

**PROGRAM APPROVAL POLICY  
FOR NEW AND REVISED CREDIT PROGRAMS**

<b>Policy Name:</b> Program Approval Policy for New and Revised Credit Programs	<b>Overseen by:</b> Vice President, Academic	<b>Effective Date:</b> November 2013	<b>Related Policies:</b> Curriculum Development and Approval, Program Advisory Committees, Associated Studies, Board Policy B01.00.01, Administrative Policy A17.01.01
<b>Category:</b> Education	<b>Approved by:</b> Education Council	<b>Review Date:</b> November 2020	

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**Purpose**

This policy ensures all credit programs, whether new or revised, will further the goals of Douglas College, produce student outcomes of appropriate standards, and meet relevant educational objectives and current guidelines of the Ministry responsible for Advanced Education.

**Policy Statement**

The development, revision, and approval of programs at Douglas College will follow a rational and consistent process to ensure that programs are both educationally viable and administratively sustainable. This policy governs internal College approval processes. Program developers should be aware of any external (accrediting body or Ministry responsible for Advanced Education) requirements and processes.

**DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF NEW CREDIT PROGRAMS**

Program developers are expected to consult all affected departments, programs and service areas early in the program development process. This consultation should include Deans and

faculty members in departments that would offer curriculum included in the program or where there is jurisdictional overlap or potential for laddering. Curriculum developers, in consultation with the Dean, may choose to amend curriculum or full program proposals after receiving input from affected Faculty Education Committees (FECs) but are not required to do so. Consultations should occur before a full program proposal is referred to the relevant FEC for review.

#### **A. Concept Statement**

1. A concept statement may be developed by an individual or group.
2. The developer(s) of the concept statement will present it to the appropriate FEC for review and to the appropriate Dean for review and determination of fit with Faculty strategic directions. The appropriate FEC is the one that would offer the majority of the courses in the program. A concept statement for an interdisciplinary program must be reviewed by all relevant FECs and responsible Deans.
3. The Dean will present the concept statement to the Vice President's Academic Council (VPAC) for review. VPAC will determine responsibility for further program development and a consultation process, including referral to the Program Consultation Committee if desired. VPAC will determine whether evidence of student demand and/or labour market demand is required before proceeding with program development.
4. After review by VPAC, the concept statement will be referred to the Senior Management Team (SMT) and to Education Council for discussion. SMT will evaluate the concept statement in terms of its fit with the strategic plan and determine whether further development is warranted. Education Council will make recommendations to developers about educational issues.

#### **B. Assessment of Student and Labour Market Demand**

1. The Dean will appoint an individual or group to proceed with program development; these may be faculty members or external experts as appropriate. The program developers will conduct, or provide information to assist others in conducting, an assessment of student and labour market demand as required by VPAC.
2. The Dean and a program developer will present the results of the assessment to VPAC for review and approval. VPAC will confirm if a proposed program can be supported administratively and operationally, and will refer the supporting evidence to SMT for approval.
3. SMT will review the evidence of student and labour market demand. If rejected by SMT, the proposal may be revised and re-submitted, held to be re-submitted

at a later date, or dropped. The program developers, in consultation with the Dean responsible, will decide which action is to be taken after considering feedback from SMT. Any revisions made to the proposal will be re-submitted to VPAC and SMT for approval.

### **C. Full Program Proposal**

1. The program developers will prepare a detailed curricular framework. The framework will list all required courses and electives, provide a brief description of all new courses developed for the program, and identify any academic requirements that differ from those in College-wide educational policies, such as a higher passing grade. When appropriate, the Dean will strike or expand a Program Advisory Committee to provide advice on the implementation and ongoing operation of the program as specified in the Program Advisory Committee Policy.
2. The program developers will write a full program proposal and complete cross-College consultations following the procedure approved by Education Council.
3. A program developer will present the program proposal to the appropriate FEC(s) for review, and then to the Dean for approval.
4. The Dean and a program developer will present the program proposal and a budget summary to VPAC for review. VPAC may request revisions to the program proposal or recommend approval to SMT. A recommendation for approval by VPAC indicates that the program meets the educational standards and strategic goals of the College and can be supported administratively and operationally.
5. Following VPAC approval, the program developers will submit documents to Education Council and its subcommittees (if required). These submissions should be made in the same month, so that they come to Education Council for approval at the same meeting.
  - a) Admissions requirements: to the Education Council Standing Committee on Admissions and Language Competency for review and recommendation, where they differ from the standard College requirements.
  - b) The program proposal: to Education Council with a request that it be placed on an Education Council meeting agenda as a Notice of Motion for Approval. Approval of a program at Education Council confirms that the proposed program meets the educational standards of the College and is consistent with all College educational policies. If a program proposal is rejected by Education Council, it may be revised by the program

developers in consultation with the Dean. Any revisions made to the proposal must be re-submitted to VPAC and Education Council for approval.

