2. PROTOCOLS FOR THE EVALUATION AND APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMS

2.1 Protocol for the Evaluation and Approval of New Undergraduate Programs

2.1.1 Evaluation and approval process for new undergraduate programs

The creation of a new program may be initiated by an academic unit, a faculty, the central administration, an internal committee, an external organization or at the request of the community.

Each proposal for a new program must undergo an appraisal and approval process that involves five main stages, some of which are broken down into sub-stages. At any of these stages, the proposal can be returned to the academic unit concerned, which must incorporate recommended modifications before moving on to the next approval stage.

2.1.1.1 Academic unit

The evaluation and approval process is normally started by the academic unit or units offering the program. The process may vary slightly for interdisciplinary and collaborative programs. However, before any discussions with academic authorities take place, the Vice-Dean Academic and the Dean of the faculty concerned must be advised of the proposed program of study.

The unit prepares a detailed proposal for the new program and submits it to all its academic authorities for approval (program committee and department assembly or their equivalent).

2.1.1.2 Faculty

The detailed proposal is submitted for approval to all faculty authorities (undergraduate program committee or its equivalent) and, finally, to the faculty council or councils.

2.1.1.3 External review

The external reviewers are selected by a subcommittee of the Council of Undergraduate Studies from two lists of candidates, one compiled by the Chair of the academic unit, and one compiled by the Dean of the faculty concerned. These individuals must have expertise in the discipline and must be at arm’s length from the program under evaluation (no family ties, partnership links, supervisory relations or other types of relationships). They must be associate or full professors and should have a good knowledge of university programs. There is a conflict of interest when a proposed external reviewer:

- has collaborated or published with a member or members of the academic program being evaluated within the past six years;
• has an administrative or family link with a member of the academic program being evaluated;
• is a former research supervisor, graduate student, or postdoctoral trainee of one of the members of the academic unit being evaluated;
• is involved in a dispute with a member of the academic program being evaluated.

As it sees fit, the subcommittee can also consult representatives from industry or related organizations and professions.

The external reviewers will receive a covering letter listing the evaluation’s objectives, their role and responsibilities and instructions for writing the report as well as a copy of the detailed proposal.

In most cases, the external review of a new undergraduate program will be conducted on-site, but may be conducted by desk audit, video-conference or an equivalent method if the external reviewer is satisfied that the off-site option is acceptable and if each reviewer submits a separate report. However, if the program proposed is considered innovative and an equivalent program does not exist anywhere in Canada, if the program is a pilot project or if the academic unit considers it necessary, the external review will include a site visit. In this case, the reviewers should submit a joint report. Within a month after the consultation, the external reviewers submit the report(s) examining the proposed program’s relevance, importance and viability. More specifically, the reviewers will consider the evaluation criteria described in section 2.1.4 below.

2.1.1.4 Internal Response

The Associate Vice-President Academic sends a copy of the reports to the Dean of the faculty and the Chair of the academic unit concerned, with a request for feedback. If necessary, the academic unit will then make any changes necessary to the proposal.

2.1.1.5 Senate

The Vice-Dean Academic of the faculty concerned submits the detailed proposal for approval to the Council on Undergraduate Studies. Next, the Associate Vice-President Academic presents this proposal to the Executive Committee of the Senate and then to the University Senate.

2.1.1.6 Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

The detailed proposal as approved by the Senate is then submitted for approval to the Quality Council. The submission template will include information on whether or not the proposed program will be cost-recovery. The same standards and protocols apply regardless of the source of funding.
2.1.2 Evaluation and approval process for new (and changes to existing) undergraduate programs that do not need to be submitted to the Quality Council

New programs (diplomas) and new program components (minors, options) that do not need to be submitted to the Quality Council must nevertheless be evaluated and approved by the University’s academic authorities. The process will be the same as indicated above in section 2.1, but without an external review (section 2.1.1.3) and without submission to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance.

2.1.3 Information to be included in the proposal

The program proposal brief must include:

a) a rationale specifying the program’s goals, learning outcomes, degree level expectations, the student profile the program is expected to attract, and the expected enrolment consistent with the University’s mission and academic plans;

b) a detailed description of the program’s structure and content (total number of credits; compulsory, optional and elective courses; year-by-year course sequence), admission requirements and opportunities, including access to graduate studies;

c) a statement on ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study;

d) a description of the program delivery methods, evaluation of teaching and learning assessment;

e) the administrative structure of the program;

f) the language of the program;

g) the length of the program;

h) a comparison with similar programs offered elsewhere, ensuring that any innovative aspects or distinctive features of the program are highlighted, including the strengths of the academic unit, teaching staff, partnerships, etc.;

i) an evaluation of the space, professorial, material and financial resources required to offer the program as well as expected class sizes;

j) evidence of interest in and a real demand for the program;

k) any possibilities for cooperation or partnerships with other institutions;

l) a completed 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, and potential internal and external sources of funding must also be explored.

2.1.4 Evaluation criteria

The various academic authorities involved in the approval process examine the proposals according to several criteria. They take into account academic criteria specific to the University of Ottawa, the Quality Council’s requirements, and the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) Guidelines on University Degree Level Expectations (Note: The University of Ottawa has adopted OCAV’s Guidelines on Degree Level Expectations and therefore the institution’s guidelines on Degree Level Expectations are the same as OCAV’s).

