



UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

Policy Manual

Policy #:	ACD-1605	Policy Title:	Policy for Creating, Modifying, Suspending or Eliminating Academic Programs
Effective:	01/15/2023	Responsible Office:	Office of the Provost
Date Approved:	01/10/2023	Approval:	EVP and Provost
Replaces Policy Dated:	05/18/2021	Responsible University Official:	EVP and Provost

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all proposed changes to academic programs are thoroughly reviewed by the faculty and academic leadership, and that the review and approval processes support compliance with federal and SACSCOC requirements. This document codifies the process and documentation needed for approving new academic programs, or modifying, suspending or eliminating existing academic programs.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to the University of Richmond and all of its Affiliates. As used in this policy, the term “Affiliates” means organizations or entities in which the University owns a controlling interest or has the right to elect the majority of the entity’s governing board.

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ACD-1605 – Policy for Creating, Modifying, Suspending or Eliminating Academic Programs

POLICY STATEMENT:

ACD-1605.1 – Definitions

Academic programs include degrees (including an undergraduate or graduate certificate) as well as majors, minors, or concentrations (if the concentration is recorded on a student's transcript).

Degree: A degree is the certification that is awarded by the University upon completion of a specific course of study. For example, C.A.S (undergraduate certificate), G.C. (graduate certificate), B.A, B.S., B.S.B.A., M.B.A., LL.M, and J.D. are all degrees currently offered by the University. Concentrations or majors within a degree are not different degrees.

Multiple Schools: An academic program is considered to involve, impact, or affect multiple schools (cross-school impact) if it incorporates courses from more than one school; if it impacts more than one school as specified in the University Faculty Senate Charter; or if there is (or would be following the creation or revision of a program) significant curricular overlap with another school. For example, curricular overlap would exist if there were redundant courses offered at the same degree level in multiple schools.

Suspension of an academic program governed by SACSCOC must have a clearly defined timeframe (with a suspension start and end date) which cannot exceed five years (the time between accreditation reviews). Freezing admission to an academic program is the same as suspending a program.

Elimination of an academic program: Suspending a program indefinitely is the same as eliminating a program, per SACSCOC.

Significant Revision/Significant Modification: Significant revision to an existing academic program is defined as a significant change to the structure of the program; change affecting 25% or more of the courses in the program; curricular change that requires additional resources (such as a faculty line) or facilities to implement, beyond that which the school can provide within existing resources, routine classroom upgrades or resources already allocated through the University budgeting process or dedicated philanthropy; and/or change that would require a substantive change notification or request to SACSCOC (*see <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf> for more information*).

ACD-1605.2 – Policy Statement

The creation, suspension or elimination of an academic program must be approved with input from the faculty, relevant Dean(s), Academic Cabinet, and Provost. Significant revisions to an academic program also must be approved with input from the faculty, relevant Dean(s), Academic Cabinet, and Provost. Creation, suspension, elimination or significant revision of academic programs involving multiple schools further require review and recommendation from the Faculty Senate, per the Faculty Senate Charter. The creation, suspension or elimination of degree programs must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Approvals will be made according to the following process:

ACD-1605.3 – Approval Process

- A. Initiating the Process to Create, Modify, Suspend or Eliminate an Academic Program

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Faculty interested in creating a new academic program or significantly revising an existing program should prepare a proposal for submission to the Dean of the school in which the program will be administratively housed and supported. Cross-school programs must be situated in a school, generally the one in which the principal faculty member who will coordinate the program is located. Proposals to suspend or eliminate a program will begin the process within the program's home school.

Proposals for new cross-school programs or related to existing programs affecting more than one school must also be submitted to the Deans of other affected schools.

The Dean must inform the Office of Institutional Effectiveness that a recommendation to create, modify, suspend or eliminate the program is being prepared, consistent with the University policy on substantive change. (NOTE: If the program to be suspended or eliminated is at an off-campus site and is the only program offered at that site, then additional approval and documentation will be required to close the site. In this case, consult with the University's SACSCOC Liaison for specific instructions and documentation necessary in addition to the approvals required in this document.)

