Concept Paper Template and Guidelines for New Degree Programs

*The concept paper serves as an indication of a program working group’s (PWG) initial thinking on key issues related to the development of a proposed program. This template should be used for all new degree programs, (e.g., Bachelor of Media Arts, Major in Computing Science).*

*Please consult the Program Development and Quality Assurance office* [*website*](http://www.ufv.ca/pdo/) *for additional information and resources.*

***Maximum Length****: 4000 words (including appendices, if required).*

Summary Description of Program

1. Credential to be awarded
2. Number of credits
3. Program length (in years or semesters)[[1]](#endnote-1)
4. Projected start date
5. Administrative responsibility
   1. Name the faculty or college that will have administrative responsibility for the program.[[2]](#endnote-2)
6. Program summary:
   1. Brief statement describing program goals and how they will provide social and/or economic benefit for students, and for the people of British Columbia;
   2. Program learning outcomes;[[3]](#endnote-3)
   3. Brief description of proposed curriculum and/or program concentrations.

Student Demand and Outcomes

1. Benefit to Students
   1. Explain how the program learning outcomes will support students in meeting UFV’s institutional learning outcomes.
   2. Briefly identify the anticipated employment, professional and/or educational goals available for graduates of the program.
   3. Explain how the outcomes provide the skills, knowledge, and attributes graduates will need to pursue their employment, professional and/or educational goals.
2. Student Demand
   1. Identify the students the program will most likely attract, and indicate where the target students will most likely come from.
   2. Provide an estimate of the annual program enrolments needed to sustain the program.
   3. Outline a plan for gathering reliable evidence to demonstrate student demand.

Institutional Mandate / Capacity

1. Institutional Mandate and Strategic Priorities
   1. Provide a brief explanation of how the proposed program will support UFV’s mandate to serve the post-secondary educational needs of the Fraser Valley region.
   2. Identify how the proposed program will support UFV’s current academic and strategic plans.
      1. Consult UFV’s key planning documents (i.e. [Vision, Mission, Values](https://www.ufv.ca/about/vision-mission-values/), Integrated Strategic Plan (forthcoming), [Education Plan, 2016-2020 and Goals](http://www.ufv.ca/media/assets/provost/education-plans/Learning-Everywhere-The-UFV-Education-Plan,-2016-2020---2016-05-09.pdf)) and explain which institutional priorities the program will support.
2. Institutional Capacity
   1. Faculty Capacity
      1. Identify the full-time and part-time permanent faculty members who will be responsible for delivering the new program, and briefly outline their qualifications for offering the proposed program.
      2. Identify any gaps in the faculty expertise or numbers that will need to be filled to offer the proposed program, and indicate how the program area intends to address the gaps.
   2. Administration
      1. Identify the administrative support the program will require to function effectively and efficiently (e.g. staff and/or technical support, program director/chair, etc.).
      2. Briefly outline any new resources that may be required to administer the program.
   3. Library Resources
      1. Indicate whether existing library resources will be sufficient to support the program, and if not, what new resources will need to be acquired.[[4]](#endnote-4)
   4. Physical Space and Equipment
      1. Identify the space and equipment requirements for the proposed program. Outline any needs for additional physical space (e.g. classrooms, studios, laboratories, offices, etc.); reconfiguration of existing space; and/or acquisition of new equipment or technologies (e.g. computers, software, specialized tools or instruments, etc.).

Social and Economic Benefit

1. Program Focus
   1. Identify whether the new program will focus primarily on meeting social benefits or economic benefits.
2. Social Benefit
   1. Briefly describe the potential social, cultural, regional, community, environmental, institutional and/or intellectual benefits of the proposed program.
3. Economic Benefit
   1. Briefly describe the direct and/or indirect economic or industrial benefits of the proposed program to the student, the community, region or province.
   2. Briefly identify the provincial labour market needs the proposed program will meet. List applicable NOC codes, and identify the minimal level of credential required to gain employment in the occupations most relevant to the program.
   3. Briefly outline the plan for consultation with relevant industry or community groups, potential employers, and/or professional bodies.

System Coordination

1. Internal Context
   1. Describe how the proposed program builds on and/or complements existing UFV programs, or provide a brief rationale for establishing a completely new program.
2. System Context
   1. Briefly indicate what differentiates the proposed program from all other related programs in the province, or provide a brief rationale explaining why UFV should establish a new program similar to others currently available in the province (particularly in the Lower Mainland/Southwest region).
3. Consultation
   1. Briefly outline the plan for consultation both internally, with areas relevant to the proposed program, and externally, with other institutions in the province that offer similar or related programs.
   2. Indicate if opportunities for collaboration and/or sharing of resources exist, whether internally with other programs at UFV, or externally with other institutions or organizations.

Program Working Group[[5]](#endnote-5)

1. List the members of the PWG and the reasons for their selection.
2. Include brief biographies and CVs for PWG members in an appendix.

Timetable for Development, Review/Approval, and Implementation

1. Provide timelines for development, review/approval, and implementation of the program.

*By requesting approval of a concept paper, you are notifying the institution of your commitment to develop the proposed program, and to do so in a timely fashion in order to allow for budget and enrolment planning. The Program Development and Quality Assurance office will work with the dean and the program working group to set a realistic date when the program will be launched. This will include a reasonable timetable for development of the full program proposal, internal and external review and approval, and implementation. The latter should take into account, for instance, inclusion in the Academic Calendar after approval, timetabling of courses needed for the program, advertising and marketing, and recruitment cycle for International students (October to May).*

*Significant delays in meeting key landmarks (for instance, entering the review and approval stage of the process) could lead to being asked to submit a revised timetable or withdraw the program from the planning process. The annual Program Report and Plan will include status reports on programs in development.*

1. All programs are expected to be structured to ensure timely completion by students (e.g., 4 years for a 120-credit degree program, or 2 years for a 60-credit diploma program). Completion time needs to be indicated only if it is a defining feature of the proposed program, for instance:

   for a program primarily aimed at international students, a minimum length of time might be advisable to facilitate immigration;

   some programs may be conceived to be delivered exclusively, or primarily, in an accelerated format;

   programs that build on an earlier credential, in a laddering model, would have a shorter completion time than suggested by the number of credits (“two semesters, post-certificate”). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. In the case that a program draws resources from more than one Faculty/College beyond the provision of service courses, the Deans involved will decide who will assume administrative responsibility for the program andwhether administrative responsibility will be shared by more than one Faculty/College. The Faculty/College and Dean that has administrative responsibility will have approval authority at the relevant stages of the program approval process. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Even though the learning outcomes presented in the concept paper are likely to be refined as the curriculum structure and content take shape, they should inform the design of a program at the outset. Given the employment, professional, educational goals to be met by the program, what skills, knowledge, and attributes will graduates of this program possess upon completion of the program? (Phrase your program outcomes as “Upon completion of this program, graduates will be able to: …”). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. A full Library Assessment for the proposed program will need to be completed for the Stage 1 and budget analysis; however, if the PWG anticipates that the program will require the acquisition of new resources beyond what would fall within the area’s annual library allocation, then requesting a full Library Assessment at the concept paper stage is strongly advised. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. The PWG should consist of a minimum of three faculty members with teaching and/or research expertise in the subject area. Normally, PWG members should be permanent UFV faculty members. If a new program is entirely discipline-based, at least one additional member from another discipline with teaching and/or research expertise in the subject area or a related area should be included. Note that only approved PWGs can develop and present Concept Papers for approval. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)