COURSE & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

The Course and Program Development (CPD) process is the method by which curriculum change occurs at Eastern Michigan University. Since the strength of any university lies in its academic programs, keeping these programs current through a carefully constructed and maintained course and program development system is essential to the educational mission of the University.

EMU's Course and Program Development Process has both a legal and functional basis. The contract between Eastern Michigan University and the EMU-American Association of University Professors provides a framework for faculty input on curricular matters. The details are spelled out in Departmental Input Documents in every academic department/school, as well as the by-laws of the faculty advisory bodies in each of the five Colleges, and the University-wide Faculty Senate.

Before changes in the curriculum can occur, faculty input must be obtained. Also, the CPD process allows for functional coordination of curricular development. It provides an ordered method whereby proposals to modify EMU courses and programs can proceed from conception to implementation, thereby assuring that the change occurs in a systematic rather than haphazard fashion. The purpose of this Handbook is two-fold: 1) The first is to explain the course and program development system as it exists 2) The second is to offer helpful hints about how to navigate the system most effectively

Explanation of the CPD system is not as easy a task as one might wish. The system offers a significant number of potential twists and turns that make a detailed account of how it works more complex than it first appears. Some of these have to do with the paperwork that starts the process; others with the routes different types of proposals must take on their way to final approval, still others with the ins and outs of the contractually mandated Faculty Input System.

Offering a clear explanation of all of these can help pinpoint bumps in the road and make it easier to avoid them. So too can the hints about how to navigate the CPD system most effectively. Typically, these have less to do with filling forms out correctly or knowing where things go when than they do with making sure proposals are presented in a way that makes them easy to understand and review and thus increases the likelihood of quick approval.

It is important to remember that the CPD process intends to foster curriculum development. To be successful, it must be responsive to the needs of those who use it, and capable of modification in the face of systemic shortcomings. These need to be communicated if they are to be fixed. Please do not hesitate to point out any difficulties and recommend changes that could improve the system. All will be welcomed, and none will go unacknowledged or unheeded.

COURSE AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Section Abstract:

☑ Course and Program Development Office manages the Course and Program Development process.

☑ The CPD Associate's primary responsibilities are to help faculty prepare proposals for curricular modifications, introduce them into the process and monitor, and facilitate the proposal's progress through the process until approved.

☑ In one fashion or another, every change to the University curriculum that requires official approval must go through the Course and Program Development Office.

The Course and Program Development Office oversees the Course and Program Development process. The Provost (or designee) and the University Registrar support this process, as well.

The Course and Program Development Office' primary responsibility is to help faculty prepare proposals for curricular modifications, introduce them into the process and monitor, and facilitate a proposal's progress through the process until approved. Carrying out these responsibilities involves such things as,

▪ Making sure that proposal forms are properly completed;

▪ Offering advice about the best way to organize and convey information;

▪ Identifying and taking care of potential problems before proposals leave their initiating departments/schools or colleges;

▪ Distributing proposals to College and Faculty Councils and keeping track of them as they make their way through the Input System;

▪ Helping resolve issues that arise during the approval process;

▪ Updating and maintaining the university's undergraduate and graduate catalogs

▪ Notifying appropriate University offices and personnel when the decision to approve or disapprove proposals has been made.

▪ Preparing and submitting proposals for review by the Academic Officers Committee of the Michigan Association of State Universities and the EMU Board of Regents

In one fashion or another, every change to the University curriculum that requires official approval must go through the Course and Program Development Office.

This includes:

▪ **New academic programs** – Major, Minor, Masters, Doctorate, Certificate

▪ **Revisions to existing programs -** including addition or deletion of courses, reconfigurations of existing courses, and changes to admissions or program level graduation criteria

▪ **New graduate or undergraduate courses –** including courses previously offered as special topics. Please note that a course can only be taught using a special topics number three times before it needs to be proposed as a regular course.

- **Revisions to existing courses** – This may include changes in number, title, description, prerequisites or restrictions; changes to a program or subject codes; and discontinuation of programs or courses through phase-out or shelving.

All, however, must be handled through the Course and Program Development Process

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

Section Abstract:

☑ Involving the CPD Office earlier in the process will speed proposal development and pave the way to smooth progress through the later stages of the input process.

☑ This may include: 1) Indicating which forms need to be completed or which numbers are available for new courses 2) Offering advice on how to fill out the forms 3) Finding the appropriate person to contact in case of potential overlap with other departments/schools 4) How best to explain a complex proposal.

☑ Where there is the potential for overlap, faculty preparing a proposal should take steps to alleviate other departments'/schools' concerns, either by carefully explaining the differences between what is proposed and what already exists, or contacting affected departments/schools and getting their approval beforehand.

☑ The Course and Program Development Office is always willing to work with faculty to help prepare proposals correctly.

