
POLICY TITLE: PROGRAM AND COURSE APPROVAL

AUTHORITY Board of Governors, on advice of Senate
PRIMARY CONTACT Vice-President (Academic) and Provost
RELATED POLICIES

POLICY

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

The process includes various consultations and approvals by academic units, administrators, the Senate and its committees, and the Board of Governors.

DEFINITIONS

1. **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, major, honours, degree, specialization, option and concentration.
2. **Undergraduate** – “Undergraduate” refers to continuing studies, vocational, developmental, and credit courses with course numbers below 600; and to certificate, diploma and degree programs with all required courses numbered below 600.
3. **Graduate** – “Graduate” refers to any program that requires at least one course at the graduate level, a course numbered 600 or above.
4. **Major Changes** – A major change to a course occurs when there is a significant modification to course objectives, learning outcomes, course descriptions, credit value, co- and pre-requisites, course title, course name or number. A major change to a program occurs when a change triggers any external review; any change to structure; any change to admission or entrance requirements; any change to graduation, residency, or continuation requirements; or any change to the duration, philosophy, or direction of a program.
5. **Minor Changes** – Any change which is not major, as described above.
6. **Program Proposal** – The detailed description for a new program using the Template for the Development of Program Proposals found in Appendix C.

PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

The process to approve programs and courses shall include a series of structured consultations and approvals that give the UFV community ample 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 mission, goals, and mandate. The general process is outlined below. The details of these processes are outlined in appendices “A” and “B” of this policy.

Each year, senior administration will develop an annual Education Plan detailing UFV’s academic objectives and strategic activities that contain recommendations to the Senate regarding program development and new programs for the coming academic year. The Education Plan will be reviewed by the Senate with a recommendation to the Board of Governors for its consideration and approval.

Two standing committees of the Senate, the Undergraduate Program Advisory Committee (UPAC), and the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) have a mandate to review program proposals, respectively at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and make recommendations to the Senate. UPAC and GSC will review and approve all course proposals and report to the Senate through their minutes or record of decisions.

Undergraduate Program Advisory Committee (UPAC)

The responsibilities of the UPAC are to:

1. Ensure that undergraduate programs and courses have been examined by all the relevant parties and that all relevant consultations have occurred.
2. Review all proposals for new and revised undergraduate programs and courses at UFV for academic quality.
3. Make recommendations to the Senate on the approval of any new undergraduate certificate, diploma, and degree programs to be implemented at UFV.
4. Make recommendation to the Senate on major changes to existing undergraduate programs at UFV and approve minor changes to existing undergraduate programs at UFV.
5. Approve all new undergraduate courses and all major changes to existing undergraduate courses. Minor changes will be handled by departments through the review process for courses.
6. Ensure that undergraduate courses and programs are reviewed regularly at UFV.
7. Make recommendations to the Senate on issues referred to it by the Senate.

The membership of the UPAC shall be as follows:

	Term
1 Faculty representative from each faculty division	2 years – (staggered)
2 Faculty (at large)	2 years – (staggered)
1 Senate representative (may be one of the above)	1 year
Director of Student Services or designate	no term
Registrar or designate	no term

Vice President, Academic or designate

no term

Total: 10 (or 9) members

The UPAC Chair and Vice Chair will be elected from among its members. The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected annually.

Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

The Graduate Studies Committee provides the Senate with advice and recommendations concerning graduate program development, and policies and standards relating to graduate studies. The responsibilities of the GSC with respect to program and course approval are to:

1. Review all proposals for new and revised graduate programs at UFV for academic quality, and make recommendations to the Senate.
2. Review and make recommendation to the Senate on proposed major changes to existing graduate programs at UFV and approve minor changes.

