



POLICY NUMBER **110.29**
APPROVAL DATE 12.09.11 draft
LAST AMENDMENT MM-DD-YYYY
REVIEW DATE MM-DD-YYYY

POLICY TITLE: UNDERGRADUATE COURSE AND PROGRAM APPROVAL POLICY

AUTHORITY Senate
PRIMARY CONTACT Provost and Vice-President, Academic
RELATED POLICIES

PURPOSE/PHILOSOPHY

UFV employs a process to scrutinize new and existing courses and programs to ensure that they meet both UFV and legislated standards and requirements.

POLICY

All new courses and programs and changes to existing courses and programs will undergo an approval process.

Approval will be guided by interests as articulated in the Strategic Plan and the Education Plan. The internal process includes various consultations and approvals by academic units, support areas, administrators, the Senate and its committees, and the Board of Governors.

This policy provides the guidelines and procedures pertaining to UFV's internal program and course approval processes.

Senate may delegate the authority to approve new courses and course changes to a Senate standing committee.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Unit: An academic unit includes but is not limited to faculties, schools, libraries, programs, centres, departments, and institutes.

Campus-Wide Consultation : The Campus-Wide Consultation process provides an opportunity for other academic units and service areas (e.g., Admissions & Records, Library, Student Services) to review and provide feedback about the course or program submission; it precedes consultation with faculty councils.

Official Course Outline: A legal document used for calendar copy, articulation, and other official documentation purposes, the Official Course Outline establishes the parameters for the course syllabus that instructors develop and provide to students. The Official Course Outline Template can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Lower-level Course: A course that is a first- or second-year course; lower-level courses are generally numbered in the 100s and 200s.

Major Course Change: A modification to a course that affects the nature or focus of a course, options for students, or budget.

Minor Course Change: A modification to a course that has no effect on the nature or focus of a course, options for students, or budget.

Program: For the purposes of this policy, “program” refers to a collection of courses and associated requirements offered as a credential or an option within a credential. This includes, but is not limited to a certificate, diploma, minor, extended minor, major, honours, degree, specialization, option, or concentration.

Program Budget Analysis: A summary of the budget implications of a proposed new program or revisions to an existing program. It is to be attached to all new and revised Program Proposals when the proposal is submitted to Senate and its standing committees for approval. The Budget Analysis Template can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Program Proposal: The detailed description for a new program prepared on the Template for the Development of Program Proposals.

Program Working Group: A group of people formed in consultation with the Dean(s) (or the Provost) to proceed in the development of a course or program proposal for consideration in the approval process. This group may become the **Program Committee**, which will provide oversight of the program and its courses. The final composition of the group is approved by the Dean. Guidelines for the composition of Program Working Groups are found in Appendix C.

Recommendation: Providing advice, positive or negative, to inform approval decisions by subsequent committees.

Undergraduate Course: Any course numbered below 600, including continuing studies, vocational, and developmental courses.

Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC): A Senate standing committee that provides Senate with advice on all matters related to the undergraduate educational programs of the university, including policies, practices, and criteria for admission, evaluation, and promotion of undergraduate students.

Upper-level Course: A course that is a third- or fourth-year course; upper-level courses are usually numbered in the 300s and 400s.

PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

1. The process to approve programs and courses shall include a series of structured consultations and approvals that give the UFV community opportunity to examine a program or course in terms of the quality of the curriculum, consistency of standards, attention to student needs, and adherence to UFV’s Strategic Plan and mandate.
 2. Changes made to the procedures and guidelines of this policy require the approval of Senate.
 3. A *new course* requires the approval of Senate according to the process outlined in [Appendix A](#).
 4. Course changes will be classified as either *minor* or *major*.
 5. A *minor* course change is to be approved by Faculty Council and submitted to UEC as an information item and for inclusion in the Calendar. The process for making *minor* changes to an undergraduate-level course and descriptions of *minor* changes are presented in [Appendix A](#).
 6. A *major* course change requires the approval of Senate upon recommendation by UEC according to the process outlined in [Appendix A](#).
 7. A *new program* requires the approval of Senate according to the process outlined in [Appendix B](#).
 8. All *changes* to programs require the approval of Senate according to the process outlined in [Appendix B](#).
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APPENDICES

[Appendix A: Undergraduate Course Approval Process and Resources](#)

[Appendix B: Undergraduate Program Approval Process](#)

[Appendix C: Undergraduate Program Approval Resources](#)

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APPENDIX A: UNDERGRADUATE COURSE APPROVAL PROCESS

This appendix includes

- 1) the process for developing and obtaining approval for a new undergraduate course;
- 2) the process for making *major* changes to an existing undergraduate course; and
- 3) the process for making *minor* changes to an existing undergraduate course.

