new program development process.

## **STAGE 2: Budget & Resource Review**

### **STEP A – Review of Projected Costs, Revenue and Resources Required**

The Office of the Provost and VPA will provide the Budget and Resource Review template to the PIs whose proposed programs were approved to move to the second stage of the new program development process. This template will ask the PIs to provide additional details on the projected costs and revenue for the proposed program.

The completed Budget and Resource Review template will be reviewed by the Finance Unit and the Government Relations Team who will advise the Provost and VPA on the financial viability and sustainability of the proposed programs.

Once the template has been reviewed, the Office of the Provost and VPA will communicate with the PIs to inform them of the outcome and the next steps in the process.

Support at this stage does not commit the institution to develop the program, given the subsequent analyses and requirements involved in the new program development process. As depicted in the process chart for new program development, government relations are embedded throughout the entire program development process. It is visualised this way to illustrate that an understanding of the priorities of the current government and ongoing communication with key contacts are essential in advocating for the current and future needs of the whole university.

## **STAGE 3: Program Proposal**

### **STEP A – Draft Full Program Proposal**

The Office of the Provost and VPA will provide the New Program Proposal template to the PIs whose proposed programs were approved to move to the third stage of the new program development process. The PIs will appoint a working group to develop the proposal.

For standalone or joint NOSM University programs, the New Program Proposal must address the evaluation criteria for new programs as set out by the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) and considering NOSM University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), Section 2.1. For collaborative partnership programs (e.g. Northern Stream), a simplified proposal template and process will apply. Wide consultation with relevant units and portfolios occurs at this step.

Once the New Program Proposal template has been completed, the PIs will submit it to the Office of the Provost and VPA who will review the proposal and coordinate the initial internal review process.

## **STAGE 4: Initial Internal Review**

### **STEP A – Review by Graduate Studies Committee and Academic Quality Assurance Committee**

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC) will review proposals for new undergraduate and graduate studies programs. As detailed in its Terms of Reference, the AQAC oversees, monitors, and reports to the Senate on all aspects of program reviews for new and existing degree and non-degree programs and assumes responsibility for ensuring programs are appropriately designed and structured to achieve their program learning objectives and outcomes.

When the new program being considered is a graduate studies program, the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) will review the proposal prior to AQAC. As detailed in the Terms of Reference, the GSC reviews, considers and recommends on academic matters and the development of policies and practices pertaining to the graduate programs offered by the university. This committee oversees NOSM University's graduate programs.

Once the review(s) by the AQAC and the GSC take place, the Office of the Provost and VPA will provide the feedback to the PIs.

### **STEP B – Response to Internal Review**

The PIs will respond to the feedback from the internal review and make the required revisions. Once the feedback and revisions have been addressed, the PIs will submit an updated version of the New Program Proposal template to the Office of the Provost and VPA. When the Provost and VPA is satisfied with the proposal, it will proceed to the next step.

### **STEP C – Review and Endorsement at Senate**

The New Program Proposal will be brought to the NOSM University Senate by the Provost and the VPA (Chair of AQAC). The PIs will be invited to attend as guests, if not otherwise members of the Senate. This will be an opportunity for the Senate to review and ask questions about the proposed program; and for the Senate to provide initial endorsement of the proposal before it moves to external review.

An endorsement by the Senate of the proposed program at this stage does not commit the institution to develop the program, given the subsequent analyses and requirements of external entities involved in the new program development process.

## **STAGE 5: External Review and Approval**

### **STEP A – Application for Ministerial Consent to offer New Joint or Standalone NOSM University Degree Program**

Once the new proposed degree program has received endorsement by the Senate, the PIs will submit the application requesting Ministerial (Ministry of Colleges and Universities) consent to offer the new degree program. The application will usually be referred by the Ministry to the [Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board \(PEQAB\)](#) for review and recommendation. The Office of the Provost and VPA will support the PIs in this process.

N.B. The new program approval process detailed in NOSM University's [Institutional Quality Assurance Process \(IQAP\)](#) process will be used in the future once the NOSM University Act is modified to expand NOSM University's degree granting privileges. Until such time, Ministerial consent with input from PEQAB will be required to develop new standalone degree programs at NOSM University.

If developing a collaborative program or a Northern Stream program in partnership with another university (where the credential is conferred by the partner institution), the review process will normally follow the IQAP process of the partner institution awarding the credential.

### **STEP B – Response to the External Review**

The PIs will respond to the feedback from the external review and make the required revisions as needed. The PIs will submit an updated version of the New

Program Proposal to the Office of the Provost and VPA within a defined period of time of receiving the external reviewers' report and the Office of the Provost will coordinate the final internal review process.

## **STAGE 6: Final Internal Review and Approvals**

### **STEP A – Final Review and Approval at GSC and AQAC**

Once the proposed program has completed the external review process, the Office of the Provost and VPA will provide the external reviewers' report and updated New Program Proposal to the AQAC and the GSC.

For new graduate studies programs the GSC will complete its final review prior to AQAC. The AQAC will review the updated proposed program's documentation for new undergraduate and graduate studies programs and may seek amendments from the PIs as needed.

### **STEP B - Final Review and Approval at Senate**

Upon final review by the AQAC, the Provost and VPA (as the chair of AQAC) will bring a motion to the Senate to approve the new program. The Senate is the final NOSM University academic approval authority.

## **STAGE 7: Quality Council Informed**

### **STEP A – Quality Council Submission**

The Secretariat of the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (i.e. the Quality Council) will be informed of the new program approvals once ministerial consent to offer the program has been obtained. This will prompt the Quality Council to add the New Program to its Cyclical Program Review master calendar.

The new program must normally begin within 36 months of approval; otherwise, the approval lapses.

## **STAGE 8: Funding Approval**

### **STEP A – Ministry Funding Approval**

After a new degree program is recommended for approval to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities by PEQAB, and that the Minister has provided their consent to offer the new degree program, this does not automatically entitle the



university to receive government funding for the new program. The Office of the Provost and VPA will therefore collaborate with the Finance Office at NOSM University to seek written confirmation from MCU that the government will fund the program before students can enrol in the program. In most cases, the provincial funding will be from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities but some programs might also require funding from the Ministry of Health.

## **STAGE 9: Recruitment**

### **STEP A – Advertising and Enrolment**

Enrolment in the program will only take place after the Ministry funding has been confirmed in writing. Advertising the program can begin after ministerial consent and Senate approval, with the statement ‘subject to budgetary approval.’ This process will be completed in collaboration with the Office of the Registrar and NOSM U Communications Team.

