

Closing a Program

The closure of a program does not happen often. It is recommended that a program/department or academic unit work closely with the Office of the Associate Vice President for Graduate Education to ensure that all steps are followed and documented. Use the forms provided in the [Appendix-Forms](#) for each type of program closure to document the process.

WASC Policy for Program Closure Teach-out Plans

Chapman University adheres to the WASC policy for program closures in case of program discontinuance. The home department must make best efforts to ensure that all matriculated students have a pathway to graduation. Details and templates can be found in the [WASC Teach-Out Plans and Agreements Guide](#).

Closure of an Existing Degree Program

The closure of an existing degree program is a serious matter that requires careful deliberation, informed by the alignment of resource allocations with the Chapman Strategic Plan's stated goals and aims and those of the university.

Closure may be prompted by

- the program review process
- a change in University or academic unit goals and operations
- an issue tied to accreditation
- a significant change in enrollment or enrollment prospects
- a significant change in the program/department faculty needed to provide the program or
- another situation that may arise.

In some cases, the decision to recommend program closure is unanimous on the part of the provost, dean, and program/department unit faculty. In other situations, there may not be a unanimous decision from all parties concerned or affected by the closure and/or members of the university at large.

A pending decision to close a program creates potential problems for current applicants. A decision to halt applications or suspend admissions should be taken in consultation with the

- Provost
- Office of Admissions
- Director of Accreditation and Assessment
- Program/department faculty
- Dean

Such consultation should happen immediately upon consideration of program closure so that appropriate action can be taken as quickly as possible to provide the least disruption to the current program applicants and students.

The information regarding the Proposal to Close Program and all comments made should be available to the parties engaged in the decision-making process. The process should be straightforward and allow for faculty consultation. All information for the specific proposal must be placed in the file sharing folder created by the Office of the Associate Vice President for

Graduate Education. Contact Lonnise Magallanez at GradEd@chapman.edu to establish the folder for the proposal and the review documents. Links to the folder can then be shared with all parties who need access for the comments and review.

The process below addresses two situations:

Alternative 1 is the pathway if there is full agreement on a recommendation to close a program between involved parties in the academic unit and the provost

Alternative 2 provides a pathway if concerns or disagreements about the recommendation to close the program are expressed by parties in the academic unit and/or others in the University and documented during the process.

The process, in brief

Step Summary	Action(s)
Step 1: Written <u>Preliminary Rationale for Degree Program Closure</u> presented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originator notifies in writing the Office of Admissions, the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Faculty Advancement, and the Associate Vice President for Graduate Education of the proposed closure and consults in the closure process, the preparation of the Preliminary Rationale for Program Closure, and potential issues that should be addressed in the Rationale. • Originator prepares and submits written <u>Preliminary Rationale for Degree Program Closure</u> to program/department faculty, curriculum committee, Dean, Provost. • University offices are notified as recommended.
Step 2: Meeting held to discuss <u>Preliminary Rationale</u>	Meeting(s) held with originator and program/department faculty, curriculum committee, Dean and Provost to discuss <u>Preliminary Rationale</u> and to discuss any need to suspend admissions or other process if necessary. Originator may continue the process by moving to Step 3 or take no further action.
Step 3: <u>Proposal to Close a Degree Program</u> prepared and provided to all parties in the academic unit(s)	Academic unit(s) review period begins <u>Proposal to Close Program</u> submitted by the originator to program/department faculty, curriculum committee, and dean for review and comment.
Step 4: Academic unit review and comment	Academic unit review period (minimum 30 days): program/department faculty, curriculum committee, and dean review proposal; outside constituencies consulted as needed. Recommendations are prepared and submitted for review by all parties.
Step 5: Final Review and Comment Period at the academic unit level	Following the initial review and comment period, all members of the program and academic unit have 7 days/1 week to review the comments from all parties and make corrections or clarifications as needed.
<i>Alternative 1: All academic unit parties and Provost are in support of Program Closure</i>	
Step 6/Alternative 1: GAC (UAC, if necessary) and LRPC review	GAC (and UAC, if necessary) and LRPC concurrently review Proposal to Close Program and provide comments to the Academic Unit(s), SEB, and Provost. The Proposal, with comments, is forwarded to SEB.