Review and approve all graduate courses and all changes to graduate courses.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Course Approval Process

COURSE APPROVAL PROCESS

1. Departmental/School Approval

The process for introducing new courses or for changing existing courses generally begins with discussions at the departmental/school level. If there is no department/school responsible for the course, a committee focused on the relevant discipline(s) and recognized by UPAC will serve instead. The following steps should guide these discussions:

- The department/school should articulate the educational needs a new course is intended to meet. The department/school should look at existing courses to see whether there is already a course that might meet the need. If one is found, consultations should be held with the department offering the course to see whether arrangements can be made to have the course available for the required number of students. If there is no existing course that could reasonably meet the needs of the program students, development of a new course can proceed. If the content of a new course overlaps significantly with or is entirely within another department's area of expertise, consultations should be held with that department early in the process.
- In the case of a graduate course, proposed changes to graduate courses must be approved by the Graduate Program Committee.

2. Consultation with Supporting Areas

Proposals for new courses/course changes must be forwarded to the Library, Educational Advising, the Registrar, Financial Aid and ITS (if applicable). A response will be required from each of these areas before the proposal will be forwarded to UPAC or GSC for consideration.

3. Dean's Approval

Approval must be secured from the Dean(s) who has (have) budgetary authority for the course.

4. Curriculum Committee or Graduate Program Committee Approval

In the case of an undergraduate course, the relevant curriculum committee must approve the proposal before it may proceed to the UPAC agenda.

In the case of a graduate level course, the Graduate Program Committee must review and make recommendations on all proposals to the Graduate Studies Committee.

5. Additional Consultation – Undergraduate Studies

The submission will be posted for academic departments, students and other UCFV areas for feedback. Departments potentially affected by a new course/course change should be prompted to respond. The comments will be gathered by the UPAC assistant and forwarded to UPAC with the submission.

6. UPAC or GSC Approval

In the case of undergraduate programs, UPAC will review and approve new course and course change proposals.

In the case of graduate programs, GSC will review and approve new course and course change proposals.

Appendix B: Program Approval Process

Program Approval Process

A. New Program Proposals

1. Ideas for New Programs

After the necessary initial internal and external consultations have taken place, ideas for program proposals should be submitted to the Dean of the faculty for support (or Deans when more than one faculty is involved). In the case of graduate studies, the ideas should also be supported by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

2. Addition to the Education Plan

Once supported by the Dean(s), the idea will be included in the Education Plan.

3. Creation of the Curriculum Committee or Graduate Program Committee

Each undergraduate program proposal will be assigned to a curriculum committee. Curriculum committees will consist of a minimum of 3 members, including representation from appropriate departments other than the department primarily responsible for the program. The composition of the committee is to be approved by the Dean(s).

For each graduate program proposal, a graduate program committee will be formed by the department(s)/school(s) involved. The composition of the committee is to be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

4. Development of a Program Proposal

A program proposal will be developed by the curriculum committee or graduate program committee. The program proposal must follow the “Template for the Development of Program Proposals” (see: Appendix C).

Proposals, in particular proposed calendar copy, must be forwarded to the Library, Educational Advising, the Registrar, Financial Aid and ITS for comment at a time when these comments can be incorporated into the proposal.

5. Proposal Submitted to Dean for Approval

When the proposal has been fully developed and approved by the relevant curriculum committee(s), it should be submitted for approval to the Dean of the Faculty (or Deans when more than one faculty is involved). In the case of a graduate program proposal, the proposal must also be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

6. Program Proposal to UPAC or GSC for Approval

Program proposals for undergraduate programs presented to UPAC must be accompanied by the official Course Outline Information forms. These forms should contain details in the following areas as required by the Ministry: course description, learning outcomes, credits/hours, pre/co-requisites, PLAR, general evaluation scheme, and general delivery scheme in relation to meeting course outcomes.

Before consideration by UPAC a proposal will be posted for academic departments, students and other UFV areas for optional feedback. Departments potentially affected should be prompted to respond. The comments will be gathered by the UPAC assistant and forwarded to UPAC with the submission.

UPAC will make an overall recommendation to the Senate based on the program proposal.

In the case of a graduate program proposal, the proposal must be reviewed and approved by GSC before it is submitted to the Senate.

