Letter of Intent: New Graduate-level Academic Programs

Background: All public senior and private nonprofit institutions of higher education in Maryland must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the Maryland Higher Education Commission for a new graduate-level programs the institution intends to propose within the subsequent 6-month to 2-year period. Submission of LOIs is only required for new graduate-level programs.

Before an institution submits a formal program proposal, the LOI is intended to (a) facilitate collaboration between institutions and (b) allow the Commission to provide early feedback regarding concerns about unnecessary duplication or unreasonable program duplication. While the LOI enables dialogue and transparency, it does not establish any priority or right of first refusal for program approval. The Commission will review submitted LOIs to identify potentially similar programs and, if necessary, notify the institutions involved to encourage coordination.

LOIs will not be posted or circulated publicly. Instead, MHEC staff will review submissions and provide institutions with feedback, including analysis of potential duplication and opportunities for collaboration.

LOIs are intended to serve as an early-stage communication tool, not a formal or evaluative submission. Its purpose is to support collaboration between institutions and allow MHEC to provide timely, constructive feedback prior to a full proposal. Institutions are encouraged to keep responses brief and use bullet points or short summaries where appropriate. LOIs should be no more than 4 pages.

Implementation Timeline: The tentative implementation timeline begins with the first round of LOIs due October 1, 2025. Any proposal for a graduate program submitted *after* October 1, 2025 must begin with an LOI. Commission staff will review and provide initial feedback by October 31, 2025. There is an expectation that MHEC will provide feedback to the campus president within four-weeks of submission. Assuming no major issues or necessary changes to the template or process, the next LOI submission date will be November 1, 2025, and future submission dates will be monthly on the 1st.

A process update will be shared at the October and November Program Review Process Advisory Council (PRPAC) meetings and Commission meetings. Draft regulations to formalize the LOI process will be shared at either the December or January PRPAC meeting for discussion.

Questions regarding this process can be directed to Dr. Lyndsay Silva, Associate Director for Academic Program Review (lyndsay.silva@maryland.gov).

Name of Institution:	

Preferred Contact	Name:	
	E-mail:	Phone:

Program Overview	Draft Title:	
	Degree Level:	Proposed Modality[1]:
	Intended Implementation Date:	

Draft Program Details	Provide a draft program description.
	Describe the intended competencies and skills.
	Describe the intended employment for graduates.
	Provide information on the need[2] for the potential program.

Reasonableness of Program Duplication	Are there existing programs listed on MHEC's Academic Program Inventory[3] (API) that are similar to the potential program? If yes, please identify the institution(s) and program(s).
	If yes, please provide an explanation of how the potential program would not be duplicative (e.g., potential admission criteria, differentiated curriculum, specific areas of concentration, intended employment opportunities, etc.).

External Considerations	Will students earn any licensure or certification through the potential program? If yes, please explain.

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[1] Fully in-person, fully online, hybrid

[2] Four kinds of needs may be identified (COMAR 13B.02.03.08): **(1)** The need for the advancement and evolution of knowledge; **(2)** Societal needs, including expanding educational opportunities and choices for minority and educationally disadvantaged students at institutions of higher education; **(3)** Occupational and professional needs relative to upgrading vocational/ technical skills or meeting job market requirements – please reference the annual Workforce Needs Analysis (https://mhec.maryland.gov/Pages/Workforce-Needs-Analysis--Public-Comment.aspx); and, **(4)** The need to strengthen and expand the capacity of historically black institutions to provide high quality and unique educational programs.

[3] https://mhec.maryland.gov/institutions_training/pages/heprograms.aspx or
https://data.mhec.state.md.us/macAux.asp#api

	Would the potential program require approval from a national accreditor or other outside entity for implementation? If yes, please explain.

Resources	What additional resources may be needed to implement the potential program (e.g., more or specialized faculty, expansion/renovation of facilities)? Have those resource requests been submitted and/or approved?

Mission	How is the potential program aligned with the institution's approved mission?

Provost/Chief Academic Officer	Name:	
	Signature:	Date: