3. PROTOCOLS FOR EXPEDITED APPROVALS

3.1 Protocol for the Expedited Approval of Undergraduate Programs

This protocol applies to proposals for major modifications to existing and already approved undergraduate programs and for which the University is requesting approval from the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council). It also applies to new programs that are created from existing University of Ottawa programs or that involve adding components or options to current programs, and for which the University is not requesting an external review.

3.1.1 Major modifications

Modification to a program is considered major when:

a) the requirements for the program differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review (e.g. a change in number and type of mandatory courses; a change in the language of program delivery; the introduction of a new concentration; a new mode of delivery; the addition or deletion of a coop or practicum; addition or deletion of a research paper; a change in the nature of the comprehensive, qualifying or candidacy examinations; the merger of two or more programs; the introduction of a bridging option for college diploma graduates; any change to field studies or residency requirements; major changes made to more than one-third of courses; a change from full to part-time program options or vice versa);

b) significant changes have been made to the learning outcomes (e.g. a major research component such as a research paper or thesis has been removed, added, or otherwise significantly changed);

c) any changes to program content, other than those listed above, that affect the learning outcomes, but do not meet the threshold for a “new program”;

d) significant changes have been made to the professors engaged in delivering the program (e.g. a large proportion of professors retires; new hires alter the areas of research and teaching interests; a field is deleted; an existing degree program is established at another location or institution). (For the introduction of a new field see above.);

e) when significant changes have been made to the essential physical resources (e.g. new laboratories are created; a complete on-line delivery of the program is proposed; the program is moved to an off-campus location) where these changes impair the delivery of the approved program.

The Senate Committee on Undergraduate Program Evaluation will act as an arbitrator to determine whether a change constitutes a major modification.
3.1.2 Evaluation and approval process for new programs that are created from existing University of Ottawa programs and for major modifications

All proposals for new programs that are created from existing University of Ottawa programs or for major modifications to existing programs are subject to an evaluation and approval process.

This process involves four stages, some of which are broken down into sub-stages, which are described below. 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.

3.1.2.1 Academic unit

The evaluation and approval process usually begins in the academic unit(s) offering the program. The process may vary slightly for interdisciplinary and collaborative programs. However, before any discussions can take place with the academic authorities of the unit(s), the Vice-Dean Academic must be informed of the proposed modifications.

The unit drafts a proposal for a new program or for major modifications and submits it for approval to the academic authorities concerned (program committee and department assembly, or their equivalent).

3.1.2.2 Faculty

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

3.1.2.3 Senate

The Vice-Dean Academic of the faculty concerned, or an equivalent authority, submits the proposal for approval to the Council on Undergraduate Studies. Next, the Associate Vice-President Academic forwards the proposal to the Executive Committee of the Senate and to the Senate, if necessary. Senate approval is necessary if a modification has an impact on the diploma (for example, if a new major is created).

3.1.2.4 Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

The proposal is then sent for expedited approval to the Quality Council.

3.1.3 Information required in the proposal

The proposal must include the following information:

a) a justification for the major modifications proposed or for the new program created from existing programs;
b) a detailed description of the major modifications or of what has been added to the existing programs (admission or graduation requirements, program structure, courses, delivery methods, resource allocation, etc.);

c) how the major modifications or new program will affect the University’s mission and academic plans, learning objectives and outcomes, undergraduate Degree Level Expectations, admission requirements or students’ level of preparation, and student enrolment;

d) how the major modifications or new program will affect teaching, learning and evaluation methods;

e) how the major modifications or new program will affect space requirements as well as professorial resources, material resources, financial resources and anticipated class sizes;

f) how the major modifications or new program will affect the existing program’s administrative structure;

g) how the major modifications or new program will ensure a high quality student University experience.

If implementing the new program or the major modifications requires new resources, the Dean and the Administrative Committee are responsible for determining exactly what resources are needed to offer the program for a reasonable period of time. The financial impact of the major modifications or new program, as well as opportunities to secure extra funding from internal and external sources, must also be examined.

3.1.4 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:

3.1.4.1 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;

**3.1.4.2 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 CGPA, language requirements and recognition of prior learning experience are sufficiently and clearly explained.

**3.1.4.3 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;

**3.1.4.4 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) 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.

**3.1.4.5 Program delivery**

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

b) expected class sizes are specified.

**3.1.4.6 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.

**3.1.4.7 Evaluation of teaching and learning assessment**

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

3.1.4.8 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.

3.1.4.9 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.

PROCESS FOR THE EXPEDITED APPROVAL OF NEW UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS CREATED FROM EXISTING PROGRAMS AND OF MAJOR MODIFICATIONS

Academic unit
\[\downarrow\]
Faculty
\[\downarrow\]
Council on Undergraduate Studies
\[\downarrow\]
Executive Committee of the Senate
\[\downarrow\]
Senate (if necessary)
\[\downarrow\]
Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance
\[\downarrow\]
Cyclical Review within 8 years