

## 5. PROTOCOL FOR MAJOR MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING PROGRAMS

### 5.1 Definition

Major modifications involve changes to existing programs due to curricular renewal to keep a program current, the restructuring of a program, a merger of existing programs, and proposals for new certificates. Major modifications typically include one or more of the following:

- a) Requirements for the program that differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review. There will inevitably be a qualitative component to the determination of what constitutes significant change. However changes to courses comprising approximately one-third of the major requirements, core requirements and/or the degree program, might serve as a benchmark. The intention here is to reflect not a shift in one or two full course equivalents as an example but substantial change in the curriculum that might have an impact on the learning outcomes.
- b) The addition of a new major or specialization where a similar major or specialization currently exists at the undergraduate level for which a student registers and receives credit on his or her transcript.
- c) The addition of a new option (e.g. location where program is offered) within an existing graduate program.
- d) Establishment or closure of undergraduate certificates.
- e) The merger of two or more programs.
- f) New bridging programs for college diploma graduates and / or internationally educated professionals.
- g) At the Master's level, the introduction or deletion of a major research paper or thesis, course-only, co-op, internship or practicum option.
- h) The deletion or creation of a new field in a graduate program (see template for the proposal of a new field).
- i) Any change to the requirements for graduate program candidacy examinations or residence requirements.
- j) Significant changes to the learning outcomes, but not meeting the threshold for a new program, such as additions to learning outcomes that constitute new categories of degree level expectations beyond those previously specified requiring new curricula and/or those that have implications for human, physical, and financial resources; and deletions of previously agreed learning outcomes that would eliminate an entire category of degree level expectations.<sup>1</sup>
- k) Significant changes to the faculty complement engaged in delivering the program that may result from a large number of retirements and/or new hires with different teaching and/or research interests.
- l) Change to the essential resources that have the potential to impair the delivery of an approved program as may occur, for example, where there have been changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery. Adding online courses and other pedagogical enhancements such as experiential education are excluded from major modifications [unless such changes fall into the criteria specified under (a) and (i) above] and are assumed to be handled at the Faculty-level.

Major modifications to existing programs do not require submission of a Proposal Brief to the Quality Council. The University may request that the QC review a major modification proposal and normally that will occur through the Expedited Approval Process without the requirement of an external review process.

**Minor modifications** require divisional approval by the respective Faculty Council(s) and include:

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<sup>1</sup> Shifts in the operationalisation of previously defined categories of degree level expectations would generally be considered minor modifications.

- the revision of a field in a graduate program
- the creation of a new course
- substitution of a course requirement
- edits to a list of courses from which students are required to take one or more courses

**These modifications are forwarded to ASCP and Senate for either information or approval as appropriate.**

Proposals for the addition of a minor, emphasis or option within an existing program should comment on the relationship of the admission requirements (if applicable) and curricular requirements for the minor, emphasis or option to those of the parent program. If different, the proposal should include a description of the admission requirements (if applicable) and/or curricular requirements, including an indication of how they are different from those of the parent program as well as a rationale for the difference in relation to the focus and learning outcomes of the minor, emphasis or option.

## **5.2 Proposal Brief**

The proposal brief for a major modification includes the following along with any additional requirements that a Faculty may choose to apply (see the Proposal Brief template for major modifications):

- a) A description of the proposed changes and the rationale including alignment with academic plans;
- b) An outline of the changes to requirements and the associated learning outcomes including how the proposed requirements will support the achievement of program learning objectives;
- c) An overview of the consultation undertaken with relevant academic units and an assessment of the impact of the major modifications on other programs (where and as appropriate, the proposal must include statements from the relevant program(s) confirming consultation/support);
- d) A summary of any resource implications and how they are being addressed (attention should be paid to whether the proposed changes will be supported by a reallocation of existing resources or if new/additional resources are required a letter from the relevant resource Dean(s)/Principal is required if new resources are required);
- e) The application of any other relevant criteria outlined in Section 3.3 to the proposed changes;
- f) A summary of how students currently enrolled in the program will be accommodated; and
- g) A side-by-side comparison of the existing and proposed program requirements as they will appear in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendar

## **5.3 Institutional Approval Process**

The institutional process is abbreviated by not requiring the use of external reviewers; hence Sections 3.2.3 through 3.2.6 (inclusive) do not apply. Flow chart 5.3 provides an overview of the protocol and approval process for major modifications. The Office of the Vice President Academic will determine whether a change constitutes a major modification. Matters pertaining to policy changes regarding major modifications are decided by the Joint Sub-Committee.

## **5.4 Annual Report to the Quality Council**

The Office of the Vice President Academic files an Annual Report to the Quality Council which provides a summary of major program modifications that were approved through the university's internal approval process in the past year.

## **5.5. Subsequent University Process**

Cyclical review of the program according to the rota within 8 years.

**Chart 5.3: Process for approval of major modifications.**

<p>1. Internal University Process</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Faculty: Development of proposal Appropriate consultation with faculty members, students, other Faculties and relevant academic units, the Registrar’s Office and external stakeholders</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Consultation with the Office of the Vice President Academic or AVP Graduate/Dean of FGS as appropriate</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Full statement of support by anchor Dean(s)/Principal required at this time</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Faculty: Curriculum Committee approval</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Faculty Council approval</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Faculty submits proposal to Committee on Academic Standards, Curriculum, and Pedagogy (ASCP) for approval</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ASCP forwards approved proposals to Senate<sup>2</sup></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Office of the Vice President Academic: Submits proposal to Quality Council as part of Annual Report</p>
<p>2. Follow-up Process</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing program monitoring by the institution through the Cyclical Program Review</p>

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<sup>2</sup> Proposals for certificates proceed to APPRC for concurrence.