# Policy and Procedure

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**Division/Department:** Academic Affairs
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**Subject:** Curriculum Design, Development, and Approval

**Authorities:**  MnSCU Policy 3.36

**Purpose:**
To provide direction for decision-making regarding the design, development, and maintenance of academic courses and programs. In addition, to ensure "faculty participate substantially in the development and implementation, academic substance, currency, and relevance for internal and external constituencies," (Higher Learning Commission).

**Policy:**
All academic courses and programs shall be designed, developed, and maintained through established procedures that facilitates continuous improvement and academic accountability. New or revised curriculum will not become official until approved by the Academic Affairs and Standards Council and has received final system office approval.

**Procedure:**

1.  <u>Curriculum Concept & Design</u>:   Prior to preparing a formal curriculum proposal, the initiator should seek the input of relevant faculty within the division.  The initiator must then meet with the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) or a CAO Designee.  The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the merits and viability of the proposal.

2.  <u>Curriculum Development</u>:  New or revised curriculum will be developed based on need and in accordance with established academic standards for accreditation.  It is the initiator's responsibility to ensure that all required forms are completed and all curriculum components are included with the proposal.

    a.  <u>New Curriculum</u>: All curriculum proposals for new academic programs and courses must be reviewed and approved by the Academic Affairs and Standards Council (AASC).  The initiator of a curriculum proposal shall complete the Curriculum Proposal Initiation Form, which must include documentation on the following criteria:
        - Alignment with college mission
        - Facility, technological, and financial resources necessary
        - Quantitative data on student interest and occupational demand
        - Identify delivery locations and mode

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- Faculty qualifications and anticipated availability
- Catalog description
- Specify student learning outcomes
- Transferability and career pathway (if applicable)
- Signed articulation agreements or collaborations (if applicable)
- Academic program advisory committee recommendations (if applicable)
- Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Worksheet (if applicable)

If AASC approves the new program, the required forms will be completed and submitted through the Program Navigator system work flow process to receive final system office approval.

Definition: Program Navigator System--The Program Navigator system is used to create and redesign academic programs and enter them in Program Inventory and ISRS.

b. <u>Curriculum Redesigns and Revisions</u>: The AASC must review and approve all program redesigns that affect the approved program name, CIP code, addition of emphases, change in academic award, or a change in delivery method  The AASC must also review and approve any revision to a program credit length when the change exceeds the maximum or fails to meet the minimum credit lengths defined in MnSCU policy.  The AASC must review and approve all major **course** redesigns to include changes to course titles, course credit values, course descriptions, and course numbers.  The initiator of a proposed program or course revision must submit a completed Curriculum Proposal Initiation Form to the AASC.  The initiator shall also provide the AASC with a Program Completion Plan that specifies the options available to those full-time students admitted into the program before the proposed change. In addition, the initiator will work with the CAO or CAO Designee to submit information through the MnSCU Program Navigator System.

c. <u>Reactivated Curriculum</u>: Any program or course that has been suspended or dormant for a period of 24 months or more, shall be presented to the AASC for review and approval.
     Course:  If the curriculum is current or requires minor changes, the course can be reinstated after one reading as determined by 2/3 majority vote. However, if any part of the curriculum needs to be revised, the course shall be presented for a second reading with 2/3 majority carrying the vote on whether the curriculum should be reinstated.
     Program: If AASC approves the reactivation of the program, the required forms will be completed and submitted through the Program Navigator system work flow process to receive final system office approval.

d. <u>Exception for Minor Changes</u>: In certain circumstances there may be "minor" changes to curriculum that will not require a comprehensive review and

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approval by the AASC. The term "minor" changes refers to any alterations to curriculum that do not impact the scope or content of the approved program or course. These minor changes may be approved by the AASC Chair and submitted to the Academic Affairs Office to be processed:

- 10 percent or less of content
- course number
- course title that retains 80 percent or more of the original title
- correction of typographical, punctuation , and formatting errors

 If the initiator of a curriculum proposal requests an "exception" for minor changes, they must consult with the CAO or CAO Designee to ensure compliance with PTC and MnSCU policy. If the person agrees that the proposed curriculum change should be classified as "minor", the curriculum change will be placed on the agenda for the next scheduled AASC meeting. A brief summary of the proposed change will be presented to the AASC. If any member of the AASC disagrees with classification as presented, the AASC will vote on the classification and a 2/3 majority carries the vote. The proposal initiator will be informed of the decision and the CAO or CAO Designee will assist with completing the administrative elements of the change.

3. Curriculum Approval: For a curriculum proposal to be considered by the AASC, the initiator must submit a completed Curriculum Proposal Initiation Form, course outline/s, and program plan. In addition, the initiator must submit an academic assessment plan that describes the method/s for assessing student learning of the established course and/or program outcomes; a course syllabus is an example of a document that may be submitted to address this required information. . The program plan will be submitted using the established template and approved by the AASC. All required documents must be received by the AASC Chair at least seven (7) days prior to the next scheduled meeting. The AASC will not consider any curriculum proposal that is incomplete or misses the deadline for submittal. Any exceptions to the required documents and timelines must have the AASC Chair's approval.

   a. All proposals for new or revised curriculum must undergo two iterations of review by the AASC or have the second reading waived and reflected in the official minutes. At the first reading, the AASC will review the content of the proposal to ensure that all academic standards and policy requirements of the college have been met. The initiator or representative must attend the AASC meeting to present the proposal and respond to questions.

   b. During the second review, the AASC will ensure that any problems noted previously have been addressed to their satisfaction. The initiator of the proposal, Division Chair, or representative must be at the AASC meeting for the second reading of the proposal. At the conclusion of the second reading, the AASC will vote on the proposal and a 2/3 majority carries the vote.

      c. The decision of the AASC will be forwarded to the CAO for administrative approval. If the CAO counters a decision of the council, the AASC Chair may request that the college president attend an upcoming meeting of the council to hear an appeal on the issue. The decision of the college president is final.

4. <u>Curriculum Timeline</u>: For purposes of scheduling, staffing, and budgeting, all proposals for new or revised curriculum should be approved by the AASC during the fall academic semester. For a new or revised program/course to be guaranteed to be included on the Master Schedule, the curriculum must be approved no later than Dec 15 of the previous academic year. However, when developing customized courses to support local business and industry or to meet grant initiatives, it may be necessary for the AASC to review and approve curriculum outside the normal timeline.

**Responsibilities:**

1. The Chief Academic Officer is responsible for the overall administration of academic curriculum and must ensure that the established procedures are being followed.
2. The initiator of a curriculum proposal is responsible for developing curriculum that is relevant to the mission, complies with academic standards, and is based on documented need. The initiator is responsible for seeking guidance and input from the program advisory committee prior to proposed revisions. It is the responsibility of the initiator to complete the curriculum proposal and to submit all required documentation to the AASC Chair in a timely manner.
3. It is the responsibility of the CAO or CAO Designee to assist faculty with designing new or revised curriculum. The Academic Affairs Office is responsible for tracking the curriculum changes, maintaining the program inventory, and providing quality control throughout the process.
4. It is the responsibility of the Division Chair to meet with the initiator to discuss the proposal prior to submission. The Division Chair may also serve as the initiator's representative during the second reading of the proposal.
5. The AASC is responsible for reviewing content of all curriculum proposals to ensure that all academic standards are being met.

**Reviewed by Campus Roundtable:** 3/16/2009, 6/1/2009
**Reviewed by AASC: 3/18/2009, 4/8/2009**
**Reviewed by Faculty Shared Governance:** 4/1/2009; 3/6/2013; 4/3/2013

**Approved: _____ Date: _____**