

PROPOSAL FOR CHANGES TO GOVERNANCE ROUTING WITH RESPECT TO GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Governance Working Group, &
Graduate Education Coordinating Committee¹
November, 2005

INTRODUCTION:

The final report of the Task Force on Graduate Education at the University of Toronto recommended that governance functions should be aligned so that they “appropriately reflect Faculty and Graduate School responsibilities.” This is one of the changes that are intended to “strengthen the profile of graduate education, to assure meaningful student input at all levels of governance, and to increase effective engagement across Faculties, campuses and sites” (Task Force Discussion Paper, April, 2005).

The recommendations of the Task Force imply that a process of scrutiny should be ongoing. Actions associated with graduate education should be scrutinized for their added value, and compared against alternate approaches that could increase that value. Structures associated with graduate education should be framed so that central activities aimed at direct “quality control” are reduced and structures for quality assurance are readily provided. The outcomes sought are graduate programs of even greater strength and quality.

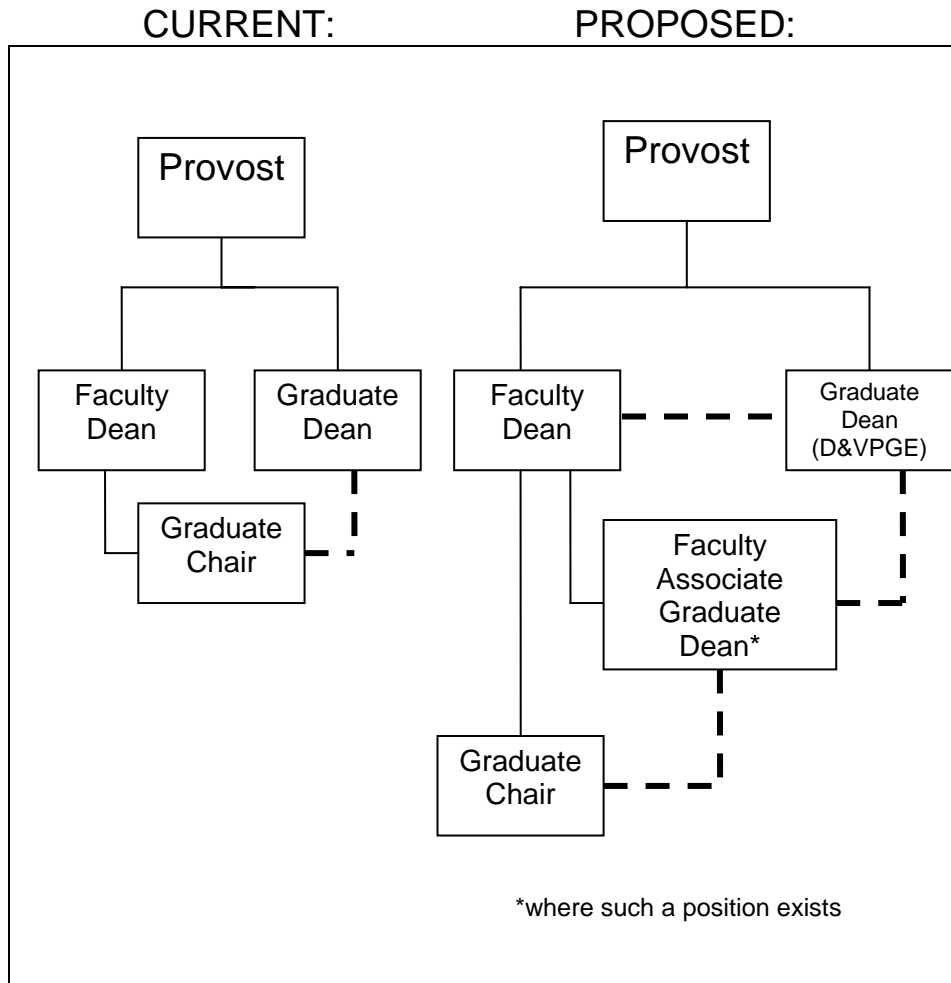
The Task Force identified “moving curriculum changes in existing programs to Faculties” as an action to be addressed immediately. Associated with this change, the Governance Working Group² was charged with developing standardized reporting systems, developing training and support activities, and identifying expectations for Faculty protocols. This paper is a proposal for achieving this goal. Its proposed actions rely in part on new roles that can arise from the re-positioning of the decanal position (since July 1, 2005) as Dean of Graduate Studies and Vice-Provost, Graduate Education (D&VPGE).

