Guidelines for the Approval of New Undergraduate Degree Programs
Revised 12 May 2003

I. Characteristics of Degree Program Proposals

Any degree program proposal should include the following:

- First and foremost, a discussion of why the program makes sense from an undergraduate educational perspective as well as from the perspective of the evolving intellectual trends in the relevant fields. This should include some estimate of reasonable expectations of both student and professional demand for this degree.
- A description of the program. This description should detail the proposed curriculum and other aspects of the students' educational experience, emphasizing the coherence of the overall program. At a minimum, it should include those elements required by CoC for its review of the proposed curriculum. (see page 7)
- An assessment of the anticipated impact of the proposed program on existing components of the undergraduate program including, but not limited to, other degree programs and minors.
- Identification of the core faculty who will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program and of any broader advisory group that might be required to provide ongoing oversight and assure continuity over time, and a plan to oversee, monitor, and evaluate the proposed program.
- A discussion of the academic and advising infrastructure that will be available to the program.
- Letters of support from heads and chairs of involved academic units (including reports on discussion by affected faculty) and letters of support from relevant Deans (including reports on relevant discussion by School Councils). These letters should discuss not only intellectual content, but also availability of resources (including faculty, administrative support, space, and fiscal resources).

II. Proposal Routing

- All proposals, once completed as described above, shall be submitted to the CoC staff in the Registrar's office for consideration by the Faculty governance structure. Proposals for degree programs must be submitted to the CoC staff

no later than the first week of December for consideration for implementation during the next academic year.

- The Chair of the CoC shall notify the chairs of the FPC and CUP of all proposal submissions ready for review and offer an initial recommendation for the expected path of review.

- The path to be followed by each proposal will normally be guided by the considerations articulated in section III below. Under these guidelines, the path followed by a given proposal should generally correspond to the degree to which the proposal differs from existing undergraduate degree programs. The Chairs of FPC, CUP, and CoC, acting jointly, have the authority to depart from these guidelines as they deem appropriate.

- The Chair of the Faculty shall notify the MIT community of each new proposal under active consideration by the CoC or CUP and all such proposals shall be posted on the Faculty web site.

III. Guidelines for Proposal Routing

1. A proposal for *revision of a current undergraduate degree program* will be routed to CoC, which acts with power (Rules of the Faculty 1.73.3.e).

2. A proposal for *a new undergraduate degree program within an academic unit that already offers an undergraduate degree program and wishes to offer the new degree program under the same degree name and department number* will normally be routed to CoC, which acts with power to approve the curriculum.

   If, however, the proposal raises issues that "involve substantial changes in policies relating to undergraduate educational matters" (Rules of the Faculty 1.73.3.e), the proposal shall first be routed to CUP for review, comment, and approval before it is sent to CoC for approval of the curriculum. CUP may decide that the proposal should not move ahead, or it may approve the proposal in one of two ways:

   a. CUP may decide that the proposal is acceptable as it stands. In such a case, the proposal shall be referred to CoC for approval of the associated curriculum, and CoC will act with power in this regard (Rules of the Faculty 1.73.3.e).

   b. In rare cases, CUP may wish to authorize a program on a provisional basis, subject to the condition that it should undergo further review before it is accepted as a permanent part of the undergraduate program. In such cases, CUP may decide that the proposal would be

appropriate to implement as a "limited educational experiment" (Rules of the Faculty 1.73.2.c), and may authorize it for a period of 5 years, withresponsibility for oversight by CUP. A proposal so authorized shall be sent next to CoC for approval of the associated curriculum. The proposal shall then be sent to the FPC Chair for communication to the Faculty (Rules of the Faculty 1.73.2.c) for discussion, comment, and advice.

CUP shall evaluate the experimental program during its third year to determine progress and recommend changes to enhance the program. Any changes to the curriculum are contingent upon CoC approval.

c. At the conclusion of the 5-year period, if CUP finds that the experiment has been a success, a proposal to make the program permanent shall be prepared and forwarded to CoC for review. With CoC approval the proposal shall then be sent to FPC for communication to the faculty. If CUP determines that the experiment has not been successful, the academic unit that has been operating the program will be asked to prepare a plan for and oversee its termination. Approval of the termination plan rests with CoC.

