

Frequently Asked Questions About PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS

1. What is the difference between a program modification and a course modification?

A program modification is a change to a degree program that affects the requirements for students to graduate from that program. For an undergraduate degree programs, such changes must be reflected by changes in the Undergraduate Degree Check Sheet for the program.

A course modification is a change that affects an individual course, including changes in the name, number, content, prerequisites, general education designation, cross listing, etc. of the course.

2. How many different categories of program changes are there?

There are three basic categories of program changes, which differ in the level of approval required for the change to be put into effect. Although the following are general guidelines for determining the category into which a change falls, final authority for determining the category resides with the Provost, consistent with State Regents' policies:

Substantive changes. Changes at this level require approval of the Provost and both the OU Regents and the State Regents. Most changes in programs fall into this category, including:

- establishing a new program
- deleting or suspending a degree program
- changing the name or degree designation of a degree program (Levels I, II or III)
- combining two degree programs
- adding or deleting an option (level IV) [See question 3 for an explanation of levels.]
- changing the GPA required for a degree program
- changing the number of hours required for a degree program

Nonsubstantive changes. Changes at this level require approval of the Provost and notification of the OU and State Regents. The types of changes that fall into this category are primarily changes in course requirements, i.e., the addition or deletion of specific courses that make up a degree program, *as long as this action does not change the number of hours required for the degree.*

Internal administrative changes. Changes at this level require approval of the Provost. Notification of the OU and State Regents is not required. There are many types of changes that fall into this category, including:

- addition, modification or deletion of a track/ concentration within a major (level V)
- addition, modification or deletion of an academic minor
- addition, modification or deletion of dual degree programs
- any other change that does not require approval or notification of the State Regents

3. What is the meaning of the different levels of programs, as reflected in the University's Degree Program Inventory?

There are five program levels, four of which are referenced in State Regents' policies:

- **Level I** – Aggregations of courses as referenced in State Regents' policy. Examples include such titles as Certificate, Bachelor of Arts, Master of Science and Doctor of (Specialty).
- **Level II** - Aggregations of courses that appear in an institution's catalog or on a student's diploma. *Note: this is the degree title that is printed on the diploma.* Examples include Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Arts in Letters, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Science in Zoology, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance, Master of Education, and Doctor of Engineering.

- **Level III** - Aggregations of courses with an institutional-unique program code (also known as the State Regents' Program Code). This level defines the discipline in which the degree is awarded. Examples include Bachelor of Science in Chemistry, Master of Arts in French, Doctor of Philosophy in Economics.
- **Level IV** - Aggregations of courses under an umbrella degree program. State Regents' policy refers to this level as an option, but at OU it is referred to as a major and assigned an OU major code. In most cases there is a one-to-one relationship between the OU major (Level IV) and the Level III program. However, there are a few OU majors that are grouped under a common level III program. Examples include majors in Chemical Engineering and the Chemical Engineering Pre-Med Option, both of which are under the Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering; and majors in Ballet Performance, Ballet Pedagogy and Modern Dance Performance, all of which are under the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance.
- **Level V** – Subgroupings of courses within a major often referred to as tracks or concentrations. These are permitted, but are not regulated by State Regents' policies and they do not appear on the diploma or transcript.

4. Where can I find a list of the University's degree programs by level?

All of the degree programs for the Norman campus are listed in the **Degree Program Inventory**, available on the internet at: <http://www.ou.edu/provost/ir/>.

5. Who do I contact if I am not sure into which category the request we plan to make falls?

The Vice Provost for Instruction or the Provost's Office.

6. What forms must be submitted as part of a request to establish a new program?

Requests for new degree programs must be submitted using a State Regents' **New Program Request** form, consisting of:

- the cover/title page
- the evaluation criteria, which contains an outline of information to be provided
- the signature page.

The order of assembly should be the cover/title page, pages describing the request and addressing the evaluation criteria, and the signature page.

Requests for new programs to be delivered electronically should be submitted using the State Regents' **Proposal for a New Program Delivered Electronically** form.

For undergraduate degree programs, you must also submit a proposed degree check sheet.

The original form with appropriate approval signatures is to be submitted.

7. What forms must be submitted as part of a request to modify an existing degree program?

Requests for both *substantive and nonsubstantive changes* in degree programs that require approval or notification of the State Regents must be submitted using a State Regents' **Request for Program Modification** form.