Step 7/Alternative 1: SEB review	The SEB reviews the Proposal, the comments, and any other information provided by parties that may be affected by the proposal and who have not been consulted appropriately if such information is available. If, after review, all parties agree on program closure, SEB forwards the proposal and the comments to Provost for final action. If a compelling issue is discovered during the review, SEB presents the proposal for review by the full Faculty Senate as described in Step 8 / Alternative 2.
<i>Alternative 2: There is no unanimous agreement among academic unit parties and/or with the Provost for closure.</i>	
Step 6/Alternative 2: GAC (and UAC, if necessary) LRPC review.	GAC (and UAC, if necessary) and LRPC concurrently review Proposal to Close Program and provide comments to the Academic Unit, SEB, and Provost. The Proposal, with comments, is forwarded to SEB.
Step 7/Alternative 2: SEB review.	SEB provides recommendations and comments on Proposal to Close Degree Program and presents all prior materials for Faculty Senate for consideration.
Step 8/Alternative 2: Faculty Senate review and vote on recommendation on Proposal to Close Degree Program.	Full Faculty Senate reviews recommendations and comments from all academic units, GAC (and UAC, if necessary), LRPC, SEB. Faculty Senate votes, and the result is sent to the Provost by the SEB. The Provost takes final action.

Closure process in detail

A proposal to terminate an existing program or degree may originate from the

- Provost
- Dean
- Program/department faculty

Step 1: No matter where the proposal originates, the originator drafts a Preliminary Rationale to Close Degree Program and is immediately provided to the program/department faculty, academic unit curriculum committee, dean, and provost for discussion and consideration.

The Office of Admissions, the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Faculty Advancement, and the Associate Vice President for Graduate Education are notified of the proposed closure and consulted in the preparation of the Preliminary Rationale for Program Closure so that they may provide the originator with information about the closure process and potential issues that should be addressed in the Preliminary Rationale.

The following parties should be notified in writing of the Preliminary Rationale for informational purposes and to assist as needed in preparation for the Proposal to Close Degree Program:

- Enrollment Services/Registrar
- Strategic Marketing & Communication
- Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (Closure of an Integrated Program)
- EVP/COO (if the proposal is an international or joint program with another school)
- Legal Affairs (if the proposal is an international or joint program with another school)

This Preliminary Rationale to Close Degree Program must include:

- An explanation of the reasoning or situation that has initiated the proposal to close the program
- A brief impact analysis of the effect of the proposed closure, including:
 - Expected impact on current students
 - Expected impact on current applicants
 - Accreditation issues that will arise from program closure
 - Expected impact on all faculty, with specific attention to how current tenured faculty will be affected
- Preliminary plans to address each of the situations above
- Discussion of economic factors that either are a part of the decision for closure or will be created by the program closure
- Discussion of how closure aligns with the university's strategic plan
- A clear timeline for program closure addressing deadlines for each step in the process, including any steps that need to be immediately taken depending on when the closure process is initiated, such as suspension of the admission process.
- *In a situation in which the timeline for the decision on closure needs to be expedited for a legitimate and agreed-upon reason, the proposer may ask the program/department faculty, curriculum committee, councils, and SEB to reduce the timeline for the process as much as possible and still allow enough time for faculty consultation.*

No form is provided to prepare the Preliminary Rationale to Close Program, however, the proposer should follow the outline above.

Step 2: A meeting is called by the proposal originator with program/department faculty, the academic unit curriculum committee, the dean, and the provost to allow for open discussion by these parties regarding the Preliminary Rationale. Questions, concerns, objections to, and support for the closure of the program should be brought to this discussion and recorded so that information will be available in the Proposal to Close Degree Program. At this meeting, a timeline is established for the development of the Proposal to Close the Degree Program and to collect the response to the proposal from the program/department faculty, academic unit curriculum committee, and dean. (Note: this is not an open meeting. The meeting is designed to facilitate the process and provide important information in the Proposal).

Step 3: Following the Preliminary Rationale meeting, if the proposal originator wishes to continue with the closure proposal, a complete Proposal to Close Degree Program is prepared and submitted to the program/department faculty, academic curriculum committee, and dean. This full proposal becomes the primary document reviewed by members of the academic unit and all subsequent reviewers. The Proposal to Close Degree Program (form can be found in the [Appendix-Forms](#) found at the end of this Handbook) must contain, at a minimum, all the information listed in the form.

Step 4: Upon receipt of the full Proposal to Degree Close Program, and within the time agreed upon in Step 2, but not less than 30 calendar days, the program/department faculty, the curriculum committee, and the dean provide a written response to the proposal with a recommendation for or against closing the program. It is recommended that each party provide a rationale for the recommendation.

