University Program Approval Submission Guideline

For universities seeking funding and OSAP eligibility for programs
(October 2014)

Introduction

The University Program Approval Submission Guideline is intended to support universities in their submission of requests for funding and Ontario Student Assistant Program eligibility for credential programs. As outlined in the *Operating Manual*, Ministry approval is required for a program to be funded for eligible students. The guideline outlines criteria for approval and considerations the Ministry makes when assessing criteria, as well as timelines and other considerations.

The Guideline will be updated from time to time, and the Ministry will consult the sector when any major changes are proposed

A. Evaluation Criteria and Information Items

The Ministry will require universities to provide information based on the nine elements below and associated details for each program approval submission:

Requirement	Evaluation: Identifying Non-Contentious Submissions
1. Strategic Mandate Agreement Alignment ● How the program is consistent with the SMA as it pertains to an identified program area of growth or strength. ● How the program is consistent with the university's mission, aims, objectives and existing strengths, enrolment forecasts, and existing programs. ● The university's capacity to deliver the program. ● How the program is consistent with government strategic directions.	The Ministry is looking for evidence that a program fits with the agreed upon program areas of growth or strength in the university's SMA, and other aspects of the SMA. The Ministry is looking for evidence that a program fits with a university's current offerings and strengths, future plans, enrolment forecasts, and government direction.

2. Tuition
● A proposed annualized tuition fee, description of the tuition fee structure, and costing methods used to determine the proposed fee.
● Examples of comparable programs used to set the tuition level at the university and at other universities, where the information is available.
● Where tuition is high, an explanation of:
  ○ The relevant cost structure;
  ○ Graduate outcomes (see below);
  ○ Impact on accessibility; and
  ○ Supports to mitigate the impact of high tuition on accessibility.
	The Ministry is looking for tuition that is:
	● Consistent with other tuition fees at the university.
	● Consistent with tuition for other comparable programs in the sector.
	● Preferably, not at the high end of the range of tuition of comparable programs.
	● If not comparable to other programs, reflective of the cost structure and expected labour market outcomes of graduates.

3. Costs ● If the university's expected program costs are not aligned with other similar programs at the university or within the province, please provide: ○ An explanation of how the university will	The Ministry is looking for the university to consider full costs for program delivery and the ability to operationalize the program without additional capital

Requirement	Evaluation: Identifying Non-Contentious Submissions
fund any additional operating costs associated with this program ○ How the university will fund any new capital costs associated with this program. ● The Board of Governors or equivalent body should ensure the university has the requisite resources to introduce the program within existing funding levels and is prepared to maintain the program for a reasonable period of time. (The approval of a program is not grounds for a request for additional funding from the Ministry to initiate or sustain the program.)	infrastructure or operating investment by the province.
4. Justifiable Duplication ● List of comparable programs at the university and other Ontario institutions, with particular reference to universities in the region. ● Evidence of how any duplicative similarities with existing programs at the university and other provincial postsecondary institutions are justified. ● Evidence that the university has consulted with other regional universities regarding the establishment of a similar program where the existing program is a recognized area of differentiation or leadership for the institution or where the proposed program requires substantial new investment in faculty, infrastructure, or experiential/entrepreneurial learning outside the regular learning environment.	The Ministry is looking for: ● Justification for why a program that duplicates another program should be eligible for Ministry funding. ● Information about discussion with other institutions, where appropriate.
5. Societal Need and Labour Market Demand ● Evidence that graduates of the program are needed in specifically identified fields (academic, public and/or private sectors). ● Evidence includes employment rates for graduates, federal or provincial labour market reports and industry-specific reports or support. ● Explanation of the dimensions of the societal need for graduates, the geographic scope of the societal need; and trends in societal need.	The Ministry is looking for evidence, where available, that the program will produce graduates with strong employment opportunities.
6. Student Demand ● Evidence of student demand, origin of student demand (local, regional, domestic and international students), and duration of demand. ● For graduate only – the undergraduate or master's programs from which students may be drawn. ● Evidence of participation in the program approval process by students or their representatives (for example through student	The Ministry is looking for evidence that the program will attract student interest.

