Letter of Intent: New Academic Program

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.

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.

Although submission of LOIs is only required for new graduate-level programs, institutions are encouraged to also submit LOIs for undergraduate programs to support planning and collaboration.

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.

Implementation Timeline: The tentative implementation timeline begins with the first round of LOIs due DATE. Any proposal for a graduate program submitted *after* DATE must begin with an LOI. Staff will review and provide initial feedback by DATE, and a process update will be shared at the MONTH PRPAC meeting. Assuming no major issues or required changes, the next LOI submission date will be DATE, with an expected four-week turnaround for feedback. A second process update, along with potential regulations to formalize the LOI process, will be shared at the MONTH PRPAC meeting and submission dates for 2026 will be discussed.

Name of Institution:	

Preferred Contact	Name:	
	E-mail:	Phone:

Program Overview	Draft Title:	
	Degree Level:	Proposed Modality1:
	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 program.

Reasonableness of Program Duplication	Are there similar programs listed on MHEC's Academic Program Inventory[3] (API) that are similar to the intended program? Yes No
	If yes, identify the institution(s) and program(s)
	If yes, why is it reasonable to offer another similar program?
	If yes, provide data showing the current and projected supply of prospective graduates.
	If <u>no</u>, provide preliminary evidence that the program is/will not be duplicative of another current program offering in the state.

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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

External Considerations	Will students earn any licensure or certification? If yes, please explain.
	Does the program require approval from a national accreditor or other outside entity for implementation? If yes, please explain.

Intended population to be served	Potential pre-requisite courses for enrollment in the program.
	Potential admissions requirements for the program.

Resources	Please describe the existing resources you already have in place to run the program (e.g., faculty, facilities, partnerships).
	What additional resources may be needed to implement the program? (e.g., more or specialized faculty, expansion of facilities)
	Will you need to build a new building/facility or significantly upgrade an existing one? Please explain.
	Will capital funding be requested (or, has capital funding been requested) to support the potential program? If yes, please explain.

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

President/Chief Executive	Name:	
	Signature:	Date: