

# Procedures

## for Graduate Course and Program Approval

Appendix to Policy 209

Revised: March 2022

[ufv.ca](http://ufv.ca)



# Introduction

In February 2013, UFV implemented a new [Graduate Course and Program Approval policy \(209\)](#) that scrutinizes new and existing graduate courses and programs to ensure they meet both UFV and legislated quality assurance standards and requirements. As revised in 2016, policy 209 grants the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) the authority to develop procedures for the approval of new and revised graduate courses and programs. The procedures for the approval of concept papers are under the authority of the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee.

The adoption of new and revised curriculum includes a series of structured consultations, reviews, and approvals that give the UFV community the opportunity to examine a program or course in terms of the quality of the curriculum, consistency of standards, attention to student needs, demand for a program, and adherence to UFV's mandate, strategic goals, priorities, and Institutional Learning Outcomes.

This document outlines the procedures for the review and approval of new and revised graduate courses and programs in effect as of February 2020.

## Submission guidelines

Items submitted to faculty/college council and subsequent committees should be formatted appropriately and should include all relevant documents. All submissions to GSC must follow the [agenda and exhibit guidelines](#) found on the GSC website.

Revised and new courses should be presented on the current *Official Graduate Course Outline form* available on the [School of Graduate Studies](#) website. Guidelines, policies and other forms and resources can also be found there. In the case of revisions to an existing course, a Word version of the current official course outline should be requested from the University Education Committee (UEC) Assistant/Calendar Editor, and whenever possible, Word's track changes feature should be used to highlight any revisions being made to the course outlines.

Program changes should be accompanied by calendar copy (as published in the current [UFV Academic Calendar](#)) with changes tracked.

All new program proposals should be submitted on the current approved templates, after verification by Program Development and Quality Assurance (PDQA). Consult the [PDQA](#) website for assistance with the development of new programs.

The AVP Research, Engagement and Graduate Studies (AVP REGS), GSC Assistant, and Program Development and Quality Assurance can be contacted directly with any questions.

## Terms and definitions

**Academic unit:** Includes but is not limited to faculties, schools, libraries, programs, centres, departments, and institutes.

**Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APPC):** Senate standing committee responsible for the mission, goals, objectives, strategies, and priorities of the university (see APPC Terms of Reference).

**Campus-Wide Consultation (CWC):** An opportunity for other academic units and service areas (e.g., Office of the Registrar, Library, Student Services) to review and provide feedback about the course or program submission. Developers must respond to all comments submitted and include responses with the submission to GSC.

**Graduate-level course:** A course numbered 600 or higher.

**Graduate Program:** Any program that requires at least one graduate level course.

**Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC):** A standing committee of faculty council responsible for ensuring excellence and innovation in graduate-level and post-baccalaureate educational offerings. It serves as an advisory body to the faculty council and the Dean on graduate curriculum-related matters.

**Graduate Program Committee (GPC):** A committee created to oversee the implementation and administration of a graduate program and its courses. A Graduate Program Committee is approved by the Dean(s) and AVP Research, Engagement & Graduate Studies.

**Graduate Studies Committee: (GSC):** A Senate standing committee that provides Senate with advice on all matters related to the graduate educational programs of the university, including policies, practices, and criteria for admission, evaluation, and promotion of graduate students.

**Major course change:** A change to a course that affects the nature or focus of a course, options for students, or budget. A more detailed breakdown of major course changes is available on page 9.

**Major program change:** A modification to a program that affects the nature or focus of the program, options for students, or budget. A more detailed breakdown of major program changes is available on page 14.

**Minor course change:** A change to a course that has no effect on the nature or focus of a course, options for students, or budget. A more detailed breakdown of minor course changes is available on page 9.

**Minor program change:** Any change which is not major, as described above. A more detailed breakdown of minor program changes is available on page 14.

**Official course outline:** Legal document used for calendar copy, articulation, and other official documentation purposes. The official course outline is used as a guideline for the syllabus that instructors develop and provide to students.

**Program budget analysis:** Summary of the budget implications of a proposed new program or revisions to an existing program. This is to be attached to all new and revised program proposals when submitted to Senate and its standing committees.

**Program concept paper:** A statement of intent to begin development of a new program prepared using a standard template provided by Program Development and Quality Assurance.

**Program Development and Quality Assurance (PDQA):** Facilitates the development and review of academic programs, and advises on matters related to academic quality assurance, curriculum design, and programming.

**Program proposal:** Detailed description and rationale for a new program prepared on a standard template provided by Program Development and Quality Assurance.