Requirement	Evaluation: Identifying Non-Contentious Submissions
representation on the University Senate).	
7. Enrolment Planning and Graduate Allocations ● Expected initial enrolment or current enrolment (for programs already in place), and anticipated enrolment at steady state. ● Consistency with enrolment forecast in the SMA. ● Consistency with graduate space allocation in the SMA. Where current graduate enrolment is near or above the university's funded graduate spaces allocation, how the university plans to manage within its current allocation.	For undergraduate programs, this is an information item. For graduate programs, the Ministry is looking for evidence that the university has prioritized its graduate expansion and that the new program fits the university's growth plans and does not create unfunded pressures.
8. Experiential Learning ● Any experiential and/or entrepreneurial learning components that will take place outside the regular learning setting, if applicable. ● Submissions should note where placements will occur. If this component is required for program completion, the submission should provide evidence that all students can be accommodated.	Evidence of a plan for practicum, placement and co-op supply, if applicable. Where experiential education is a program requirement, the Ministry is looking for evidence of sufficient placement opportunities for students.
9. Program Prioritization/Program Transformation ● Whether this program request results in the elimination of any other programs, or how the addition of this program fits with overall institutional program transformation initiatives, if any.	The Ministry is looking for evidence about prioritization at the university in a way that is consistent with its SMA. This is an information item.

B. Expedited and Secondary Reviews

Following the finalization of Strategic Mandate Agreements with universities, the Ministry will place all subsequent program approval submissions into two streams: expedited review and secondary review. Universities will be informed within 30 days of the submission deadline in which stream their program approval request will be placed.

While the ministry understands that institutions will submit a variety of program approval requests, the Ministry strongly encourages universities to review their planned programs and to prioritize the submission of programs that align with the SMA program areas of growth, as these program areas have already been subject to extensive analysis and discussions between universities and the Ministry.

<u>Expedited Reviews</u>

As part of the alignment with the program approval process and SMAs, program areas of growth and strength in a university's SMA will determine whether a university is eligible for an expedited review. Program approval submissions that can demonstrate alignment to an SMA program area of growth will be reviewed as a priority submission. Programs aligned with program areas of strength may be eligible for expedited review if there are no Ministry cautions noted about the program area. It is expected that program approval submissions that are eligible for an expedited review and do not raise any issues will receive a decision earlier than non-expedited submissions in the secondary review stream. In both cases, institutions are to complete all sections of the program approvals template.

<u>Secondary Reviews</u>

Program approval submissions that are not eligible for an expedited review will be reviewed in a secondary review stream after expedited reviews are completed. These submissions will be subject to additional analysis to confirm alignment to the university's mandate and Ministry priorities.

C. Process and Timelines

Any new program approval submissions must be submitted to the Ministry using the provided template. Universities will be informed within 30 days of the submission deadline as to whether a submission will be going through an expedited review, or a secondary review.

The Ministry is establishing a cycle with the following submission deadlines:

Submission Deadline	Target Dates for Decisions for Expedited Submissions
November 3, 2014	March 2, 2015
January 12, 2015	May 11, 2015
April 13, 2015	August 10, 2015
July 13, 2015	November 9, 2015
November 2, 2015	March 7, 2016

Submissions received after the deadline will automatically be placed into the next submission cycle.

Submissions received by the cycle due date will undergo an initial review to verify the following:

1. Completeness of the submission;
2. Alignment to a program area of growth or strength in the SMA;
3. Relation to any Ministry concerns or cautions; and

Best efforts will be made to inform universities within 30 days of the submission deadline about whether:
- The submission will undergo an Expedited Review; or
- There is any missing information required in the submission.

This initial review is intended to assist universities with planning and will provide an opportunity for universities to provide additional information. During the full review of the submission, the Ministry may identify issues that require further information from the university and that may delay the decision. The Ministry will provide guidance to individual universities about the timeline considerations for such submissions.