Proposals to create a new academic program or significantly revise an existing program must adhere to accreditation standards related to minimum required semester credit hours or equivalent units for degree programs. (*SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation Standard 9.2 Program Length*)

B. Approvals

The process for recommending creation, revision, suspension or elimination of an academic program within each school is described in the *Faculty Handbook*. All school-based approvals must be completed per the Faculty Handbook before moving to the next stage of approval. Program modifications that are not significant can be considered approved upon completion of the school-based approval process.

Once the proposal has been approved within all affected schools, the Dean of the home school will submit a letter of intent to the Provost and include messages from Deans of affected schools conveying approval from their schools in the case of programs that involve multiple schools. In the case of proposals to create new programs, documentation should also include copies of the faculty proposal, the Assessment Plan Outline with Proposed Curriculum Map, and a Preliminary Faculty Credential Roster (See Exhibits 1 – 5).

The Provost will consult with the Academic Cabinet and may request additional information from the Dean.

If the proposal includes the suspension or elimination of a program that may involve the dismissal of tenured faculty, the *Faculty Handbook*, Procedures for the Discontinuance of an Academic Department or Program of Instruction Involving Possible Dismissal of Tenured Faculty, becomes applicable at this stage of the process. The steps of program review and timeline outlined in the Faculty Handbook related to the discontinuance of academic programs that are home to tenured faculty are more rigorous than those for other types of program elimination, and all steps involving Departmental, School, Senate, Provost and Board of Trustee review and approval must be completed according to the Handbook; any steps required by this policy which are not also required by the

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Handbook must also be completed.

If the program involves multiple schools, the Provost will convey a recommendation, informed by consultation with Academic Cabinet, to the University Academic Programs Committee (UAPC), with all relevant documentation of the proposal. The UAPC will consider the proposal and make a motion to the University Faculty Senate (UFS) for approval.

If a proposed program will not incorporate courses from more than one school and does not affect another school then the proposal does not require review or recommendation from UAPC or UFS. Proposals for new or significant revisions to single-school degrees will be sent to UAPC for its awareness; no action on a single-school matter is required. It is at this stage that UAPC would consult with the Provost regarding the possible need for review under the multi-school process, if UAPC determined that the proposed new or revised degree would affect multiple schools as specified in the Faculty Senate Charter.

Following approval by the school in the case of academic programs exclusive to one school, or the University faculty (via Faculty Senate vote or full faculty vote, pursuant to the University Faculty Senate Charter) in the case of academic programs involving multiple schools, the proposal goes as a recommendation to the Provost.

If approved by the Provost:

- a. In the case of majors, minors, concentrations, or significant revisions to academic programs, the Provost will notify the Academic and Enrollment Management Committee of the Board of Trustees.
- b. In the case of a proposal to create, suspend, or eliminate a degree program, the Provost will recommend approval of that proposal to the Academic and Enrollment Management Committee and the Board of Trustees.

Following approval by the Provost in the case of academic programs exclusive to one school, the Provost will notify the Faculty Senate.

After the proposed program change has been approved by the Provost (or Trustees for a new or eliminated degree), the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will notify, and if necessary, seek approval from SACSCOC. In addition to SACSCOC, an individual school or program may need to seek approval from the program accrediting body if applicable (e.g., AACSB, ABA, CAEP). Proposals to create, suspend or eliminate a degree program must be approved by the Board of Trustees prior to notifying SACSCOC.

Exhibits 7-10 provide Flowcharts of the Approval Steps outlined in this policy

ACD-1605–Timeline

For New Program Implementation: In order to ensure sufficient time to review and seek necessary approval of new programs, including accreditation approval, it may take up to two years following the initial proposal to begin enrolling students in the new program. New programs usually begin in the fall semester.

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For Suspending or Eliminating Programs: In order to ensure sufficient time to review and seek necessary approval for suspending or eliminating existing programs, this action may require up to two years to take effect; further, each program suspension or elimination may require an additional five active program years to allow students to complete the program. The timeline will be shorter if there are no students currently enrolled in the program. (NOTE: Per SACSCOC and federal requirements, the University cannot stop admitting students to a program prior to obtaining SACSCOC approval.)