Governance and administrative functions are linked. The Administration Working Group has begun its activities, as directed by the Task Force. Recommendations will arise from that work, in due course. The reporting structure that is proposed here will form that basis for those developments. Changes that followed the Sedra-Cohen report (1996) delegated various responsibilities from the graduate dean to the graduate chairs. The current proposal re-positions the reporting lines, moving some types of responsibilities from SGS to the Faculties (see Figure 1). The proposed changes will minimize the dual reporting at the Chair level and will direct the authority on many aspects of graduate program management through the Faculty Dean or designate. There are many aspects to consider in shifting administrative structures to align with this reporting structure, and discussions will continue in the months to come.

While this proposal is framed in the context of the Task Force on Graduate Education, its spirit and content are also consistent with the principles of *Stepping UP*, our strategic plan. The proposed changes will contribute to the linkage of graduate and undergraduate academic programs within each Faculty. Broader communication during the planning of initiatives will highlight the sense of shared ownership, reflecting our institution’s values and diminishing barriers among graduate units.

¹ S. Pfeiffer, R. Desai, A. Sass-Kortsak, A. Kola-Olusanya, J. Mostaghimi, J. DeSilva, J. Cherry, M. Gertler, N. Labrie,

² Graduate Education Coordinating Committee, plus E. Hillan, H. Lasthiotakis, J. Alderdice

Graduate Reporting Structures (fig.1):

PRINCIPLES:

Fiscal and governance responsibilities are linked. The work of the Governance Working Group is predicated on the understanding that the departments³ and Faculties that have budgetary responsibility for graduate program operation should in all instances have authority over decisions about those programs, in a manner that assures an appropriate level of review and oversight. University policy on graduate affairs (“the unitary graduate school”) will be respected, while Faculties will achieve more autonomy in their graduate programs.

Communication and consultation are important. Information about proposed and approved changes to existing graduate programs must be readily available across the institution, with a mechanism identified for substantive discussion of those proposals. Our graduate enterprise is the largest in the province, yet graduate activities can be overshadowed by our substantially larger undergraduate enterprise. Strong lines of communication will minimize redundancy and maximize interdisciplinary connections.

Simplify procedures, if possible. Procedures should be simplified, while maintaining accountability. There should be fewer steps between the proposal of a change and the consideration for approval of that change. To that end, several common categories of program change will be considered at the Faculty level, rather than by SGS. Benefits that should accrue from the proposed simplification include the development of more staff and faculty with expertise in graduate curriculum management, and an uncontested sense of responsibility for the quality of graduate programs within the departments that offer them.

THEMES THAT UNDERLIE THE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Matters of graduate policy:

Most activities of the Council of the School of Graduate Studies, as defined in the statute (<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/current/governance/statute/index.asp>), are not addressed in this document. These include matters of establishing graduate departments, deciding upon graduate policy, and having an Academic Appeals Board. The Council of SGS includes elected graduate faculty and graduate students from across the four disciplinary divisions. As such, it is a forum for expert and focused consideration of the quality of U of T's graduate policies and programs, in the context of our unitary Graduate School. The By-Laws of the Ontario Council of Graduate Schools specify,

“Each university, acting through the Dean of Graduate Studies, is expected to submit each new graduate program for appraisal before the university senate gives final approval for its implementation. No university may begin operation of a proposed new graduate program (i.e., process applications and admit students) until has been approved to commence by OCGS.”

(<http://ocgs.cou.on.ca/bin/home/byLaws.cfm>).

The same expectation for dual approval applies to other major program initiatives. The SGS Council remains the vehicle for consideration of new graduate policies, policy changes, any new program proposals and other initiatives prior to their submission to OCGS.