Universities will be able to withdraw submissions that are undergoing review in order to consider re-submission within the SMA cycle. Programs that are not approved should not be resubmitted during the period of these SMAs without significant changes.

To improve the efficiency of the program approvals process, the Ministry also invites universities to submit new program approval proposals to the Ministry in parallel with the submission of these programs to the Ontario Universities' Council on Quality Assurance. While Ministry approval is contingent upon approval by the Ontario Universities' Council on Quality Assurance, a concurrent submission to the Ministry is intended to improve the timeliness of the approval process.

For enrolment reporting purposes, the Ministry asks universities to report students as ineligible for funding until a program is approved. Programs not approved by February 1 will not be eligible for funding and OSAP for that fiscal year, and all enrolled students must be reported as ineligible for funding for that fiscal year.

Graduate Programs

The Ministry continues to expect all universities to manage overall graduate enrolments within the space allocations assigned by government. Universities should be mindful that the approval of new programs does not imply or result in any additional allocation of graduate spaces or funding above what will be assigned to each university through the graduate space allocation process.

Graduate programs will undergo a review of consistency with the university's available graduate spaces, taking into account the new allocations. In some cases, universities have been or may be asked to prioritize their graduate program submissions due to the number of proposed programs and their graduate space capacity.

Invitation to Comment

The Ministry intends to release a list of submitted program approval requests (that will consist of the name of programs and the name of the university) to all publicly assisted colleges and universities after each cycle submission deadline. Institutions are invited to comment, within 30 days, on any submissions that may have an effect on duplication,

workplace learning opportunities and local student and market demand related to existing programs. Institutions may submit comments via PSEprogramsubmissions@ontario.ca.

The Ministry will review these comments in the context of the information provided in the application regarding duplication, workplace learning opportunities, and student demand. The ministry will raise any significant concerns identified through the sector comments with the applicant university.

Nomenclature

Nomenclature in each program approval submission must be consistent with that submitted to the Quality Council, as the Ministry's approval is based on the Quality Council approved nomenclature. Institutions should inform the Ministry if the program nomenclature is updated or changed as a result of the Quality Council's review during the Ministry's review process. Name changes to programs after Ministry approval should be submitted to the Ministry through the Program Development Report.

D. Additional Context

Tuition

As new programs are introduced, in some cases, universities seek to set tuition based on the highest fees of existing comparable programs, which may be outside the existing tuition range at the university. Where the requested tuition fee is at the high end of a wide range or is outside the existing tuition range at the university, the Ministry asks that universities justify the tuition based on comparable programs and provide information about expected labour market outcomes for graduates. Institutional policies that mitigate the impact of higher tuition for low-income students in graduate and professional programs should also be identified. The same information is sought for programs for which the university believes there are no comparators and proposes a tuition that is higher than tuition for a similar credential.

The Ministry notes that while a range of tuition fee levels may be associated with comparable programs or similar credentials, new programs will not necessarily be approved at a tuition that is at the high end of the range or that is outside the university's existing tuition range. Reviews of these programs may also take longer.

Accreditation

If there is a legal requirement for graduates in a program to be certified, registered, licensed or granted some other form of official recognition by a regulatory authority that is authorized by Ontario law to grant such certification, registration, license or other form of recognition, in order for the graduate to work in the occupation in Ontario or use an occupational title, the Ministry expects that the university has received the appropriate recognition, or that the university has started the process to receive accreditation.

In addition, the Ministry expects that the institution will inform the Ministry if the program either fails to receive accreditation, or if accreditation is at risk in the future.

Programs at New Locations

The Ministry reminds institutions that existing programs offered at new locations need to be offered at the same or lower funding and tuition as the original program. Universities are to inform the Ministry of programs offered at new locations.

In addition, any institution considering an initiative that involves a significant expansion in capacity (or the institution's expansion into a new location) should contact the Ministry in writing to determine whether the planned expansion is subject to evaluation under the Major Capacity Expansion framework.