1. Approval Process for New Courses

- 1.1. The process for introducing a *new* course, generally, begins with the department/school or Program Committee, which develops the Course Outline and prepares a memo that outlines the rationale and any financial implications of the new course using the Memo Template. If there is no department/school responsible for the course, a committee representing the relevant discipline(s) will be struck.
- 1.2. Upon department/school or Program Committee approval, the Course Outline and Memo are submitted to the Dean or designate for approval.
- 1.3. Upon Dean's approval, the Course Outline and Memo are submitted to the UEC Assistant for Campus-Wide Consultation for a period of one to four weeks.
- 1.4. Following the Campus-Wide Consultation, the department/school or committee sends the Course Outline and Memo to Faculty Council(s) for approval. Course developers must also respond to all comments submitted during the Campus-Wide Consultation process and include this response in the submission to Faculty Council(s).
- 1.5. Upon approval by Faculty Council(s), the Course Outline and Memo are submitted to UEC for review and recommendation to Senate.
- 1.6. Upon Senate approval, the UEC Assistant makes all necessary calendar changes and posts the new Course Outline on the web.

2. Approval Process for Major Changes to Existing Course

The following are considered to be *major* course changes:

- a change for which new resources are required to deliver the course
- course deletions
- a change to a course title that reflects a change in the nature or focus of the course
- changes to the calendar description of a course that reflect a change in the nature or focus of the course
- changes that move a lower-level course to an upper-level course and vice versa
- change to the total number of credits for a course
- change to the hours assigned to components (e.g., total student contact hours, lecture hours, seminar hours) and/or length of a course
- change to the prerequisites or co-requisites for a course that restricts options for students or affects the students or programs of other academic units
- changes to learning outcomes that change the nature or focus of the course
- changes to the course content that change the nature or focus of the course
- change in the maximum enrolment for a course if it affects the quota for an educational program within the academic unit or students or programs of other academic units

- changing or adding a delivery method for a course when the extra cost of the added delivery method will not be absorbed by the academic unit delivering the course
 - changes that affect the students or programs of other academic units
- 2.1. The process for making *major* changes to an existing course, generally, begins with the department/school or Program Committee, which revises the Course Outline and prepares a memo that outlines the rationale and any financial implications of the course changes using the Memo Template. If there is no department/school responsible for the course, a committee representing the relevant discipline(s) will be struck.
 - 2.2. Upon department/school or Program Committee approval, the Course Outline and Memo are submitted to the Dean(s) or designate(s) for approval.
 - 2.3. Upon Dean's approval, the Course Outline and Memo are submitted to the UEC Assistant for Campus-Wide Consultation for a period of one to four weeks.
 - 2.4. Following the Campus-Wide Consultation, the department/school or committee sends the Course Outline and Memo to Faculty Council(s) for approval. Course developers must also respond to all comments submitted during the Campus-Wide Consultation process and include this response in the submission to Faculty Council(s).
 - 2.5. Upon approval by Faculty Council(s), the Course Outline and Memo are submitted to the UEC Assistant for dissemination to the Senate standing committees (i.e., UEC, Senate Budget Committee) for review and recommendation to Senate.
 - 2.6. Upon Senate approval, the UEC Assistant makes all necessary calendar changes and posts the revised Course Outline on the web.

