

RIT Guidelines for Jointly Administered Academic Programs April 2015

Preamble

The purpose of this document is to propose a model that describes a process on how the various academic units of the RIT can offer and administer joint academic degree-granting programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Other approaches should be considered when appropriate.

Definitions

Because of general education, all academic degree programs include a range of courses offered in a number of academic units. Joint programs are programs offered by two or more academic units (“the partner units”) that play a significant role in the core curriculum of the program. Partner units are typically academic departments that sit inside a college, institute or center, which are academic organizations one level up. Academic units offering a limited number of core courses or credit hours are not considered partner units in the context of this document.

For example, the proposed MS program in Computational Finance is a collaborative effort of two RIT colleges, Saunders College of Business and the College of Science. The MSCF program seeks to address a vital and growing market niche, a demand for persons with a background in quantitative finance where expertise in mathematics, computer data management, and business acumen are required. It is anticipated that each college will offer a significant fraction of the core courses and credit hours for this program.

Joint program agreement

Each joint program will be unique and therefore requires a separate agreement (“the joint program agreement”) between the participating partner units and will specify the administration of the program. This agreement will be guided by this document and will be developed with input from the faculty. The agreement must be approved by the heads/chairs/directors of the partner units and/or the deans/directors of the appropriate academic organization one level up.

The agreement will specify a program director who will ensure courses are scheduled, students are advised, faculty are assigned to courses, etc. The program director will be the designated administrator to certify the degree (see the section on program directors below).

The agreement will also specify how new faculty or staff hired to support the joint program will be assigned to the partner units. Such new hires will be selected through a joint search process involving the partner units (see the section on joint faculty and staff below).

Overarching Principles

In the context of the approach outlined in this document, joint programs will be governed by the following principles:

- A faculty will be identified for joint programs including representatives from each of the partner units. In the case of new faculty hired specifically for the program, they will be assigned a home partner academic unit. Each member of this faculty will have relevant expertise and will teach courses that are integrated within the joint program. This faculty, with the support of the staff assigned to the joint program, will be responsible for the curricula of the program.
- Budgets will be developed based on needs of the joint program. Partner units will jointly submit budget requests related to the joint program. The budget and expenses will be distributed among the partner units as appropriate to provide the required resources to run the joint program.
- Credit will be awarded by counting student head count and student FTEs equally among the partner units.
- Partner units will contribute to implementing the program, identifying and assessing student learning outcomes, developing recruitment goals, defining program capacity, assessing program success, and ensuring faculty engagement.
- The deans of the partner colleges in consultation with the chairs/heads of the relevant academic units will appoint faculty members to assessment committees that will conduct both internal and external assessment.
- Any conflicts related to the joint programs that cannot be resolved by the partner chairs, directors, or deans will be addressed and resolved by the Provost.

Administrative Hosting and Staff Support for Joint Program

Every joint program will be hosted by an administrative academic unit (department, school, or college). The Program Director/Coordinator will typically be a member of this academic unit, although this may not necessarily be the case. The host unit, along with its college support infrastructure, handles administrative and staff duties related to the joint program. For example, the BS in Human Centered Computing is a joint program between GCCIS and COLA, but GCCIS is the host college for that program and therefore provides staff support for the program. Hosts of academic units are not necessarily permanent and the academic unit hosting the program may change or rotate over time.

Program Director

Each joint program is led by a Coordinator/Director who is appointed as specified by the joint program agreement. The Coordinator/Director has oversight of the students of the joint program and is responsible for course assignments/scheduling, identification of adjunct instructors, and oversight of policy and process. In the case of graduate programs, the Director has the additional responsibility to screen applications and (with the help of a graduate committee comprising members of the faculty of the joint program) select the incoming graduate students, assist students with the selection of their thesis committee and advisor, and allocate graduate scholarships and stipends. The Coordinator/Director may be elected or appointed for a term of three years and reports, on activities related to the program only, to one of the supervisors,

typically a dean, of the academic organization one level up from the partner units, as specified by the joint program agreement. This appointment can be renewed as appropriate.

Joint Program Faculty

Joint Program Faculty assignments exist where a faculty member is actively engaged with the joint program and offers courses that are included within the program. Joint program faculty assignments will be for a period of three years but can be renewed as appropriate. The primary criterion for renewal of an assignment is that the individual has been contributing, and is likely to continue contributing, to the joint program in ways outlined in the responsibilities identified within this document. An application to join the faculty for a joint program must be approved collectively by the chairs/heads of the partner units and the supervisors of the academic organizations one level up from the partner academic units. Faculty with joint program assignment report to the chair/head of the partner unit in which their primary or home assignment resides. Membership of the joint program faculty will be such that it ensures an appropriate balance of representation among the partner academic units. The responsibilities of faculty with joint program assignments are to:

- teach courses in the program;
- advise and supervise undergraduate/graduate student research projects;
- serve on capstone/thesis/dissertation committees;
- participate in curriculum development;
- serve on committees that are related to:
 - student recruiting and admission,
 - student success and learning outcomes,
- engage in actively running and supporting the success of the program;
- integrate support for the joint program into their annual plan-of-work approved by their academic unit chair/head;
- retain affiliation and responsibilities with their home academic unit for scholarship, learning environment, and service expectations;
- follow tenure and promotion processes in their home college with appropriate input from the director of the joint program.

Faculty members with joint program assignments are evaluated by their academic unit chair/head during the annual review process with input from the director/coordinator of the joint program.

In some cases, faculty will have joint tenure appointments. In such cases, the deans or appropriate supervisor will establish a separate joint tenure appointment agreement.

Unless a joint tenure appointment is involved, the hiring process for joint program faculty is administered through the appropriate partner unit and/or college, which will serve as the individual's tenure home and follows the normal RIT hiring policies and procedures. In addition:

- The deans of the partner colleges will collectively support requests to hire faculty to support joint programs as appropriate to reinforce the importance of these positions in the context of the joint program.
- Representatives from the partner units will be included in the search process for faculty being hired as a result of this process.

- Joint program status will be specified and integrated into the plan of work when faculty members are hired as a result of this process.

Definition and Revision of Curriculum

The curriculum of a joint program will be defined through a collaborative and inclusive process. All curriculum development activities are driven by a committee comprising representatives from the partner units. If a joint program faculty has yet to be defined, this committee will comprise representatives from each partner college/academic unit. If a joint program faculty has been defined, this committee will comprise representatives from the joint program faculty.

The initial curriculum, and subsequent changes to the curriculum, must be approved by: the joint program curriculum committee, the faculty of all partner units, the curriculum committees of all academic organizations one level up, and the supervisors of all academic organizations one level up. All constituents should be kept informed throughout this process to minimize complications during the approval process.