ACD-1605.4 – Documentation

All new academic program proposals will include the following components (exhibits 1-5):

1. A proposal to the Dean of the appropriate school from a faculty body (working group, committee, department, program, school)
2. A letter of intent from the Dean of the appropriate school to the Provost
3. An Assessment Plan Outline
4. Proposed Curriculum and Program Map (for new degrees and majors only)
5. A Preliminary Faculty Credential Roster

Proposals for significant revisions to existing programs will include a letter of intent from the Dean of the home school, modeled on Exhibit 2. Updated assessment plans and faculty credential information will be provided if the extent of the changes warrant.

Proposals for suspension or elimination of existing programs will include a letter of intent from the Dean of the appropriate school (Exhibit 6).

Each of these components is described in more detail on subsequent pages (Exhibits 1-6).

ACD-1605.5 – Changes and Modifications to this Process

It is likely that the format, timeline, and review and approval processes for academic program changes will need to be modified or adjusted over time. Any changes to the University-wide format, timeline, or review process will be made after consultation with the appropriate faculty and administrative decision-making bodies and will maintain the University's compliance with state, federal, and accrediting body regulations. Each school may change its review and approval process at any time in accordance with the processes outlined in the Faculty Handbook. This document will be updated regularly to reflect review and approval elements required by state, federal or accrediting body regulations.

ACD-1605.6 – Applicable Regulations & Accreditation Standards

SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation 14.2 Substantive Change
SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation 9.2 Program Length

RELATED POLICIES:

Faculty Handbook

Faculty Senate Charter

ACD-1605 – Policy for Creating, Modifying, Suspending or Eliminating Academic Programs

ACD-9001 -- Substantive Change Policy

ACD-7201 – Academic and Professional Preparation Requirements for Faculty

POLICY BACKGROUND:

Policy created prior to 2013

Policy revised 12/2013

Policy reviewed by Academic Deans and Faculty Senate prior to approval on 04/13/2017

Current policy reviewed by Academic Deans, President’s Cabinet, and Faculty Senate prior to approval on 05/17/2021

Non-substantive revision January 2023 to include reference to required credit hour minimums

POLICY CONTACTS:

EVP and Provost

Director of Institutional Effectiveness and SACSCOC Liaison

Exhibit 1

Proposal from Faculty to a School Dean to Establish a New Academic Program

The proposal should provide an overview of the new program including a description, justification, and estimate of existing resources as well as additional resources needed to launch and to sustain the program over time. The proposing faculty should consult with appropriate individuals/offices as needed to complete each section.

The proposal should be structured in three parts to provide the following information:

1. Description of the proposed new program
 - Name
 - Mission Statement
 - Possible or confirmed partnerships with other areas as relevant; e.g., other departments, programs, or schools
 - Requirements including courses as well as other academic and nonacademic requirements. [A proposal for a new degree (including undergraduate or graduate certificate) should also include specific information on admission requirements.]
 - Name, title and department of coordinator and a brief explanation of their academic or other qualifications relevant to the new program (not needed for a new concentration)
2. Justification for the new program
 - Explanation of how it fits into the School or University's educational mission
 - Explanation of external trends or needs in the program area as relevant
 - Estimate of potential student interest in the first five years of the program
3. Estimate of resources required to develop and sustain a high quality program (to be made in consultation with appropriate University offices).
 - Faculty positions
 - Library resources
 - Technology resources
 - Facilities (specialized classroom needs, lab space, office space, etc.)
 - Equipment
 - Financial aid (for new degree programs only)
 - Potential impact (positive or negative) on current programs

The proposal should be concise and should be accompanied by the completed Assessment Plan Outline (with curriculum map) and Faculty Roster in the materials submitted to the Dean for approval.

Exhibit 2:

Letter of Intent from the Dean of the Appropriate School to the Provost to Establish a New Academic Program

After the School has completed its review of the proposed new program, the Dean will send a letter to the Provost indicating the School's support for the program. The letter of intent can incorporate information from the faculty proposal or include the faculty proposal as an attachment. However, it is expected that the Dean's letter of intent will include more refined estimates of the demand for the new program as well as the resources required to develop and sustain the program. In addition, the letter will reflect input from the offices of Enrollment Management, Financial Aid, Business and Finance, and University Facilities concerning the potential impact of the new program within each of these areas.

For cross-school programs, the Deans of each of the schools involved will submit a letter of intent to support the program. For single-school programs, the letter will comment as to whether there is any overlap with curriculum in another school.

