



March 24, 2011

Memorandum to: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

From: Andrea Sass-Kortsak

Subject: **Proposal to Revise the Terms of Reference Concerning Approval and Review of Academic Programs**

The Governing Council, at its meeting of June 24, 2010, approved the revised Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs. The revisions reflected the new Ontario Quality Assurance Framework and the recommendations of the 2008 Undergraduate Program Review Audit. Under the provisions of the revised Policy and the Quality Assurance Framework, the Office of the Vice-President and Provost has established a detailed University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (the U.T.QAP), which has been submitted (a) to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs, the Academic Board and the Governing Council for information, and (b) to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (the “Quality Council”) for ratification.

The revised Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs requires the external appraisal of all proposals for new undergraduate and graduate programs as part of the development process. It also requires the cyclical review of all established programs and their units. Cyclical reviews include external evaluations carried out by a committee consisting wholly or partly of external reviewers. The new Policy sets a very high standard for the program review process. The previous reviews of graduate programs by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies, as well as current accreditation reviews of professional programs, could be described as “threshold reviews” intended to ensure that “mutually agreed-upon threshold standards of quality are maintained.”¹ The revised Policy stipulates that the review process will “address the quality of programs, and how the programs and the units in which they reside compare to the best in their field among international peer institutions.”²

Under the revised Quality Assurance Process, Governing Council oversight of the process has been strengthened substantially. First, an external appraisal of all new program proposals will now occur prior to those proposals coming forward for governance approval, and the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) will see the appraisal reports. Second, in the case of the cyclical reviews, AP&P will see reviews of both graduate and undergraduate programs and units; previously reviews of

¹ Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units,” p. 2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

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graduate programs were prepared by and for the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies. Third, review reports will be submitted to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs twice annually. This will allow more time for Committee discussion. Fourth, reviews had previously been submitted on a slip-year basis to enable Deans to complete their responses and to begin implementation of changes. Henceforward, reviews will generally be presented to the Committee within six months of their completion, enabling more timely consideration. Finally, the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs will be able henceforward to request follow-up reports on areas of concern, which reports would normally be provided in one year's time. AP&P will continue to forward its Report, along with a compendium of review reports, to the Agenda Committee of the Academic Board, which will identify any academic issues that require further consideration by the Academic Board. The compendium of reviews, including the report of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs, will continue to be forwarded to the Academic Board, the Executive Committee of Governing Council, and the Governing Council.

The strengthened process for the approval and review of programs contained in the University's Quality Assurance Process enables the delegation of authority for approval of modifications of existing programs to the Councils of the academic divisions. The delegation is consistent with the Governing Council's approval, on October 28, 2010, of recommendation 15 of the Task Force on Governance, which calls for delegation of authority with respect to transactional matters to the lowest appropriate level of governance. The University's Quality Assurance Process stipulates that an annual report of major modifications to programs approved by the divisional Councils will be prepared by the Office of the Vice-President and Provost and submitted to the Quality Council. That report will also be provided to AP&P for information.

The purpose of this proposal is to recommend amendments to the terms of reference of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs to implement the new Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and the new Quality Assurance Process.

Section 3, Function

Section 3 of the Terms of Reference of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs outlines the general functions of the Committee. The amendments proposed below deal solely with those Committee functions concerning academic programs and the review of academic programs and units. They:

- maintain the requirement for the Committee to consider the establishment of new academic programs and their content;

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- make specific the requirement that the Committee also consider the disestablishment of academic programs;
- leave flexible the definition of the “new academic programs” requiring approval;

The current terms of reference are silent with respect to the termination of academic programs, but the precedent has been firmly established that approval of the termination of programs follows the same path as approval of their establishment.

The current terms of reference include a footnote providing some clarification of the definition: “Here, the term “programs” includes the curriculum within a particular degree. Examples include specialist, major and minor programs in Arts and Science, and changes in curriculum within a professional degree, such as revisions to degree requirements.” It is proposed that the terms-of-reference definition of those new academic programs requiring approval follow the definition used Province-wide, approved by the Provincial Quality Council, and stated in the University’s Quality Assurance Process (the U.T.QAP). This is proposed because (a) the definition is not at this time firmly established, and (b) it might well change over time. The current definition would be provided for information in a footnote, which could be changed as a matter of course without the requirement for Governing Council approval but with the expectation of a report for information to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs.