**Program Report and Plan (PRP):** Submitted annually to the Board, includes Concept Papers recommended by Senate for approval.

**Program Working Group (PWG):** Group formed in consultation with the Dean(s) and the AVP Research, Engagement & Graduate Studies to proceed in the development of a course or program proposal; may become the Graduate Program Committee.

**Senate Budget Committee (SBC):** Senate standing committee responsible for advising Senate on the university's annual budget, budgetary policies, guidelines, processes, and models (see SBC Terms of Reference).

# Timelines

## Calendar Deadlines

The calendar is the official source for all approved courses and programs and can be found at [www.ufv.ca/calendar](http://www.ufv.ca/calendar). All changes and new additions of courses and programs should be published to the calendar prior to implementation. Deadlines and other calendar information can be found [here](#).

All departments are encouraged to submit changes that affect the calendar copy as far in advance as possible to avoid missing the deadlines for revisions.

**Major program changes** must be approved by the January GSC meeting to be included in the Fall calendar or by the June GSC meeting to be included in the Winter/Summer calendar. (Please note that subsequent approval by Senate, and in some cases SBC, is also required).

**Minor program changes and major and minor course changes** must be approved by the February GSC meeting to be included in the Fall calendar or by the September GSC meeting to be included in the Winter/Summer calendar.

## Minimum Timelines

Due to the need for quality assurance, the following are the approximate **minimum** lengths of time that the approval processes take from recommendation by faculty council/GCC to final approval.

### Courses

- New course: 4-5 months
- Major changes: 4-5 months
- Minor changes: 2-3 months

**Note:** Changes to prerequisites that are more restrictive require 6 months' notice in the academic calendar (see policy [84](#)).

### Programs

- New program (including concept paper): approximately two academic years if the following optimal timeline is followed:
  - Year 1: September-February: development of concept paper
  - Year 1: March-June: review and approval of concept paper
  - Year 2: September-December: development of full program proposal
  - Year 2: January-June: internal review and approval of full program proposal
  - External review and approval: two to three months for certificates and diplomas; depending on Ministry timelines for degrees.
- Major changes: 7-8 months
- Minor changes: 4-5 months

**Note:** Changes that make entrance requirements more restrictive must be published in the academic calendar at least twelve months prior to the start of the semester, unless they are necessary to maintain the program's accreditation (see policy [80](#)).

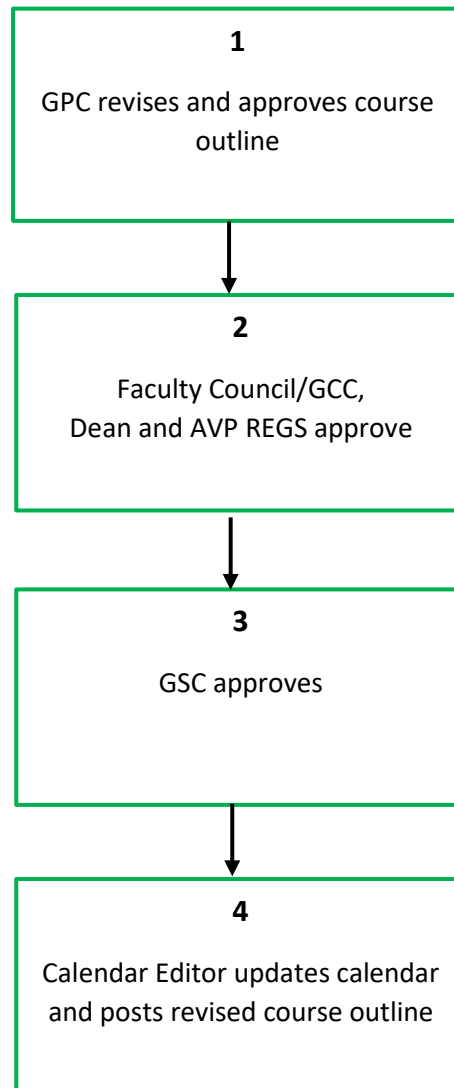
# Course Approval Processes

The approval process differs for new courses, major course changes, and minor course changes. The following outlines the steps in each of the course approval processes. Each process correlates with the flow charts featured on the next page. A table on page 9 explains the differences between minor and major course changes in detail.