³ Graduate Department, Centre or Institute

Changes to reporting structure and name of SGS Council:

It is proposed that the reporting structure and name of the SGS Council be changed. Re-titled the Graduate Education Council (GEC), this body will report to, and work with, relevant bodies of Governing Council. The Vice-Provost Graduate Education (D&VPGE) is both the chair of the Council and an assessor to the Academic Policy & Programs (AP&P) Committee. Interactions between the two bodies will be facilitated through the office of the Vice-Provost, Graduate Education (D&VPGE). This change will clearly reflect the fact that oversight for quality in graduate programs continues to be the responsibility of the Vice-President and Provost and the Academic Board.

SGS Council Divisional Executive Committees:

The changes proposed in this discussion paper will lead to amending the SGS statute in a number of matters. These include the Council name and the removal of the SGS Council Divisional Executive Committees, which have been removed from the governance routing proposed here. The statute revision will need to be approved by SGS Council and then by Academic Board. It is proposed that the stated role of the Executive Committees, to “consider and approve matters of policy, new developments, program changes, graduate courses to be included in the calendar; and calendar submissions” will in large part be undertaken by the Faculties. The provision of inter-program scrutiny and oversight when changes are proposed will be achieved through the internet posting of proposed changes and subsequent discussion, supported by SGS. Indeed, the breadth of information exchange should be widened in this manner.

SGS decanal portfolios:

It is suggested in the context of a re-structuring of the SGS decanal portfolios that the four discontinued Executive Committees be replaced by two multidisciplinary, consultative standing committees of the Graduate Education Council. They will be organized around *Student Matters* and *Program Matters*. Membership on each of the committees will span the four divisions, and will include both graduate faculty and graduate students. They will be chaired by two Vice-Deans who will hold portfolios in Student Matters and Program Matters (a change from one Vice-Dean and four Associate Deans, assigned by division). Matters of graduate policy will be reviewed by the appropriate committee(s) prior to consideration by the Graduate Education Council. The committees will also be a venue for development of new initiatives and improvements to current practice in graduate education and the graduate student experience at University of Toronto. (see Appendix 1).

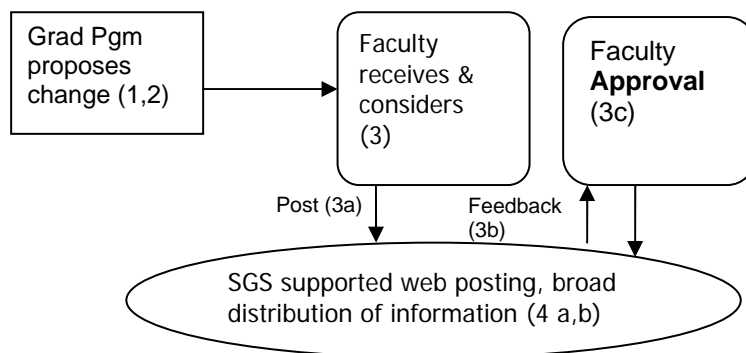
PROPOSED CHANGES TO ROUTING:

1. Minor course changes: No changes are proposed to how this category of activities is handled. They are currently within the jurisdiction of the graduate unit and will remain so. Graduate units should consult SGS staff regarding procedures. The Faculty should be consulted as appropriate and should be informed in all instances (For listing, see appendix 2).

2. Minor program changes: This category includes minor program changes that do not hold significant implications for the nature of the program or the needs of the student. Such items currently go to either an SGS Associate Dean or to the SGS Divisional Executive for approval, then on to SGS Council and the office of the Provost for information (For listing, see appendix 2).

It is proposed that they will go through Faculty governance, instead, continuing with the provision of information to the office of the Provost, through the Vice-Provost Graduate Education (D&VPGE). As illustrated in figure 2, proposed changes will be conveyed by program representatives to designated recipients at the Faculty. Once it is established that the necessary information has been provided and that the proposal is consistent with policy, the Faculty will post the proposal on a web site, through which consultation will occur. Subsequent to a consultative period and contingent on the input received, a designated Faculty body will consider the proposal, for final approval. Characteristics of this process are outlined, below.