- leave flexible the definition of those diploma and certificate programs that would require approval for their establishment or termination, with the requirements for governance approval to be determined by the Policy on Diploma and Certificate Programs;

A recommendation for amendment of that Policy is likely to be forthcoming in the near future. Relying on the Policy definition would again allow some flexibility. There would be no requirement for the more complex process to change the terms of reference.

- omit reference to any requirement for the approval of changes within existing academic programs.

Responsibility for approval of such changes is proposed to be delegated to the councils of the academic divisions.

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The specific changes recommended to section 3 of the terms of reference, "Function," follow.

Current Provisions	Proposed Provisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the academic content and requirements of all new degree programs • joint programs with external institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new academic programs* including joint programs with external institutions, and their academic content and requirements, and the closure of academic programs. <p style="text-align: center;">* The University's Quality Assurance Process, draft dated February 9, 2011, defines new programs as new undergraduate degrees, undergraduate specialists and majors (for which a similar specialist/major is not already approved), graduate programs and degrees, graduate diplomas, collaborative graduate programs, and new fields in an existing graduate program. That definition, and this note, are subject to change from time to time. Any change will be reported to the Committee for information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the termination of existing degrees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all major changes within existing academic programs or in academic regulations; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • major changes in academic regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diploma and post-secondary certificate programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the establishment of new diploma and post-secondary certificate programs, with approval as required by the Policy on Diploma and Certificate Programs, and the closure of such diploma and post-secondary certificate programs

Section 4 - Areas of Responsibility

Section 4 of the Terms of Reference deals with more specific areas of responsibility and sets out appropriate levels of approval for proposals of various sorts.

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Section 4.1 Areas of Responsibility: Admission Policies and Practices

One element of program modification in the University's Quality Assurance Process concerns the requirements for admission to programs. They are deemed to be minor modifications, and authority to approve most changes would be delegated to divisional councils. The approval of proposals to change admission requirements to graduate programs, including approval of direct admission options to PhD programs, was delegated in 2006 to the Graduate Education Council. With the changes to the Constitution of the School of Graduate Studies, approved by the Governing Council in 2010, the Graduate Education Council no longer performs that function, which would again be delegated to the divisions. New divisional policies and practices and amendments that would affect the whole division, as well as University-wide policies would remain within the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs.

Current Provisions	Proposed Provisions
<p>Minor changes to individual programs or to divisional practices and policies are normally approved by the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs.</p> <p>Proposals from divisional councils to approve changes to admission requirements to graduate programs, and to approve the establishment of direct admission options for existing PhD programs, may be approved by the Graduate Education Council.</p> <p>New divisional policies and practices or amendments to existing ones which affect the whole division or amendments to University-wide policies are considered by the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs and forwarded to the Academic Board for consideration.</p>	<p>New divisional policies and practices or amendments to existing ones which affect the whole division or amendments to University-wide policies are considered by the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs and forwarded to the Academic Board for consideration.</p>

Section 4.4 Areas of Responsibility: Academic Program Proposals

The revision proposed below again leaves some flexibility in the definitions of program changes requiring approval, by stating reliance on the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process and the Policy on Diploma and Certificate Programs. Doing so permits change in the definitions by action that is less complicated than changes to the Terms of Reference.

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It should be noted that in cases of Committee recommendations to the Academic Board the final level of approval required (in this case confirmation by the Executive Committee) is specified in the terms of reference of the Academic Board.

Current Provisions	Proposed Provisions
<p>The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs considers academic program proposals forwarded from divisional councils. [The administration forwards proposals to the Planning and Budget Committee for a review of planning and resource implications.]</p> <p>All major changes within existing academic programs, and academic program proposals, including joint programs with external institutions and new degree program, which involve new academic directions or anticipated significant new directions for a Faculty are forwarded by the Committee to the Academic Board with its recommendations for approval. [The Planning and Budget Committee forwards to the Committee for its information proposals for the disestablishment of academic units]</p>	<p>The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs considers academic program proposals forwarded from divisional councils.</p> <p>Where it considers it appropriate:</p> <p>(a) The Committee recommends to the Academic Board approval of proposals for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) undergraduate programs leading to new degrees; (ii) graduate programs and degrees; (iii) the closure of existing degrees; (iv) the addition and termination of joint degrees and programs with external institutions; (v) the renaming of degrees; and (vi) programs that establish significant new academic directions for a Faculty or are anticipated to have a substantial impact on relationships amongst divisions or with the public. <p>Note 1: Where a proposal in these categories will have substantial resource implications requiring an addition to a division's approved budget, the senior assessor to the Planning and Budget Committee (or designate) will bring to that Committee a proposal for review of the planning and resource implications of the proposal, for action with respect to the resource implications, and for concurrence with the recommendation of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs for approval of the proposal.</p> <p>Note 2. Where a proposal for the</p>

