

FOR APPROVAL

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: UTM Academic Affairs Committee

SPONSOR: Professor William A. Gough, Interim Vice-Principal Academic & Dean
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PRESENTER: Professor Bryan Stewart, Vice-Dean, Academic Programs
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DATE: May 1, 2025, for May 8, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 3 (b)

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Program Closure: Specialist in Environmental Geosciences, Co-op Internship Program (CIP) Stream, UTM

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The UTM Academic Affairs Committee is responsible major and minor modifications to existing degree programs. All major modifications shall be reported annually for information to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs.

GOVERNANCE PATH:

1. UTM Academic Affairs Committee [For Approval] (May 8, 2025)

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

No previous action taken.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The Departments of Chemical & Physical Sciences (CPS) and Geography, Geomatics and Environment (GGE) at UTM proposed to close the Specialist program in Environmental Geosciences, and its associated stream in the UTM Co-op Internship Program (UTMCIP).

Beginning in Fall 2024, the UTM Co-op Internship Program (UTMCIP) launched among select academic programs offered by five participating academic units (Biology; Chemical & Physical Sciences (CPS); Economics; Institute of Communication, Culture, Information & Technology; Mathematical & Computational Sciences). Students enrolled in the UTMCIIP stream of their

Program of Study complete mandatory Work-Readiness Modules, followed by a 12- or 16-month paid, full-time, academically related work experience. Students that complete the UTMCIIP graduate with an acknowledgement (“UTM Co-op Internship Program”) on their transcript.

The UTMCIIP stream attached to the “parent” Specialist in Environmental Geosciences (ERSPE1253) program received governance approval in January 2024 as part of a major modification proposal including 26 academic programs. Unfortunately, the intention to close the parent Specialist program was not known until after this stream received governance approval. This UTMCIIP stream has no students enrolled – neither currently, nor in the past. It is anticipated this stream closure will not negatively impact students because there are other UTMCIIP stream options available for students who are interested in studying this subject area, namely with Earth Science specialist. Closing the stream will have no impact on the CPS or GGE Depts since the stream was never formally opened to enrolment.

A separate proposal to close the specialist, effective August 31, 2025 is being brought forward to governance to be approved at the Committee for Academic Policy and Programs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications to the campus operating budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Be it Resolved,

THAT the Closure of the Specialist in Environmental Geosciences, Co-op Internship Program (CIP) stream, UTM, as detailed in the proposal dated March 7, 2025, to which admissions were administratively suspended on October 25, 2024, be approved, effective August 31, 2025.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

Closure of an Existing Program or Program Structure (Graduate or Undergraduate)

University of Toronto Proposal:

Closure of an Existing Program or Program Structure (Graduate or Undergraduate)

Closure proposed; please specify precisely what is being closed: i.e., field, certificate, option within a program (e.g., specialist, part-time option), entire program or degree.	UTMCIP Stream in the specialist in Environmental Geosciences undergraduate program (ERCIP1253)
Department/unit if applicable:	Department of Chemical and Physical Sciences and Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment
Faculty/academic division:	University of Toronto Mississauga
Department/unit contact:	Claudiu Gradinaru Associate Professor and Department Chair cpschair.utm@utoronto.ca
Faculty/academic division contact:	Bryan Stewart Vice-Dean, Academic Programs vdacademicprog.utm@utoronto.ca Ferzeen Sammy Manager, Academic Programs, Reviews, and Quality Assurance ferzeen.sammy@utoronto.ca
Date when admissions were administratively suspended:	October 25, 2024
Effective date of full closure of program: i.e., date by which students currently in the program are expected to graduate.	August 31, 2025
Version date: please change as you edit this proposal.	March 7, 2025

Framework for UTQAP closures:

UTQAP processes support a structured approach for creating, reflecting on, assessing, and developing plans to change and improve academic programs and units in the context of institutional and divisional commitments and priorities.

