

1. Purpose of the Committee

The General Faculties Council (“GFC”) Programs Committee (the “Committee”) approves:

- (a) the creation, modification, suspension and/or termination of Academic Programs and Online and Continuing Education Programs; and
- (b) modifications to admissions, Transfer Credit, and Academic Standing regulations.

The Committee also provides oversight on regulatory matters related to its purpose.

2. Delegated Authority from GFC

In furtherance of the purpose of the Committee, and as permitted by the PSLA, GFC has delegated to the Committee the following powers, duties and functions:

2.1. Creation, Modification and Suspension and/or Termination of Academic Programs and Online and Continuing Education Programs - PSLA ss. 26(1)(a) and (b) and (c)

Pursuant to subsection 29(1)(a) of the PSLA, a Faculty council may determine the programs of study for which such Faculty is established, subject to any conditions or restrictions that are imposed by GFC. In addition, pursuant to subsection 26(1)(b) of the PSLA, GFC has the authority to consider and make decisions on the reports of the Faculty councils as to the programs of study in such Faculties. Subsection 26(1)(c) of the PSLA provides that GFC has the authority to determine all programs of study to which subsection 26(1)(b) of the PSLA does not apply and that are to be offered by the University for credit toward the requirements for any Credential. Subject to sub-paragraph 3.1 and paragraph 4, GFC has delegated to the Committee the authority to approve the creation, modification, suspension and/or termination of:

- (a) Academic Programs; and
- (b) Online and Continuing Education Programs.

GFC has also delegated to the Committee the duty to receive and discuss Quality Assurance Reports on an annual basis and receive, discuss and provide feedback on processes for the quality assurance of Academic Programs.

2.2. Regulation - PSLA ss. 26(1)

Further to GFC’s responsibility for the academic affairs of the University, GFC has delegated to the Committee the authority to approve regulations as set out in the University Calendar, or elsewhere, regarding:

- (a) Academic Programs; and
- (b) Online and Continuing Education Programs.



2.3. Regulations for Admission and Transfer - PSLA ss. 26(1)(a), (n) and 29(1)(c)

Subsection 26(1)(n) of the PSLA provides that GFC has the authority to determine regulations respecting the admission of persons to the University as students. Pursuant to subsection 29(1)(c) of the PSLA, a Faculty council may provide for the admission of students to that Faculty. Subject to sub-paragraph 3.3, GFC has delegated to the Committee the authority to:

- (a) make modifications to University admission and Transfer Credit regulations;
- (b) determine Transfer Credit equivalency for Courses and Block Transfers; and
- (c) approve Physical Testing and Immunization of Students.

GFC has also delegated to the Committee the duty to receive and discuss the Report of the Senate Lay Observers concerning their observations of Undergraduate Quota Program admission processes.

2.4. Academic Standing Regulations - PSLA ss. 26(1)(a) and (e) and 29(1)(b) and (d)

Subsection 29(1)(b) of the PSLA accords to a Faculty council the power to appoint the examiners for examinations in that Faculty, conduct the examinations and determine the results of them. Subsection 29(1)(d) of the PSLA accords to a faculty council the power to determine the conditions under which a student must withdraw from or may continue in an Academic Program in that Faculty. Further, pursuant to subsection 26(1)(e) of the PSLA, GFC may consider and make decisions on the reports of faculty councils as to the appointment of examiners and the conduct and results of examinations. GFC has delegated to the Committee the authority to approve:

- (a) modifications to Academic Standing regulations as set out in the University Calendar, or elsewhere; and
- (b) modifications to International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement regulations in the University Calendar.

Collectively, the powers, duties and functions set out in paragraphs 2.1 through and including 2.4 is the “**Delegated Authority**”.

3. Limitations on Delegated Authority

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the following powers, duties and functions are expressly reserved by GFC and have not been delegated to the Committee as part of the Delegated Authority:

3.1. Creation, Modification, and Suspension and/or Termination of Academic Programs

- (a) Substantial proposals relating to the creation, modification, or suspension and/or termination of Academic Programs; and



- (b) the receipt and discussion of Quality Assurance Reports that merit consideration with regards to the academic mission of the University.

3.2. Regulations

- (a) the establishment of Major regulations regarding Academic Programs and Online and Continuing Education Programs; and
- (b) Major modifications to existing regulations regarding Academic Programs and Online and Continuing Education Programs.

3.3. Admissions, Transfer and Academic Standing Regulations

- (a) Proposals for Substantial modifications to admissions, Transfer Credit, and Academic Standing regulations; and
- (b) the determination of regulations for the admission of Indigenous students to the University, including the documentation of Indigenous identity.

3.4. Collective Agreement

In the event there is a conflict or inconsistency between one or more recommendations or decisions made pursuant to these Terms of Reference and the Collective Agreement, the terms of the Collective Agreement will prevail.