7. Program Proposal to the Senate for Approval

8. Program Proposal to Board for Approval

9. Submission of Program Proposal for external review and approval as required.

B. Changes to Programs

All program changes must be approved by the same process used for course approvals except major changes that require Senate approval and may require external approval. If a change to a program triggers an external review, then the change will be considered a new program proposal.

Appendix C: Template for the Development of New Program Proposals

There are three components to a new program proposal: 1. Academic Merit; 2. Importance to the University; and, 3. Implementation.

1. Academic Merit

- 1.1. Quality in terms of accepted criteria of academic, professional and/or occupational merit.
 - 1.1.1. Degree level standard

- 1.1.2. Credential Recognition and Nomenclature
- 1.1.3. Curriculum/Program Content
- 1.1.4. Learning Methodologies/Program Delivery
- 1.1.5. Admission and Transfer/Residency
- 1.1.6. Faculty
- 1.1.7. Program Resources
- 1.1.8. Program Consultation
- 1.1.9. Program Review and Assessment
- 1.2. Originality, particularly in relationship to academic programs offered by other universities in British Columbia.
 - 1.2.1. Verify that there is no unnecessary duplication with existing programs at UFV and other institutions.
- 1.3. Fit with faculty, school, and/or departmental priorities and stated goals in teaching and research.
- 1.4. Alignment with existing academic strengths.
- 1.5. Potential to foster and facilitate interdisciplinary and inter-institutional connections.
- 1.6. Potential to stimulate the development of centres of excellence in teaching and research.

2. Importance to the University

- 2.1. Relationship to the university's strategic directions and stated mission in teaching and research.
 - 2.1.1. Fit with institution mandate and education plan.
- 2.2. Relevance to external communities (regional, provincial, national and international) strategic needs and aspirations.
- 2.3. Potential to attract new students and faculty to the university.
- 2.4. Effects on current student patterns of enrolment within the university.
 - 2.4.1. Template: Student Demand
- 2.5. Potential to interest students not previously attracted to the university or underrepresented in the university.
- 2.6. Potential to interest faculty and staff not previously attracted to the university or underrepresented in the university.
- 2.7. Potential to offer research opportunities for students in the program.
- 2.8. Potential to generate research opportunities for faculty.
- 2.9. Prospective employment and/or post-graduate opportunities for students in the program.
 - 2.9.1. Template: Student Demand
 - 2.9.2. Template: Labour Market Demand

3. Implementation

- 3.1. Affordability in terms of the existing finances of the home academic unit (faculty, school, department).
 - 3.1.1. Program Resources
- 3.2. Ability of current faculty and staff to implement the new program within existing resources and facilities.
- 3.3. Estimates for both start-up and predicted on-going costs during the initial five years of implementation:
 - 3.3.1. new faculty and/or staff and strategies for their recruitment and retention;
 - 3.3.2. new and/or redeveloped space/facilities;
 - 3.3.3. new and/or redeveloped infrastructure facilities, such as equipment and furnishings;
 - 3.3.4. additional library acquisitions and information resources;
 - 3.3.5. additional instructional technology and software;
 - 3.3.6. specialized training programs;
 - 3.3.7. advertising and recruitment.

- 3.4. Potential for new or off-setting revenue sources, such as full-cost tuition and fees; overhead costs or levies; government strategic funding envelopes; external funding agencies and organizations.
- 3.5. Comparison of proposed program costs relative to similar programs delivered through comparable and/or alternative means. (For example only: on-site compared with online delivery, or on-site compared with cooperative education.)
- 3.6. Identified strategies for student recruitment and projected student numbers in the first five years of implementation. These may include specialized access programs, and projected associated costs.
- 3.7. Identified strategies for the provision of financial assistance to students. This may include awards and/or bursaries or work-study types of programs.
- 3.8. Identified strategies for student retention and projected rates of retention, during the initial five years of implementation.

Program Development Process

