



## STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

### 03.02.99.M0.01 Creation and Review of Interdisciplinary Degree Programs

*Approved October 12, 2012*

*Revised February 11, 2016*

*Revised March 24, 2021*

*Revised May 19, 2021*

*Next Scheduled Review: May 19, 2026*

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#### SAP Statement

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This Procedure describes the required steps in creating and reviewing Interdisciplinary Degree Programs (IDPs) and the functioning of the Interdisciplinary Overview Council (IOC) in order to ensure that the appropriate offices at the University are engaged in the approval process.

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#### Reason for SAP

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This Procedure clarifies responsibilities; information, reviews and approvals required in the creation or continuation of IDPs; expected support for creation and engagement in IDP activities; and ensures that appropriate evaluations and notifications occur in the creation and continuation of such programs.

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#### Procedure and Responsibilities

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##### 1. GENERAL

- 1.1 An Interdisciplinary Degree Program (IDP) involves a group of faculty from more than one discipline representing more than one college, organized and administered by the procedures outlined in this SAP.
- 1.2 An IDP is normally formed for the purpose of enhancing curricular activities and overseeing graduate and/or undergraduate education for a degree program that does not exist in an existing academic unit. After following the process for IDP creation described below and receiving approval of the IDP under section 2.1.4.e. below,

such programs must follow the normal curricular approval process for new degree programs.

- 1.3 The Interdisciplinary Overview Council (IOC), a single university-level standing council which consists of all deans of colleges having faculty participating in any IDP and the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School, will review proposals for the creation of new IDPs and evaluate cyclical reviews for reaffirmation or discontinuation of established programs. The Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School shall serve as chair of the IOC. In the case of approval or review of undergraduate programs, the IOC Chair will consult with the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies.
- 1.4 All IDPs must ensure that the faculty and student roles are clearly articulated and align with the administrative units where their positions are located. In concert with these understandings, the expectations of support from these administrative units should be clearly defined and authorized in a well-documented manner.

## 2. ESTABLISHING INTERDISCIPLINARY DEGREE PROGRAMS

- 2.1 For a group of faculty to establish an IDP they must:
  - 2.1.1 Develop a set of bylaws for the IDP including a mission statement, membership criteria, and procedures for selecting an Executive Committee (EC) and its leadership (e.g., a chair or co-chairs). The Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School must approve these bylaws.
  - 2.1.2 Identify a department or set of departments (called sponsoring departments) and the corresponding colleges (called sponsoring colleges) to act as advocates for the proposed program during the creation/evaluation process.
  - 2.1.3 In conjunction with the sponsoring units, identify a department in which the IDP will reside administratively. This department is called the administrative department, and the corresponding college is called the administrative college.
  - 2.1.4 Submit a proposal for the establishment of the IDP containing the items listed above and in Section 2.2 of this SAP. This proposal originates with the faculty group seeking to establish the IDP and is routed for approval through the following:
    - a. The sponsoring department heads.
    - b. The sponsoring deans.
    - c. The Interdisciplinary Overview Council (IOC).

- d. The Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School, who will consult with appropriate University units such as the Senior Vice President of the HSC, the Vice President for Research, the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies, and the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (for accreditation and assessment issues).
  - e. Final approval is through the Provost and Executive Vice President, which must be obtained before initiation of the normal curricular approval process for new degree programs.
- 2.2 In addition to the items listed in section 2.1 above, the proposal for establishing an IDP must contain the following:
- 2.2.1 The rationale for the creation of the IDP.
  - 2.2.2 A description of the Advisory and Evaluation Committee (A&EC) of Participating Department Heads, which consists of the department heads of academic departments having faculty members participating in the IDP. Annually, one of the Department Heads will be selected by this Committee to serve as the Lead Department Head.
  - 2.2.3 A budget (and budget justification) for the operating costs of the IDP.
- 2.3 The Provost and Executive Vice President will make final decisions regarding the approval of IDPs. Establishment of, and funding for, the operating budget is the collective responsibility of the A&EC, other participating units or other offices in the university as proposed and approved by the IOC.

### 3. PROGRAMMATIC AND FACULTY REVIEWS

- 3.1 All IDPs will be reviewed in the 10-year cycle required by the University Academic Program Reviews. These reviews or any notification from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board of a low producing program could result in the termination of the degree, with an appropriate ‘teach out’ of the program for participants in the IDP.
- 3.2 Annual reports will be submitted by the EC to the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School for the program, who will ensure the report is distributed to the IOC and the A&EC. A yearly meeting of the A&EC and EC will be held to review the performance of the IDP. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the A&EC or IOC.
- 3.3 As part of the normal annual review of faculty, each participating department head will review with each of their involved faculty members their future level of

participation in the IDP as well as the results of their previous participation. These discussions may be incorporated into promotion, tenure, and merit raise decisions.

4. **COORDINATION OF INTERDISCIPLINARY DEGREE PROGRAMS WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE A&M SYSTEM**

IDP efforts may include faculty from other members of The Texas A&M University System as outlined in the program's bylaws. A memorandum of understanding must be initiated between the system member(s) and Texas A&M University, as represented by the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School with the concurrence of the Vice President for Research or Dean of Faculties, to establish the level of participation of the system member(s) in the IDP.

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**Contact Office**

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Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School