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	<p>disestablishment of an academic unit is to be made to the Planning and Budget Committee, the senior assessor to that Committee (or designate) will forward that proposal to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs for information.</p> <p>(b) The Committee approves proposals for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) new undergraduate programs within an existing degree, as defined in the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process*, and other than those in (a) above; (ii) diploma programs, including graduate diploma programs, as required by the University's Policy on Diploma and Certificate Programs; (iii) new collaborative graduate programs; and (iv) new fields within an existing graduate program. <p>* The University's Quality Assurance Program, draft dated February 9, 2011, defines new programs as new undergraduate degrees, undergraduate specialists and majors (for which a similar specialist/major is not already approved), graduate programs and degrees, graduate diplomas, collaborative graduate programs, and new fields in an existing graduate program. That definition, and this note, are subject to change from time to time. Any change will be reported to the Committee for information.</p> <p>The Councils of the academic divisions have delegated authority to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) modifications to existing degree programs;
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	<p>The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs receives for information an annual report on modifications to existing programs that are defined in the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process as major modifications.*</p> <p>* The University's Quality Assurance Process, dated February 9, 2011, defines a major modification as follows. A major modification of a program is a restructuring of a program, a merger of existing programs or a refreshing of a program in order to keep it current with its academic discipline. Under the scope of 'Major Modification' is included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Requirements that differ substantially from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review; b) Significant changes to the learning outcomes; c) Significant changes to the faculty engaged in delivering the program and/or to the essential physical resources as may occur, for example, where there have been changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery (e.g., different campus, online delivery, inter-institutional collaboration). <p>This definition, and this note, are subject to change from time to time. Any change will be reported to the Committee for information.</p> <p>(b) transcript notations within existing degree programs;</p> <p>The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs receives for information an annual report on the establishment and termination of transcript notations.</p> <p>(c) the establishment, termination and</p>
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	<p>modification of diploma programs and certificate programs, where authority is delegated to the academic divisions in the University's Policy on Diploma and Certificate Programs;</p> <p>The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs receives for information an annual report on such actions where reporting is required by the Policy on Diploma and Certificate Programs.</p>
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Section 4.9 Areas of Responsibility: Monitorial Responsibilities

Section 4.9 of the Terms of Reference deals with monitorial responsibilities, including responsibility for governance oversight of the reviews of academic programs and units. It requires a small amendment to provide for semi-annual reports to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs on reviews of academic programs and units. It also requires amendments to provide for annual reports on: (a) approvals by divisional councils of major modifications to their programs, and (b) establishment and termination of transcript notations within existing degree programs.

Current Provisions	Proposed Provisions
<p>The Committee is responsible for monitoring academic matters as may be required by general policy, as specified herein or by resolution of the Academic Board, the Executive Committee or the Governing Council. The Committee receives annual reports on matters within its purview, including reports on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews of Academic Units and Programs; • Connaught Committee activities; • Student Financial Support; • Research and international activities; • Student awards. 	<p>The Committee is responsible for monitoring academic matters as may be required by general policy, as specified herein or by resolution of the Academic Board, the Executive Committee or the Governing Council. The Committee receives annual reports, or such more frequent regular reports as it may determine, on matters within its purview, including reports on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews of Academic Programs and Units; • Major modifications to programs, as approved by divisional Councils; • Establishment and termination of transcript notations within existing degree programs; • Connaught Committee activities;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Financial Support; • Research and international activities; • Student awards.
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Guidelines Regarding Levels of Approval

The above amendments would require corresponding amendments to the table accompanying the terms of reference entitled “Committee on Academic Policy and Programs: Guidelines Regarding Levels of Approval,” pages 1, 2 and 3, which deal with Admission policies and academic program proposals. A footnote to the terms of reference states that “the table is meant as a general guide. Decisions are made by the Chair in consultation with the Senior Assessor and the Agenda Planning Group.” The provisions concerning level of approval are listed under four column headings. The fourth column lists changes which are recommended by the Committee on Policy and Programs to the Academic Board for approval. (A footnote states that for levels of approval beyond the Academic Board, the reader should see the Academic Board terms of reference.) The third column lists changes which may be approved by AP&P. The second column lists changes which are received by AP&P for information. The first column lists changes approved by the Divisional Council.