3. Approval Process for Minor Changes to Existing Course

The following are considered to be *minor* course changes:

- a change to an existing course that has no impact on programs or students of other academic units
 - a change for which all associated costs will be covered by the academic unit
 - a change to a course title for the purpose of correction or clarification
 - change(s) to the calendar description of a course for the purpose of correction or clarification
 - change of a course level from 1st to 2nd year (or 2nd to 1st year) and from 3rd to 4th year (or 4th to 3rd)
 - change to the prerequisites or co-requisites for a course that expands options for students
 - change to the frequency of a course offering
 - changes to learning outcomes that do not change the nature or focus of the course
 - changes in course content that do not change the nature or focus of the course
 - changing or adding a delivery method for a course that does not affect the cost of delivering the course
- 3.1. The process for making minor changes to an existing course, generally, begins with the department/school, which revises the Course Outline and prepares a memo that outlines the rationale and any financial implications of the course changes using the Memo Template. If

there is no department/school responsible for the course, a committee representing the relevant discipline(s) will be struck.

- 3.2. Upon department/school or Program Committee approval, the Course Outline and Memo are submitted to the Dean(s) or designate(s) for approval.
- 3.3. Upon Dean's approval, the Course Outline and Memo are submitted to Faculty Council(s) for approval.
- 3.4. Upon approval at Faculty Council(s), the revised Course Outline and Memo are submitted to the UEC Assistant who will make all necessary calendar changes, post the revised Course Outline on the web, and forward the changes as information items to Senate and standing committees as required.

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APPENDIX B: UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS

This appendix includes

- 1) the process for developing and obtaining approval for a new undergraduate program; and
- 2) the process for making changes to an existing undergraduate program.

1. New Program Approval Process

- 1.1. The process for introducing a new program, generally, begins when a Program Working Group presents its vision of the program to the Dean(s) of the appropriate academic unit(s).
- 1.2. In the event that an appropriate Program Working Group does not exist and/or to ensure faculty representation on the Program Working Group, the Dean(s) will strike a Program Working Group. A Program Working Group must consist of a minimum of three people with teaching or research expertise in the subject area. If a new program is entirely discipline-based, at least one additional member from another discipline with teaching or research expertise in the subject area or related area should be added. The composition of a Program Working Group must be approved by the Dean before it submits any proposals to any approval body.
- 1.3. With the assistance of the Program Development Coordinator and in consultation with appropriate academic units and Dean(s), the Program Working Group will develop and approve a Concept Paper.
- 1.4. The Concept Paper is presented to the Dean for review and recommendation to Faculty Council.
- 1.5. Upon approval at Faculty Council(s), the program proposed in the Concept Paper is included in the Faculty's submission to the Education Plan, and the Program Working Group will develop the Program Proposal.
- 1.6. The Program Proposal and draft calendar copy are submitted on the appropriate template to the Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC) Assistant for Campus-Wide Consultation for a minimum of four weeks. Developers must respond to all comments submitted during the Campus-Wide Consultation process and include this response in the submission to Faculty Council(s).
- 1.7. Upon completion of the Campus-Wide Consultation, the Program Working Group submits the Program Proposal, accompanied by responses to comments submitted during Campus-Wide Consultation, to the appropriate Faculty Council(s) for approval. Upon approval of the program by the Faculty Council(s), the development of the program budget is overseen by the Dean(s) and the Program Development Coordinator.
- 1.8. The Program Proposal is submitted to UEC for review and recommendation to Senate, and for information to Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APPC). The Program Budget is sent to the Senate Budget Committee for review and recommendation to Senate and for information to APPC.
- 1.9. Programs recommended by UEC will be reviewed and prioritized by the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee.
- 1.10. Upon Senate approval, the Program Proposal is sent to the Program Development Coordinator for review and submission through the Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic to external agencies (e.g., Ministry or accreditation bodies) for approval.

