

# THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



## OKANAGAN SENATE SECRETARIAT Enrolment Services Senate and Curriculum Services

Okanagan Campus  
University Centre · UNC 322  
3333 University Way  
Kelowna, BC · V1V 1V7  
Tel: (250) 807-9619 · Fax: (250) 807-8007  
[www.senate.ubc.ca](http://www.senate.ubc.ca)

### Curriculum Guidelines

This document is designed to aid Faculty Curriculum Chairs and others who complete and submit curriculum changes. For the full text of the Okanagan Senate Curriculum Guidelines please including forms and resources, please visit

<http://www.senate.ubc.ca/okanagan/curriculum.cfm>.

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**Note:** all proposed curriculum changes must be approved before they can be implemented, including:

- new programs
- program changes
- discontinuing existing programs
- new courses
- course changes (e.g.: new description, title, vectors, pre- and co-requisites credit value, grade type, etc.) and
- discontinuing existing courses.

*Where the word “program” is used, it is to be understood that this includes degrees, diplomas options, majors, concentrations, and any other sub-category that is recognized in the Academic Calendar or the Student Information System (SIS), or on a transcript or degree parchment.*

## “Major” vs. “Minor” Proposals

There is a division between “major” (**Category 1**) and “minor” (**Category 2**) curriculum proposals:

A **Category 1** proposal has one or more of the following characteristics:

- a new program
- a new course
- a substantive change to a course or program to the extent that the nature of the course or program is significantly changed
- a change to an existing course or program that affects faculties outside of the proposing faculty (such as a change to a service course)
- budgetary implications beyond the available resources of the proposing faculty
- the proposal is Category 1 in the opinion of the Senate Curriculum Committee.

A **Category 2** proposal is anything else, and includes but is not limited to:

- changes in course titles to clarify subject or reflect updates in the field
- changes to course description to clarify or reflect updates in the field
- changes to credit value (NB: extreme changes in credit value may be classified as Category 1 because of the assumed broad change in course content)
- changes to pre/co-requisites or vectors
- changes to subject heading or course numbers provided that new numbers still reflect scope and depth of course
- closing courses or programs.

### Steps before Submitting a Curriculum Proposal

Before a Category 1 or Category 2 proposal may be forwarded to the Senate Curriculum Committee, it must be approved by the proposing faculty using whatever procedures that faculty considers acceptable (a full faculty meeting, a faculty curriculum committee, a program committee, etc). Proposals without faculty approval will not be considered.

In the case of proposals affecting graduate programs, the proposing faculty is required to submit their proposal for consultation to the College of Graduate Studies *prior* to submitting their proposal to the Senate Curriculum Committee (just as is done for other faculty, budget, and library consultations). The proposing faculty must include the signed and completed Graduate Studies Consultation in their submission to the Curriculum Committee; proposals affecting graduate programs that do not include a consultation with Graduate Studies will *not* be considered by the Curriculum Committee.

**Note:** the Graduate Studies Council does not need to approve the proposal necessarily, but a signed form is required to demonstrate graduate consultation.

### **Timing and How to Submit a Proposal**

Proposals may only be submitted to the Senate Curriculum Committee by the chair of a faculty/college curriculum committee (or equivalent), or in their absence, the dean. All proposals must be submitted by the proposal submission deadlines, see <http://www.senate.ubc.ca/okanagan/proposal.cfm>.

All Category 1 and Category 2 proposals are to be emailed to Nathalie Hager [nathalie.hager@ubc.ca](mailto:nathalie.hager@ubc.ca). Paper copies are not required. Please note that with regards to Category 1 proposals, hard copies of the proposal itself, along with all supporting documentation, will need to be submitted due to the signature requirement on Library, Consultations, and Budget forms.

It is preferable for faculties to submit their proposals in waves rather than constant streams. Ideally, once or twice a term a curriculum report should be submitted that encompasses most of your proposals in one document. For ease of consideration, it is asked that such reports are divided into Category 1 and Category 2 sections, and further divided by internal unit (school, dept., etc). Of course, urgent proposals outside of term reports can still be considered.

**Note:** for programs to be implemented in September, implementation (including scheduling) is difficult if approval is not given by December of the previous year.

Please note that the Academic Calendar <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan> is updated several times a year (and is considered the official Academic Calendar at all times).

### **What is Required for the Consideration of a New Program?**

A new program requires the approval of the Senate and Board of Governors. In the case of a new program which is a “new degree,” approval of the Ministry of Advanced Education is also required. At present, the Ministry has defined a “degree” as a “recognition or implied recognition of academic achievement that is specified in writing to be an associate, baccalaureate, masters, doctoral or similar degree.”