Minor Program Changes, All Faculties (fig. 2):



- (1) SGS provides current policy and guidelines for department preparation of proposal (new course, changes to course, curriculum changes, and other matters).
- (2) It is expected that departmental action will include the involvement of elected (not co-opted) graduate student(s).
- (3) The steps taken by each Faculty may differ, as each has its own Constitution. It is expected that the body that considers proposed changes will include *at minimum*: graduate faculty and elected graduate student(s) as voting members, graduate administrative staff from graduate unit(s); the Vice-Provost, Graduate Education (D&VPGE) will be a member, ex officio.
 - a. When the proposal is received, with the approval of the Faculty dean or designate, it is posted on the web for information, with an indication of a route for comments; posting will be for a specified and standard time, normally at least 30 calendar days, on a schedule to be determined with reference to existing governance cycles.
 - b. The Faculty will compile all the feedback it receives; if the initiative is going to subsequent governance bodies (major changes, see below), the Faculty will confirm that those concerns have been addressed.
 - c. Following approval, the Faculty re-posts or affirms the item on the web space. This information will be conveyed by the Vice-Provost, Graduate Education (D&VPGE) to the office of the Provost, for information. The Faculty makes the change to the ROSI posting, authorizes the department to proceed, and to include the change in the program's Graduate Calendar copy, if appropriate.
- (4) Secure web space, with *write* access for staff supporting Faculty curriculum committees, *read* access for the university community;
 - a) posting of PROPOSED program changes, including review by SGS relating to existing policy, and by interested parties in other Faculties, a time period for feedback to the proposing Faculty; SGS will provide regular notification of new postings, with links to facilitate review.
 - b) posting of APPROVED program changes

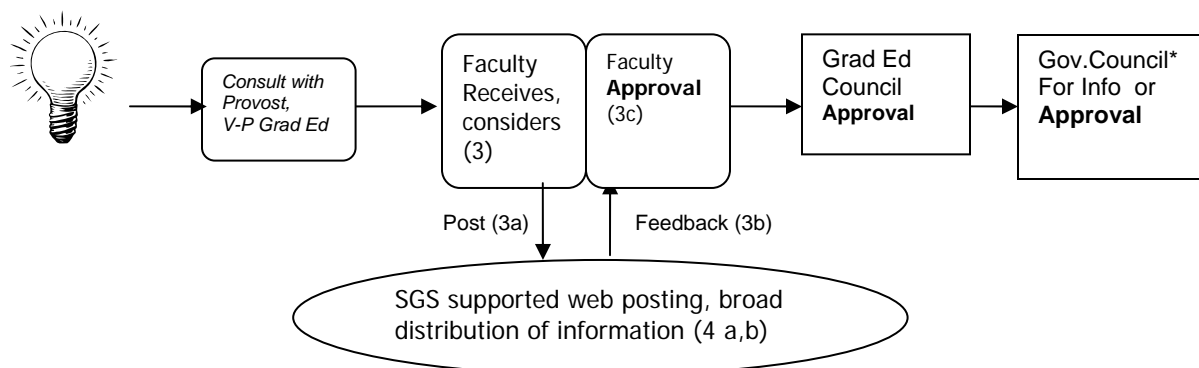
3. Program Initiatives and Major Program Changes: Most of the changes in this category currently go to SGS Divisional Executives; in all instances they go to SGS Council for approval, then to one or more committees of Governing Council for information or approval (For listing, see appendix 2)

It is proposed that changes in this category will first go through the Faculty governance step and undergo broad communication through web posting (as described in the discussion of minor program changes) instead of going to the SGS Divisional Executives. We recommend that some of these items be delegated by AP&P to the Graduate Education Council, with annual reporting to AP&P, namely those that now go to Academic Policy & Programs (A,P&P) for approval or information and go to OCGS for information.