2. Changes to an Existing Program Approval Process

- 2.1. The process for changing a program, generally, begins with the relevant academic unit or Program Committee, in consultation with the Dean(s) responsible. The changes and the rationale for the changes are outlined. NOTE: If the program changes require the approval of the Ministry, a full Program Proposal must be prepared and go through the process outlined for new programs.
- 2.2. Upon approval by the department/school or Program Committee, the proposed changes and rationale are submitted to the UEC Assistant for Campus-Wide Consultation for feedback from the support areas and other academic units for a minimum of four weeks. Developers must respond to all comments submitted during the Campus-Wide Consultation process and include this response in the submission to Faculty Council(s) and UEC.
- 2.3. After Campus-Wide Consultation, the revised program, accompanied by responses to comments submitted in the Campus-Wide Consultation, is submitted for approval to the appropriate Faculty Council(s).
- 2.4. Upon approval by the Faculty Council(s), the development of the program budget is overseen by the Dean(s) and the Program Development Coordinator.
- 2.5. The outline of changes and Program Budget Analysis are sent to the UEC Assistant for dissemination to the appropriate Senate standing committees (i.e., UEC and Senate Budget Committee) for review and recommendation to Senate.

APPENDIX C: UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM APPROVAL RESOURCES

This appendix includes the following resources:

[Program Approval Part I: Academic Merit](#)

[Program Approval Part II: Alignment with UFV Values and Priorities](#)

[Program Calendar Copy Template](#)

[Budget Analysis Template](#)

[Concept Paper Template](#)

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Program Approval Part I: Academic Merit

The following is a subject-heading summary of what is required in ‘*Part I: Academic Merit*’ of a new undergraduate degree program proposal. These requirements are set by the Province, and reflect the standards of the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education.

‘*Part II: Alignment with UFV Values and Priorities*’ requires other information related directly to UFV strategic directions. A Budget Analysis (at the budget committee stage) and the Calendar Copy for the program will also be required, though not until the program proposal is complete. These templates are also included in this appendix.

When the proposal goes to the Ministry for approval, several sections are added to this document relating to UFV policies, facilities, faculty credentials, and other matters. The Program Development Coordinator will assist developers in adding these components and preparing the final document for external approvals.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. An overview of the organization’s history, mission and goals (provided by the Program Development Office).
- 1.2. Proposed credential to be awarded, including the level and category of the degree and the specific discipline or field of study (guidelines on the naming of degrees provided by the Program Development Office, and set out by the Ministry)
- 1.3. Location
- 1.4. Faculty(s) or school(s) offering the proposed degree program
- 1.5. Anticipated program start date
- 1.6. Anticipated completion time in years or semesters
- 1.7. A summary of the proposed program, including
 - Aims goals and objectives of the proposed program
 - Anticipated contribution of the proposed program to the mandate and strategic plan of the institution
 - Linkages between the learning outcomes and the curriculum design, an indication of whether work experience is required, and if so, a description of the purpose and role of work experience within the program
 - Potential area/sectors of employment for graduates and/or opportunities for further study (this section should be supplemented by a more detailed appendix)
 - Delivery methods
 - Program strengths
 - An overview of the level of support and recognition from other post-secondary institutions, and relevant regulatory or professional bodies, where applicable, and plans for admission and transfer within the BC post-secondary education system
 - Related programs in the institution or other British Columbia post-secondary institutions. Indicate rationale for duplication, if any (this section should be supplemented by an appendix)
- 1.8. Name, title, phone number and e-mail address of the institutional contact person in case more information is required.

2. Degree Level Standard

Developers should consult the Ministry guidelines for determining the standards which must be met to satisfy each of the following criteria. They are available from the Program Development Office.

2.1. Depth and breadth of knowledge

- Key assumptions, methodologies and applications of a field of knowledge
- Understand range of fields within the field of practice and how these intersect with related fields
- Ability to gather, review, evaluate and interpret information, compare merits of alternative hypotheses, create options
- Engage in independent research in a supervised context
- Critical thinking and analytic skills
- Ability to apply learning

2.2. Knowledge of methodologies and research

- Understand methods of inquiry or creative activity to evaluate different approaches to problems, devise arguments
- Describe history of advanced scholarship in the area

2.3. Communication Skills (accuracy, reliability, to range of audiences, informed by key concepts)

2.4. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge (limits to own knowledge and ability, appreciation of ambiguity and uncertainty)

2.5. Professional Capacity/Autonomy

- Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement
- Initiative, personal responsibility, accountability
- Work effectively with others
- Behave with academic integrity

3. Credential Recognition and Nomenclature

Evidence must be provided that employers and other post-secondary institutions will recognize the credential. The name of the program and its content must match. Ministry guidelines on the naming of degrees must be satisfied.