The University of Toronto (U of T), in its [*Statement of Institutional Purpose*](#) (1992), articulates its mission as a commitment “to being an internationally significant research university, with undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs of excellent quality.” Thus “quality assurance through assessment of new program proposals and review of academic programs and units in which they reside is a priority for the University...:

The quality of the scholarship of the faculty, and the degree to which that scholarship is brought to bear in teaching are the foundations of academic excellence. More generally, all of the factors that contribute to collegial and scholarly life —academic and administrative complement, research and scholarly activity, infrastructure, governance, etc.—bear on the quality of academic programs and the broad educational experience of students. ([*Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units*](#) (2010))

The University’s approach to quality assurance is built on two primary indicators of academic excellence: the quality of the scholarship and research of faculty; and the success with which that scholarship and research is brought to bear on the achievement of Degree Level Expectations.

These indicators are assessed by determining how our scholarship, research and programs compare to those of our international peer institutions and how well our programs meet their Degree Level Expectations.

Program and Program Structure Closure

Proposals for program closures are vehicles of academic change. The University of Toronto views the closing of academic activities as a normal and positive part of quality assurance and program evolution. There are a number of possible reasons for closing a program including low enrolment, a changing disciplinary landscape and poor quality of the academic program. These reasons may be articulated in external review reports or may be identified by members of the University community.

This template (last updated by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs on May 28, 2024) aligns with UTQAP requirements and will help to ensure that all evaluation criteria established by the Quality Council are addressed in bringing forward a proposal. Divisions may have additional requirements that should be integrated into the proposal.

Steps	Dates
Decanal sign-off	March 30, 2025
VPAP sign-off	March 12, 2025
Faculty/divisional council (closure of program structures; freestanding minors; fields; concentrations; category 1 certificates; etc.)	UTM AAC May 8, 2025
AP&P (closure of undergraduate specialists; majors; diplomas)	N/A
Academic Board (closure of degree; graduate program; joint program)	N/A
Executive Committee of Governing Council (confirmation of approval of degree, grad program, joint program closures)	N/A
Inclusion in annual report to Quality Council	July 2025

1 Executive Summary

Please provide a brief summary of the closure being proposed.

Beginning in Fall 2024, the UTM Co-op Internship Program (UTMCIP) launched within select academic programs offered by five participating academic units (Biology; Chemical & Physical Sciences (CPS); Economics; Institute of Communication, Culture, Information & Technology; Mathematical & Computational Sciences). Students enrolled in the UTMCIP stream of their Program of Study complete mandatory Work-Readiness Modules, followed by a 12- or 16-month paid, full-time, academically related work experience. Students who complete the UTMCIP graduate with an acknowledgement (“UTM Co-op Internship Program”) on their transcripts.

This UTMCIP stream, attached to the “parent” specialist program in Environmental Geosciences (ERSPE1253), received governance approval in January 2024 as part of a major modification proposal that included 20 academic programs (6 of which were from within the CPS department).

At the same time that governance submission and approval was occurring for this UTMCIP, the CPS department and the Department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment (GGE) had begun the process of program closure for the Environmental Geosciences specialist program, including suspending admissions in Fall 2024. Unfortunately, it had not been identified that the “parent” specialist program had very low enrolment and was already planned for full closure until after the UTMCIP stream

was approved. Therefore, this stream closure is now a necessary step to complete the specialist program closure.

The specialist program closure and UTMCIIP stream closure proposals are being submitted simultaneously for governance approval.

This UTMCIIP stream has no students enrolled – neither currently, nor in the past. It is anticipated this stream closure will not negatively impact students because other UTMCIIP stream options are available for students interested in this subject area, namely the Earth Science specialist program (ERCIP1465). Closing the stream will have almost no impact on the CPS or GGE departments since the stream was never formally opened to enrolment.

Table 1: Program Enrolment and Graduation

Degree	UTM Start Session	Program Start Session	Program Completion Session	Graduation Session	Degree Conferral Date
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The UTMCIIP Stream has not had any historical enrolments.