They must ensure that:

2.1.4.1 Objectives

a) the new program is consistent with the University’s mission and academic plans, particularly with respect to the Francophonie, the development of bilingualism, and the needs of Franco-Ontarians, and matches both the goals and the teaching and research strengths of the academic unit (or units) concerned;

b) the new program is consistent with the proposed educational goals and learning outcomes as well as with the undergraduate OCAV’s Degree Level Expectations;

c) the new program satisfies a societal need and students’ actual interests;

2.1.4.2 Admission requirements

a) the admission requirements as well as students’ prior learning (results) and level of preparation allow for the learning outcomes to be achieved;

b) other possible admission requirements such as the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), language requirements and recognition of prior learning experience are sufficiently and clearly explained.

2.1.4.3 Program structure

a) the program’s structure and requirements allow for learning outcomes to be achieved and undergraduate Degree Level Expectations to be met and to be consistent with OCAV’s Degree Level Expectations;
2.1.4.4 **Program content**

a) the program’s name and the degree awarded correspond to both the program content and the terminology used in the discipline;

b) ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study;

c) any innovative aspects or distinctive features of the program are highlighted, in particular those that will contribute to the quality of the student University experience.

2.1.4.5 **Mode of delivery**

a) delivery methods ensure learning outcomes are achieved and meet undergraduate Degree Level Expectations;

b) expected class sizes are specified.

2.1.4.6 **Language of delivery**

a) there is evidence that, where appropriate, the University’s mission concerning Ontario’s Francophone Community and bilingualism is reflected in the program delivery.

2.1.4.7 **Assessment of teaching and learning**

a) the methods used to evaluate student progress ensure learning outcomes are achieved and undergraduate Degree Level Expectations are met and are consistent with OCAV’s guidelines on Degree Level Expectations.

b) the plans for documenting and demonstrating students’ level of performance are included and are consistent with the institution’s statement of its Degree Level Expectations.

2.1.4.8 **Resources**

a) the experience and quality of the teaching staff is clearly recognized, and there is a sufficient number of regular faculty members;

b) the role of part-time and adjunct professors is defined;

c) the financial and physical resources available or invested for the program are sufficient;

d) the resources necessary to support students’ scholarly activities, such as experiential learning opportunities (if required), library services, information technology support and laboratory access, are sufficient and of good quality.
2.1.4.9 **Quality and other indicators**

a) quality indicators for teaching staff (training and skills, distinctions, ability to make a significant contribution to the proposed program) are set out;

b) all elements of the academic unit, program structure, composition of teaching staff and possible partnerships that will ensure an intellectually stimulating university experience are identified.

2.1.5 **Role of the Council on Undergraduate Studies**

In addition to receiving the detailed proposal for evaluation and approval, the Council on Undergraduate Studies elects the members of its subcommittee responsible for nominating the external reviewers.

**Nomination Committee - Council on Undergraduate Studies**

**Creation**

The Nomination Committee is a subcommittee of the Council on Undergraduate Studies.

**Status**

The Nomination Committee is an advisory committee of the Council on Undergraduate Studies.

**Mandate**

Under the authority of the Council on Undergraduate Studies, the Nomination Committee names the two professors from other universities to review each proposed undergraduate studies program.

**Functions**

The committee:

- receives the list of external reviewers from the Chair of the academic unit and the Dean of the faculty offering the program;

- names the two external reviewers and their substitutes (the reviewers will normally be associate or full professors, or the equivalent, with expertise in the discipline, and will be at arm’s length from the program under review);

- recommends any improvements to the process for identifying and nominating external reviewers.

**Membership**

The Nomination Committee is chaired by the Associate Vice-President Academic and includes three members of the Council on Undergraduate Studies who are elected by the Council.
Appointments are for one year, and elections take place in June at the last meeting of the academic year.

Meetings
The Nomination Committee meets at the call of its Chair as often as required to carry out its mandate.

Secretarial services
Secretarial services are provided by the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost.

**APPROVAL PROCESS FOR A NEW UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM PROPOSAL**

Academic Unit

Faculty

External Review

Internal Response

Council on Undergraduate Studies

Executive Committee of the Senate

Senate

Quality Council

Ongoing Program Monitoring by the Institution (Vice-President Academic and Provost)

Cyclical Review within 8 Years of First Enrolment
2.1.6 Announcement of new programs

Upon approval by the Senate, the documentation is submitted by the Vice-President Academic and Provost to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance.

Once the Council has received all the documentation, the academic unit may advertise the proposed program with the following caveat: Conditional upon approval by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The academic unit must not solicit applications without the explicit authorization of the Vice-President Academic and Provost.

2.1.7 Implementation window

After a new program is approved to commence, the program will begin within thirty-six months of that date of approval; otherwise the approval will lapse.

2.1.8 Institutional follow-up

Ongoing monitoring of the program (including oversight of the timely implementation of recommendations) is ultimately the responsibility of the Vice-President Academic and Provost, who normally delegates this responsibility to the Dean and Vice-Dean, Academic (or equivalent) of the faculty or faculties concerned, who will monitor the implementation of the recommendations.

The academic unit must submit a brief report at the end of the second and fourth academic year after the program has been approved to commence. These reports will be sent to the Vice-President Academic and Provost with a copy to the Dean of the faculty concerned. The report must provide the following information:
   a) number of applicants;
   b) number of offers extended;
   c) number of offers accepted (student retention);
   d) courses offered;
   e) quality of the student experience as determined by focus groups or a survey;
   f) any changes in human resources (departures, additions);
   g) any other information deemed useful and pertinent by the academic unit.

This report will be shared with the Undergraduate Program Evaluation Committee. After this consultation, the academic unit may be required to make modifications to the program. The Vice-President Academic and Provost is ultimately responsible for overseeing these changes; however, this task is usually delegated to the Dean of the home faculty.

The first cyclical review for any new program must be conducted no more than eight years after the date of the program’s initial enrolment and in accordance with the program review schedule established by the University of Ottawa.