4. Curriculum/Program Content

The criteria in this section are complex and lengthy, and developers should refer to the Ministry guidelines for details. In general, this section requires that *“the management structures and methods of the program are well-defined and permit delivery of the quality of education necessary for students to attain the learning outcomes. The institution must demonstrate that the program in both subject matter and learning outcome standards offers an education of sufficient depth and breadth and rigour to be comparable to similar programs at the proposed degree level offered by recognized provincial, national and international post-secondary institutions. The curriculum must be current and reflect the state of knowledge in the field, or fields in the case of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs.”*

Calendar descriptions and complete course outlines must be included in the Ministry application, but can be reduced to live links to the UFV online calendar in the internal proposal. A sample program grid for

each semester should be included. Academic policies related to standards must be included in the Ministry proposal, but are not necessary for the internal proposal.

5. Learning Methodologies/Program Delivery

In this section every method of delivery used in the program should be described, including distance education, practicums, internships, labs, independent study, and studio work. Developers should refer to the Ministry standards. While it is necessary to include all relevant policies and facilities descriptions in the Ministry document, these may be omitted in the internal proposal. They will be added by the Program Development office. If program-specific policies need to be included, please include them here.

6. Admission and Transfer/Residency

All requirements and processes must be described, showing a willingness to provide flexible admission, PLAR, and transfer credit.

7. Faculty

Demonstrate that UFV has the human resources necessary, or has a plan to hire them; describe faculty qualifications, research activity and scholarly output. Policies related to hiring, academic freedom, evaluation, probation, research ethics, professional development, and other related issues will be required for final submission to the Ministry, though not for the internal proposal, and will be provided by the Program Development Office.

Developers should refer to the Ministry standards for this section for further details on the standards that must be met. Full faculty CV's and all relevant policies must be provided for the Ministry proposal, but may be omitted for the internal proposal. For the internal proposal, however, a summary of the credentials of the faculty involved should be provided.

An implementation plan for the program should be included here, including all required faculty and staff over a five year period.

8. Program Resources

In this section, proposers must describe all resources the institution has to mount the program, and all those which must be acquired. Library resources, facilities, equipment, labs, databases, computing, shops, and agreements for work-study must be considered. There must be a commitment both to provide and sustain these resources in the future. An appendix should include a detailed library collections analysis and description of the facilities and other resources required. This section, along with the five-year plan for implementation, will form the basis of the Budget Analysis which will accompany this proposal to the Senate.

9. Program Consultation

The developers must show that they have consulted widely with appropriate individuals and institutions in the development of the proposal. Letters of support and results of academic reviews should be included in an appendix, with a description of how critiques were considered and what was done to address them. Evidence that the credential will result in employment should be included here as well if employers have had a role in developing the program. Developers should take note that Conflict of Interest guidelines exist in relation to who is consulted about the quality of the curriculum, and check with the Program Development Office for further information.

10. Program Review and Assessment

This section will be provided by the Program Development Office.

Program approval Part II: Alignment with UFV Values and Priorities

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Budget Analysis Template

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Program Calendar Copy Template

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Concept Paper Template

The concept paper is not required to be a definitive statement of the curriculum of a new program, but rather a general indication of the thinking of the development group on some key issues. It provides the basis for inclusion in the education plan, and the basis for the approval of a Curriculum Working Group. Approval of a concept paper means only that a group has a mandate to continue to develop a program, not that it will ultimately be approved by Senate. It should include the following elements, and any other issues the group wishes to include, and should not exceed three pages in length.

- a. Name of program
- b. Credential to be awarded
- c. Program Length or number of credits (or range)
- d. Audience (type of student served) and benefits to this audience
- e. Relationship to local communities and their needs
- f. Relationship to UFV Strategic Plan and Faculty priorities, including possibilities for Indigenous and international content
- g. Relationship to existing programs at UFV
- h. Anticipated links to further study, and to employment (type of graduate or professional school; kinds of jobs a graduate would be prepared for)
- i. Delivery methods
- j. Possible resource needs (labs, faculty, space, technical support)
- k. Suggested Curriculum Working Group members and the reasons for their selection. Include brief biographies and credentials