## Minor Course Changes (2-3 months)

1. **Revision of course outline:** The Graduate Program Committee (GPC) obtains a Word version of the current course outline from the Calendar Editor. The GPC revises and approves the course outline and prepares a memo outlining the rationale and any financial implications of the course changes.
2. **Faculty Council/Graduate Curriculum Committee; Dean and AVP REGS:** GPC submits the course outline and memo to the faculty/college council (and, if applicable, the faculty/college graduate curriculum committee), the Dean and AVP REGS for approval.
3. **Graduate Studies Committee (GSC):** The council or Dean's assistant submits the course outline and memo to GSC for approval.
4. **Publication:** GSC submits the revised course outline to the Calendar Editor, who makes all necessary calendar changes, posts the revised course outline on the website (<https://www.ufv.ca/calendar/courseoutlines/>), and sends the course outline to the Office of the Registrar for data entry.

## Approval process for minor course changes



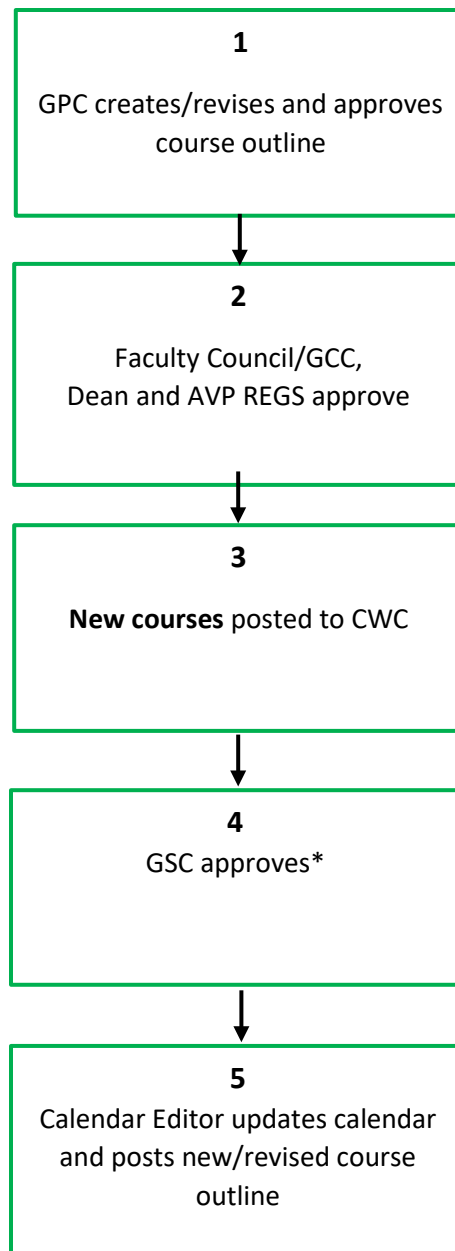
## New courses and major course changes (4-5 months)

1. **Development/revision of course outline:** The Graduate Program Committee (GPC) develops and approves the course outline. If revisions are being made to an existing course, a Word version of the current course outline is requested from the Calendar Editor and, whenever possible, Word's track changes feature is used to highlight any revisions being made to the course outlines. A memo outlining the rationale and any financial implications of the new or revised course is submitted with the course outline.
2. **Faculty Council/Graduate Curriculum Committee; Dean and AVP REGS:** GPC submits the course outline and memo to the faculty/college council (and, if applicable, the faculty/college graduate curriculum committee), Dean and AVP REGS for approval. Dean and AVP REGS determine if the proposed course or course changes have any significant budgetary implications. If so, the Dean prepares an explanatory memo for submission to Senate Budget Committee (SBC) (see step 4 below).
3. **Campus-Wide Consultation (CWC):** For new courses only, the council or Dean's assistant submits the course outline and memo to the PDQA for posting to CWC for a period of one to four weeks. During CWC, the GPC must respond to all comments submitted, and include this response in the memo. Major course changes **do not** need to be posted to CWC.
4. **Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) / Senate Budget Committee (SBC):** The GPC submits the course outline, memo, and any CWC comments and responses, to GSC. GSC approves the course outline or recommends to Senate for approval if there are financial implications.

If there are financial implications, the GPC submits the course outline and memo from the Dean to the Senate Budget Committee. SBC will review and make a recommendation to Senate. Both GSC and SBC recommendations are sent to Senate concurrently.

5. **Publication:** GSC (or Senate in the case where there are financial implications) submits the course outline to the Calendar Editor, who makes the necessary changes to the calendar, posts the new/revised course outline on the website (<https://www.ufv.ca/calendar/courseoutlines/>), and sends the course outline to the Office of the Registrar for data entry.