- c) Any new curriculum guidelines developed for the program: to the Curriculum Subcommittee of Education Council for review and recommendation. Curriculum guidelines for any new Associated Studies courses may be submitted after the full program proposal is approved at Education Council.
6. The Vice President, Academic will refer program proposals that have been approved by Education Council and VPAC to SMT for review and approval. Approval by SMT indicates that the program is sustainable and is consistent with College strategic directions and planning priorities.
7. When an Education Council-approved program proposal requires a new credential, Education Council and the Vice President, Academic will recommend the new credential to the College Board for approval.
8. When a program requires approval by the Ministry responsible for Advanced Education and the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB), the Vice President, Academic will inform Education Council when such approval is granted or denied, and report on the reasons for a denial.

## **REVISION OF CREDIT PROGRAMS**

[**NOTES:** Revisions to curriculum guidelines for individual courses must follow the process outlined in the Curriculum Development and Approval Policy. Revisions to Bachelor's Degrees may require DQAB approval.

When a program is to be cancelled, Administrative Policy A17.01.01, Program Cancellation, will apply. In some cases, to be determined by the College Board, Board Policy B01.00.01, Planned Changes to the Organization, Structure and Operation of Educational Programs and Services may apply.]

1. The Dean will strike an ad hoc faculty committee to develop a proposal for program revision, including the old and new curriculum frameworks, a detailed rationale for changes, and the effective date of the revision. When program revisions lead to changes in graduation requirements that are more restrictive, or result in the discontinuation of one or more courses required under any current student's **program start term**, the ad hoc committee will also be required to include a **student transition plan** for the corresponding **program start term(s)**.

2. The program developer will complete cross-College consultations following the procedures approved by Education Council. This consultation should include, as appropriate, external stakeholders, Program Advisory Committees, and departments that are affected by the revision (e.g. departments that offer an Associated Studies course affected by the revision).
3. The proposed program changes will be reviewed by the FEC and approved by the Dean of the Faculty delivering the program. Where a program is jointly offered by more than one Faculty, all involved FECs must review and Deans must approve the changes.
4. The Dean will consult with the Vice President, Academic to determine whether a program revision must be approved by VPAC. When there are major changes such as resource implications, significant changes to program outcomes, or a new credential name, the Dean will present details of the proposed program changes to VPAC for review and recommendation to SMT.
5. The program developers will forward the proposed program revision to Education Council with a request for Notice of Motion to Approve. With the agreement of the Dean and the Vice President, Academic, Education Council approval may be sought simultaneously with VPAC approval.
  - a) When program admission requirements change, the program developers will forward requested changes to the Education Council Standing Committee on Admissions and Language Competency for review and recommendation to Education Council.
  - b) When curriculum guideline revisions include major changes, the program developers will forward requested changes to the Education Council Curriculum Committee for review and recommendation to Education Council. Revised curriculum guidelines may be submitted to the Curriculum Committee after or at the same time as a proposal for program change is submitted to Education Council.
6. In the case of a major revision, the Vice-President, Academic will recommend approval to SMT following VPAC review and Education Council approval.
7. When revisions include a change in the credential name, Education Council and the Vice President, Academic will recommend the establishment of the new credential name and withdrawal of the old one to the College Board for approval.
8. Where a revision requires DQAB approval, the Vice President, Academic will inform the appropriate Dean(s), Education Council and SMT when that approval is granted or denied, and report on the reasons for a denial.

## **COURSE EQUIVALENCIES**

Programs or departments may identify courses offered by Douglas College that can be used as official equivalencies for courses in the curriculum framework approved by Education Council.