Proposal development is the first phase in the course and program development process. Typically, faculty in an academic department/school initiates proposals. Although in some cases, a department head/school director may also initiate a proposal.

Curriculum modifications may range from changing a course title (course revision proposal) to adding a new course to an existing program (program revision proposal), to creating an entirely new degree program (new program proposal). In many cases, changes are the result of a perceived need within a department/school, but may also stem from such diverse external causes, as altered accreditation requirements or federal/state-mandated changes.

It is important that proposals be prepared correctly, they are the basis for which curriculum is implemented at many levels of the university, most notably the Academic Catalogs and Banner. Proposals have the potential to be scrutinized at every step of the process. Thus, proposal preparation involves more than simply writing it up and submitting it. The submission of any proposal requires paperwork. Curriculum proposals are submitted using an online system, Curriculog (emich.curriculog.com). Even something as simple as deleting a course (course deletion proposal) or changing its prerequisites (course revision proposal) requires that a form is completed. **For something as complex as proposing a new program (new program proposal) or significantly revising an existing one (program revision proposal), the paperwork may be extensive and may require considerable prior effort.** The proposal must also be presented in a way that clearly articulates the desired outcome.

While every attempt is made to simplify and clarify forms and guidelines, they may still appear complicated and confusing, especially to faculty who are unfamiliar with them. Even when the forms are clear, it still may take a considerable investment of time and effort to complete them fully and correctly. Part

of the services offered by the Course and Program Development Office is to assist faculty in completing paperwork correctly.

While proposals are most often generated within individual departments/schools, **interdisciplinary courses and programs** may involve more than one department/school or more than one college. As they are being developed, such proposals may require collaboration with and acceptance by faculty in several departments/schools and Colleges. This process may complicate and delay the development of intricate proposals. <u>Please contact the Course & Program Development Office before starting an interdisciplinary proposal.</u>

Faculty in departments/schools other than the originating department/school may have a stake in the proposal. The most obvious case is when there is content overlap between a course and program proposed by one department/school and courses or programs already existing in other departments/schools. <u>Where there is the potential for overlap, faculty preparing a proposal should take steps to alleviate other departments'/schools' concerns, either by carefully explaining the differences between what is proposed and what already exists, or contacting affected departments/schools and getting their approval beforehand.</u> Once again, the Course and Program Development Office can assist in this process.

No one is as familiar with a curriculum proposal as the person who has originated it. Part of developing a proposal should be identifying someone whose responsibility it will be to explain and, if necessary, defend it. Choosing a "contact person" will not only facilitate approval, but it will also help speed up the resolution of problems that might arise.

<u>Proposal preparation is easily the most critical step in the entire process.</u> This is where mistakes are most often made**.** As mentioned before, **the best way to avoid the pitfalls of proposal development is to involve the CPD Office from the start**. The Course and Program Development Office is always willing to work with faculty to help prepare proposals correctly, including 1) Indicating which forms need to be completed or which numbers are available for new courses 2) Offering advice on how to fill out the forms 3) Finding the appropriate person to contact in case of potential overlap with other departments/schools 4) How best to explain a complex proposal.

Involving the Course and Program Development Office earlier in the process will speed proposal development and pave the way to smooth progress through the later stages of the input process.

There is no easy way to estimate the time it may take to develop a proposal. Preparation time seems to be a function of several factors, including the complexity of the proposal and the urgency of making the changes. Complex proposals take longer than simple ones. New program proposals take longer to prepare than revisions of existing programs, often because they require such things as a needs assessment or a detailed cost analysis. Likewise, the necessity of getting something done quickly, as a result, for example, of a State, Federal, or accrediting body mandate, can shorten the time a proposal is in development. In contrast, the need to collaborate with other departments/schools or colleges to develop a new interdisciplinary program can significantly lengthen the process.

FACULTY INPUT PROCESS

Faculty Input (Originating Department/School)

In this step in the CPD process, the originating department/school review proposals according to the procedures outlined in its Departmental Input Document (DID). The time a proposal is in the originating department/school depends on the review that needs to occur. The steps

> *Section Abstract:*
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> ☑ Review your college's input document, as well as, the faculty council's by-laws for the specific process within your college.
>
> ☑ Proposals that are small in scope, having no impact beyond the initiating college, move forward in an expedited process.
>
> ☑ Deans (and Faculty Councils) of the non-originating college, are given at-least 60 days to give input on proposals that have the potential to affect the courses and/or programs in their colleges.
>
> ☑ After consideration of the proposals, each dean must recommend to the Provost (or designee) either approval or disapproval.

are outlined in the DID; the actual time a proposal takes to get through these stages varies. Most proposals spend about a month under review in the originating department/school. **Given the vast differences between departments/schools, this handbook does not touch on specifics regarding the input system within each department/school.**

Faculty Input (Originating College)

Only proposals found acceptable at the department/school level move forwarded to the college level review. The process for, and level of, the review is determined by each college. In some cases, a standing committee will review the proposals before the full Council; in others, the full council will consider the proposals from the start, or not review the proposal at all. Councils will make a recommendation to the Dean, whether the proposal is accepted, rejected, or sent back to the department/school for revisions. In the vast majority of cases, the Dean follows the wishes of the Council, though they have the right to decide differently.