Exhibit 3:
Assessment Plan Outline for Proposed New Degree or Major

Proposed Program Information	
Academic Program (Major)	
Degree	
Department	
School	
Contact Person	
Name	
Title	
Department	
E-Mail Address	
Extension	
Proposed Program Mission Statement	
Proposed Program Learning Outcomes	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.	

Exhibit 5: Preliminary Faculty Roster Form
Qualifications of Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty

Name of Program:

Type of Program:

(e.g., degree, major, minor, concentration)

Name and Department of Program Coordinator:

School(s):

Date Form Completed:

1	2	3	4
<p align="center">FACULTY NAME (FT/PT)</p> <p>List the faculty who will be teaching in the new program and indicate whether the faculty member is full- or part-time. If new faculty will be hired, use NEW for the name and complete the rest of the columns based on your expectations for the position.</p> <p>Example: Steig Cederholm (PT)</p>	<p align="center">PROGRAM COURSES</p> <p>Include the course number and title of the courses that will make up the new program for new and existing courses.</p> <p>Example: MUS 390 Music Composition</p>	<p align="center">ACADEMIC DEGREES & COURSEWORK</p> <p>List the faculty member's academic credentials (including degree, field of study, and institution) that qualify them to teach the courses listed in column 2. If needed, list specific graduate coursework.</p> <p>Example: BM (Music Composition), University of Louisville</p>	<p align="center">OTHER QUALIFICATIONS & COMMENTS</p> <p><i>Complete this section only if the faculty member does not have sufficient academic credentials to teach the courses in column 2. If completing this section, only include information related directly to the courses in column 2.</i></p> <p>Example: Formerly the composer in residence for the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra</p>

Exhibit 6:

Letter of Intent from the Dean of the Appropriate School to the Provost to Suspend or Eliminate an Existing Academic Program

The letter should provide an overview of the reasoning and process for suspending or ending the existing academic program. Please consult with the appropriate individuals/offices as needed to complete each section.

For cross-school programs, the Deans of each of the schools involved will submit a letter of support for the suspension/elimination. For single-school programs, the letter will comment as to whether there is overlap with the curriculum of any other school.

The letter should be structured in four parts to provide the following information:

1. Description of the program to be suspended or eliminated
 - Program name
 - Program mission statement
 - Name, title and department of program coordinator
 - Proposed suspension start and end dates (not needed for eliminating a program)
2. Justification for suspending or eliminating the program
 - Explanation of why the program is being suspended or eliminated such as:
 - Lack of student interest
 - Changes in external trends or needs in the program area as relevant
 - Budgetary considerations
 - Faculty considerations
 - Other resource issues
 - Program quality issues
 - Strategic planning/University mission
3. Potential impact (positive or negative) of suspending or eliminating the program
 - Description of the potential impact on current faculty (specify full-time/part-time and tenure status)
 - Description of the potential impact on students currently enrolled in the program
 - Include the number and status of students currently in the program and projections for completion
 - Description of the potential impact on prospective students/applicants
 - Description of the potential impact on current staff (specify full-time/part-time)
 - Description of the potential impact on resources (such as facilities, equipment, etc.)
 - Description of the anticipated impact on net tuition revenue
 - Description of the potential impact on other academic programs (shared course offerings, shared instructional staff, shared resources,

general education, etc.)

4. Teach-Out Plan

- Detailed description of how currently enrolled students will be helped to complete the program with minimal disruption or additional expense
 - Include a timeline for moving current students through program completion
 - Include specific course requirements and when and how they will be offered to facilitate program

Exhibit 7: Approval Process for Adding/Eliminating/Significantly Modifying Majors/Minors/Concentrations Involving One School