These courses must have very similar learning outcomes and will be listed in the calendar as equivalencies. New courses will be identified as equivalent to existing College courses as part of the curriculum approval process. Course equivalencies may or may not be reciprocal.

If a program or department wishes to identify existing courses as equivalent, the equivalency will be approved following the Curriculum Development and Approval process.

## **COURSE SUBSTITUTIONS**

Programs or departments may allow an individual student to substitute a course completed at Douglas College or another post-secondary institution for a program requirement even when there is no official equivalency, if the course has appropriately similar learning outcomes and the student has a sufficient academic or employment background to warrant the substitution. The Chair/Co-ordinator will grant approval of the substitution and notify the Dean and the Registrar's Office. Substitutions should not be unreasonably withheld and should be granted consistently. The Chair/Co-ordinator should consider the impact of such a substitution on the student's progress in the program (e.g. the need for prerequisite waivers). The Registrar may request that a Dean and Chair/Co-ordinator reconsider a decision about a substitution.

If a program or department wishes a substitution to apply to all students, it will establish a formal equivalency following the Curriculum Development and Approval process or, where the substitute course is from outside of Douglas College, grant appropriate transfer credit.

## APPENDIX: DEFINITIONS

### DEFINITIONS

#### Associated Studies

Associated Studies courses are supplied by one area in the college at the request of another area. Associated Studies may be of three types:

- **Open courses:** existing courses whose curriculum meets the educational needs of the requesting area.
- **Adapted courses:** sections of existing courses (where the course number remains unchanged) with some curriculum modifications to make readings, assignments, and, if applicable, modes of delivery relevant to the requesting area's curriculum and learning outcomes.
- **Exclusive courses:** courses designed specifically for a requesting area to meet an identified need for new curriculum.

#### Concept Statement

A concept statement provides a brief (five pages maximum) outline of the rationale for a new program, its relationship to the strategic directions of the College, and a tentative list of courses and admissions requirements. A concept paper for a bachelor's degree should include a brief summary of how the proposed curriculum meets degree-level standards. A concept statement is developed by an individual or group under the guidance of the relevant Dean.

#### Assessments of Labour Market and Student Demand

Assessments of Labour Market and Student Demand may be requested to demonstrate that a proposed program could compete in the post-secondary environment. These assessments normally require quantitative data from potential employers and current and prospective students. The assessment should also draw comparisons with existing programs in the province and build a case to demonstrate that Douglas College could sustain the proposed program within a competitive post-secondary environment. Letters of support from community partners, prospective employers, and students should not be solicited at this stage.

#### Curriculum Framework

The curriculum framework is a table showing all courses to be included in a program, including course sequencing, where prescribed. For a degree program, the table will list the program requirements to be included in the first two years of the program (specific courses and/or a laddering program) and in the final two years of the program, noting acceptable substitutions where applicable. Required courses should be distinguished from electives. Some guidelines may be attached to electives to ensure they meet program objectives for rigour (e.g. upper-

levels elective) or breadth (e.g. elective outside the Faculty). In addition, the curricular framework will include a brief description of the content to be covered in each required course or within a laddering program and a statement of how the overall program content meets any relevant accreditation or regulatory requirements.

### **Full Program Proposal**

A written submission outlining details of a proposed new program that includes a detailed curriculum framework and provides all information required by the Ministry responsible for Advanced Education.

### **Curriculum Guidelines**

Curriculum guidelines provide a detailed description of course content, objectives, prerequisites, methods of instruction and methods of evaluation. Curriculum guidelines must follow the development and approval process outlined in the Curriculum Development and Approval Policy.

### **Notice of Motion to Approve**

Formal first notice that a department is asking Education Council to consider a motion: in the context of this policy, motions will be to approve a new or revised program. Program developers and/or Deans will attend Education Council meetings to speak about their proposals/revisions.

### **Motions for Approval**

Final motions that lead to a vote. Motions to Approve are normally made at Education Council at the meeting subsequent to the meeting when Notice of Motion has been considered. Program developers and/or Deans are invited to speak to Education Council about their proposals.

### **Program Start Term**

The **program start term** for each individual student is established upon admission, re-admission, or approved declaration of program and determines program curriculum requirements in effect for each student.

### **Student Transition Plan**

A written plan that provides registered students in a program with their new graduation requirements to complete their program of study when program completion requirements change subsequent to their program start term.