

Title: New Programme Approval Policy	Number: 4.31.0217.1
Approved by the Board of Governors Date: February 21, 2017	Implementation Date: March 1, 2017
History: Scheduled Review Date: February 2020	Origin:

RATIONALE

Approval of new instructional units and programs is motivated by (a) a desire to ensure sufficient resources to offer high quality programs or to support a new instructional units, and (b) a need to ensure that new programmes are designed to serve a need in the community and the workforce that is worthy of significant financial, human and and/or capital investment over an extended period of time. The new programme approval policy provides a rational and systematic means of considering the benefits of such investments, and ensures that decisions are made at the highest level of the College. The underlying principle that informs the new programme approval process is that instructional decisions are best made in a collegial fashion, with full and open discussion among all parties that will be affected and that will play a part in ensuring the success of the programme. The final responsibility for new programme approval rests with the College's Board of Governors.

DEFINITIONS

Programme: An organized sequence of courses leading to a defined objective, a degree, certificate, diploma, license, or transfer to another institution of higher education.

New Programme Committee: When a formal discussion is initiated concerning a new programme, a New Programme Committee will follow appropriate criteria as a means of recommending action to the President's Cabinet. Membership of the Committee will include the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, the Director of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, a member of the Resource Allocation Committee identified by the President, the Dean responsible for the proposed programme, the President of the Faculty Association and one additional faculty.

POLICY

1. The following types of actions related to instructional programmes require approval by the College's Board of Governors:
 - a. Any new degree or certificate programme;

- b. Any increase in the number of credits required to earn a degree that is above the number that approximates those offered by U.S.-based community colleges.¹
 - c. Any extension of an approved program to a higher award level, (e.g., Certificate to Associate degree level)
2. When the Board considers the establishment of a new degree program, information regarding its need, quality, cost and means of assessment is paramount.
3. A recommendation concerning a proposal for a new degree or certificate programme must have the endorsement of both the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and the President, before it can be considered for approval by the Board.

PROCEDURE

A. Initiating a Discussion on New Programs

A proposal for a new programme may be initiated from a variety of external as well as internal sources, such as the Ministry for Education and Culture, Board of Governors, a Division or Instructional Department (Dean, Faculty or Programme Advisory Committee). A discussion concerning a new programme may also be initiated in college governance forums and at leadership levels such as the President's Cabinet, Academic Council, Office of the President or Vice President of Academic Affairs. Regardless of where the discussion begins, a new programme will need to be approved by the Board before related curriculum development work can be undertaken.

B. Charge to the New Programme Committee

The New Programme Committee will be charged by the Vice President with:

1. Electing a Chair from its prescribed membership.
2. Exercising discretion to expand its membership to include additional persons
3. Gathering detailed qualitative and quantitative evidence into a written report.
4. Participating in any public (e.g. industry personnel or workers) meetings and discussions; and
5. Recommending to the President's Cabinet one of the two potential outcomes concerning the proposed programme.

C. New Program Proposal Evaluation Criteria:

Both qualitative and quantitative evidence from internal as well as external sources will need to be evaluated during the discussion concerning a new programme. The Committee shall gather qualitative evidence to assess the programme's alignment with the mission, values, and goals of the College; and access and equity for students. Qualitative factors to be considered may include, but are not limited to:

1. The balance of the college's curriculum;
2. The improvement of student access to educational opportunities;
3. The replication of the programme with existing programme offerings;

¹ This ensures that the College meets U.S. federal requirements that must be monitored by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the agency by which the College is accredited.

4. The ability of the programme to meet standards of outside agencies and licensing or certifying boards;
5. The College's goals and strategies as outlined in the most recent Strategic Plan.

Quantitative evidence may include, but is not limited to:

1. The projected employment demand for the programme;
2. Employment trends;
3. The availability of College resources (facilities, staff, technological support, equipment etc.)
4. Estimated start-up and continuing cost of the programme; including the impact of these on the budget.