4. Sub-delegation of Authority

4.1. Pursuant to subsection 26(3) of the PSLA, GFC may prescribe conditions governing the exercise or performance of any delegated power, duty or function, including the power of subdelegation. GFC hereby authorizes the Committee to sub-delegate to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) of the University the approval of:

- (a) the creation, suspension and/or termination of:
 - (i) Graduate Second-Level Specializations; and
 - (ii) Undergraduate Second-Level Specializations;
- (b) the modification, suspension and/or termination of Online and Continuing Education Programs;
- (c) proposals for Minor modifications to:
 - (i) Academic Programs; and
 - (ii) University admission and Academic Standing regulations,



with the condition that the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) shall document any such approvals and/or modifications and report to the Committee with respect to the same at the earliest opportunity for the inclusion of such report in the Committee's publicly available meeting materials and approved minutes.

- 4.2. Any member of the Committee or the University Community may identify to the Committee an issue with any approval made pursuant to sub-paragraph 4.1 that, in the opinion of such individual, acting reasonably, warrants review and discussion by the Committee. In such circumstances, the Committee shall engage in a review and discussion of the identified issue at its next scheduled meeting. Following such review and discussion, and if deemed necessary, the Committee is authorized, in its sole discretion, to approve a course of action for rectifying the identified issue.
- 4.3. In addition, and in accordance with the *Transfer Credit Procedure*, it is acknowledged and understood that the Transfer Credit equivalency for Courses and Block Transfers has been sub-delegated to individual Faculties.

5. Reporting Obligation

A written report will be put before GFC by the Committee at each regularly scheduled meeting of GFC, which shall summarise the activities and decisions of the Committee since the last meeting of GFC.

6. Composition of the Committee

Voting Members (16)

Chair (1)

- Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Ex-officio (6)

- Vice-Provost and University Registrar
- Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
- Vice-Provost (Indigenous Programming and Research)
- Associate Vice-President (Online and Continuing Education)
- Vice-President (Academic), Graduate Students' Association
- Vice-President (Academic), Students' Union

Elected by the GFC (9)

- 5 Academic Staff from Category A elected by GFC, at least three of whom are elected Academic Staff members of GFC, at least one of whom will have graduate program administration experience. One member, ideally a member of GFC, will be elected by the committee to serve as Vice-Chair
- 2 Academic and/or Non-Academic Staff members from at-large (Category A and/or S1.0, S2.0)
- 1 graduate student, preferably from GFC



- 1 undergraduate student from at-large

Non-Voting /Resource Members

- GFC Secretary
- University Secretary
- Associate Dean of Students
- Director Student Ombuds (or delegate)

The Committee may, in its sole discretion, and at any time, appoint one additional member to the Committee where the Committee is of the opinion that such additional member will bring a particular perspective, expertise and/or knowledge to the Committee that will serve to enhance its work. The procedure for such an appointment is within the discretion of the Committee, provided that the procedure is demonstrably fair and transparent.

7. Definitions and Interpretation

7.1. In these Terms of Reference, and in addition to terms otherwise defined in these Terms of Reference, the following terms have the following meanings:

- (a) **“Academic Program”** means a group of credit Courses that, on completion, leads to the granting of a Credential, along with their associated Course Designators;
- (b) **“Academic Staff”** has the meaning set out in the [Recruitment Policy \(Appendix A\) Definition and Categories of Academic Staff, Administrators and Colleagues](#) as filed and located in UAPPOL;
- (c) **“Block Transfer”** refers to a block of Courses completed as part of a Credential (e.g. diploma or certificate) that transfers into an Academic Program;
- (d) **“Board”** means the board of governors of the University;
- (e) **“Collective Agreement”** means the then-current collective agreement between the University and the Association of the Academic Staff of the University of Alberta;
- (f) **“Course”** means a unit of study usually undertaken to complete the requirements of an Academic Program;
- (g) **“Course Designator”** means the abbreviation designating a group of Courses or subject names;
- (h) **“Credential”** refers to the types of Credentials defined in the [Alberta Credential Framework](#) including but not limited to certificates, diplomas, bachelor’s and master’s degrees;
- (i) **“Faculty”** means a division of the University governed by a faculty council that is entitled, among other things, to determine the Academic Programs for which such faculty is established;