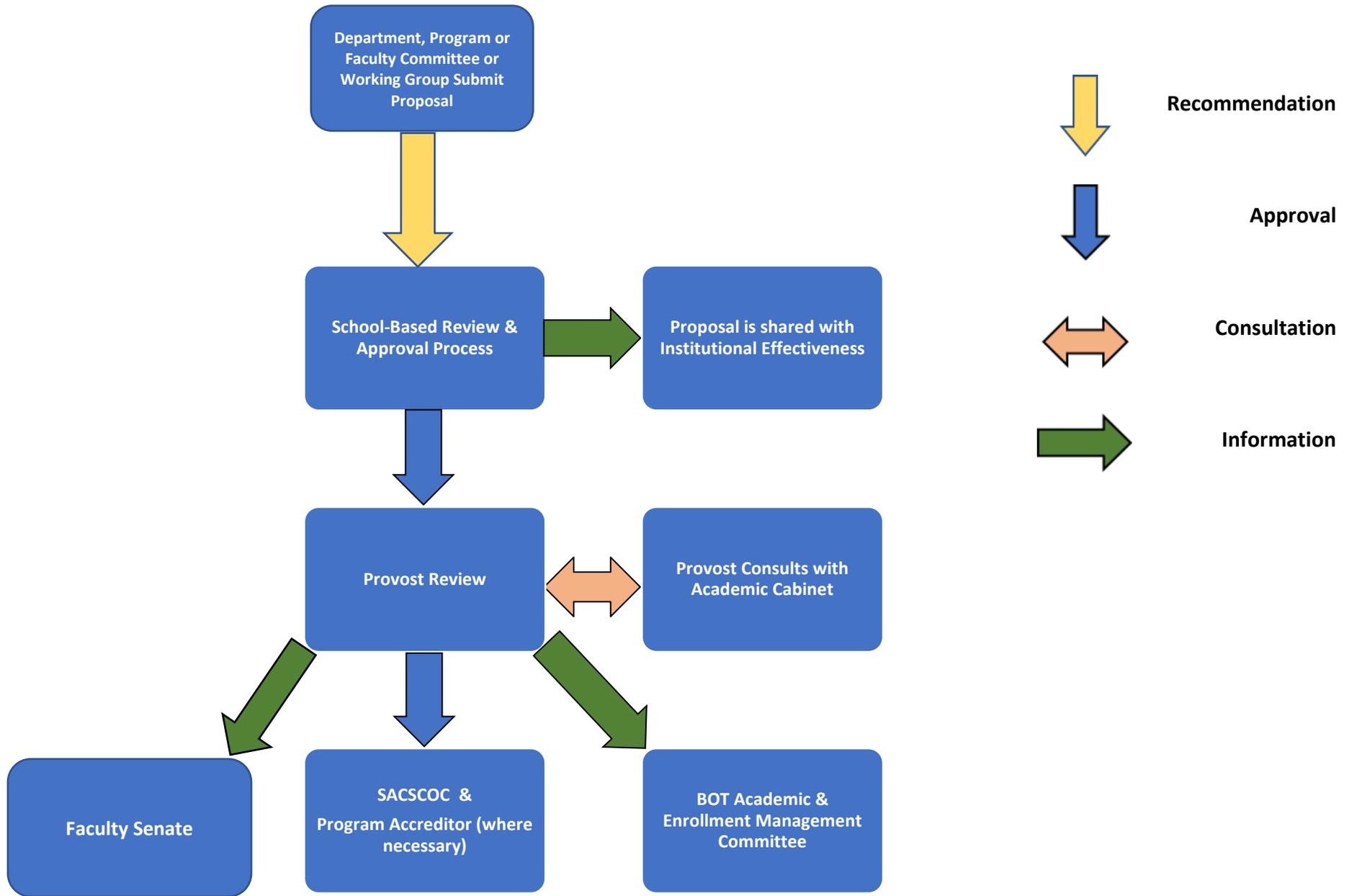
