Principles for assessing Harvard Chan Degree Programs
Committee on Education Policy, February 1, 2021

The following principles were developed to use in assessing both existing and new degree programs. These principles may be used by those who are proposing new degrees, departments reviewing their existing degrees, or in advance of other School-wide programmatic reviews, such as for reaccreditation purposes.

1. The degree program aligns with School priorities and strengths

   Clearly articulated goals and the necessary expertise to meet those goals
   
   - The program aligns with the mission and strategic priorities of Harvard Chan
   - The School has strong expertise in the focus area of the degree, and has or can create one of the best programs in the country/world in this area
   - The degree has a clearly articulated and distinct focus that specifies
     - The knowledge, competencies, and skills graduates will gain
     - The target learner, the kind of student that is to be educated and why target learners are important for the School
     - How the program relates to and is impacted by accreditation requirements
   - The School should not develop new degree programs that overlap with or duplicate existing degree programs

   Clear lines of responsibility and a model for sustainability
   
   - Department and/or Program sponsor(s) are motivated to take ownership and responsibility for the degree program as a whole and have a theory about and model for the long-term viability of the program
   - There is a clear framework for governance and decision-making about the program
   - One or more faculty members want to lead the program and will devote sufficient time to this activity to do it well (including reducing, as necessary, other activities)
   - There is strong faculty interest in teaching, advising and mentoring students in the program
   - There are dedicated and clear communication mechanisms and connections from the leaders and administrators of the degree program with the educational activities of the School overall

2. There is evidence that the degree program has the intellectual, financial, and administrative context required for it to be successful

   Meets student and graduate goals
• There is evidence that there is (a) strong demand for the program in the market and (b) that graduates will be able to obtain relevant jobs that require the knowledge and skills they learn in the program
• Analysis shows how this program fits into the current competitive environment for the degree and that Harvard Chan is likely to be successful in this environment
• There is evidence that there is sufficient demand for the degree such that we will get high quality applicants and attract enough students to have a reasonable cohort size

Financial and administrative commitments exist and are aligned with intellectual goals

• The financial and administrative commitments for the program are clear, realistic and evidence-based
  o Note that not all degrees are the same in this regard; some may operate at a loss because they further the School’s mission in other important ways, others may operate at cost, and still others might bring in funds to the School
  o The commitment includes a plan to devote the necessary administrative and other resources to develop, implement, and run the program. For example, the School should not have a program solely or primarily because of a training grant
• The program can be offered at reasonable tuition (as determined by the market)
  o There is an appropriate availability of financial aid
  o The tuition is realistic given the time the student will dedicate
  o Given the cost-intensive demands, assessment of what is reasonable for a Joint program may be different from non-joint programs. Additional considerations for Dual Degree Programs include the following:
    ▪ Harvard Chan has a partner School that is committed to the success of the Program with clear lines of responsibility and the necessary dedicated resources
    ▪ There is a coherent and feasible program of study given the requirements of both degrees, and the schedules of both schools
    ▪ The administrative details of programs can be made to work for applicants, students, and both Schools (e.g., coordinated application deadlines, admissions criteria, financial aid policies, teaching compensations, sharing of student information, course evaluations, etc.)