Policy on the Central Administration of the University’s Academic Programs

Effective Date: November 6, 2013

Policy Statement

The Division of Student and Administrative Services is responsible for ensuring that the University complies with all federal, state and institutional requirements governing approved academic programs as they relate to registration and student financial aid. This policy sets forth requirements for the set-up, implementation and recording of approved academic programs into the University’s official system of student records, as well as, the central administration of these programs.

Reason(s) for the Policy

To ensure compliance with federal, state and institutional requirements governing the University’s approved academic programs, as they relate to student records and student financial aid.

Primary Guidance to Which This Policy Responds

Approval of Educational Programming Policies and Processes [Add link to Provost Policy]

Responsible University Office & Officer

Office of the Registrar – Barry Kane, Associate Vice President and University Registrar

Student Financial Services – Cheryl Ross, Vice President

Revision History

Not applicable

Who is governed by This Policy

All schools at Columbia University are governed by this policy. In particular, all University officers and staff who have the authority and associated responsibility for the creation of new academic programs and/or making changes to established academic programs such as name, curriculum and required credits.

Who Should Know This Policy

The Office of the Provost, Deans, Faculty, Academic officers, Student Affairs, Registration Administrators, and Financial Aid Officers

Exclusions & Special Situations

None

Policy Text
STUDENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES’
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY’S
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The Division of Student and Administrative Services is responsible for ensuring that the University comply with all federal, state and institutional requirements governing approved academic programs as they relate to registration and student financial aid. Two of its reporting departments, the Office of the Registrar and Student Financial Services, have direct responsibility for ensuring adherence to the established processes that enable such compliance.

All academic programs offered at the University must undergo the Approval of Educational Programming Policies and Processes [Add link to Provost Policy]

Once an academic program has received all of the necessary University approvals and has been registered by the New York State Education Department (NYSED), it must also undergo a review for student financial aid eligibility by Student Financial Services and a final review by the Office of the Registrar.

I. STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES’ REVIEW OF APPROVED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS FOR FEDERAL AND STATE STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY

Student Financial Services supports the Columbia community with services relating to tuition rates and fees information, billing and payment options, and student financial aid. One of its offices, the University Financial Aid Office (UFAO), provides centralized operational oversight of the schools’ financial aid offices. It also coordinates efforts relating to the University’s Program Participation Agreement with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and all official reporting on student financial aid to NYSED.

In accordance with federal regulations, federal student aid can only be awarded and disbursed to students registered in approved degree-granting or certificate programs. In accordance with NYSED regulations, state student aid can only be awarded and disbursed to students in registered programs. Certifications of professional achievement are not eligible for federal and/or state student aid.

A. UFAO REVIEW PROCESS

The UFAO must review all academic programs approved by the Office of the Provost in order to determine whether federal and state student financial aid can be awarded and disbursed to registered students.

The UFAO is responsible for reviewing this information and making the program eligibility determination based on federal and state requirements. The process by which the office determines this academic program eligibility includes, but is not limited to, a review of the following:
• NYSED’s notification of a new or updated registration and other supporting documents as provided by the Office of the Provost
• Program details, such as name, type of program, program length, and the required credit hours.
• Federal and state eligibility criteria for student financial aid purposes.

B. UFAO REVIEW RESULTS AND NEXT STEPS

Once the review for student financial aid eligibility is completed, the UFAO will proceed as follows:

1. NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS which have received all of the necessary approvals described in the Provost’s statement, “Approval of Educational Programming Policies and Processes.”

   a. Programs that are ELIGIBLE for federal and state student financial aid: The UFAO will notify ED of the University’s new degree-granting or certificate program. When the program approval is received from ED, the UFAO will notify the Office of the Registrar about the program’s eligibility for federal and state student financial aid, as well as provide a copy of all supporting review documentation.

   b. Programs that are NOT ELIGIBLE for federal and state student financial aid: The UFAO will notify the Office of the Registrar that the program is not eligible for federal student financial aid and provide a copy of all supporting review documentation. The Office of the Registrar will notify all pertinent parties as stipulated below in section “Final review results and notification”.

2. ESTABLISHED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS with “substantial change”, as defined in the Provost’s statement, “Approval of Educational Programming Policies and Processes.”

   a. The UFAO will notify ED of the updated information regarding the “substantial change” to the University’s established academic program.

In order to make an eligibility determination, the UFAO may request additional information, as necessary from the Office of the Provost and the applicable school.

In all eligibility notifications to the Office of the Registrar, the UFAO must certify that the office has reviewed the program information thoroughly when making such determinations.
II. THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR’S FINAL REVIEW

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for ensuring the integrity, accuracy and security of all academic records for current and former students, as well as providing central oversight on all matters governing the registration activities at the University. This includes a final review of all information pertaining to the University’s approved academic programs as provided by the Office of the Provost and reviewed by the UFAO.

A. FINAL REVIEW AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The Office of the Registrar ensures that all academic programs have undergone both the approval process described in the Provost’s statement, “Approval of Educational Programming Policies and Processes,” and an eligibility review by the UFAO. The Office of the Registrar must review all supporting documentation as provided by both of these offices. It is also responsible for ensuring that the proper recordkeeping as it relates to these approved academic programs is in place.

