

# Approval Guidelines for Curriculum Committees



**Office of the Vice-Provost, Innovation in Teaching and Learning  
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# Approval Guidelines for Curriculum Committees

## CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Curriculum development support is available through the Office of the Provost and the School of Graduate Studies for programs undergoing major revisions, and for the creation of new programs. If your department is planning a major revision to your curriculum, or thinking about proposing a new program, please contact [curriculum@concordia.ca](mailto:curriculum@concordia.ca) to discuss options before you begin working on your dossier.

## RESOURCES FOR CURRICULUM INNOVATION AND NEW PROGRAMS

Departments and faculties may be interested in exploring the following topics as they make updates to current programs, and as they plan for the development of new programs:

- integration of applied skills and experiential learning opportunities such as capstone projects, work-integrated learning projects, internship and practicum courses, professional development, community engagement opportunities, and teaching assistantships.
- use of blended learning (blended learning combines in-class instruction with a variety of eLearning components) or online instruction, online delivery, etc.).
- use of flexible models, such as stackable degree structures. Stackable degree structures allow for students to start by taking a shorter credential, such as a certificate or diploma, as the first step work towards the completion of a full degree. This model allows the credits earned from the shorter credential, such as a certificate, to count towards the completion of a degree program.
- growing or strengthening links with community collaborators, external organizations, and other universities.
- collaboration with another department or faculty, team teaching, interdisciplinary exchanges, international components.
- integration of undergraduate and graduate research initiatives.

Additional resources can be found on the Office of the Provost and the Office of Experiential Learning websites:

- <https://www.concordia.ca/provost/resources/curriculum.html>
- <https://www.concordia.ca/academics/experiential-learning/faculty-staff.html>

## THE ROLE OF CURRICULUM APPROVAL COMMITTEES

The role of curriculum committees is to ensure that:

- the academic content and structure of the revised curriculum is aligned with the overarching program learning outcomes (see Curriculum Mapping Guidelines available on the [Office of the Provost](#) website).
- any units impacted by the changes have been consulted. In all cases, letters of support from impacted units must be included in the curriculum dossier.
- any resource implications have been considered, and the unit confirms that sufficient resources are in place to support the curriculum changes.
- changes are aligned with best practices within the field, within the unit and within the university, and adhere to internal and external processes and regulations

*It is important to ensure that any impacted units have been informed well in advance, to allow the necessary time for discussion before the dossier is submitted through the approval process.*

## **Regular Curriculum Changes**

### **Course Changes**

These may include changes to course titles, descriptions, credit values, subject codes and catalogue numbers, prerequisite, or notes.

When reviewing course changes, curriculum committees should ensure that:

- the appropriate prerequisites and exclusion notes are included in the course changes.
- if prerequisites are removed or modified, a pedagogical reason should be provided to explain how students are adequately prepared to succeed in the course.
- the progression of courses is clear to students, and that students complete all the prerequisite and required courses within the total allotment of the program requirements.
- if the level of the course has increased or decreased (from 300- to 400-level or vice versa), an explanation should be provided as to why the course is more suitable to be taught at a more or less advanced level, and the course rationale should describe how students will be adequately prepared to succeed. If the course is covering more complex concepts, the prerequisites may need to be adjusted to ensure that students have some foundational knowledge in the subject area.
- if the course credit value is increased, an explanation should be provided as to why additional course hours are required to cover the required subject matter.

### **New Courses**

When reviewing newly introduced courses, curriculum committees should ensure that:

- dossiers introducing new courses include an abridged syllabus in the supporting documentation, including the learning objectives for the course
- the dossier indicates how the courses are incorporated into the program requirements (either as elective or required courses), and whether the course is available to students in other programs or departments.
- academic units offering similar or related courses are informed about the creation of the new course.
- the rationale on the course change form indicates whether the course has been offered previously under a Special Topics code, and what the enrolment figures were.
- when Special Topics courses are converted to permanent courses, impacted units are informed of the creation of the new course.

Note that for the introduction of new internship courses, additional documentation is required. Please see the section on Experiential Learning Components below for additional information.

