

Policies and procedures for the approval of new undergraduate programs

<http://www.uottawa.ca/vr-etudes-academic/en/committees.html>

Objectives

The policies and procedures for assessing and approving new undergraduate programs are a key mechanism in the University of Ottawa's ability to provide the best quality and the highest standards in these programs. Specifically, these policies and procedures ensure:

1. that new programs are consistent with the general objectives of the University's mission and academic plans;
2. that new programs are consistent with the guidelines for University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations provided by the Ontario Council of Academic Vice Presidents;
3. that the programs are of high quality;
4. that the programs are socially relevant and meet an actual need and demand;
5. that there are enough resources to support the program.

1. Definition of "program"

A program is a coherent whole composed of a set of articulated and integrated courses or other learning activities prescribed as the requirements for obtaining a particular degree.

2. University approval process

The approval process for new undergraduate programs takes place under the authority of the Vice-President Academic and Provost. The Vice-President is supported in this task by the Council on Undergraduate Studies.

The initiative for a new program may come from students, faculty members, academic units, the central administration or an external agency. The source of the proposal may influence the approval process. (For a detailed process, see University Government).

Generally, a proposal is first approved by the unit or units involved (school, department, etc.). It is then submitted to the Committee on Educational Policy, and later to the Council of the faculty or faculties concerned. Next, the proposal is studied by the Council on Undergraduate Studies, for recommendation to the Executive Committee of the Senate. Finally, the program is submitted to the University Senate for final approval. At any point in this process, the proposal may be referred back for clarification or modification.

3. Information required by the University

Proposals for the creation of a program must include:

- a rationale specifying, among others, the program's aim and learning outcomes as well

as the type of students it is thought to attract and the expected enrolment;

- a detailed description of the program's structure and content (number of credits, compulsory and optional courses, year by year sequence), its admission requirements and opportunities, including access to graduate studies;
- a comparison with similar programs offered elsewhere;
- an evaluation of the space, professorial, material and financial resources required to offer the program, especially if new courses/facilities are needed;
- evidence of student interest in and demand for the program;
- the administrative structure of the program; and possible cooperation or partnerships with other institutions;
- the filled-out "New Program" form.

If launching the program requires new resources, the dean and the Administrative Committee must decide on the resources needed to keep the program running for a reasonable period of time. The financial impact of the new program on existing programs must also be examined, and consideration must be given to the possibility of requesting additional funds from internal or external sources.

Criteria for assessing the quality of academic programs

The Council on Undergraduate Studies examines proposals according to several criteria. The Council takes into account academic criteria specific to the University of Ottawa and the need to meet the requirements imposed by the Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee and by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The Council also makes sure that:

1. The program name and degree designation accurately reflect the program content and usage in the discipline.
2. The new program is consistent with the University's mission and academic plans and also matches both the goals and the teaching and research strengths of the academic unit or units concerned.
3. The new program is consistent with the degree's standards, educational goals and learning outcomes.
4. The admission requirements, as well as the achievement and preparation required, are appropriate for the program's learning outcomes.
5. The program structure and curriculum are appropriate for the program's learning outcomes; innovative and distinguishing features of the program must be highlighted.
6. The learning or teaching methods (including, where applicable, distance or on-line delivery) are appropriate for the program's learning outcomes.

7. The methods for evaluating student progress match the goals of the program.
8. The human, physical and financial resources available or invested should adequately support the program.
9. The quality and expertise of the teaching staff in the area of the proposed program are demonstrated and there is a sufficient number of full-time faculty.
10. The program meets societal needs.

Executive Committee of the Senate – August 27, 2007
Senate – September 10, 2007