- (j) **“Graduate Second-Level Specializations”** means Academic Programs that fall under graduate first-level specializations in each discipline, providing an additional level of focus;
- (k) **“Ministry”** means the Government of Alberta’s ministry responsible for the post-secondary education system in the Province of Alberta;
- (l) **“Non-Credit Programming Framework”** means the approved framework defining non-credit credentials including micro-credentials, events, Courses, certificates and diplomas that make up the University’s Online and Continuing Education Programs;
- (m) **“Online and Continuing Education Programs”** means programs that fit the criteria set out in the Non-Credit Programming Framework;
- (n) **“Physical Testing and Immunization of Students”** means, collectively, regulations for testing and/or immunization of students as a precondition to admission to, or a condition to continuation in, individual programs within Faculties;
- (o) **“PSLA”** means the *Post-secondary Learning Act* S.A. 2003, c. P-19.5, as may be amended from time to time;
- (p) **“Quality Assurance Reports”** means reports issued following cyclical reviews of Academic Programs administered in accordance with the guidelines set by the Campus Alberta Quality Council and by the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic);
- (q) **“Report of the Senate Lay Observers”** means a summary of the activity, observations, and feedback of the Senate Lay Admissions Observers who are assigned to Undergraduate Quota Programs in the University in order to observe the admissions process to such programs;
- (r) **“Senate Lay Observers”** means the University senators assigned by the Office of the Senate to observe the admissions process in Undergraduate Quota Programs or to other program admissions committees at their request;
- (s) **“Transfer Credit”** means certain credits accepted by the University in respect of previous learning represented in Course units or credits applied and denoted on a student’s academic transcript;
- (t) **“Undergraduate Quota Programs”** means any undergraduate program that has a limited number of admissions and requires a selection process to fill them;
- (u) **“Undergraduate Second-Level Specializations”** means Academic Programs that fall under undergraduate first-level specializations, providing an additional level of focus;
- (v) **“University”** means the University of Alberta, a comprehensive academic and research university continued under the PSLA and legally referred to as “The Governors of the University of Alberta”;



- (w) **“University Calendar”** means the document that sets out the most current information on students rights and responsibilities and information on the degrees, programs, and Courses offered in the University, as well as rules and regulations; and
- (x) **“University Community”** means all academic staff, administrators, colleagues, and support staff as outlined and defined in [Recruitment Policy](#) ([Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B: Definitions and Categories](#)); and emeriti, undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows.

7.2. For the better understanding and interpretation of these Terms of Reference:

- (a) As used in these Terms of Reference:
 - (i) the term **“Academic Standing”** encompasses continuation and/or promotion in an Academic Program, graduation, and the requirement for a student to withdraw from the University;
 - (ii) the term **“regulation”** includes rules, procedures, policies, standards, frameworks and other regulatory content approved by GFC; and
 - (iii) the term **“student”** has the meaning given to such term in the PSLA.
- (b) Proposals for the creation, modification, suspension or termination of an Academic Program, or for the creation or modification of admission or Academic Standing regulations, are characterized as **Substantial, Major** or **Minor** in nature:
 - (i) a **“Substantial”** proposal:
 1. contemplates a significant financial investment in one or more Facilities and/or technology; or
 2. requires an assessment of reputational or academic risks to the University;
 - (ii) a **“Major”** proposal:
 1. contemplates significant modifications to substantive content; and/or
 2. requires the establishment of, or modifications to, regulatory content, reasonably expected to lead to significant administrative and/or academic impacts on the proposing Faculty or other Faculties or the University;
 - (iii) a **“Minor”** proposal:
 1. contemplates minimal modifications to substantive content; and/or
 2. requires the establishment of, or modifications to, regulatory content,



not reasonably expected to lead to significant administrative and/or academic impacts on the proposing Faculty or other Faculties or the University.

If there is any dispute or question as to which of the above categories a proposal falls under, the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) (or delegate) will decide.

- (c) For clarity, the “**suspension**” of an Academic Program refers to the temporary closure of an Academic Program to new admissions, while the University continues to deliver such Academic Program to current students and to issue parchments to graduates of such Academic Program.
- (d) Academic Programs include Ministry approved Credentials.
- (e) Words importing the singular number include the plural and *vice versa*.
- (f) Pursuant to subsection 26(1)(a) of the PSLA, GFC has the authority to exercise any power of a Faculty council that GFC considers desirable to exercise. In these Terms of Reference where it is noted that GFC is delegating to the Committee a power that is, *prima facie*, a power given to a Faculty council under the PSLA, it should be understood that GFC has elected to exercise such power, and to delegate the exercise of such power to the Committee.
- (g) The authority conferred upon GFC by virtue of subsection 26(1) of the PSLA is, in all respects, subject to the authority of the Board, and, where the context requires, these Terms of Reference shall be read with awareness and recognition of the foregoing.

8. **Supplemental Information**

[Academic Standing Policy](#)

[Academic Standing Regulations Procedure](#)

[Admissions Policy](#)

[Alberta Credential Framework](#)

[Non-Credit Programming Framework](#)

[Transfer Credit Articulation Procedure](#)

[Undergraduate Admissions Procedure](#)

Approved by General Faculties Council (GFC):
April 29, 2024