



**GUIDELINES OF THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM  
COMMITTEE**

As Revised April 2022

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) is a standing committee of the University Senate as defined in part IV-A of the University Senate Charter. Composed of regular and advisory members representing the faculty, administration, and student body, the UCC makes recommendations to the University Senate concerning university-wide academic policies and reviews particular programs and courses to determine whether they meet established standards. Specific functions of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee are covered under UCC Bylaws Section IV. The Charter of the University Senate and the Bylaws of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee govern operation of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. The mission of the UCC is not simply to consider passage of undergraduate curricular and academic proposals but to insure the development of high-quality undergraduate courses, programs, and academic policies that will help the University fulfill its academic mission.

As part of that, the UCC operates under the general idea that the consideration and facilitation of proposals and the implementation of academic courses, programs, and policies are its paramount concerns.

## **II. SERVING EFFECTIVELY ON THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

Being an effective member of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee requires an awareness of the university's curriculum approval process and an understanding of the role UCC members are expected to play in that process. The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee is governed by its Bylaws as approved by this Committee and the University Senate. Meetings of the UCC shall occur at a place and time agreed upon by the Committee at its initial August meeting and will be published on the UCC website.

As noted above, the UCC is a standing committee of the University Senate; it considers academic matters related to undergraduate education (courses, programs, degree requirements, most academic policies, etc., except Colonnade requirements) and makes recommendations for approval by the University Senate. All curricular actions approved by the Senate go to the Provost for approval; in some cases, the Board of Regents and the Council on Postsecondary Education must also approve curricular actions. Proponents should take this timeline into consideration when developing proposals for inclusion in the catalog.

The heaviest burden of responsibility for reviewing and editing curricular and other proposals falls on the departmental and college curriculum committees, whose members are most likely to have the relevant discipline knowledge to ensure that curricular or other academic proposals:

- meet appropriate standards for the discipline, college, or university;
- address the academic and professional needs of students;
- appropriately address the resources necessary for implementation;
- are supported by appropriate scholarship;
- follow "best practices" for the discipline;
- are consistent with state and institutional standards and requirements;
- follow the established formats for curricular or other proposals;
- reflect careful consideration of existing courses and programs; and
- are models of polished writing.

The main purposes of curricular review at the university level are to provide an additional check on the above criteria by persons less closely connected with the discipline from which the proposal originated; to offer opportunities for collaboration across departments/units and colleges; to develop awareness of interconnections among disciplines, programs, courses, faculty, and students; and to prevent undue duplication.

Program-specific proposals for courses, programs, and policies must first be approved by program and departmental/unit curriculum committees (if any) and by the faculty in the department/unit that offers the program or is administratively responsible for the program. Next, the proposal is reviewed by the appropriate college curriculum committee. The subsequent step in the process is determined by the nature of the proposal; some are sent to the Colonnade General Education Committee, some are sent to the Professional Education Council, some are sent to the Graduate Council, and some are sent directly to the UCC. The criteria for determining whether a proposal should go through expedited or full review (and thus which proposals go to which curricular committee next) are explained in the WKU Curricular Workflows section of the WKU Curriculum Manual.

## **A. PREPARING FOR AND ATTENDING UCC MEETINGS**

After receiving notification from the UCC Chair that agenda items have been posted to the website, members should carefully read all proposals prior to the meeting, reviewing for both form and substance. To see the proposals with the changes indicated (where applicable), login to CourseLeaf via the Approver URL posted on the UCC website, and change “Your Role” to “Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.” Members may contact proponents directly to ask questions about the proposals; they should, however, copy the UCC Chair on all email messages. The more that is resolved in advance, the better the proposals are and the more smoothly meetings go. If members have serious objections regarding proposals, they should notify the Chair in advance of the meeting.

Things to consider when reviewing proposals:

### **FORMAT**

- Does the proposal follow the format required by the University Curriculum Committee? Is the proposer contact information listed? Are all required items included in the proposal?
- Is information (other than lists and catalog course descriptions) written in complete and grammatically correct sentences?
- Does this proposal present the complete information specified in the guidelines for the format followed?
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### **COURSE REVISION PROPOSALS**

- Is the abbreviated title appropriate?
- Are prerequisite/corequisite courses clearly described and distinguished from each other?
- Are courses preceding the prerequisite/corequisite courses omitted (as they should be)?
- Is the course catalog listing concise?
- Is the special information about the course included in the course catalog listing?