The time a proposal spends on this step will vary from college to college. Review your college's input document, as well as, the faculty council's by-laws for the specific process within your college. Again assuming no difficulties, it usually spends between two weeks and two months in the originating College.

Course and Program Development Office

Proposals accepted at the College level will make their way to the Course and Program Development Office. This is the first step in the process where there is formal involvement at the University-Level. Any role the Course and Program Development Office had up to this point was informal or advisory. Once a proposal has cleared the originating college, however, the role becomes official; and it remains so throughout the remaining steps.

Expedited Approval

Proposals received by the Course and Program Development Office. are treated in different ways. Curricular changes that are small in scope, having no impact beyond the initiating college, move forward to the Provost (or designee) for final action. This process is informally referred as an "expedited approval." If a course or program revision proposal impacts a department outside of the originating college, it may be eligible for expedited approval if the impacted departments had a previous opportunity to provide input on the proposal. In consultation with the Provost (or designee) the Course and Program Development Office will make the final determination as to whether or not a proposal can be expedited. Before moving forward for Provost (or designee) approval, expedited proposals may be sent to the University Registrar for an informal review to find potential areas of concern that may delay the implementation of an approved proposal.

Faculty Input (Non-Originating Colleges)

Deans of the non-originating college, as well as, the University Librarian, are given the opportunity to give input on proposals that have the potential to affect the courses and programs in their colleges. By faculty contract, the faculty council in each college has the right and responsibility to review curriculum proposals and make a recommendation to their Dean. Proposals are routed to the deans and college faculty councils by the Course and Program Development office, via Curriculog. The time that elapses between receiving the proposals and their distribution to the colleges will vary depending on the time of year, and the size/complexity of the proposal.

As a rule, all proposals distributed to the non-originating colleges for input are given a 60-calendar day response deadline. The Faculty Councils in each college are given the opportunity to examine these proposals during the 60-day review period. At certain points during the academic year, this 60-calendar day

response time is extended to account for the time that faculty members are contractually unavailable. As an example, College Faculty Councils do not meet between May and August. Proposals that reach the Course and Program Development Office after *March 1st* each year, and do not meet the requirements for expedited approval, are distributed with a September, October, or November deadline. The input deadline is posted to the proposal in Curriculog.

The review process varies, depending on faculty council procedures and by-laws. After consideration of the proposals, the faculty councils typically recommend approval, disapproval, or delay full consideration, i.e., table a proposal, and request more information. They may do this provided it is within the 60-day review period. If the faculty council can work with the faculty who submitted the proposal to address concerns before the end of the 60-day review period, this would be preferred. The Course and Program Development Office will monitor college responses and help see that concerns are acted on without undue delay.

Final faculty council recommendations are recorded in Curriculog by the council's chair. Though these recommendations are advisory, seldom do Deans fail to accept them. The Dean makes a recommendation regarding approval, to the Provost (or designee), via Curriculog. The Dean's recommendation should be recorded in the proposal, within Curriculog. Colleges are encouraged to make a recommendation on all proposals but understand that the lack of a formal response signifies a recommendation to approve.

College Faculty Councils may review proposals using whatever criteria and standards they choose. Not all review them with the same degree of scrutiny, nor do they do so according to the same criteria and standards. Historically, the following have often been the determining factor on whether or not a faculty council recommends approval.

- **Coherence and Intelligibility** A proposal that is not clearly articulated is very likely to be rejected or tabled by a reviewing body.

- **Internal Consistency** If the parts contradict one another, or if similar information is presented in widely different ways, then again a proposal's acceptance is likely to be delayed.

- **Content Overlap** Reviewers are acutely sensitive to the possibility that the curricular content of a proposal might duplicate what is already being offered elsewhere, especially in areas of their concern. A proposal for a new course in Law and Chemistry might be a red flag to others who teach courses in the law. Without some acknowledgment and prior consultation with others who might have an interest in such a proposal, would certainly risk delaying final approval.

Understanding and taking account of these standards is critical in preparing proposals and is another reason for involving the Course and Program Development Office early in the process

The actual time a particular proposal is under review may be shortened if all Deans recommend approval before the deadline expires. However, the time may lengthen if one or more of the colleges object to it. How quickly it might then be acted on depends on how quickly objections are handled. The Course and Program Development Office is also responsible for helping resolve problems as expeditiously as possible. The Provost (or designee) can decide on approval after receiving a recommendation from each dean, or the deadline has passed.