The following changes are proposed to each column. The proposed revisions to the terms of reference are reflected fully in this section of the table. In some cases, that full reflection represents the higher level of detail proposed in the terms of reference. In other cases, the reflection represents the lower level of detail in the terms reference implied by their reliance on the provisions of the University’s Quality Assurance Process and on its Policy on Diplomas and Certificates.

Column 4, Recommended by AP&P to the Academic Board for approval:

Current Provisions	Proposed Provisions
<p>Changes which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish a new degree program, or change an existing degree, diploma or post-secondary certificate programs with resulting resource implications; or • establish significant new academic directions for a Faculty; or • are anticipated to have significant impact on relationships amongst divisions or with the public. • Involve joint programs with external institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate programs leading to new degrees; • new graduate programs and degrees; • the termination of existing degrees; • the addition and termination of joint degrees and programs with external institutions; • the renaming of degrees; and • programs that establish significant new academic directions for a Faculty or are anticipated to have a substantial impact on relationships amongst divisions or with the public.

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Column 3, Approved by AP&P: Admission policies

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor changes to individual programs or to divisional practices and policies. 	
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Column 3, Approved by AP&P: Academic program proposals

Current Provisions	Proposed Provisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes to curriculum within established degree programs that can be accomplished with existing resources and are not major, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ specialist, major and minor programs in arts and science ○ changes in professional degree requirements ○ addition or deletion of program streams within established degree programs; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new programs within an existing degree, as defined in the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process, other than those requiring approval by the Academic Board and confirmation by the Executive Committee.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma programs which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree for admission; • comprise a coherent sequence of courses • provide for a mechanism of assessment of student performance • register students as University of Toronto students who receive diplomas at Convocation • may include courses offered for credit in a graduate degree program, for which credit may be transferred if the student enrolls in the degree program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diploma programs, including graduate diploma programs, and certificate programs, where governance approval is required by the University's Policy on Diploma and Certificate Programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-secondary certificate programs which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require completion of secondary school as a condition of admission • comprise a coherent sequence of courses 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide for a mechanism of assessment of student performance • registers students as University of Toronto students who receive diplomas at Convocation • may include courses offered for credit in an undergraduate degree program, for which credit may be transferred if the student enrolls in the degree program 	
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Column 2, Received by AP&P for Information: Admission Policies

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to admission requirements for graduate programs and approval of direct entry options to existing PhD programs, as approved by the Graduate Education Council, are included in an annual report of changes to graduate programs submitted to the Committee for information. 	
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Column 2, Received by AP&P for Information: Academic Program Proposals

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborative graduate programs, after approval by the Council of the School of Graduate Studies • flex-time options for PhD studies approved by SGS Council • combined programs where the requirements of the established component programs are not changed • Minor changes within degree programs <p>Certificate programs in continuing education which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have open admission, but may be targeted to particular professional and quasi-professional areas • comprise a coherent sequence of courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual report on modifications to existing programs that are defined in the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process as major modifications. • An annual report on the establishment, termination and modification of diploma programs and certificate programs where reporting is required by the Policy on Diploma and Certificate Programs. • An annual report on the establishment and termination of transcript notations within existing degree programs.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • credit may not be transferred to degree programs • do not register students as University of Toronto students 	
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Column 1, Approved by Divisional Council under delegated authority; reported to the Provost's Office for information.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • changes in the semester in which a course is offered; • minor adjustments in the course hours, without significant implications for the objectives of the program; • changes in titles and in course descriptions that reflect normal updating; • purely stylistic changes in calendar material; etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) modifications to existing degree programs; (b) the establishment, termination and modification of diploma programs and certificate programs, where authority is delegated to the academic divisions in the University's Policy on Diploma and Certificate Programs; (c) transcript notations within existing degree programs.
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Recommendation

THAT the proposed amendments to sections 3, 4.1, 4.4, and 4.9 to the terms of reference of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs, and the proposed amendments to the sections of the "Guidelines Regarding Levels of Approval" dealing with Admission policies and Academic program proposals, be approved.