SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Creating a New Program

Higher ed institutions are tasked with reading and responding to the evolving needs of prospective students as well as employers. Layered with the increasing competition for these learners, an ever-evolving employment landscape, and the rising costs of both degree and non-degree programs, it's no surprise that creating new programs to solve a variety of challenges is an important component of staying relevant and attracting the right learners.

But the decision to develop a new program can't be made in a vacuum; it requires a thorough analysis of market demands, an audit of stakeholder responsibilities and institutional strengths, and close study of future trends.

This self-assessment guide explores key areas to consider when undertaking the creation of a new course of study, as well as a list of questions to help you identify your university's needs and readiness so that the process—and your new program—is positioned for success.

1. Validate the need through market research

Is there a demand for this program among employers? Is there a demand for this program among students? How many similar programs exist in the US? In your region? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these programs? What unique value, if any, will your program offer compared to similar programs? Is the industry to which this program relates projected for stability and/or continued growth? What is the projected cost of tuition/fees for your program? How do all of these costs compare with similar programs? What are the projected employment rates for program graduates? What are the projected salary rates for program graduates?

2. Connect with career placement staff and industry partners to assess skill requirements

What skills are most in demand for graduates of programs like this? What emerging trends should your program be prepared to address? Is your new program aligned with projected future workforce needs (5-10 years)? Does the program align with skill gaps in relevant industries? Can your program be updated to remain relevant and impactful as student and industry needs evolve over time? Are there industry or educational partnerships that can be nurtured to enhance your new program?

3. Review accreditation requirements

How will your program satisfy accreditation requirements? Can these requirements be integrated into your learning outcomes without compromising the rigor of the program? What are the accreditation standards/competencies required for graduates in this field? What evidence will need to be collected to demonstrate that your graduates meet these standards? What reporting will be required to stay current? Can you use integrated tools and systems that will support this reporting from the start?

4. Craft meaningful learning outcomes that align with market demands, industry needs, and accreditation requirements

Do your learning outcomes reflect what you learned from your market research, industry thought partnership and accreditation review? Are your learning outcomes skills-based, so prospective students can easily see the connection between what they will learn in your program and the contributions they will be expected to make in the workplace?

5. Engage key stakeholders early and follow a change management process

Whose involvement and support will be needed to make the program a success? Who is overseeing each aspect of the creation and launch of the program? Have faculty, student support staff, marketing professionals, enrollment staff, and department leadership been engaged with the creation of this project early to promote buy-in? How have these institutional stakeholders responded to the creation of this program? Who can manage communication efforts to ensure the right information is available to the right stakeholders at the right time?

6. Utilize learning design resources to ensure best practices and effective modalities

What resources exist on campus to help design engaging courses? What new resources need to be developed or procured to create and implement this program? What learning design models, resources, and best practices can be applied to ensure your program is pedagogically sound? Have you developed a visual style guide to ensure all courses reflect your university's unique brand and identity? Will students recognize continuity of your brand and identity from course to course, both within a program and across all university offerings? How will you capture the unique spirit of your university in your course design in a way that differentiates your program from others like it? Which of your current faculty have high rates of student engagement and can share best practices as you design the program? What modalities are being employed by peer institutions with similar programs?

7. Leverage technology to promote engagement and accessibility

What instructional tools exist on campus that can optimize engagement and accessibility for hard-to-reach students? What learning technologies are emerging that would support student learning? How will the program ensure that all resources are accessible to students needing special accommodations? What technologies or modalities can you use to create learning experiences that go beyond the traditional lecture? Are there platforms or tools that can be used to create a collaborative space among students and faculty? Are those platforms or tools available in both synchronous and asynchronous settings? Can the technologies you choose adapt to the individual needs of students? Can social learning and enriched media be integrated into the program to meet the learning preferences of your students? What training and support will you provide faculty to ensure they can effectively use the technology to enhance teaching?

Answer Evolving Academic Needs

Noodle is committed to launching online programs and courses that reflect your institution's identity and expectations for a powerful learning experience. We work with universities to create, reconceptualize, design, and build any online, traditional, or hybrid offering—from single, non-credit courses to certificates and credentials to multi-year degree programs, and ensure that your offerings follow university branding for continuity and a seamless student experience.

Our approach is collaborative, engaging, and inclusive so that your university's vision can come to life. Rather than trying to replicate the face-to-face experience online—an approach that often fails in terms of both learning and user experience—our philosophy is to develop programs that leverage technology to enhance learning.

Connect With Us
www.noodle.com | partnerships@noodle.com