Note: *No degree program proposal should be submitted with the specific intent of obtaining an authorization as an experiment. Any proposal for a new undergraduate degree program must make the case for approval of the program as a permanent addition to the undergraduate curriculum.*

3. A proposal for *a new undergraduate degree program within an academic unit that already offers an undergraduate degree program and wishes to offer the new degree program under an existing degree — but with a new degree name or a modified department number*— will normally be routed to CoC, which acts with power to approve the curriculum. If the proposal is not deemed to raise issues that "involve substantial changes in policies relating to undergraduate education matters," the proposal will be sent to FPC for ratification of the decision made by CoC. Because this will become a permanent degree program, approval of the program by the full Faculty is required. See Section IV below.

   If however, the proposal raises issues that "involve substantial changes in policies relating to undergraduate educational matters" (Rules of the Faculty 1.73.3.e), the proposal shall first be routed to CUP for review, comment, and approval before it is sent to CoC for approval of the curriculum.

   CUP may decide that the proposal should not move ahead, or it may approve the proposal in one of two ways:

a. CUP may decide that the proposal is acceptable as it stands and constitutes a minor departure from existing programs. In such a case, the proposal shall be referred first to CoC for approval of the associated curriculum, and then to FPC for ratification of the decisions made by CUP and CoC. Because this will become a permanent degree program, approval of the full Faculty is required. See Section IV below.

b. In rare cases, CUP may wish to authorize a program on a provisional basis, subject to the condition that it should undergo further review before it is accepted as a permanent part of the undergraduate program. In such cases, CUP may decide that the proposal would be appropriate to implement as a "limited educational experiment" (Rules of the Faculty 1.73.2.c), and may authorize it for a period of 5 years, with responsibility for oversight by CUP. In this case, authorization of the proposal as an experiment is contingent on CoC approval of the associated curriculum and FPC approval of the proposal as a whole. The FPC Chair will communicate this decision to the Faculty (Rules of the Faculty 1.73.2.c) for discussion, comment, and advice.

   CUP shall evaluate the experimental program during its third year to determine progress and recommend changes to enhance the program. Any changes to the curriculum are contingent upon CoC approval.

c. At the conclusion of the 5-year period, if CUP finds that the experiment has been a success, a proposal to make the program permanent should be prepared and forwarded to CoC for review. With CoC concurrence the proposal would then be sent to FPC for its approval and then follow the steps in Section IV below. If CUP determines that the experiment has not been successful, the academic unit that has been operating the program will be asked to prepare a plan for and oversee its termination. Approval of the termination plan rests with CoC.

Note: *No degree program proposal should be submitted with the specific intent of obtaining an authorization as an experiment. Any proposal for a new undergraduate degree program must make the case for approval of the program as a permanent addition to the undergraduate curriculum.*

4. A proposal for a *new interdisciplinary undergraduate degree program* or a *new undergraduate program within an academic unit that does not already offer an undergraduate degree program* will be routed first to CUP.

CUP may decide that the proposal should not move ahead, or it may approve the proposal in one of two ways:

a. CUP may decide that the proposal is acceptable as it stands. In such a case, the proposal shall be referred first to CoC for approval of the associated curriculum, and then to FPC for ratification of the decisions made by CUP and CoC. Because this will become a permanent degree program, approval of the full Faculty is required. See Section IV below.

b. In rare cases, CUP may wish to authorize a program on a provisional basis, subject to the condition that it should undergo further review before it is accepted as a permanent part of the undergraduate program. In such cases, CUP may decide that the proposal would be appropriate to implement as a "limited educational experiment" (Rules of the Faculty 1.73.2.c), and may authorize it for a period of 5 years, with responsibility for oversight by CUP. In this case, authorization of the proposal as an experiment is contingent on CoC approval of the associated curriculum and FPC approval of the proposal as a whole. The FPC Chair will communicate this decision to the Faculty (Rules of the Faculty 1.73.2.c) for discussion, comment, and advice.

   CUP shall evaluate the experimental program during its third year to determine progress and recommend changes to enhance the program. Any changes to the curriculum are contingent upon CoC approval.

c. At the conclusion of the 5-year period, if CUP finds that the experiment has been a success, a proposal to make the program permanent should be prepared and forwarded to CoC for review. With CoC concurrence the proposal would then be sent to FPC for its approval and then follow the steps in Section IV below. If CUP determines that the experiment has not been successful, the academic unit(s) operating the program will be asked to prepare a plan for and oversee its termination. Approval of the termination plan rests with CoC.