Considerations regarding Consent for Collaborative/Joint-Programs

With regard to collaborative or joint degree programs, the Ministry reminds universities that a Program Approval Submission does not constitute an application for consent where a partnering institution requires consent under the *Post-Secondary Choice and Excellence Act, 2000 (PSECE)*. In some instances, partnering institutions may require consent to provide all or part of a program of post-secondary study leading to a degree. Partnering institutions must submit applications for Ministerial consent when required. Please consult PSECE for further information about when partnering institutions require consent: http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_00p36_e.htm.

Information about partnerships is requested through the Program Approval Request Submission.

F. Ministry Contacts

Please send all program approval submissions to PSEprogramsubmissions@ontario.ca. Paper copies are not required.

Any questions about this guideline, the program approval process and related matters can be directed to Rylan Kinnon, Senior Policy Advisor at Rylan.Kinnon@ontario.ca or 416-325-8925, or Michael Friesen, Research Policy Analyst, at Michael.Friesen@ontario.ca or 416-326-0113.

Program Approval Certification Form

University:

Program Name:

Degree Designation/Credential:

The university certifies that the information contained in the submission has been evaluated and meets the university's standards and the Ministry's criteria for the proposed new program. In addition, the university certifies that:

☐ Sufficient evidence has been provided about the program's alignment with the university's Strategic Mandate Agreement.

☐ The Senate has undertaken a nomenclature review and certified program quality.

☐ The program has been submitted to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance for a nomenclature review and program quality assessment. The university understands that the Ministry's approval will be held pending approval of the Quality Council.

☐ If there is a legal requirement for graduates in a program to be certified, registered, licensed or granted some other form of official recognition by an regulatory authority that is authorized by Ontario law to grant such certification, registration, license or other form of recognition, in order for the graduate to work in the occupation in Ontario or use an occupational title, the university has received the appropriate recognition, or the process to receive recognition is underway.

☐ The governing body of the university has certified that the program can be financed by the university's resources, unless the Minister has given prior approval of additional funding to cover any portion of program costs that cannot be absorbed by the university.

☐ There is convincing evidence of student demand.

☐ There is convincing evidence of societal need.

☐ Any duplication with existing programs is justified.

The following attachments are included as part of this request:

☐ Completed Program Approval Request Submission.

☐ Quality assurance approval from the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (if available at the time of the submission).

☐ Program Calendar Information (including a list and description of courses offered each year with credits identified).

☐ Agreement with partnering institutions for collaborative/joint-programs (if applicable)

| _____ | _____ |
| **(Signature of President)** | **(Date)** |

PROGRAM APPROVAL REQUEST SUBMISSION

Institution:	
Program Name (must be consistent with nomenclature submitted to QC).	
Degree Designation/Credential:	
Program Location:	

Contact Person:

Name:	
Title:	
Email:	
Telephone:	

Proposed Program Details:

1.	**Program Description**	
2.	**Does the program have a thesis option?** (Yes/No)	
3.	**Description of experiential learning component outside regular learning environment if applicable**	
4.	**Program offered at new location?** (Yes/No)	Location:
5.	**Expected Start Date**	
6.	**Requested FORPOS Code**	
7.	**Requested Program Weight**	
8.	**Requested CIP Code**	
9.	**Collaborative/Joint Program (college/university/other)?** (Yes/No)	
	a. **Program Partners:** (List all institutions)	
	b. **Enrolment and tuition reporting arrangement (indicate institution(s))**	
	c. **Credential(s) issued by or jointly with partner institution**	
	d. **If the partner is based outside of Ontario, please provide information about the program delivery.**	

INSTITUTIONAL FIT

1. Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) Alignment:

A. Program alignment:

☐ Program Area of Growth in SMA
☐ Program Area of Strength in SMA
☐ Neither a program area of growth or strength in SMA

Please list the program area of growth/strength:

Please provide the rationale for alignment:

The university should provide: • A description of how the program is consistent with the program area of growth or strength which is included in their SMA

B. General alignment with SMA, if not aligned with a program area of growth or strength

The university should provide: • A description of how the program is consistent with the mission, aims, objectives and existing strengths of the university; • An explanation of how the proposed program fits with the university's current program offerings and demonstration of the university's capacity to deliver the proposed program; • Evidence that the proposal is consistent with government's strategic directions (e.g., enrolment caps); and • Information on how they will address any cautions or concerns expressed by the Ministry related to the program area or program. In providing this information, universities should consider: • Notable resources available to the program (including external support) demonstrating institutional capacity to deliver the program; • Related schools, departments, institutes and centres; and • Unique library collections or resources and facilities.