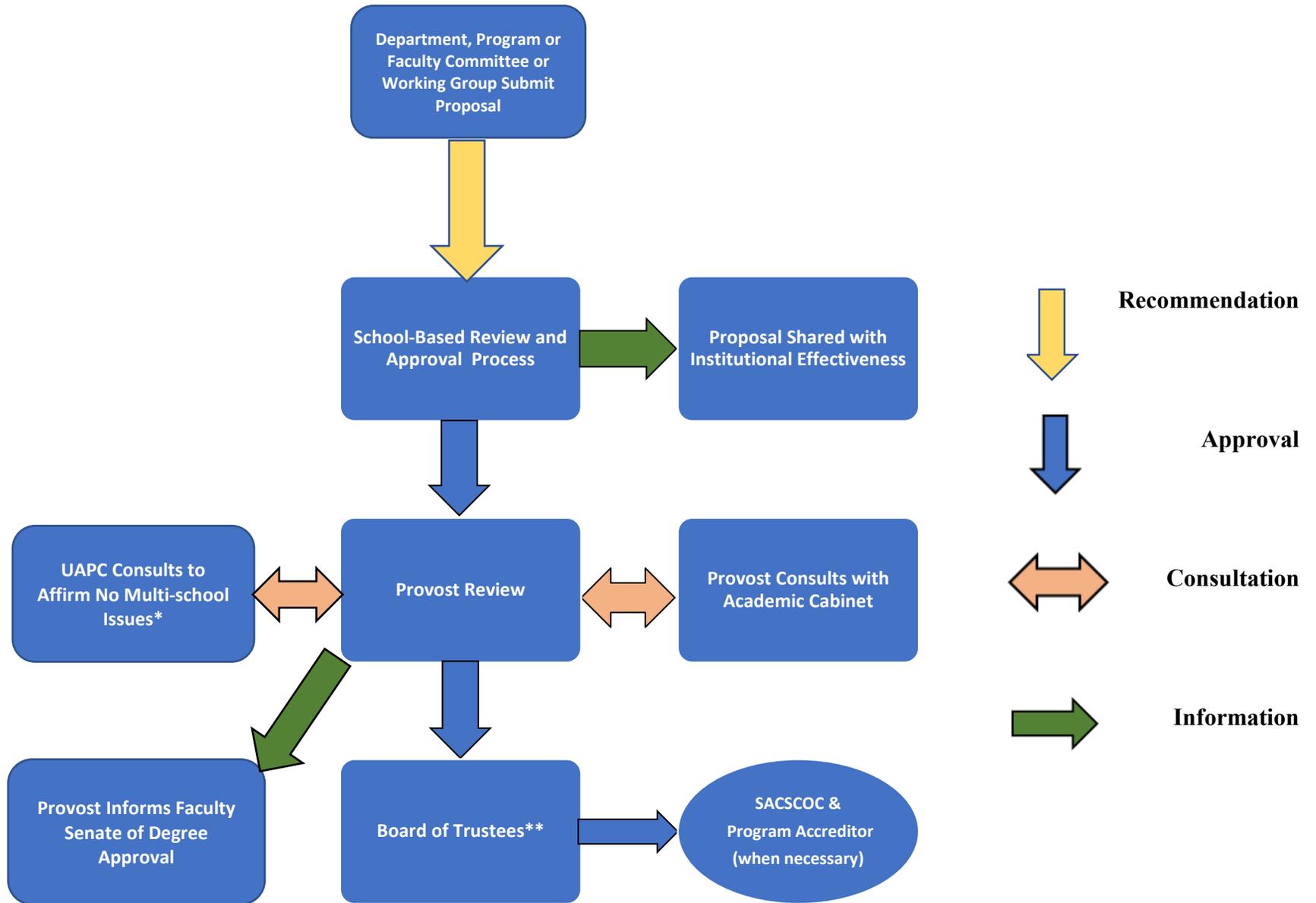