## Approval process for new courses and major course changes



\*In the case of budgetary implications, GSC and SBC will both review and recommend to Senate for approval.



## Major vs minor changes to an existing course

Type of change	Major changes	Minor changes
<b>Title and/or calendar description</b>	Reflects a change in nature or focus	For correction or clarification
<b>Learning outcomes and/or content</b>	Reflects a change in nature or focus	Does not reflect a change in nature or focus
<b>Prerequisites and/or co-requisites</b>	Any change to prerequisites	Editorial change only
<b>Course details</b>	Change in number of credits or number of hours	Frequency of course offering
<b>Delivery method</b>	Change or addition of a delivery method that has a cost	Change or addition of a delivery method that does not affect cost
<b>Impact on other programs</b>	Affects other academic units	Does not affect other academic units
<b>Resource requirements</b>	Additional resources are required at a cost	Additional resource costs are covered by the associated academic unit
<b>Maximum enrolment</b>	Affects the quota for a program or has cost implications	Does not affect the quota for a program
<b>Other</b>	Deletion of course	

**Note:** One major change means that all changes in the proposal are considered major

## Program Approval Processes (minor and major changes)

The approval process differs for new programs, major program changes, and minor program changes. The following outlines the steps for each of these processes [and correlates with the flow charts featured on the next page].

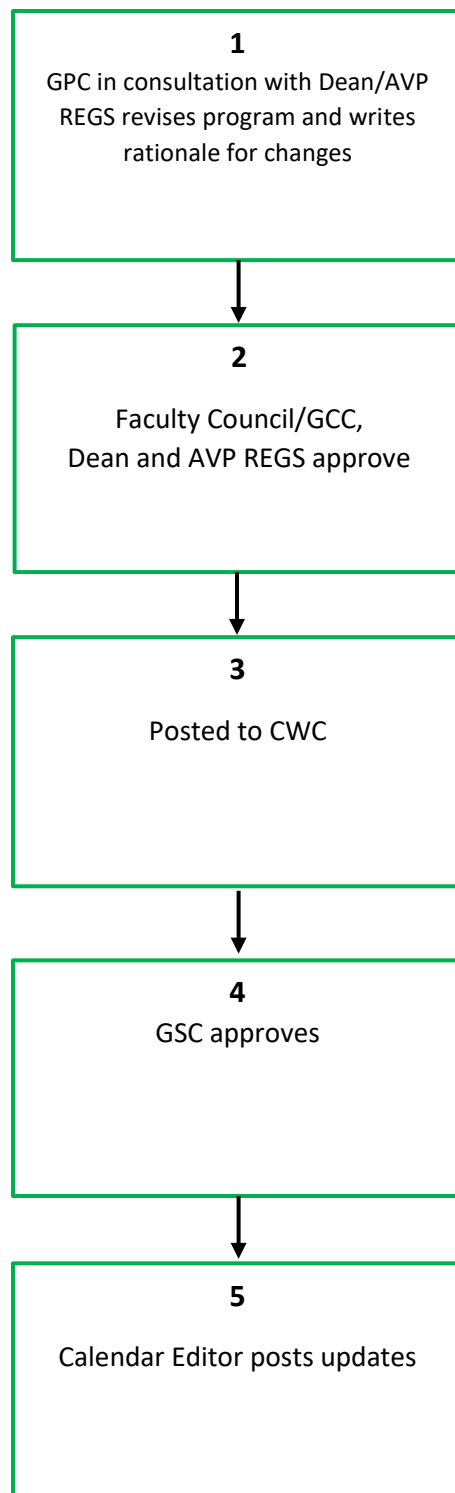
Changes that make entrance requirements more restrictive must be published in the academic calendar at least twelve months prior to the start of the semester, unless they are necessary to maintain the program's accreditation (see policy [80](#)).

A chart of major vs. minor changes to an existing program can be found on p. 14.

### Minor Program Changes (minimum 4-5 months)

1. **Development of Program Revisions:** GPC, in consultation with the Dean responsible and AVP REGS, outlines and approves the changes, and writes a rationale for the proposed changes.
2. **Faculty Council/Graduate Curriculum Committee, Dean and AVP REGS:** GPC submits the program revisions and calendar copy to faculty council/GCC (and, if applicable, faculty graduate curriculum committee), the Dean and AVP REGS for approval.
3. **Campus-Wide Consultation (CWC):** The council or Dean's assistant submits the program revisions, calendar copy and rationale to the PDQA for posting to CWC for a period of one to four weeks. During CWC, the GPC must respond to all comments submitted, and include this response in the submission to GSC.
4. **Graduate Studies Committee (GSC):** GPC submits the proposal, calendar copy and CWC comments and responses to GSC. GSC approves the program changes.
5. **Publication:** GSC Assistant confirms final approval of the program revisions with the Calendar Editor, who makes the necessary changes to the calendar.