It will continue to be very important for units to inform the office of the Provost of plans for major initiatives. They are advised to work closely from the outset with the office of the Vice-Provost, Graduate Education (D&VPGE) in the preparation of new initiatives and major changes. As noted in the *Policy for Assessment and Review of Academic Programs and Units*, “proposal assessment is a critical process that ensures the quality and merit of the proposal is fully developed before entering governance so that appropriate decisions can be made by Governing Council as to whether the program or unit should be established.” (<http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/English/page-6-12958-1.html>) In tandem with University processes, the evaluative criteria of OCGS can and should be incorporated into a unit’s plans. (<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/gradadmin/admin/periodicappraisalguide.asp>)

Major Program Changes and New Initiatives (fig. 3):

An initiative may come from an existing program, or from elsewhere; numbered footnotes refer to text of figure 2.



*Indicates one or more committees of Governing Council, as required; see Appendix 2.

NEXT STEPS:

Following broad consultation, and acceptance in principle by SGS Council and AP&P, the time line will be:

By February 1, 2006, each Faculty will be asked to respond to the Vice-Provost, graduate education, describing the manner in which it will comply with these changes to governance routing (for specific expectations, see especially the notes to Figure 2). Following review, each Faculty will undertake to have appropriate mechanisms in place by July 1, 2006.

By July 1, 2006, the School of Graduate Studies will have in place a site for web posting, guidelines for its use, and staff who will be designated to facilitate information exchange through regular emailed notifications of new postings, with links.

Changes to the SGS Council statute will be made prior to July 1, 2006, in tandem with possible changes to individual Faculty constitutions.

APPENDIX 1

PROPOSED CHANGES TO SGS DECANAL PORTFOLIOS: from six to three

For several years, the decanal responsibilities within the School of Graduate Studies have been shared among six people: a dean (1.0 FTE), a vice-dean (0.75 FTE), and four associated deans (0.5 FTE each). The vice-dean holds special responsibilities for administration of the SGS Centres and Institutes, the financial management of SGS including graduate scholarships and bursaries, and collaborative graduate programs. Each associate dean carries a broad range of responsibilities within one disciplinary division, including service on tenure review committees in that division. The dean maintains oversight over all activities, including policy review and development, and holds particular responsibility for various matters.

BACKGROUND AND COMPARATORS

Among North American universities of our size, there is little evidence of division of responsibilities based on disciplines. A review of twelve large schools (one Canadian) indicated that most have a bipartite division, students and programs, augmented by other task-based portfolios, like diversity, program review, and scholarships. There are some positions that include specific disciplinary foci, but comparators seem to favor the commingling of disciplines, rather than their separation.

Institutions of our size normally have more decanal and staff positions than are proposed here. At UBC, for example, there are four associate deans with responsibilities for: policy and program review; student academic services; awards; research and faculty development. The University of California at Berkeley has three associate deans with responsibilities for: admission, degrees and appointments; information technology and program review. Some of our sister institutions in Ontario use a disciplinary divisional model (cf. three at McMaster), but others identify the associate deans by topics of responsibility (cf. two associate deans at York).

The U of T's four SGS divisional associate dean positions have been in place since 1967. They provide assistance and leadership in disciplinary contexts. Such contexts can have distinct traditions and budgetary features. The value of the divisional dean's role is unquestioned and well established. Aspects of these roles have been embraced by the Faculty-based Associate- and Vice-Deans who hold portfolios related to graduate education. With the creation of the Faculty positions, the number of administrators with graduate responsibilities has expanded substantially in the past few years. At the same time, the number of programs has increased (from 98 in 1997-98 to over 150 today), the number of graduate students has grown, and the graduate aspirations of UTM and UTSC have been articulated and recognized. Much of our activity is now cross-divisional, as interdisciplinary programs have become more common.

PROPOSED NEW FRAMEWORK

Despite the increased activity in graduate education, the SGS decanal group can be reduced in size. Considering the importance of consistency in the application of policy, the University of Toronto will be better served by re-framing the SGS positions so that SGS deans hold responsibility for clearly delimited task groupings.

