Overview: This policy allows departments to propose a moratorium or suspension of a graduate-level academic degree program, or undergraduate, professional, or graduate certificates requiring 30 or more credits (see policy on Certificates [under revision]), or to discontinue any academic degree program or certificate on a permanent basis. A moratorium or suspension must be specific to the campus location(s) officially approved to offer the degree. Typically, undergraduate and professional degree programs are not placed in a moratorium or suspension status. Undergraduate programs may be limited through certification criteria (see policy on Certification [under revision]).

Definitions: A moratorium is defined as a temporary suspension of admission to a graduate program for up to two calendar years. A suspension is defined as suspending admission to a graduate program for more than two calendar years, but not more than five calendar years, usually in anticipation of closing the program. Discontinuation is defined as the permanent closure of an academic degree program or certificate of 30 or more credits.

Purpose: The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all the necessary processes and notifications occur in a timely manner, and that the appropriate approvals are obtained when a program decides in advance that suspension, moratorium, or discontinuation is warranted. This policy is not intended to cover an atypical year in a graduate admissions cycle when a weak pool results in no admissions offers, or when unforeseen circumstances prevent offers of admission after applications have been accepted. Should the consequences of such a failed admissions cycle warrant a moratorium or suspension for the ensuing year, then this policy applies.

The moratorium or suspension process is twofold: It includes (1) notification to the appropriate university offices and external bodies that the graduate program/certificate at one or more campus locations is not accepting new students for a defined period of time; and (2) provides the academic unit time to implement changes, address resource concerns, consider implications for the future, and plan for potential transitions. Both moratorium and suspension actions require review by the dean of the Graduate School, approval of the Provost’s Office and notification to Faculty Senate and the Board of Regents. Suspension of a graduate-level academic degree program or any certificate of 30 or more credits also requires submission to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) for approval.

Discontinuation of an academic degree program or certificate of 30 or more credits requires a formal teach-out plan, the approval of the Provost, Faculty Senate, and Board of Regents, and notification to currently enrolled students. Discontinuation of an academic degree program or certificate of 30 or more
credits also requires submission to the NWCCU for approval and notification to the Washington Student Achievement Council and US Department of Education.

**Moratorium:** A temporary suspension of admission to a graduate program or any certificate of 30 credits or more may be requested for up to two calendar years for any or all locations at which the program is offered. A moratorium may be requested to address a variety of short-term issues, including but not limited to:

1. Low demand for the program
2. Curricular changes as a result of program assessment or review
3. Temporary loss or reallocation of program resources
4. Over-enrollment in a given year

A program in approved moratorium status at a specific location may not admit new students at that location and must contain a prominent notice on its website that admissions have been placed in moratorium. The program must notify the Graduate School and the Provost’s Office via the **Moratorium or Suspension of a Graduate Degree Program** form. Moratoria are reported as information items to the Faculty Senate and Board of Regents.

At the end of the moratorium period, the academic unit must submit a **Moratorium or Suspension of a Graduate Degree Program** form to the Provost to reopen the program to new applications; the request must provide information regarding the academic unit’s capacity and resources to reactivate the program/certificate. A list of the faculty and their committee roles for participating in the graduate program must be approved by the Graduate School and included with the reactivation form. If the academic unit does not take any action at the end of the moratorium period, the program automatically will be put into suspension status. The unit will be requested by the Provost’s Office to complete the required paperwork for NWCCU for a suspended degree.

**Suspension:** An academic unit may request suspension of a graduate degree program for more than two years but fewer than five years at any or all campus locations where the program is officially offered. A program/certificate at a specific campus in suspension status may not admit new students to that location; however, the program must continue to offer required courses until all students already admitted into the program complete their course of study within the maximum time allotted for the degree completion. The program website must contain a prominent notice that admissions have been suspended.

A suspension may be requested to address the following issues:

1. Reassess the purpose and goals of the program/certificate
2. Address declining and insufficient enrollment trends
3. Design and implement major curricular changes
4. Address deficiencies in resources and/or staffing
At the end of the suspension period, the academic unit must submit a Moratorium or Suspension of a Graduate Degree Program form to the Provost to reopen the program to new applications or submit a Proposal to Discontinue a Degree Program. The request to reactive the program must provide information regarding the academic unit’s capacity and resources to reactive the program/certificate. A list of the faculty and their committee roles for participating in the graduate program must be approved by the Graduate School and included with the reactivation form.

Responsibilities: The dean of the college in which the graduate program or certificate resides should discuss the moratorium or suspension, along with potential impacts to the program and its students, with the dean of the Graduate School before submitting a Moratorium or Suspension of a Degree Program form to the Provost. Appropriate campus administrators impacted by the action will be notified. Once the form is reviewed by all appropriate parties and submitted to the Provost’s Office, the provost will notify the program director/chair, campus administrators, college dean, and dean of the Graduate School of the moratorium or suspension decision. If the request is approved, the Provost’s Office will also notify the Faculty Senate along with the dean of the graduate school for graduate programs/certificates. If there is no request to reactivate a program already in moratorium status, the Provost’s Office will automatically put that program into suspension status for up to 5 years, and will notify the program, campus, college, Graduate School and Faculty Senate. The program will be required to complete paperwork for submission to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

Before the end of the moratorium or suspension period, the dean of the college should submit a Moratorium or Suspension of a Graduate Degree Program form to the Provost for reinstatement to active status, or take action to close the suspended program. The Provost will notify the program, college, campus, Graduate School and Faculty Senate if the program is reinstated. If the academic unit decides to discontinue the program or certificate, the dean of the college should submit a Proposal to Discontinue a Degree Program to the Provost’s Office in accordance with the Faculty Senate Memorandum of Understanding (2014) and the provisions of the Faculty Manual.

The Provost’s Office will notify all appropriate offices and external agencies if a closure is approved. It is the responsibility of each academic unit to notify the affected students appropriately and to ensure the timely offering of essential courses in the program/certificate so current students can complete their requirements, per NWCCU’s teach-out policy and in accordance with Faculty Senate’s Statement of Institutional Responsibility to Current Students When an Academic Program or Degree is Discontinued (3/31/83; under revision 2017).

Related Policies
WSU Faculty Senate, *Statement of Institutional Responsibility to Current Students When an Academic Program or Degree is Discontinued* (3/31/83, 1996; under revision, 2017).

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Provost and the Faculty Senate regarding the Creation, Consolidation, New Location, Renaming or Elimination of Degree Programs (2014).

WSU Faculty Manual 2016-17, section III.E.3.b, Discontinuation of a Program.

NWCCU, *Substantive Change Policy* (2017) and application form identify moratorium, suspension and discontinuation as reportable actions.

NWCCU, *Standard* 2.D.4: In the event of program elimination or significant change in requirements, the institution makes appropriate arrangements to ensure that students enrolled in the program have an opportunity to complete their program in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.