- Is an appropriate implementation date indicated?
- Are the revisions proposed such that a new course proposal should be submitted instead?

#### NEW COURSE PROPOSALS

- Is the abbreviated title appropriate?
- Are prerequisite/corequisite courses clearly described and distinguished from each other?
- Are courses preceding the prerequisite/corequisite courses omitted (as they should be)?
- Is the course level appropriate to the topic and course objectives?
- Are the course credit hours appropriate to the content, topic, course objectives, and requirements?
- Are the catalog course description, course objectives, course content, and proposed text materials consistent with each other?
- Is the course catalog listing concise?
- Is the special information about the course included in the course catalog listing?
- Does the proposal adequately discuss the relationship of the course to the other specific courses, which are identified by prefix, number and title? That is, does the proposal say more than just that the course doesn't duplicate others, but rather discusses its relationship to other courses, as indicated in the guidelines for these sections?
- Has an appropriate justification for the enrollment estimate been provided?
- Are complete citations provided for tentative texts?
- Is an appropriate implementation date indicated?
- Does the proposed course overlap or impact courses in other programs and colleges? Is there evidence that this has been addressed?

#### PROGRAM REVISION PROPOSALS

- Are the credit hours listed in Program Requirements those for the major/minor/certificate only (*not* the total hours for the degree program)?
- If the revisions involve courses in other departments, have the chairs/directors been consulted?
- Is a rationale included for *each* proposed change?
- Is an appropriate implementation date indicated?
- Are the revisions proposed such that a new program proposal should be submitted instead?

#### NEW PROGRAM (MAJOR, MINOR, CERTIFICATE) PROPOSALS

- For new major programs: have arrangements been made in the Office of Academic Affairs for posting an overview of the new program on the CPE website?
- Is the correct CIP code included?
- If the program includes courses in other departments, have the chairs/directors been consulted?
- For interdisciplinary programs, have other departments been consulted?
- Is the catalog description written in complete sentences?
- Does the catalog description include all required information, including admission or transfer criteria; core, elective, and restricted elective courses; total number of hours in the program; sequence of courses; and other relevant information?
- Is the proposed program compared to *specific* programs in the department, in other departments, and at other institutions?
- Is an appropriate implementation date indicated?

### Attending UCC meetings:

- Members who cannot attend a UCC meeting must arrange for their elected/designated alternates to attend.
- Members who must leave early should also arrange for their elected/designated alternates to replace them.
- When meetings are held in person, members should sit in the area designated for members.
- Members should bring copies of agenda materials, either electronic or paper, and/or notes regarding the proposals.
- Representatives from the college curriculum committees should make note of announcements and information that should be reported back to their respective curriculum committees and deans' offices.

## **B. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS AND PROPOSALS**

- It is the responsibility of the department/program with an item on the action agenda of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee to ensure that a knowledgeable representative—in general the proponent or the chair/director of the department/division housing that program—is present at the UCC meeting when the agenda item is being considered.
- Any action item not approved by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee shall be returned to the college curriculum committee or other sponsoring unit. The unit shall have the opportunity to revise its proposal and resubmit it to the UCC on the next college curriculum committee agenda. Substantive changes should be reviewed through the appropriate curricular bodies. If the proposal is rejected by the UCC a second time, the college curriculum committee or other unit shall have the right to appeal its case to the University Senate by submitting the proposal to the Chair of the University Senate to be placed as an action item on the Senate agenda. If the University Senate rules in favor of the college curriculum committee's or other unit's proposal, the proposal shall be forwarded as a recommendation to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- Proposals may not be substantially revised between the agenda posting on the UCC website and the scheduled UCC meeting. If a proponent must make substantive revisions to a proposal after the agenda has been posted, the proponent is advised to withdraw the proposal and resubmit it on the appropriate college curriculum committee agenda for a future UCC meeting. Depending on the nature of the revisions, it may be necessary to resubmit revised proposals to preceding curricular bodies such as the college curriculum committee.