2.Tuition

Please note: Tuition fee should exclude all centrally collected ancillary fees and student referenda fees.

Proposed Program						
Tuition fee for the program's full academic year, as defined by the institution	Academic year	Tuition fee as appropriate to how it is charged (per year/ session/course/ credit)	Number of semesters covered by tuition noted in column 1	Number of units of study covered by tuition noted in column 1	Number of semesters for program completion	Number of units of study for program completion

	Academic Semesters	Co-op Semesters	
Number of fall semesters*			
Number of winter semesters*			
Number of spring/summer semesters*			

*Graduate programs only

Please provide at least two (2) examples of both institutional and sector comparator programs used to set the tuition level (internal and/or external) below. Comparators may be similar credentials, similar programs or programs with similar cost structures. The Ministry prefers tuition comparators in Ontario, and then in Canada if Ontario comparators are not available. If no comparators are available for tuition fee setting, please provide the rationale.

TUITION FEE COMPARATORS

Program Comparators - Institution							
Program Name	Tuition fee for the program's full academic year, as defined by the institution	Academic year	Tuition fee as appropriate to how it is charged (per year/ session/course /credit)	Number of semesters covered by tuition noted in column 2	Number of units of study covered by tuition noted in column 2	Number of semesters for program completion	Number of units of study for program completion

Program Comparators - Sector (only the program, institution names, and tuition fees are mandatory)

Program Name	Institution Name	Tuition fee for the program's full academic year, as defined by the institution	Tuition fee as appropriate to how it is charged (per year/ session/course /credit)– if known.	Tuition year	Number of semesters covered by tuition noted in column 1	Number of units of study covered by tuition noted in column 1	Number of semesters for program completion	Number of units of study for program completion

Where tuition is at the high end of the comparable programs, provide an explanation of:
- The relevant cost structure;
- Graduate outcomes;
- Impact on accessibility; and
- Supports to mitigate the impact of high tuition on accessibility.

3. Program Costs:

If the program's costs are not aligned with other similar programs within the institution or the province, the university should provide:
- A description of how it plans to finance and staff the proposed program, including any sources of funds beyond tuition and MTCU funding; and
- A summary of capital requirements, estimated costs and sources or an explanation of how the program will be accommodated within the university.

4. Evidence of Justifiable Duplication:
The university should provide evidence of how any duplication or similarity to programs at other provincial postsecondary institutions is justifiable.

The university should provide:
- A list of comparator programs at other postsecondary institutions;
- Why adding a new program is justifiable; and
- Evidence that the university has consulted with other institutions regarding the justification of duplication, or potential collaboration.

In providing this information, universities should consider:
- Differences between the programs;
- Comments from other institutions regarding proposed new undergraduate programs;
- Comments regarding health-related programs from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care;
- Comments from other relevant stakeholders, as required; and

- The impact of any proposed experiential learning components on experiential learning programs at other institutions, if applicable.

5. Evidence of Societal / Labour Market Need:

The university should provide evidence that graduates of the program are needed in specifically identified fields (within academic, public and/or private sectors), where information is available.

In providing this evidence, the university should consider:
- Dimensions of the societal need for graduates (socio-cultural, economic, scientific, technological etc.);
- Employment rates for graduates of existing and related programs; and
- Employment, outlook based on federal, provincial or sector reports, where available.

Please note, the Ministry may also consider other sources of information related to societal and labour market need.