D. Discussion Guidelines and Fundamental Considerations:

Guidelines:

- Discussion of new programmes should include faculty, staff, administrators and all parties potentially affected by the decision. External parties may include students, the employing business /industry and the community. Internal parties may include technological support and facilities personnel
- Discussions should be conducted by the Committee in open meetings. The dates, times and locations of these meetings should be widely communicated; using all reasonable means of college communications;
- Discussions should reflect both qualitative and quantitative evidence. Sources of data for all evidence should be clear; and should be cited in the report;
- All Committee discussions and recommendations should be documented.

E. Fundamental Considerations (Why should the College offer this programme at this time?)

Needs of the Territory: Will the proposed programme be an optimal use of the territory's resources in light of budget considerations and the contributions of existing programmes? What are the needs (justifications) for the territory to initiate a new curriculum at this time?

Employer Needs. Will the programme fill demonstrable employer needs within the territory? If so, what BVI and non-BVI market data indicate current unmet employer demand for graduates or completers of such a programme and the designated degree or certificate level? If not, will the programme fill demonstrable non-employment needs in the territory?

Student Needs: Will the programme fill demonstrable student needs in the territory? If so, what BVI and/or non-BVI market data indicate current unmet student demand for such curricula? If not, why does the College anticipate student demand for the programme?

F. New Programme Proposal (NPR)

The report of the Committee should be completed in the form of a New Programme Proposal (NPR). The Proposal should summarize the rationale for developing the programme, the need for it; the nature of the proposed curriculum, the requirements for graduation; identifies the faculty and other programme resource requirements; and the opportunities for graduates. The format of the proposal should be as follows:

1. *Title Page*

- Title of the proposed degree,
- The Department,
- Date the programme is to begin,
- Any licensure or certification requirements;

2. *Programme Objectives*

- Nature of the programme, its objectives, rationale for it, skills or knowledge that students will acquire, and the relationship of the proposed programme to the general field.

3. *Need for the Programme*

- Description of the need (e.g. intellectual, artistic, cultural, social or economic) need for the programme. Employment opportunities should be clearly delineated. Evidence of student demand and projected enrolments for the first five years of the programme should be specified. The enrolment projection should include estimates of full-time, part-time and total number of students anticipated.

4. *Educational Programme*

- Description of the instructional programme, including:
 - Statement of learning outcomes
 - Statement of the measures and strategies that will be used to assess student achievement of the learning outcomes
 - Admission requirements
 - Graduation requirements
 - Curriculum outline of a typical course of study
 - Potential for inter-departmental, or inter-institutional cooperation
 - Transferability of course credits;
 - Potential for articulation with other institutions;
 - Typical course sequence, identifying required and elective courses
 - Potential for collaboration with other College units.

5. *Faculty*

- Qualifications of all existing and needed faculty who will teach in the programme.

6. *Library Resources*

- Assessment of the impact of the new programme will have on Library resources. When new resources are needed for collections or services, a statement must be included describing how existing resources are to be reallocated to recover the new demands.

7. *Technological Resources*

- Assessment of the impact a new programme will have on technological and computer resources within the department and the College.

8. *Additional Documentation*

- Description of additional programme needs (e.g. facilities, equipment) and sources of funding available.

G. Resource Commitments

In order to move forward with the approval process, there must be clarity concerning responsibility for programme costs. To be approved by the President's Cabinet and the Board of Governors, all resource needs, including the need for programme faculty, facilities, technological support, specialized equipment etc. must be identified and fully committed. Programmes that lack clear commitments concerning the required resources will be referred back to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, a process that could delay programme approval. Memoranda of support acknowledging commitments for new resources should be attached to the recommendation by the New Programme Committee.

H. Recommendations of the New Programme Committee

There are two possible recommendations that can be made by the New Programme Committee. A programme can be recommended for approval or not. The recommendation should be based on evidence contained in the qualitative and quantitative criteria; and must be documented in writing by the Committee.

I. Decision-Making Concerning New Programmes

The Committee's recommendation concerning a new programme shall be forwarded to the President's Cabinet by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The recommendation should include clearly stated reasons that support the recommendation that is being made. The President's Cabinet will make a decision concerning whether or not to accept the recommendation of the Committee.

In those circumstances in which the recommendation of the Committee is not accepted, the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs shall promptly communicate the reasons for non-acceptance to the Committee.

The final decision concerning a new programme can only be made, through the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board, by the Board of Governors; on the recommendation of the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and the President.