2 Academic Rationale

- **Discuss the academic rationale for the closure including alignment with the unit's academic plan and connection to any previous reviews.**
- **Discuss any resource implications.**

Since 2017, the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) has framed experiential education as a core element of its campus mission, vision, and identity. Beginning in Fall 2024, the UTM Co-op Internship Program (UTMCIIP) launched within select academic programs offered by five participating academic units (Biology; Chemical & Physical Sciences; Economics; Institute of Communication, Culture, Information & Technology; Mathematical & Computational Sciences). Students enrolled in the UTMCIIP stream of their Program of Study complete mandatory Work-Readiness Modules, followed by a 12- or 16-month paid, full-time, academically related work experience. The time to degree completion for students enrolled in the UTMCIIP is normally 5 years. Students who complete the UTMCIIP graduate with an acknowledgement (“UTM Co-op Internship Program”) on their transcripts.

This UTMCIIP stream, attached to the “parent” specialist program in Environmental Geosciences (ERSPE1253), received governance approval in January 2024 as part of a major modification proposal that included 20 academic programs (6 of which were from within the CPS department).

At the same time that governance submission and approval was occurring for this UTMCIIP, the CPS and GGE departments had begun the process of program closure for the Environmental Geosciences specialist program, including suspending admissions in Fall 2024. Unfortunately, it had not been identified that the “parent” specialist program had very low enrolment and was already planned for full closure until after the UTMCIIP stream was approved. Therefore, this stream closure is now a necessary step to complete the specialist program closure.

The specialist program closure and UTMCIIP stream closure proposals are being submitted simultaneously for governance approval.

The “parent” specialist program was launched in 2014 as a joint program between the CPS and GGE departments. The Environmental Geosciences specialist program (ERSPE1253) was created with the objective of fulfilling the knowledge requirements for certification as a Professional Geoscientist (P.Geo.) in conformity with the stipulations of the Association of Professional Geoscientists of Ontario (APGO) and the Canadian Council of Professional Geoscientists (CCPG). The original course plan led students towards a P.Geo. designation upon graduation and individual application through the APGO. However, due to several factors, the program did not reach its intended goals, and it was decided to be closed. In 2019-2020, the CPS department restructured the curricula of two programs, including the Earth Science specialist program (ERSPE1465), which rendered the Environmental Geosciences program obsolete. As a result, the administering departments decided to suspend admissions to the specialist, and submit a proposal for program closure. Therefore, the accompanying UTMCIIP stream is being proposed for closure now, as well.

Students interested in this field of study and aiming to meet APGO requirements can now follow one of the two pathways in the Earth Science specialist program (Resources, Hazards & Tectonics Pathway, or Earth, Climate, & Life Pathway) to achieve this outcome. The Earth Science specialist program has an option for UTMCIIP stream as well. Therefore, closing this stream within the Environmental Geosciences specialist program will not reduce UTMCIIP options for students.

Closure of this stream will not have any resource implications on either the GGE or CPS departments, or centrally within the Experiential Education Unit (EEU) since there are no dedicated resources for this particular stream. However, its closure may free up resources required to administer UTMCIIP streams.

3 Impact of Closure on Divisional and Other Programs/Units

- **Discuss the impact on the nature and quality of the division's program of study.**
- **Discuss the impact of closure on other units including inter-divisional and inter-institutional agreements/contracts.**

Closure of the stream has no impact on planned course offerings, or any other programs of study.

4 Impact on Students

Please provide the current enrolment showing breakdown by year of study in the program or program option being closed.

4.1 Table 2: Undergraduate

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Current enrolment	0	0	0	0

Referring to the table above, discuss the impact on and accommodation of any students currently enrolled in the program.

There are no students currently nor historically enrolled in the program; therefore, no accommodation plan is needed.

Any students interested in a UTMCIIP stream in this area of study can pursue this option through the Earth Science specialist program.

Students are informed about current offerings in UTMCIIP streams through the EEU website (link: [Experiential Education Unit](#)). This information is updated regularly, and students can contact the EEU or academic unit for advising on program options. As well, the GGE and CPS Departmental Advisors are aware of the program and stream closure proposals and are equipped to advise students on current program and UTMCIIP stream options.

5 Consultation

- **Discuss consultation with affected divisions, units, faculty and students.**

In addition to consultations undertaken for the “parent” specialist program closure including both administering Department Chairs, faculty and staff, consultation for the UTMCIIP stream closure included the EEU Director and Managers in Fall 2024.

There are no current students enrolled in the stream or in the “parent” specialist program.