### **Course Deletions**

When reviewing course deletions, curriculum committees should ensure that:

- the rationale provides a pedagogical explanation for why the course materials are no longer relevant in terms of meeting the learning needs of students.
- students have opportunities to meet the program learning outcomes through other existing or newly introduced courses offered by the department.
- in the case that the course is listed in the requirements for programs housed in other departments, that the impacted departments are informed and given adequate time to adjust their curriculum accordingly.

## Changes to program requirements

These may include the addition of new streams or options, changes to the program title, changes to the required courses, or changes to the total credit value of the program.

When reviewing changes to the program requirements, curriculum committees should ensure that:

- pedagogical reason for how the changes to the program requirements or program title align with changes in the field and with the overarching program learning outcomes.
- the changes do not exceed the introduction of more than one third new courses to the program requirements (see details under the processes for New Programs below).
- students can complete the program requirements, including prerequisite courses, within the total allocated number of program credits
- students can complete the program within the appropriate time to completion for the type of credential awarded.
- if the total required credits for a program or concentration are modified, an explanation should be provided as to why a more condensed or expanded program is required for the particular field of study.

## Changes to the program requirements and regulations

These may include changes to the performance requirements, entry requirements, graduation requirements or other academic regulations.

When reviewing changes to program requirements and regulations, curriculum committees should ensure that:

- a pedagogical reason for how the changes align with the learning needs of students is provided in the rationale.
- changes to entry or graduation requirements are aligned with the academic regulations set out by the Office of the Registrar, the Office of the Provost and the School of Grad Studies?
- changes to entry or graduation requirements are supported by market research. Standards set by other universities should be explored and considered when making significant changes to the entry or graduation requirements.

## Experiential Learning Components

Curriculum committees should consult the guides, templates and resource materials for planning experiential learning activities available on [the Office of Experiential Learning](#) website.

When reviewing dossiers that include experiential learning components, curriculum committees should ensure that:

- the dossier rationale outlines any consultations that have taken place with the Office of Experiential learning as well as relevant external community/industry collaborators.
- the dossier rationale explains how internship or practicum requirements align with best practices for experiential learning.
- collaborations with external organizations should include an agreement that clearly defines the roles and expectations of the unit, the University, and the external organization. Please see the resources available on the [Office of Experiential Learning](#) website.
- when any changes are made to internship or practicum courses, an internship form should be included that clearly outlines expectations for students, including the number of required hours, whether the work may be paid or unpaid, the process for applying and being assigned to placements, the role of the host organization, the role of the faculty supervisor, and a description of how student

performance will be assessed. Typical assessment activities include student reflective journals, internship reports, employer assessments, and debrief(s) with academic supervisors. The internship documentation should also indicate whether the internship will be assessed according to the standard letter grade system or on a pass/fail basis. Please see the resources available on the [Office of Experiential Learning](#) website.

- when changes are made to the expected hours or credit value for internship or practicum courses, evidence related to the standard workload expectations and credit value for similar programs at other universities and at Concordia should be included in the dossier rationale.

## **Major Revisions to Programs**

Departments planning major revisions to their programs should email [curriculum@concordia.ca](mailto:curriculum@concordia.ca) to discuss options for curriculum development support when planning a major curriculum revision. Program requirements that do not meet the criteria for the New Program review process as outlined below, may be submitted through the Regular Curriculum process.

Curriculum committees should ensure that major program revisions:

- draw from the last program review and include an executive summary indicating to what extent the recommendations from the review have been implemented, where applicable.
- identify how the revised version of the program addresses the overarching program learning outcomes. Newly introduced courses should be incorporated into the program requirements and added to the curriculum map, which should be included as a supporting document. The foundational abilities that the program expects of students entering the program should be defined, as well as the expected outcomes for graduating students. This information should also be clearly communicated to students and included on the departmental website.
- identify evidence of changes to the field or shifts in societal need/market demand. Market analysis reports may be included in the dossier as supporting documentation. This may include labour market reports, government or industry reports, letters of support from associations or accrediting bodies, enrolment trends, newspaper articles or academic articles/reports.
- include a current Library Resource Implications Report if changes affect the library holdings.