It is proposed that the portfolios of the Vice-Dean and four associate deans be compressed, and that the work be undertaken by two vice-deans (0.8 FTE each). One vice-dean will focus on student matters and one will focus on program matters, both

working across all disciplinary divisions. Recruitment of the deans, which will normally be for five year terms, will include consideration of the importance of disciplinary breadth among the deans. From time to time, as special projects require concentrated attention, faculty members may be seconded to take focused leadership roles. Such assignments will be associated with the development and stewardship of new initiatives, or oversight of policy reviews.

The Graduate School needs to help Faculty-based administrators stay abreast of parallel developments across our institution; to provide vehicles for training and support; and to stand ready to develop institutional policy in support of their collective aspirations. To establish strong communication and linkages, it is proposed that the SGS Dean should regularly convene the group of Faculty-based deans, in concert with the SGS deans, thus merging developing needs with the traditional SGS Committee of Deans (CoD).

The proposed changes will facilitate the maintenance of expertise and the commitment to improvement on institution-wide issues such as time to degree, graduation rate and student experience, as well as other indicators of graduate quality. Identification of a Vice-Dean for Student Matters will clearly indicate our commitment to our students. This position will create a locus for new initiatives, and should regularize the application of consultation and mediation in problem situations. It is intended that the activities of the current four associate dean roles will exist within the new structure, which includes the proposed changes to governance routing. No matters are to be lost. The challenge to the structure will be to encourage interconnectedness among programs that have common disciplinary bases (previously supported by the Divisional Executive committees), but this challenge can be met.

PROPOSED RESPONSIBILITIES for the two new positions:

Vice-Dean for Students (DSM):

- Graduate Education Council Committee for Student Matters (chair)*
- Admissions and Programs Committee (co-chair with DPM)
- Fellowships & bursaries
- Recruitment, Diversity & Community
- International students
- Mediation and consultation
- Graduate House, ELWS and other SGS-based student services
- As delegated by Dean:
 - Tenure hearings
 - Search committees

Vice-Dean for Programs (DPM):

- Graduate Education Council Committee for Program Matters (chair)*
- Admissions and Programs Committee (co-chair with DSM)
- New program development (assisting Dean)
- Appraisals of existing programs (e.g. OCGS)
- Program modifications, incl. activities assoc. with new governance routing
- Final Oral Examinations
- SGS Centres & Institutes and other SGS-based program support matters
- As delegated by Dean:
 - Tenure hearings
 - Search committees

*The two new committees, for Student Matters and for Program Matters, will replace the SGS Council Divisional Executive committees. Each committee's voting membership will be formed from the membership of the Divisional Executives, namely students who have been elected to the Graduate Education Council (six on each committee), and graduate coordinators whose home units include all four Divisions. Membership will be for two years, one year for student members (renewable once); one quarter of all graduate units will be represented on each committee. This will create committees of approximately 30 members. Memberships will rotate so that each unit will sit on each committee for a two year term within an eight year cycle. It is envisioned that the agendas of these committees will be regularly conveyed to all graduate coordinators and graduate administrators, who are welcome to attend committee meetings.

A NOTE ON TENURE HEARINGS

The graduate deans will continue to serve as tenure assessors, but their involvement will be augmented through a modest expansion of the pool of senior faculty tenure assessors who can be delegated to represent the Dean of SGS. This expansion has been initiated in a small way this year. Each assessor will be asked to serve on 5-6 files per year, for a three year period. Distributing the responsibility for representing the Graduate School on tenure cases to a slightly expanded group will allow the work of the Graduate School to continue during the winter term, during which most tenure deliberations occur. It also gives the institution the benefit of the wisdom and experience of senior scholars in this context.

APPENDIX 2

TABULATION OF GRADUATE PROGRAM ITEMS, IN RELATION TO GOVERNANCE ROUTING

ITEMS THAT DO NOT GO TO ACADEMIC POLICY AND PROGRAMS:

In the parlance of the Committee on Academic Policy & Programs (AP&P), the items listed under minor course and program changes are “minor calendar changes, such as the addition or deletion of a course, without significant implications for the nature of the program or the needs of students.” As such, they are not considered by AP&P.