When submitting a request for a program modification, the order of the pages is important:

- Cover Page
- Type of Request Page (appropriate page selected from #1 - #8). If you are requesting extensive changes and your summary or rationale will not fit into the *Summary of changes* or *Reason for requested action* spaces provided on the Type of Request Page, you can type "see attached explanation" in those spaces and provide a more detailed description as an attachment.

- attached narrative explanation with supporting documents
- Current degree check sheet
- Proposed degree check sheet
- Signature Page

For undergraduate degree programs, you must also submit a current degree check sheet and a proposed degree check sheet that clearly shows the proposed changes.

Requests to deliver an existing program electronically should be submitted using the State Regents' **Existing Program Delivery Electronically Request** form.

The original form with appropriate approval signatures is to be submitted.

Requests for *internal administrative changes* (i.e., changes not requiring approval or notification of the State Regents) must be submitted using the **Request for Administrative/Internal Changes** form.

- Cover page
- Attached narrative explanation with supporting documents
- Signature Page

If the requested change affects the degree check sheet, you must also submit a current check sheet and a proposed degree check sheet that clearly shows the proposed changes.

The original form with appropriate approval signatures is to be submitted.

8. Where can I get copies of the program forms?

These forms are available in section 6 of the Provost's **Memos and Forms on Academic Procedures** page at <http://www.ou.edu/provost/pronew/content/memorand.html>.

9. Under what conditions are we required to submit a modified degree check sheet?

Any change in the requirements for graduation from an undergraduate degree program must be reflected in the degree check sheet. The proposed check sheet must accompany a request for a new program, whereas both the current and proposed versions of the check sheet must accompany requests for program modifications.

10. What changes can we make without submitting a Program Modification form?

Course changes, such as changing a course number, course title, course description, prerequisite, course credit hours, course general education designation, etc. These require the use of a Course Request form, which is initiated through the MCIR system in CICS. Consult the "Course Request and Syllabi - Checksheet for submission to APC" available online in section 6 of the Provost's **Memos and Forms on Academic Procedures** page at <http://www.ou.edu/provost/pronew/content/memorand.html>.

11. When do new programs and program modification go into effect?

A new program may be implemented at the beginning of the semester after it is approved by the State Regents.

Changes to existing programs go into effect the summer term following their approval. **NOTE:** The changes apply *only* to new students entering the program *and* continuing students who elect to change to the new program requirements.

12. What is the deadline for submitting a Program Modification or Course Request?

Such requests may be submitted at any time. However, since it can take a minimum of seven months for a substantive request to be approved and a minimum of five months for a nonsubstantive request to be

approved, units should initiate the process well in advance of the beginning of the semester in which the changes are intended to go into effect.

New program requests and substantive program modification requests to be effective for summer/fall must be submitted to the Academic Programs Council no later than the preceding December. Nonsubstantive program modifications must be submitted no later than the preceding February.

13. Can we submit more than one Program Modification per year?

Technically there is nothing to prevent this. However, the Curricular Changes/Academic Publications office has requested that only one Program Modification be submitted each year, as it becomes very confusing if more than one proposal is submitted. It is a much cleaner process to handle all proposed changes in one program modification request and one proposed check sheet each year. However, exceptions may be granted by the Vice Provost for Instruction or Provost.

14. Do you have any advice to help facilitate a smooth process through the system?

- Be sure that the explanation and summary of the changes you are requesting are adequate.
- Cross-check your summary and checksheet. If a change is in your summary, it should be on the checksheet; if it is on the checksheet, it should be in your summary.
- If the changes to your program are tied to the creation of new courses or changes in existing courses, you should submit the Program Modification form and all corresponding Course Requests as a packet. This facilitates cross-checking and ensures that all of the requests are processed in tandem.
- If you are requesting General Education designation for a course, submit the paperwork for that approval to the Provost's Advisory Committee for General Education Oversight (PACGEO) in care of Vice Provost Bell's office at the same time you submit the Course Request to Curricular Changes/Academic Publications.

15. What is the routing for program modification requests?

Flow charts are available online in section 6 of the Provost's **Memos and Forms on Academic Procedures** page at <http://www.ou.edu/provost/pronew/content/memorand.html>.

16. What is the routing for course modification requests?

A flow chart is available online in section 6 of the Provost's **Memos and Forms on Academic Procedures** page at <http://www.ou.edu/provost/pronew/content/memorand.html>.