## Approval process for minor program changes



## Major Program Changes (minimum 7-8 months) \*

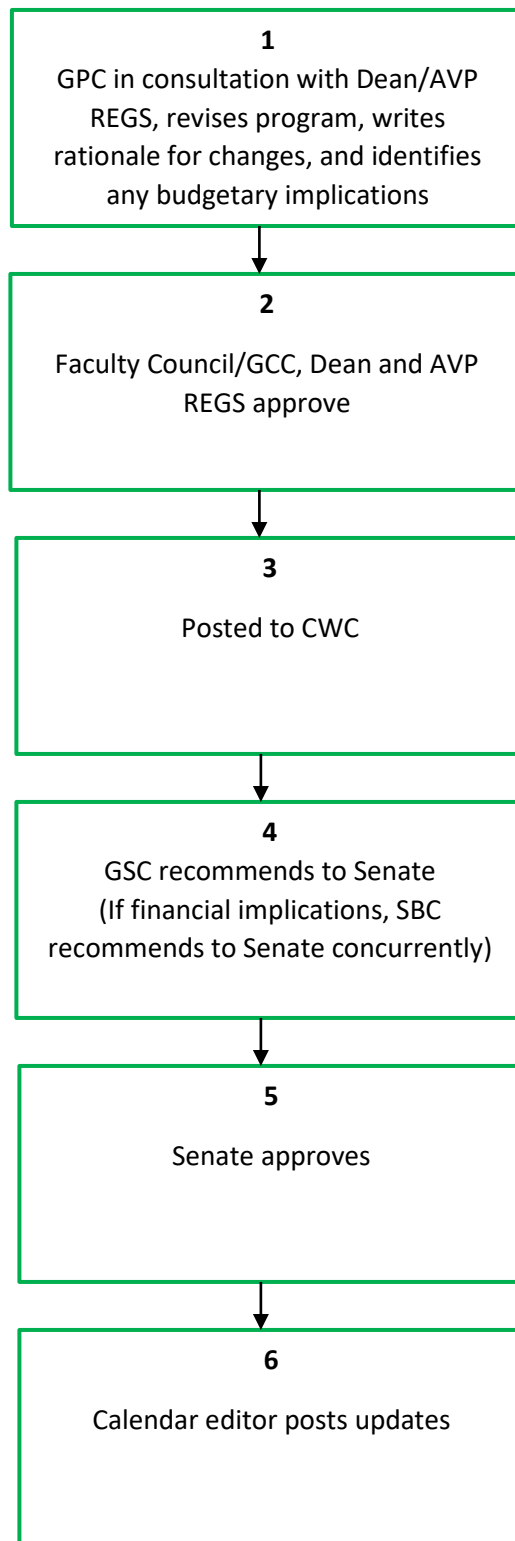
1. **Development of Program Revisions:** GPC, in consultation with the Dean responsible and AVP REGS, outlines and approves changes to the program and rationale for the proposed changes, identifying any budgetary implications.
2. **Faculty Council/Graduate Curriculum Committee, Dean and AVP REGS:** GPC submits the program revisions and calendar copy to faculty council/GCC (and, if applicable, faculty graduate curriculum committee), Dean and AVP REGS for approval. Dean and AVP REGS, in consultation with the Budget Office, determine if the proposed revisions have any significant budgetary implications. If so, the Dean prepares an explanatory memo for submission to Senate Budget Committee (SBC) upon recommendation by GSC (see step 4 below).
3. **Campus Wide Consultation (CWC):** The council or Dean's assistant submits the program revisions, calendar copy and rationale to the PDQA who will post to CWC for one to four weeks. Developers must respond to all comments submitted during the CWC process and include the responses in the submission to GSC.
4. **Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) / Senate Budget Committee (SBC):** The GPC submits the program revisions, calendar copy and rationale, and any CWC comments and responses, to GSC for review and recommendation to Senate.

If there are financial implications, the Dean submits the proposed revisions and budgetary analysis to the Senate Budget Committee. Both GSC and SBC recommendations are sent to Senate concurrently.