Note: *No degree program proposal should be submitted with the specific intent of obtaining an authorization as an experiment. Any proposal for a new undergraduate degree program must make the case for approval of the program as a permanent addition to the undergraduate curriculum.*

5. A proposal to offer a *new degree type/designation* (e.g., B.Arch., A.B., etc.) will be routed first to FPC before review by CUP and CoC. This routing is appropriate because a new degree will have Institute-wide implications "of concern to the Faculty" (Rules of the Faculty 1.72.a) and will fall within the FPC's mandate to "maintain a broad overview of the Institute's academic programs" (Rules of the Faculty 1.72.c). The structure of the curriculum associated with the new degree must be approved by CoC, which acts with power in this regard. After approval by FPC, CUP, and CoC, such a proposal must then be routed and approved as described in Section IV.

6. A proposal for a *new degree program that couples an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree* will be routed first to FPC before review by CGSP, CUP, and CoC. This routing is appropriate because a new degree will have Institute-wide implications "of concern to the Faculty" (Rules of the Faculty 1.72.a) and will fall within the FPC's mandate to "maintain a broad overview of the Institute's academic programs" (Rules of the Faculty 1.72.c). The structure of the curriculum associated with the new degree must be approved by CoC and CGSP. After approval by FPC, CUP, CoC, and CGSP, such a proposal must then be routed and approved as described in Section IV.

Under exceptional circumstances the chairs of FPC, CUP, and CoC may judge a proposal of any type to have major implications for education at MIT that go beyond the mandate of their respective committees and choose to ask for approval from the full Faculty.

IV. Final Steps to Approval

Final approval for permanent degree programs of the types described in III.3, III.4, III.5 and III.6, including those emerging successfully from CUP experimental status, requirestwo additional steps" (a) approval by the Full Faculty; and (b) approval by the Corporation, in sequence.

V. Proposals to Terminate Degree Programs

- If an academic unit(s) offering a program should decide to terminate it, the proposal will be reviewed by the CoC, which acts with power (Rules of the Faculty 1.73.3.e).

- If a proposal to terminate a degree program is initiated by another entity, the Chairs of the FPC, CUP, and CoC shall jointly determine the most appropriate course of action to discuss and act upon the proposal through the Faculty governance structure.

Elements Required by CoC for Review of a Degree Program Proposal

- Description of the program suitable for inclusion in the Course Catalogue.

- Degree chart in catalogue format including:
    - General Institute Requirements and CI-Ms
    - Departmental Program Requirements
    - Departmental Program Units that also satisfy the GIRs
    - Unrestricted Electives
    - Prerequisites for required subjects
    - Total Units

- New subject proposals/changes to existing subjects including:
    - Description and rationale that conforms to catalogue requirements submitted utilizing the Catalogue Information System.
    - Identification of other subjects with similar titles and descriptions with an explanation of how the proposed subject differs.
    - Incorporation of necessary documentation for subjects seeking CI-M, REST, or Institute Lab status.

- Degree Pathways Document including:
    - A roadmap by semester of subjects for students entering the program as sophomores.

A roadmap by semester of subjects for students entering the program as juniors.

Table of Required Votes for Approval

Type of Proposal	CoC	CUP	FPC	Faculty	Corp.
A proposal for revision of a current undergraduate degree program (III.1)	✔				
A proposal for a new undergraduate degree program within an academic unit that already offers an undergraduate degree program and wishes to offer the new degree program under the same degree name and department number.					
Authorized as proposed (III.2)	✔				
Authorized with CUP input (III.2a)	✔	✔			
Authorized as an experiment (III.2b)	✔	✔			
Making a successful experiment permanent (III.2c)	✔	✔			
A proposal for a new undergraduate degree program within an academic unit that already offers an undergraduate degree program and wishes to offer the new degree program under a new degree name or a modified department number.					
Authorized as proposed (III.3)	✔		✔	✔	✔
Authorized with CUP input (III.3a)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Authorized as an experiment (III.3b)	✔	✔	✔		
Making a successful experiment permanent (III.3c)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
A proposal for a new interdisciplinary undergraduate degree program or a new undergraduate program within an academic unit that does not already offer an undergraduate degree program.					
Authorized as proposed (III.4a)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Authorized as an experiment (III.4b)	✔	✔	✔		
Making a successful experiment permanent (III.4c)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
A proposal to offer a new degree type/designation (III.5)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
A proposal for a new degree program that couples an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree (III.6)	✔	✔ [also CGSP]	✔	✔	✔

- Note: For order of approval, see text. Revised 10 May 2003.