Note that in some cases, if the program learning outcomes change significantly, or if the changes include more than 1/3 of the program requirements being comprised of new courses, the program may be subject for review by MES as a new program (see below). If this is the case, please email [curriculum@concordia.ca](mailto:curriculum@concordia.ca) for support in the early stages of planning.

## **New Programs**

Departments and faculties planning to introduce new programs should consult with the Office of the Provost and the School of Graduate Studies for curriculum development support. If your curriculum change meets any of the criteria listed below, please email [curriculum@concordia.ca](mailto:curriculum@concordia.ca) before preparing your curriculum dossier.

If the curriculum changes involve the introduction of a new degree type or a new concentration such as an Honours, Specialization, Major, Minor, Diploma, Certificate or Microprogram, the changes must go through either the **New Program, Regular Process**, or the **New Program Fast-track Process**.

Detailed information about these processes, as well as resources, guides and templates to support planning for programs, can be found on the [Office of the Provost website](#).

Dossiers that meet one or all of the criteria outlined below may be subject for review by MES as a new program.

- the changes will result in **one third or more of the program consisting of new courses** (courses that did not previously exist as permanent courses).
- the changes involve **revisions to two thirds or more of the program requirements** (the program requirements are revised to be composed of already existing courses that were not previously included in the program requirements).
- the changes collectively represent **new pedagogical activities** that lead to a degree.
- the **final outcome of the program is clearly distinct** from existing programs.
- the **pedagogical activities are targeted towards a new group of students** with particular needs that are distinct from the current pool of students.
- the program will lead to the creation of **a new declaration in the GDEU system** (this may apply to cases where the changes correspond with the creation of **new options or streams**, or cases where **the title of an existing program is modified**, in combination with **major changes to the program requirements** and learning objectives for the program).

## CHECKLIST FOR CURRICULUM APPROVAL COMMITTEES

### Evidence of Consultation

The following list includes examples of persons and units that should be consulted, as appropriate to the nature of the curriculum change:

- the Office of the Provost, the School of Graduate Studies (for graduate programs), Lifelong Learning (for microprograms), and the Library for any major or complex revisions to curriculum, or for the introduction of new programs.
- any other academic units affected by the changes.
- any technical or administrative support units that would be affected by the changes (such as the SIS team, Office of the Registrar/Enrolment Services, IITS, CDA).
- any faculty or staff personnel involved in hiring processes, in cases where new hires are required for the implementation of the curriculum changes.
- the Faculty Enrolment and Student Affairs personnel for changes that involve the deletion of or introduction of new courses, changes to course codes, or any changes to program titles, plans or sub-plans (such as options, streams, concentrations, or elective groups) offered within a program.
- the Office of the Registrar for any cases that require significant modifications to the Student Information System (SIS).
- the Faculty Budget Officer for changes that involve significant resource implications.
- any external approval bodies as relevant, such as accreditation bodies, or CAPFE in the case of Teacher Education programs.
- the Office of Experiential Learning, in cases where the curriculum changes include experiential learning opportunities such as internships, hands-on projects or community/industry engaged initiatives.
- the Institute for Co-operative Education for any changes to Co-op requirements.
- The Equity Office and the Office of Indigenous Directions may also be consulted for support and feedback in the curriculum development process, according to the nature of the changes proposed

### Pedagogical explanations for changes are included in the rationale

Is a clear rationale provided on each of the individual change request forms? Is the dossier summary of rationale self-explanatory as to the curriculum change(s) being proposed? The rationale should include:

- an overall summary including relevant background context for the changes, including references to any relevant data, such as enrolment trends or evidence of changes in the field of study or labour market.
- comprehensive global explanation for all changes included in the individual change request forms.
- clear identification of the specific department/units that are impacted by the changes, and a description of any consultations that have taken place with impacted units.
- explanations for how any resource implications will be addressed.

### Resource implications resulting from the curriculum changes are addressed

Are there any resource implications as a result of the changes being presented? If so, they should be identified in this box. If there are none, the resource implications field for the changes should be indicated as “None” on the dossier change request forms.