## **III. NAVIGATING THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

These Guidelines are intended to help proponents navigate the UCC. Passed and approved by the UCC, the Guidelines establish the basic rules for proposal routing and formatting, as well as the other minutia of the committee. It may seem like a laborious process, but while it takes a few months because of meeting schedules it should not be all that difficult.

Keep in mind that the UCC exists to guide, advise, and recommend to the University Senate university-wide academic policies and in particular programs and courses to determine whether

they meet established standards. That means that the proponent will have to do the majority of the work—and in some cases a great deal of work—to bring a new course to final fruition. It may be helpful to think of the process in terms of a grant application. That is, for any new policy, new course, or revision of a course, proponents should think in terms of how to justify that proposal to the University-wide community that is represented by the UCC and the Senate. So, particular care must be taken to get the process right and to present a proposal case in the best way possible. Additionally, UCC documents become part of the permanent record of the University, so proponents should take great care in their preparation.

## **A. PREPARING PROPOSALS FOR SUBMISSION TO THE UCC**

Revisions to already existing courses are relatively straightforward in that the course has usually been taught recently and some faculty member has experience with the course. A faculty member who would like to develop a new course may wish to consider offering it the first time as a special topics course; most departments have course numbers for special topics courses or workshop courses. If the department does not have an appropriate special topics number, the course may also be offered as a temporary course. These two options are good ideas in that it allows someone to “test-drive” the course to gauge student interest, etc. However, the same course should not be taught repeatedly under the special topics number. Instead, a new course proposal should be submitted.

An important consideration for getting a proposal through the UCC is the curricular review workflow. There are two curricular review workflows: full and expedited. Only items going through the full review workflow are reviewed by the UCC. For information about the curricular workflows, see the WKU Curriculum Manual.

## **B. PROPOSAL FORMATS**

Course and program proposals are submitted through the CourseLeaf online curriculum system. Information about these proposals is located in the WKU Curriculum Manual.

## **C. PROPOSAL ROUTING**

Curricular and policy proposals may originate from a number of university units, including departmental programs, departments, schools, institutes, colleges, interdisciplinary programs, the Office of the Registrar, and the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. As a rule, curricular proposals are routed through college dean’s offices as specified in the WKU curricular workflow.

The UCC Chair may refer non-curricular proposals to the Academic Policy Subcommittee of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

WKU has two curricular review workflows available: full and expedited. Full review requires approval by faculty curricular committees, the Dean, Provost, and, in some cases, the Board of Regents. Expedited reviews require approval from the Dean and Provost.

When too many edits are suggested or the proposal is not approved by the UCC, the chair should roll back the proposal. The chair must pick where the proposal will go and give an explanation. If the proposal is sent back to the proponent, it must enter the workflow again.

In either of the workflows, if the Professional Education Council declines to endorse the proposal, the unit responsible for submitting the proposal may withdraw the proposal, make revisions, and re-submit it. The unit also has the option of sending the proposal to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee without the endorsement; however, courses not approved by the Professional Education Council may not be counted toward a program approved for certification by Kentucky's Educational Professional Standards Board.

UCC-approved proposals are forwarded by the UCC Chair to the University Senate as part of a consent agenda. Items approved by the University Senate are forwarded as recommendations to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for final consideration.

#### **IV. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARATION OF AGENDAS BY THE DEANS' OFFICES**

Items approved by the college curriculum committees are automatically sent through the curricular workflow on CourseLeaf.

#### **V. DEADLINES**

The proposal submission schedule for the UCC will be provided on the UCC website. Departmental and college deadlines for submission of curricular and non-curricular proposals vary, so proponents are encouraged to check with their individual departments and colleges. Proponents should consult with their college deans' offices regarding specific college-related requirements. Proponents should also consult with the Professional Education Council, the Colonnade General Education Committee, and the Graduate Council regarding their submission requirements if the proposal requires review by one or more of these committees. Deadlines for submission of proposals to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the University Senate can be found on the online administrative calendar. The UCC calendar, including meeting dates and deadlines for agenda submissions, will be provided on the UCC website.

**CAVEAT:** Only those curricular and non-curricular changes approved by the University Senate and the Provost will be published in university schedule bulletins and catalogs. Therefore, advanced planning is required to ensure that curricular and non-curricular proposals are approved by all committees prior to the preparation of course schedule bulletins and university catalogs.