5. **Senate:** The proposed revisions, budget and calendar copy are submitted to Senate for final approval.
6. **Publication:** The GSC Assistant confirms that the proposed revisions have final approval and submits the approved calendar copy to the Calendar Editor, who makes the necessary changes to the calendar.

\* The Ministry includes in its definition of "new program" revision of a program's major objectives resulting in significant change and a significant revision of a program that warrants credential renaming. Please consult Program Development and Quality Assurance if the revision considered may fall under this definition.

# Approval Process for Major Program Changes



## Major vs minor changes to an existing program

Type of Change	Major changes	Minor changes
<b>Resource requirements</b>	Additional resources are required at a cost	Additional resource costs are covered by the associated academic unit
<b>Courses</b>	Change to the majority of courses in an approved program	Addition of new course options, or deletion or substitution of a required course
<b>Duration, philosophy, or direction</b>	Change to the duration, philosophy, or direction of a Program*	
<b>Specialization</b>	Addition or deletion of a new field of specialization (e.g., concentration or option)**	
<b>Admission requirements</b>	Change in requirements for admission	
<b>Residency requirements</b>	Change in requirements for residency	
<b>Continuance requirements</b>	Change in requirements for continuance	
<b>Admission quotas</b>	Change in admission quotas	
<b>External review</b>	Change which triggers an external review (e.g., accreditation purposes)	

\* The Ministry includes in its definition of “new program” revision of a program’s major objectives resulting in significant change and a significant revision of a program that warrants credential renaming. Please consult Program Development and Quality Assurance if the revision considered may fall under this definition.

\*\*If not considered a new program or covered under the Program Discontinuance policy (222).

# New Program Approval Process

The following outlines the steps for new programs and correlates with the flow charts featured on the next pages.

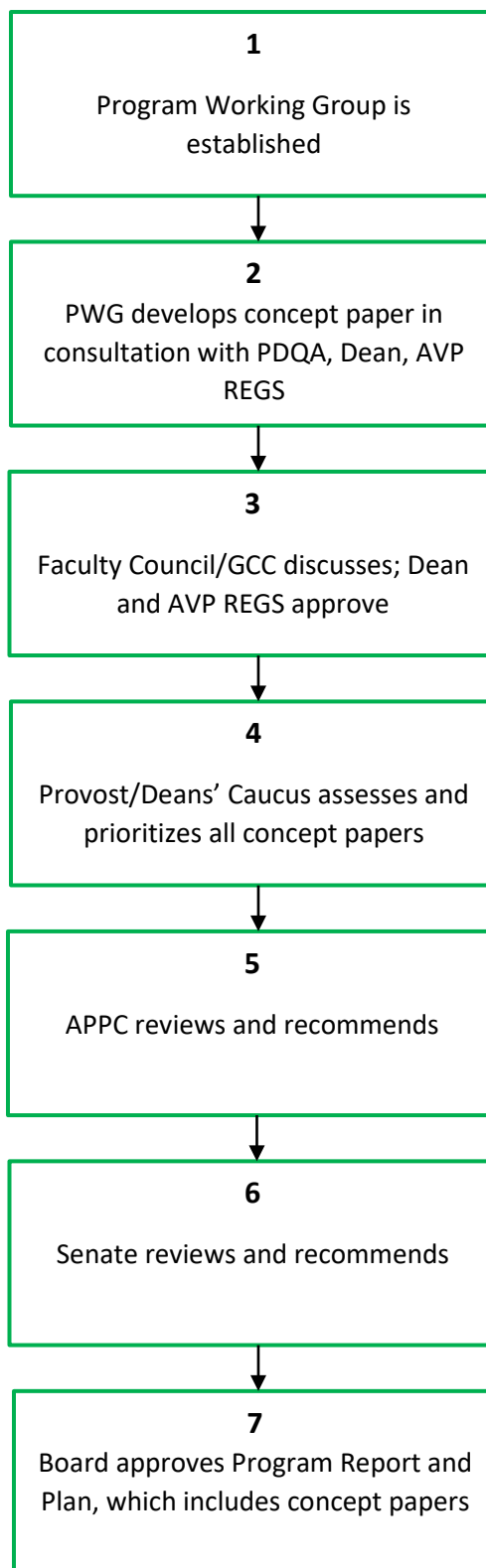
Before you begin the development of a new program, please contact [Program Development and Quality Assurance](#) (PDQA) for specific information about submission formats and procedures. An administrative guide for the internal approval process is available on the [PDQA website](#).