- **Course resources:** The introduction of new courses or modifications to existing courses should generally be planned to be funded within the department's regular credit envelope. If additional funding is required for net new course sections, an explanation should be provided as to how the department or faculty will cover the additional resource needs.
  - **Program resources:** Modifications to existing programs should generally be planned to be funded within the department's regular credit envelope. If additional funding is required for major program revisions, an explanation should be provided as to how the department or faculty will cover the additional resource needs. Note that the introduction of new programs requires prior budget approval through the Letter of Intent (LOI) process. Detailed information about the processes for planning new programs may be found on the [Office of the Provost](#) website.
  - **Regulation and requirements resources:** In most cases, regulation changes should not involve any resource implications. However, in the case that , an explanation must be provided as to how the department, faculty or university will cover the costs.
- **Summary of Committee Discussion:**  
The summary of committee discussion should indicate any major issues that were discussed when the committee reviewed the proposal as well any specific recommendations made by the committee as a condition for approving the dossier and submitting it to the next step.
- **Calendar Publication and Implementation Dates**  
Do all change request forms indicate the correct calendar publication and implementation dates?
- **Calendar publication date:** This date is determined according to the deadlines indicated on the APC and Senate Schedule, available on the [Office of the Provost](#) website.
  - **Implementation date:** The implementation date may be the same date or later than the calendar publication date. Due to MES reporting requirements, the implementation date may not be earlier than the calendar publication date. For a new course, the implementation date refers to the date that the course is offered. For changes to the program requirements, the implementation date refers to the date by which students may be assessed for graduation according to the new requirements. In most cases, students are entitled to graduate according to the requirements in place at the time that they entered their program. However, students may also be provided with the option to graduate according to the requirements in place at the time of their graduation. For programs overseen by accreditation bodies, students are normally advised to meet the program requirements in place at the time of their graduation.
- **Impact Report**  
Are any other units flagged as being impacted on the Impact Report? Have all these impacted units been informed of the changes? In cases where impacted units must make corresponding changes to their curriculum to adjust, a letter of support or email correspondence with the impacted unit should be provided in the dossier as a supporting document.
- **Publication Preview**  
The Publication Preview feature allows the user to generate a proof of how the proposed calendar text will appear in its final published form. The Publication Preview is a useful tool for proofreading the changes to the calendar text before it is submitted through the approval process. The publication preview may be uploaded as a supporting document, which will allow committee members to see an example of what the final published text will look like when they are reviewing dossiers for approval.

Please see the Publication Preview manual housed on the [Office of the Provost website](#) for detailed instructions on how to generate the publication preview.

□ **Supporting Documentation**

Is the appropriate supporting documentation included in the dossier? Examples of supporting documents include the following:

- email correspondence or letters of support verifying consultations and agreements with other impacted units, including the ID number of the dossier being prepared by the impacted units to make any requirements adjustments their curriculum.
- a revised curriculum map and market research reports in the case of significant program changes.
- an abridged syllabus for any new courses (aside from new special topics courses).
- a Memorandum of Understanding may be required in more complex cases that require a written agreement between units.
- Publication Preview (see above).
- for any changes to internship courses, or for the introduction of new internship courses, the following supporting documentation is required (see Experiential Learning Components in the guidelines above for further detail):
  - a description of the activities that students are assessed on, such as student reflective journals, internship reports, employer/on-site supervisor evaluations, and debrief(s) with academic supervisor.
  - the method of assessment, such as whether the internship will be assessed according to the standard letter grade system, or whether it will be assessed on a pass/fail basis
  - the minimum number of hours required for the internship.
  - a sample of an agreement with the employer/on-site supervisor that clearly defines the role of the employer and the role of the university in supporting and assessing the student throughout the internship.
  - any policies or requirements regarding whether or not the internship must be paid should be included in the documentation. The university does not stipulate whether internships must be paid or unpaid, but any policy set by the department must be clearly communicated. If it is optional whether the internship is paid or unpaid, this should be specified in the documentation.