Minor course changes (unit approval is final)

- Splitting of full course into two halves
- Amalgamating two half courses into a full course
- Re-naming a course
- Re-numbering a course
- New designator
- Course offered/not offered
- Course deletion

Minor program changes (Faculty approval is final)

- new course
- extended or continuous course
- change of timing of existing required element (e.g. deadlines for completion of qualifying or comprehensive examinations)
- course weight change
- new delivery option within an existing field (e.g. coursework-only, internship, etc.)
- Temporary cessation of program admission
- Collaborative and combined program curriculum changes, changes to Memoranda of Agreement (MOA)
 - If changes involve a multi-Faculty program, the program director will contact the Vice-Provost, Graduate Education regarding governance routing

ITEMS THAT GO TO ACADEMIC POLICY AND PROGRAMS:

Program Initiatives and Major Program Changes (Faculty approval is not final)

Items in this table follow various pathways, subject to current Governing Council and OCGS policies. They are organized here into groups based on the required Governing Council actions. Italicized subheadings refer to AP&P categories. The final column indicates which items go to OCGS for approval.

ITEM	CURRENT Approval route	PROPOSED Approval route	OCGS Approv.
To AP&P for Information			
New collaborative program (one or more Faculties)	Approval: SGS Council Information: AP&P	Approval: GEC Annual report for information to AP&P	✓
Flexible-delivery option to PhD (individual program)	Approval: SGS Council Information: AP&P	Approval: GEC Annual report for information to AP&P	
New combined programs where the requirements of the estab. programs are not changed	Approval: SGS Council Information: AP&P	Approval: GEC Annual report for information to AP&P	✓
New field in an existing degree	Approval: SGS Council Information: AP&P	Approval: GEC Annual report for information to AP&P	✓
<i>"Minor changes within degree programs":</i>			
Program requirement and structure changes, all program types	Approval: SGS Council Information: AP&P	Approval: GEC Annual report for information to AP&P	✓
Field name change	Approval: SGS Council Information: AP&P	Approval: GEC Annual report for information to AP&P	(✓)
New delivery mode of existing program	Approval: SGS Council Information: AP&P	Approval: GEC Annual report for information to AP&P	✓
To AP&P for approval (annual basis):			
Admission requirement changes	Approval: SGS Council Approval: AP&P	Delegated for approval to GEC; Annual report for info to AP&P	
Admission direct to PhD (individual program)	Approval: SGS Council Approval: AP&P	Delegated for approval to GEC; Annual report for info to AP&P	
To AP&P and Planning & Budget, to Academic Board for approval:			
Program closure (only for main degree, not collaborative or combined)	Approval: SGS Council Recommended to Academic Board by AP&P & P&B	Approval: GEC Recommended to Academic Board by AP&P & P&B	
<i>"Changes which establish a new degree program, or change an existing degree, diploma or post-secondary certificate programs with resulting resource implications, or establish new academic directions for a Faculty, or are anticipated to have significant impact on relationships amongst divisions or with the public, or involve joint programs with external institutions":</i>			
New graduate degree program	Approval: SGS Council Recommended to Academic Board by AP&P & P&B Governing Council	Approval: GEC Recommended to Academic Board by AP&P & P&B Governing Council	✓
New graduate diploma	Approval: SGS Council Recommended to Academic Board by AP&P & P&B Governing Council	Approval: GEC Recommended to Academic Board by AP&P & P&B Governing Council	✓
Joint graduate programs with other institutions (one or more Faculties)	Approval: SGS Council Recommended to Academic Board by AP&P & P&B	Approval: GEC Recommended to Academic Board by AP&P & P&B	✓
Graduate program changes that affect a Memorandum of Agreement	Approval: SGS Council Subsequent steps determined by context	Approval: GEC Subsequent steps determined by context	(✓)
Graduate program name change	Approval: SGS Council, AP&P info or approval (depends on context)	Approval: GEC AP&P info or approval (depends on context)	
Graduate department name change	Approval: SGS Council Academic Board, Exec. Cte.	Approval: GEC Academic Board, Exec. Committee	