## Concept Paper

**Note:** *Normally a single dean will have administrative responsibility and approval authority over a program. In the case that a program draws resources from more than one faculty/college beyond the provision of service courses, the deans involved will decide who will assume administrative responsibility for the program and whether it will be shared by more than one faculty/college in addition to the School of Graduate Studies. The faculty/college and dean that has administrative responsibility will have approval authority at the relevant stages of the program approval process.*

- 1. Establishment of a Program Working Group (PWG):** Faculty members interested in developing a new program presents a notice of intent to the Dean(s) of the appropriate academic unit(s) and the AVP REGS. PWG membership must be approved by the AVP REGS, and the Dean who will assume administrative responsibility for the program. Program Development and Quality Assurance (PDQA) is also notified of the PWG membership. Membership should consist of a minimum of three faculty with teaching or research expertise in the subject area. If a new program is entirely discipline-based, at least one additional member from another discipline with teaching or research expertise in the subject area or related area should be added.
- 2. Development of Concept Paper:** The PWG develops the Concept Paper, on the approved template, in consultation with PDQA, appropriate academic units, the Dean and AVP REGS. The PWG submits the Concept Paper to PDQA, who verifies that it is complete before submission to faculty council/GCC.
- 3. Faculty Council/Graduate Curriculum Committee, Dean and AVP REGS:** The PWG presents the Concept Paper to faculty council or GCC for discussion. The concept paper is then presented to the Dean and AVP REGS for review and approval.
- 4. Academic Programming Council:** Upon approval, PDQA sends the concept paper to the Academic Programming Council (APC) for review and recommendation. APC assesses all Concept Papers submitted in a given academic year and prepares a report for presentation to APPC (with accompanying rationale) on Concept Papers that are: a) meritorious and supported for development with a specified timetable for implementation and start date; or b) not supported for development (with an explanation). Any revisions required to concept papers prior to APPC go through PDQA.
- 5. APPC:** reviews and recommends Concept Papers to be approved for development
- 6. Senate:** reviews and recommends Concept Papers.
- 7. Board:** The Program Report and Plan (PRP), which includes Concept Papers, is submitted to the Board for approval. **Only upon approval by the Board should a program working group proceed with submitting the full program proposal for internal review and approval.**

## Approval Process for Concept Papers





## Full Program Proposal

**Orientation Meeting:** Following approval of the concept paper, an orientation meeting will be held to review program design principles and proposal preparation. This meeting will include the PWG chair and members; the Associate Director and Assistant for Program Development and Quality Assurance; AVP REGS; and the Dean.

Graduate programs requiring Ministry approval complete Stage 1 development prior to proceeding to Stage 2 development of the program proposal (see A below).

Graduate programs requiring only internal approval and 30-day peer review on the Post-Secondary Institution Proposal System (PSIPS) proceed directly to development of the full program proposal (see B below).

### A. Graduate programs requiring Ministry approval (degree programs)

1. **Stage 1 Development:** For programs that require Ministry approval, the PWG, with assistance from PDQA, completes the research and consultation required to address the Stage 1 standards and criteria, and develops the learning outcomes and curriculum for the program. A budget analysis for the program is also completed in consultation with the Dean and the UFV Finance office. The completed Stage 1 and budget analysis are submitted to PDQA, who verifies completeness and appropriate consultation.
2. **Stage 1 Approval:** PDQA submits the Stage 1 proposal to APPC and SBC (Senate Budget Committee) for verification of meeting Stage 1 standards and criteria. The program's budget analysis is also submitted to SBC for review and confirmation of program costing. The Stage 1 proposal returns to PDQA for review and is then submitted through the Office of the Provost and VP Academic to the Ministry for posting to PSIPS, review by the DQAB (Degree Quality Assessment Board), and Minister's decision on Stage 1 approval. Only upon approval of the Stage 1 by the Minister should the PWG proceed with submitting the Stage 2 proposal for internal review and approval. If the Stage 1 proposal is not approved, a decision will be made on whether to revise the Stage 1 based on Ministry feedback or discontinue development.
3. **Stage 2 Development:** With the assistance of PDQA, the PWG develops the program and writes the full program proposal. The PWG submits the program proposal and draft calendar copy to PDQA, who verifies that it is complete, and that appropriate internal consultation has taken place before submission to faculty/college curriculum committee and/or faculty council, as applicable.
4. **Faculty Council/Graduate Curriculum Committee; Dean and AVP REGS:** The proposal and new courses related to the program are submitted to faculty council/GCC (and, if applicable, faculty graduate curriculum committee), Dean and AVP REGS for approval. The proposal will include a summary of the internal consultation that has taken place during the proposal development stage, with supportive evidence. The PWG responds to any feedback, revising the proposal as needed, and submits to PDQA.
5. **Campus Wide Consultation (CWC):** PDQA posts notice of the proposal to CWC for information only. Since internal consultation will have already occurred during the program development process, new program proposals are not required to remain at CWC for a specific time period; however, developers must nonetheless respond to any comments received from CWC and, where applicable, include any responses in the program proposal.
6. **Graduate Studies Committee (GSC):** PDQA submits the program proposal, calendar copy, course outlines (for new courses and major changes to existing courses), and any PWG's responses to comments received through Campus Wide Consultation (CWC), to GSC for review and verification of meeting degree quality standards and quality curriculum principles.