For further clarity, this includes:

- a new major (although not a new honours program in a field in which a major currently offered)
- an interdisciplinary major for which the majority of the courses or are substantially altered to conform to the program’s objectives
- a joint major if one or more of the fields in the joint major is not already represented by an approved major
- revision of a program’s major objectives resulting in significant changes
- significant revision of a program that warrants credential renaming.

For a new program, University (Senate and Board) approval is required before the Ministry will consider the program. University approval requires:

- The standard Curriculum Proposal Form outlining program requirements
  - This includes (please note that this list is highly variable depending on how a program integrates with other programs or fits within a degree program; some information may not be necessary as it would be redundant.):
    - an introduction to the program
    - advising information
    - admission requirements, either as amendments to the undergraduate admissions or graduate admissions section, and/or as their own section (located here) as context requires
    - any academic regulations unique to the program
    - degree/program requirements, broken down on an yearly basis (tables are preferably if a program is highly structured)
    - program contact information.
- Any associated courses and their documentation (this are not necessarily requires for program approval, but they does aid greatly in understanding the nature of a new program).
- Consultations with affected or related units at the UBC Okanagan campus.
- Budget sign-off from your dean (or the Provost if the program cannot be supported with existing funding).

Once University approval has been given, a Notice of Intent and a full Program Proposal can be submitted to the Ministry along with the program requirements specified above.

More information on the Ministry approval process can be found at:

<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/degree-authorization/public/welcome.htm>.

Beyond approval of the Senate Curriculum Committee, a new program will also need its admissions requirements approved by the Senate Admissions and Awards Committee before the proposal may be submitted to Senate.

For undergraduate programs, please consult with Undergraduate Admissions at least one week before your proposal is to be considered by the Admissions and Awards Committee.

New programs may also need to be submitted the Council of Senates Budget Committee and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's Executive Committee for information.

### **What is Required for a New Course?**

New courses also require University approval, but do not require Ministry approval. For a new course to be considered, it requires:

- The standard curriculum change form outlining the course description for the UBC Okanagan Academic Calendar. This includes:
  - subject code and course number
  - course title
  - credit value (either a fixed value, or a variable where a slash [/] indicates an option and a hyphen [-] indicates a range. For variable credit courses, please specify a “D” after the range if it is to be set by the unit, or a “C” if it can be selected by the student in consultation with the unit)
  - vectors (if your unit uses vectors)
  - course description
  - pre/co-requisites
  - a notation if the course is marked on a pass/fail basis
  - a notation if the course can be taken more than once for credit.
  
- A course syllabus, outlining at least the following:
  - objectives and learning outcomes
  - format
  - schedule
  - requirements
  - evaluation criteria and grading, and
  - required and recommended readings
  
- Library Consultation, including the approval of the Library if the course cannot be supported with existing funding.
  
- Consultation with affected or related units.
  
- Budget sign-off from your dean (or the Provost if the program cannot be supported with existing funding).

### **What is Required for a Category 1 Change that is Not a New Course, or Program?**

Generally, only material relevant to the change is required. For instance, to change a service course used by three other faculties, consultation with those three faculties is required. To change the credit value of a course from 3 to 12 credits, a new syllabus outlining the added material, and a new library consultation (if the reading list has changed) would be required.

### **What is Required for a Category 2 Change?**

Category 2 changes, by virtue of generally having no increased resource implications outside of a faculty, do not require consultations, library, or budget approval. As such, the standard curriculum change form is all that is required unless the Senate Curriculum Committee requests further documentation.

### **What Should Course Description Say (and Not Say)?**

Course descriptions are the formal topics of a course. Ideally, they are specific enough to give students a general idea of the subject and focus of the course without being so specific as to require changes every year with new advances in the field of study or new instructors. The University can be held to teach what is in our course descriptions, so any material, which may be “variable” in a given year should be in a course syllabus, not the formal description. The use of “examples include” in course descriptions is discouraged except when necessary for clarity.

Course descriptions should be no longer than forty (40) words, and should be as brief as possible. Phrases such as “This course...,” “Students will learn...,” “An examination of...,” etc are unnecessary. If length is an issue, full sentences are also not required. Course descriptions are not intended to be summaries of syllabi.

If the content of a course is covered by its title, a course description may not be necessary, especially at the graduate level.

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For more information on the curriculum development process, please visit the Senate website <http://www.senate.ubc.ca/okanagan/curriculum.cfm> or contact:

Nathalie Hager, Associate Academic Governance Officer  
Okanagan Senate Secretariat  
Senate and Curriculum Services  
250-807-9619  
[nathalie.hager@ubc.ca](mailto:nathalie.hager@ubc.ca)