Any party may request information from students and alumni and incorporate it into the recommendation. If such parties have a strong opinion on the proposed closure, it is recommended that parties with a stake in the decision be provided an avenue to express their concerns, whether in a public meeting or in writing. All such concerns should be documented with the Proposal to Close Degree Program. At the end of step 4, all recommendations and other documents created are collected and posted. While it is recommended that the program/department faculty and college/school curriculum committee each provide a separate group response, any individual in the academic unit may submit a separate individual response to the recommendation for approval/non-approval of the Proposal to Close Degree Program.

Step 5: All recommendations and other documents created in Step 4 are available for review by the program/department faculty, academic unit curriculum committee, dean, and the originator (if outside the academic unit) during the subsequent one week (7 calendar days) or within the time agreed upon in Step 2. Comments and responses may be posted and should be limited primarily to omissions or corrections to statements of fact.

ALTERNATIVE ONE

If at the end of the academic unit review period (Steps 4-5), all of the recommendations and comments from the program/department faculty, academic unit curriculum committee, and dean are unanimously in support of closure:

Step 6/Alternative 1: the recommendations and proposal are sent to the GAC (and UAC, if necessary) and LRPC. GAC (and UAC, if necessary) review the proposal to ensure the closure process meets all academic policies and procedures, does not have an undue impact on other programs, and provides for a reasonable teach-out plan for the current students. LRPC reviews the long-range impact of the closure. Comments from the Councils are then sent to the SEB.

Step 7/Alternative 1: The SEB reviews the Proposal and all recommendations for adherence to process and policy. Should there be no issues, the Proposal and all recommendations are sent to the Provost for final action. Should any issues arise, the SEB places the Proposal to Close Program on the Senate agenda for review and recommendation (see Step 8 / Alternative 2).

ALTERNATIVE TWO

If the recommendations from the program/department faculty, academic unit curriculum committee, and dean are not unanimous:

Step 6/Alternative 2: the Proposal to Close a Degree Program, recommendations, and other comments are forwarded concurrently to the GAC (and UAC, if necessary), LRPC, and SEB for review and recommendation. The SEB is placing the Proposal to Close Degree Program on the Faculty Senate agenda. The second Senate reading is scheduled to occur after the senators receive information from the councils and SEB.

Step 7/Alternative 2: The GAC/UAC, LRPC, and SEB review the Proposal to Close Degree Program, all recommendations and comments, and any other information obtained in the process. Based on the information provided, each council and the SEB make a recommendation for approval.

Step 8/Alternative 2: The SEB provides the Faculty Senate with the Proposal to Close Degree Program and all recommendations and comments to date. The Faculty Senate votes to recommend or not recommend closure, and the result is sent to the Provost for action.

Final Decision: The Provost has final authority to decide whether to approve or not approve the program closure.

Upon determination by the Provost to close or not to close a program, notification of the decision is sent by the Office of the Provost to:

- President, Faculty Senate
- Dean, academic unit curriculum committee, and program/department faculty
- Associate Vice President for Graduate Education
- Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Faculty Advancement, and the Director of Accreditation & Assessment, who will notify WASC of the closure
- Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (for an Integrated Program only)
- Office of Enrollment Management Services and Admissions Office
- Enrollment Services/Registrar (upon approval only)
- Strategic Marketing & Communication (upon approval only)
- EVP/COO (upon approval only)
- Legal Affairs (upon approval only)
- Board of Trustees (upon approval only)

Process following approval of closure:

The following communication is required once the degree program closure is approved:

1. An official notice of program closure to all active and inactive students, including the following details of the program closure:
 - a. A timeline for the closure: we have not accepted any students for fall and are no longer accepting applications for future terms.
 - b. A timeline and a specific course plan will be provided to help students complete their program in a timely way, including what courses will be offered and in which terms so that the students can appropriately plan for the completion of their degrees.
 - c. Notice to offer advising sessions to any student who has questions or concerns about their ability to finish within the provided timeframe with the assurance that the program will do its best to help every student finish.
 - d. If a student cannot finish within that time frame, the program will do its best to help them finish at another program/institution.
 - e. The tuition and fees and pricing structure for the remaining terms.
2. An official notice of program closure to all faculty and staff in the program.
3. An update of the program website with program closure information.