Exhibit 8: Approval Process for Adding/Eliminating/Significantly Revising Degrees Involving One School



*UAPC consultation not necessary for single-school degree eliminations

**Board of Trustee approval required for creation or elimination of degrees; significant revisions require inform AEMC only

Exhibit 9: Adding/Eliminating Majors/Minors/Concentrations or Significant Revisions to Academic Programs Involving Multiple Schools

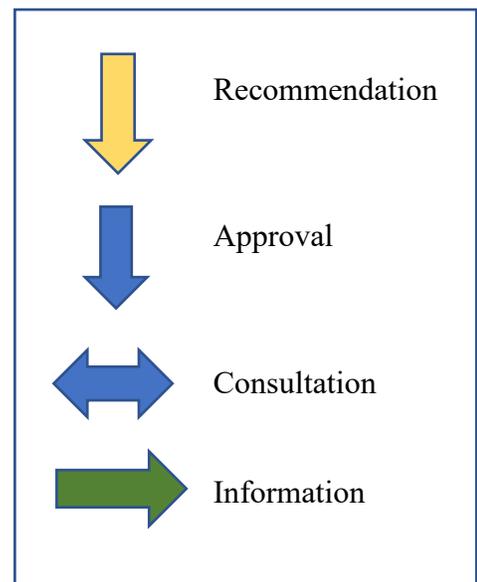
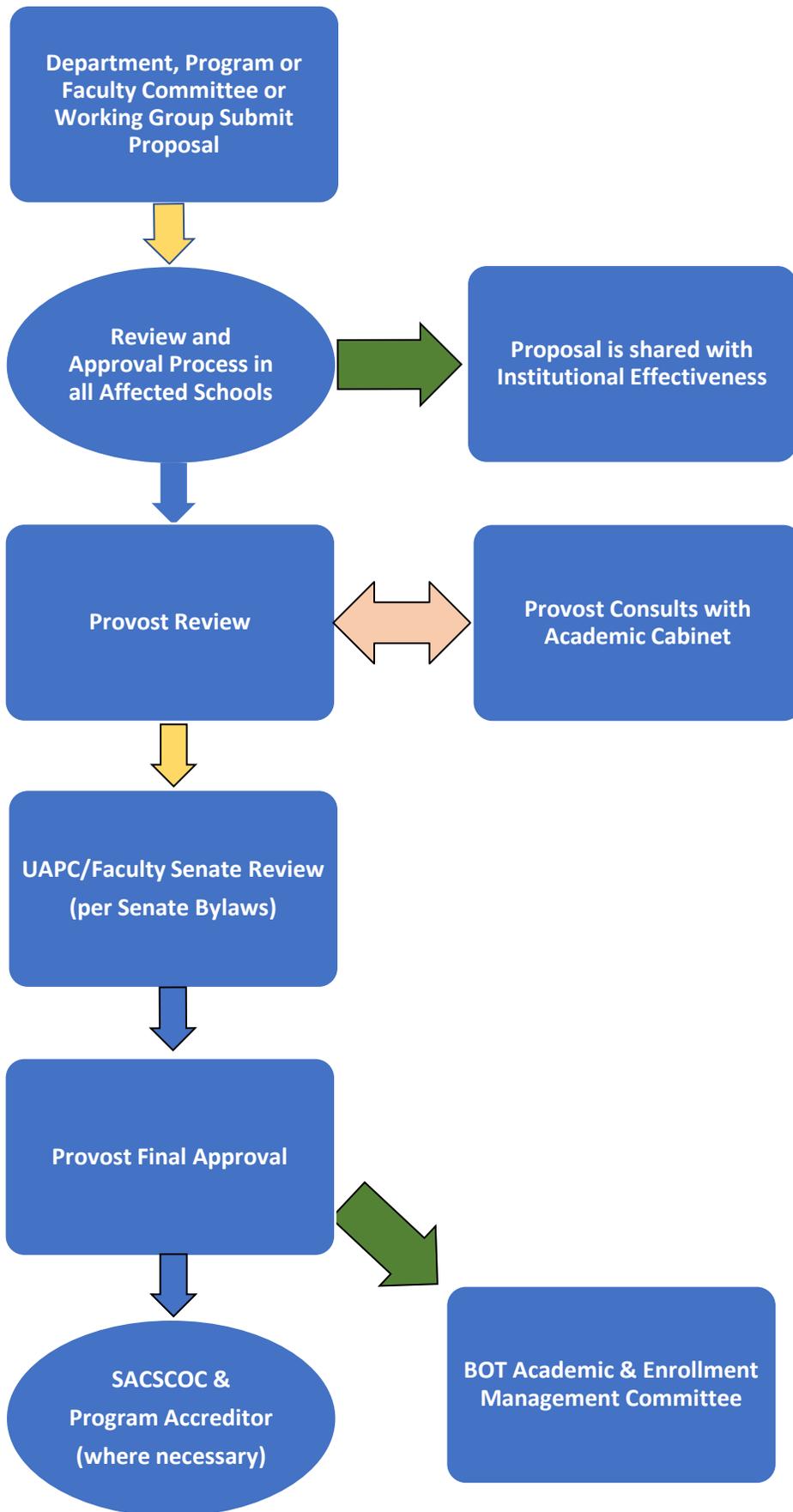


Exhibit 10: Adding/Eliminating/ Degrees Involving Multiple Schools