7. **Senate Budget Committee (SBC):** Program proposals requiring Ministry approval go to SBC only if changes to program content since Stage 1 approval require adjustment to the original program costing.
8. **Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APPC) and Senate:** Following GSC and (where required) SBC verification, PDQA ensures completeness of all documents before sending the program proposal to APPC and Senate for information. APPC and Senate reserve the right to request revisions to the proposal or reconsideration of the decisions from GSC or SBC. Furthermore, if Senate determines that the program has substantially changed from what was proposed in the Concept Paper, Board approval is solicited.
9. **Stage 2 Approval:** The program proposal returns to PDQA for final review and submission through the Office of the Provost and VP, Academic for external approval, as required by the Ministry of Advanced Education. The Stage 2 will be posted to PSIPS for 30-day peer review, after which the PWG will need to respond to any comments received. The proposal will be reviewed by the DQAB, who will determine whether or not to proceed to an External Site Visit. Following the site visit, DQAB will conduct a final review of the proposal, including the external panel's assessment, and make a recommendation to the Minister, who will then make a decision on approval.
10. **Implementation:** Upon approval, PDQA organizes a meeting with the PWG chair, the Dean, the AVP REGS, and the Vice-Provost to review the implementation procedures for the new program.

## **B. Graduate programs requiring internal approval and PSIPS peer review only (non-degree programs)**

1. **Full Program Proposal:** With the assistance of PDQA, the PWG develops and writes the full program proposal. The PWG submits the program proposal and draft calendar copy to PDQA, who verifies completeness and ensures appropriate consultation has taken place before submission to faculty/college curriculum committee, or faculty council, as applicable. A budget analysis for the program will also be completed in consultation with the Dean and the UFV Finance office.
2. **Faculty Council/Graduate Curriculum Committee; Dean and AVP REGS:** The proposal and new courses related to the program are submitted to faculty council/GCC (and, if applicable, faculty graduate curriculum committee), Dean and AVP REGS for approval. The proposal will include a summary of the internal consultation that has taken place during the proposal development stage, with supportive evidence. The PWG responds to any feedback, revising the proposal as needed, and submits to PDQA.
3. **Campus Wide Consultation (CWC):** PDQA posts notice of the proposal to CWC for information only. Since internal consultation will have already occurred during the program development process, proposals are not required to remain at CWC for a specific time period; however, developers must respond to any comments received from CWC and, where applicable, revise the program proposal accordingly.
4. **Graduate Studies Committee (GSC):** PDQA submits the program proposal, calendar copy, course outlines (for new courses and major changes to existing courses), and any PWG's responses to comments received through Campus Wide Consultation (CWC), to GSC for review and verification of meeting degree quality standards and quality curriculum principles.
5. **Senate Budget Committee (SBC):** Following GSC approval, PDQA submits the budgetary analysis, program proposal, and calendar copy to SBC for review and approval.
6. **Academic Planning & Priorities Committee (APPC) and Senate:** Following GSC and SBC approval, PDQA ensures completeness of all documents and submits the proposal to APPC and Senate for information. APPC and Senate reserve the right to request revisions to the proposal if deemed necessary. If Senate determines that the program has substantially changed from what was proposed in the Concept Paper, Board approval will be solicited prior to program implementation.
7. **PSIPS:** The proposal returns to PDQA for final review and is then submitted through the Office of the Provost and VP Academic for posting to the Post-Secondary Instructional Program System (PSIPS) for 30 days. The PWG must respond to any comments received during the PSIPS peer review.
8. **Implementation:** Once the PSIPS peer review has been completed, the PDQA office will organize a meeting with the PWG chair, the responsible Dean(s), the AVP REGS, and the Vice-Provost to review the implementation procedures for the new program.

## Approval process for new graduate program proposals