6. Evidence of Student Demand:

The university should provide evidence of student demand, including the number of prospective student inquiries, applications and registrations for this or similar programs, and surveys of existing students, graduates and/or professionals in the field.

In providing this evidence, the university should consider:
- Origin of student demand (local, regional, domestic and international students); and, for graduate only – the undergraduate or master's programs from which students may be drawn; and, the professional interest, if applicable;
- Duration of the projected demand; and,
- Evidence of participation of students and/or their representatives in the program development or approval process.

Please note, the Ministry will also consider enrolment in comparable programs at other institutions.

7. Enrolment Planning and Graduate Allocations:

Please provide the expected program enrolment (from initial year):

				Maturity
Year 1 of program				
Year 2				
Year 3				
Year 4				
Total Enrolment				

Additional Enrolment Information:

The university should address:
a) How the enrolment fits within the university's total enrolment forecasts set out in the university's SMA.
b) For graduate programs: how the university intends to manage within its graduate allocation.
c) Any links with graduate allocation priorities envelope.

FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES:

8. Experiential Learning

The university is asked to provide a description of any experiential learning component of the program, including:
   a) Requirements, credits, length;
   b) Integration/relation of this experience within the program of study;
   c) How the experiential learning component will be arranged; and
   d) Supply of opportunities for students.

Where experiential education is a program requirement, the Ministry is looking for evidence that all students can be accommodated.

9. Program Prioritization/Program Transformation Initiatives

The university is asked to provide information about:
   - Whether the addition of the program is part of, or will result in, the elimination or restructuring of any other programs; and/or
   - Whether the program is the result of a program transformation exercise in a way that is consistent with the SMA.

This is an information item, but may be supportive of applications for programs where the institute is at or over its graduate allocation.

Program Approval Categories

Undergraduate "Core Arts and Science Programs," Group A - "Non-Core" Undergraduate Programs, and Group B - All Graduate Programs

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Undergraduate "Core Arts and Science" Programs

Programs that are in basic disciplines which might be expected to be offered at any university... (and are) appropriate to the academic ethos and character of any university.

Biological Sciences (including Biotechnology)	Mathematical Sciences & Computer Studies
English Language & Literature	Physical Sciences
French Language & Literature	Social Sciences (including Women's Studies)
General Arts and Science	Theology
Humanities (including ancient and classical languages)	

*Note: Core Arts and Science programs are exempt from the program approval process.

Group A - "Non-Core" Programs

Accounting, Accountancy	Family Studies, Family Science	Native Studies
Actuarial Science	Film, Cinema	Nursing
Agricultural Business	Finance	Nursing Education
Agriculture	Fine Art, Studio Art, Painting	Occupational Therapy
Architecture	Forest Technology	Optometry
Area Studies	Forestry	Personnel and Administrative Studies
Art Education, Conservation, Art Therapy	Gerontology	Pharmacology
	Health Studies	Pharmacy
Clothing, Textiles, Design and Fashion	Home Economics, Food Studies	Physical Therapy, Physiotherapy
Commerce	Horticulture	Physical Education
Communications	Industrial, Labour Relations	Planning
Community, Urban and Regional Planning	Journalism	Public Administration
	Kinesiology	Public Service Studies
Criminology	Labour Studies	Radiation Therapy
Dance	Landscape Architecture	Recreation
Dental Surgery	Language and Literature Studies	Resource Management
Dentistry	Law	Social Work
Dietetics	Law Enforcement	Speech Pathology and Audiology
Drama	Legal Studies	Survey Science
Education	Library Science	Systems Design
- Primary-Junior	Linguistics	Theatre Arts
- Junior-Intermediate	Management, Business Management	Translation, Interpretation
- Intermediate-Senior	Marketing	Urban Studies, Urbanism
- Technological Studies	Medical Illustration	Veterinary Medicine
- French as a First Language (FFL)	Medicine	War Studies
Engineering	Midwifery	
Environmental Studies, Environmental Science	Municipal Administration	
	Music	

Group B - Graduate Programs - All graduate programs