Decision

Except in the case of a New Program proposal, which requires Michigan Association of State Universities and Board of Regent review, final approval of curriculum proposals rests with the Provost or their designee. However, approval will always be delayed in two cases. First, a dispute between those who have put forward a proposal and those who have reviewed it is not reconciled. If this occurs, a meeting between the parties to the dispute, as well as the Course and Program Development Office and the Provost (or designee) may be needed to see whether an agreement between them can be reached. If the meeting does not resolve the issue, the Provost (or designee) will make a final decision. This decision is final.

Second, there are occasionally issues with proposals that are outside the purview of the Course and Program Development Process/Input System. Most often, these have to do with new programs that require funding over and above what the department/school and college can provide. When programs require significant new financing, the Provost (or designee) may delay approval until the sources of that funding have been identified.

Michigan Association of State Universities

The Academic Officers Committee of the Michigan Association of State Universities reviews all new program proposals proposed by any of the State's 15 public universities. The Committee meets four times a year. The committee requires that new programs brought before it, be submitted six weeks ahead of time. Program phase-outs and spin-offs are reported to the body but are not voted on.

Board of Regents

New degree programs approved by the Provost (or designee) are presented to the Board of Regents for final action. The Board has final authority to approve or disapprove all new degree programs and degree types. The Board meets approximately every two months. Keep in mind the Board of Regent agendas are set months in advance of the actual meeting, there will be at least a month interval between Provost (or designee) approval and Board action; but as with Academic Officers Committee action, the range is more likely to be six weeks to two months, in some cases additional time is needed.

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

Section Abstract:

☑ Implementation is a shared responsibility between the Course and Program Development Office, Records & Registration, and other University Offices.

☑ Upon receiving a proposal, both the Course and Program Development Office and the Registrar review the proposal for potential implementation issue.

☑ Following approval, the Course and Program Development Office edits the catalog. After the catalog is revised, he/she notifies the University community that a proposal has been approved.

Proposals that have been approved must then be implemented. Implementation is a shared responsibility between the Course and Program Development Office, Records & Registration, and other University Offices. Upon receiving a proposal, the Course and Program Development Office reviews the proposal for potential issues that may need to be dealt with to avoid delaying implementation. Following approval, the Course and Program Development Office revises the catalog and notifies the University community that a proposal has been approved. Notification is through a memorandum of approval, signed by the Provost (or designee). The approval memo is distributed via e-mail to those responsible for submitting the proposal and those who are charged with various aspects of its implementation.

Full implementation may be a complicated procedure and require the involvement of several different University offices.

- **Records and Registration** - Responsible for loading course and program changes into Banner
- **University Admissions -** Responsible for updating banner with new or revised admission criteria.
- **Academic Advising** – Responsible for advising students, and must be familiar with revisions to the curriculum

It is essential to remember that the existing curriculum is not eligible for revision until the Provost (or designee) has approved it. In particular, none of the offices mentioned above can make even simple changes to an existing course or program data unless there is a formal memorandum of approval from the Provost (or designee), underlying all web content and marketing materials.

Requests from academic departments/schools to make unapproved changes are shared with the Course and Program Development Office who will see to it that the steps necessary for approval are taken. Depending on the type of change, this authorization may be easily obtained; but no change can be implemented without it.

Timeline

Ideally, curricular changes would become effective as soon as they are approved. For various reasons, however, there is often a time lag between approval and implementation. Though there are exceptions, the

timeline for curriculum implementation depends on its potential impact on students. While no principles are universally applicable, generally course and program revisions are effective the Fall semester following approval. In rare cases, new and revised courses are approved for a Winter or Summer semester effective date.

The most public record of current course and program requirements are the University's Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog. University policy is that the current catalog at the time of a student's matriculation defines their graduation requirements. The University publishes a new undergraduate and graduate catalog every academic year. A working draft of the following year's catalog is made available each year by March 1 and remains a working draft until July 1 of that year, when the catalog becomes official and locked from further editing.

Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog Timeline	
3/1	The CPD Office publishes the Working Draft of both catalogs
3/1 – 6/30	Departments/Schools review the catalogs and address any concerns with the Course and Program Development Office.
7/1	Catalogs are locked, preventing further editing. The catalogs are copied, and work begins on the following year's catalogs.

CONCLUSION

You may find that you appreciate this process after you consider these two major lessons. The proposals approved without unnecessary delay are often well prepared and have a champion. Completing the proposal correctly from the beginning and taking responsibility for shepherding it along the way, will all but guarantee proposal approval. The second, though, is that the process takes time. Significant curricular change does not happen overnight. Proposals are subject to various levels of review; the scope of the proposal determines the levels of review required. The most complex proposals take a year or longer. Understanding the process and how long it is likely to take, can lessen both impatience and frustration. The system does work, but it may not do so quickly.