

2.04 Curricular Changes

Purpose:

To establish structures and processes for handling curricular matters at departmental, college, university committee, and academic administration levels.

Policy Statement:

This policy begins with a statement of general principles informing the development and management of curriculum at the University of Northern Iowa. It identifies the major administrative bodies or entities and the roles they play in managing the curriculum. The policy describes, in general terms, curricular processes and procedures. These, as well as the roles and responsibilities of relevant administrative bodies, are specified in greater detail in the [Curriculum Review Process Information Handbook](#) ("Curriculum Handbook"). The policy also addresses several special issues pertaining to curriculum.

Principles:

The curriculum of the University of Northern Iowa is a proper concern of the faculty, the administration, students, and other stakeholders. Although the faculty has primary responsibility for the curriculum, this responsibility is shared with academic administrators who must implement it. Curricular actions by faculty and administrators should be informed by the input of students and other stakeholders the curriculum is intended to serve.

While some curricular matters only affect individual departments, others impact their colleges and the university as a whole. Because of these impacts and interdependencies among different parts of the university's curriculum, the curriculum and proposed changes to it must be reviewed and managed at various levels. In addition, while an effective curriculum will exhibit considerable consistency over time, it must be responsive to changes in the external environment. This creates a need for curricular change processes that provide flexibility while maintaining an appropriate degree of continuity.

Administrative Entities:

Curriculum management and change is effected through various committees and other administrative bodies. The roles and responsibilities of the most important of these are summarized below:

Department:

Departments bear primary responsibility for managing the curriculum within their academic discipline. They must ensure that all departmental courses and programs are well justified, effectively designed, and correctly described. Curricular proposals within an academic discipline shall, with rare exceptions, be initiated by the relevant department. All interdisciplinary and other curricular proposals that involve a department's academic discipline shall include departmental review as part of the approval process.

College:

Colleges, through their Deans, act as intermediaries in the curriculum change process, receiving and reviewing departmental proposals that are then forwarded on to higher level administrative entities. College Deans and, when called upon, Senates shall resolve departmental disputes about curricular jurisdictions and ensure that allocations of the College's resources are properly aligned with its curriculum.

University Curriculum Committee (UCC):

The University Curriculum Committee reviews and acts on—either approves or disapproves—all substantive curricular proposals involving undergraduate courses or programs. Only in extraordinary circumstances will the UCC consider proposals that have not been reviewed by pertinent

departments and colleges. The UCC is responsible for evaluating the impact of undergraduate curricular proposals on the University, for preventing duplication, and for ensuring that proposals are in compliance with relevant policies and requirements.

Graduate College Curriculum Committee (GCCC):

The Graduate College Curriculum Committee reviews and acts on—either approves or disapproves—all substantive curricular proposals involving graduate courses or programs. Only in extraordinary circumstances will the GCCC consider proposals that have not been reviewed by pertinent departments and colleges. The GCCC is responsible for evaluating the impact of graduate curriculum proposals on the University, for preventing duplication, and for ensuring that proposals are in compliance with relevant policies and requirements.

UNI Faculty Senate:

Consistent with its role as the “principal representative agency of the University faculty” (Article V.3, Constitution of the Faculty), the UNI Faculty Senate (“Senate”) has final faculty approval authority for all curriculum proposals. While UCC and GCCC recommendations will usually be followed, the Senate can review any proposal it deems worthy of its attention. The Senate is responsible for ensuring that all academic programs are performing effectively and for advising the Provost on the appropriate allocation of academic resources.

Processes and Procedures:

Detailed procedures, along with relevant forms, for the processing of curricular change proposals are provided in the Curriculum Handbook. This document also contains (p. 3) a diagram outlining the process by which such proposals are reviewed and approved. The final approval level varies with the nature of the proposal. However, as depicted in this diagram, the process of effecting curricular change normally begins in a department, moves to the college and then to the university as a whole, before concluding, if necessary, with approval by the Board of Regents, State of Iowa. The following matters bear special attention:

- While curricular proposals within an academic discipline will normally be initiated by the relevant department, proposals can be initiated by other parties. Interdisciplinary programs and programs of broad scope may be initiated by other faculty bodies. However, in every case where a proposal involves a department’s academic discipline, departmental faculty shall be able to review and evaluate the proposal’s acceptability, with this review/evaluation being included in the proposal’s documentation as it moves through the curriculum process.
- At all review levels in the curriculum process, changes to a proposal can only be made with the concurrence of the body that initiated the proposal.
- At all review levels in the curriculum process, negative recommendations by an administrative body prevent a proposal from being forwarded to the next review level. However, such recommendations can be appealed by administrative bodies that had previously approved the proposal so that any proposal can, on appeal, be considered by the Senate.
- In the event that curricular proposals approved by the Senate are not approved by the Provost and/or President of the University, these parties shall report and explain their actions to the Senate in a timely manner.
- All proposals to close or terminate programs must go through the normal curricular review process, to include departmental review and evaluation of the proposal. In cases of financial exigency, the university will follow current AAUP guidelines. Agreement between the University President, Provost, and UNI Faculty Senate is required before a proposal to close or terminate an academic program is sent forward to the Board of Regents, State of Iowa.
- Curricular changes become effective following approval by the Board of Regents.

Other:

The following provisions apply in the indicated special circumstances:

Restructuring of Academic Units.

Expansions, divisions, and mergers of colleges, departments, schools, and programs shall be reviewed, for curricular implications, by the Senate.

Experimental/Temporary Courses.

Experimental/temporary courses can be offered under the x59 designation up to three times, after which the course must either be dropped or approved as a new course. Since x59 courses are not part of the established university curriculum and are not listed in the catalog, the decision to offer them, after approval by the department, is an administrative matter between the appropriate department head(s) and college dean(s).

UNI Faculty Senate Policy Committee, approved March 6, 2023