Specifically, the Office of the Registrar, in conjunction with Student Financial Services, ensures that the following information has been collected and reviewed prior to the assignment of a University Program Code and the inputting of the academic programs into the Student Information Systems (SIS):

1) NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS which have received all of the necessary approvals described in the Provost’s statement, “Approval of Educational Programming Policies and Processes” and the UFAO’s student financial aid eligibility review

1. Program Name
2. Program Type: degree, certificate and certification of professional achievement
3. Degree type, if applicable: BA, BS, MA, MS, March, MBA, MFA, MHA, MIA, MPA, MPH, MPhil, JD, LLM, JSD, DDS, DEngSci, DPH, DPT, MD, PHD
4. Registration code as issued by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Not applicable to certifications of professional achievement.
5. Registration Date by NYSED
6. Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code
7. Program length (in weeks)
8. Required credits for completion
9. Required hours for completion
10. Initial start date of program
11. Initial start term
12. Location, specify whether the program is offered completely on-site or if 50% or more of the program is offered at a different site off-campus.
13. Location approval from Middle States
14. Location approval from Department of Education
15. **Dual-Degree** for two programs offered at the University or **Joint-Degree** for a program offered at the University and a program offered at another institution, Yes or No

16. If yes for dual-degree or joint degree programs, please list all locations at which instruction will be provided.

17. **Distance Education/Online Program**, Yes or No – NYSED considers any degree or certificate programs in which a major portion (i.e., 50% or more) of the requirements can be completed through study delivered by distance education must be registered in the distance education format.

18. **Consortium or Contractual Agreement** – Is program part of a formal agreement with another school at Columbia University or external institution of higher education or organization? If so, indicate other entity. A copy of the agreement must accompany this information.

19. **Part of term or module-based study**, Yes or No – Does the program include courses that do not span the length of a standard term?

20. **Application of courses applied towards degree**
   a. For academic programs not leading to a degree or certificate, can the courses be applied towards a degree program?
   b. For academic programs leading a certificate program, can the courses be applied towards a degree program?

21. **Federal Aid Eligibility?** Yes or No

22. **State Aid Eligibility?** Yes or No

23. **Other information as deemed necessary**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Incomplete or inaccurate information will prevent the Office of the Registrar’s final approval and the proper recording of the program information into SIS, this may impact registration services for students and their eligibility for federal and state student financial aid.

2) **ESTABLISHED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS** with “substantial change” as defined in the Provost’s statement, “Approval of Educational Programming Policies and Processes” and the UFAO’s student financial aid eligibility

The Office of the Registrar will update approved changes to the academic program’s required information, including but not limited to the new program name and the updated NYSED registration code.

**B. Final review results and notification**

Once an academic program has all of the necessary academic approvals within the University and has been registered by the NYSED, a student financial aid eligibility review by the UFAO and a final review by the Office of the Registrar, the Office of the Registrar will then assign a University Program Code to the academic program and enter the program information into SIS.
In addition, the Office of the Registrar will:
1) Notify the school and the Office of the Provost of the results of the review.
2) Work with Student Financial Services’ Billing Office to ensure that the proper assessment of charges to be billed is implemented in conjunction with the established University Program Code.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Schools are strongly advised to consult Student Financial Services and the Office of the Registrar during the exploratory or planning phase of a new program, as well as when considering any proposed substantial changes to established programs, to discuss these requirements and any potential implications. For guidance on the definition of “substantial change”, please see [Link to Provost Policy]

### III. MONITORING OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

#### A. Annual Audit

To ensure that the University’s academic programs are properly registered, the Office of the Provost, in cooperation with the Registrar, will conduct an inventory audit every spring. It will send each school a list of its registered programs for its review. The schools will be asked to confirm that the list includes all of its academic programs. They will also identify any significant changes in their academic programs over the preceding academic year. Finally, they will be asked to provide information on any new programs or changes in established academic programs that they anticipate for the coming academic year.

Any new academic programs or established programs with “substantial changes” that are identified to be missing approval will be required to undergo approval process described in the Provost’s statement, “Approval of Educational Programming Policies and Processes”, the UFAO’s eligibility for student financial aid and the Office of the Registrar’s final review.

#### B. Compliance Monitoring

To ensure the University’s compliance with federal and state requirements as they relate to student financial aid, the Compliance Office for Student Financial Services and the Office of the Registrar will conduct a monthly sample-based review of academic programs.

**Responsibilities**

- Schools must adhere to all institutional, federal and state requirements regarding the approval of academic programs.
- The Office of the Provost and the Office of the Registrar ensure that all information regarding academic programs is accurate and up to date.
The UFAO ensures a thorough review of an academic program’s eligibility for federal and state student financial aid before the disbursement of any federal or state funds.

The Office of the Registrar will conduct a full review of each program file before the assignment of a University Program Code.

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Cross References to Related Policies  
Approval of Educational Programming Policies and Processes

Web Address  
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Appendix