COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
School of Professional Studies

Title: Course and Program Change Review Policy
Responsible Unit: Faculty
Approval by: Academic Excellence Committee, Dean's Council
Effective Date: September 15, 2018

Introduction

The Academic Excellence Committee (AEC) is charged with maintaining academic rigor and curricular quality for programs at the School of Professional Studies. The AEC doesn't speak to every issue that impacts excellence, some issues, such as course sequencing fall under the purview of the program and Academic Directors. The committee is responsible for reviewing new program proposals and course syllabi and providing recommendations for revision or approval. The committee is also responsible for reviewing changes to these programs and courses. Though there has been prior discussion that a course with changes constituted 50% change require review by the committee, there has not previously been clarity on what constitutes a 50% change. This policy attempts to differentiate changes that require review from the academic excellence committee.

Policy

At the program level, the following changes require review from the Academic Excellence Committee:

- Addition, removal, or substitution of a required or elective course.
- Any changes to programmatic learning outcomes.
- Changes to or additions of new audiences, such as an executive population or a distance option.

At the program level, the following changes do not require review from the Academic Excellence Committee:

- Addition of forced sequencing or the establishment of pre-requisites.
- Addition or removal of elective courses.

At the course level, the following changes require review from the Academic Excellence Committee:

- New course title.
- Change in credits.

- Rewrites—other than grammatical improvements—to a Course Overview. If there are rewrites to the Course Overview that indicate the focus of the course has changed it will necessitate a review by the AEC.
- The addition or subtraction of course learning objectives. If the number of objectives being changed is equal to or greater than 20% of the total number of objectives, the syllabus must be reviewed by the AEC. If fewer than 20% of the objectives are changing, a full syllabus review is not necessary. However, the program must still present the following information to the AEC:
  - For new objectives: the relationship between new course objectives and the program objectives, as well as a definition of how these objectives will be assessed.
  - For removed objectives: an explanation of the impact on programmatic objectives, as well as an accounting for what objectives will be measured by remaining assessments.
- Changes to the course assessment strategy, where more than 50% of the course grade will be assessed differently than in the previously approved version. If there are no other changes to the course, a full syllabus review is not necessary. However, the program must still present an explanation of the impact these changes will have on how learning objectives are being assessed in the course.
- Changes to 50% or more of the topics in the course, as demonstrated by topics listed in the weekly schedule.
- Change that includes international travel.
- A course that has not been taught for five or more years should be formatted in the current SPS syllabus template and submitted to the Committee for review prior to offering to students.

For any course changes that carry contract implications (e.g. somebody is being hired as a staff associate to make modifications to an existing course), changes must be reviewed by the Instructional Designer. Changes made as part of regular teaching practice should be made in consultation with the program's Academic Director unless they rise to the level of modification discussed in this policy. All changes are subject to review during program's official review.

At the course level, the following changes do not require review from the Academic Excellence Committee:

- New modalities of existing courses, so long as the new modality does not alter the changes delineated above.
- New readings or examples that improve the currency and relevance of course topics.
- Revisions to assignments if the overall assessment strategy is not changed. For example, new exam questions or essay prompts do not require approval.
- Changes to fewer than 50% of the weekly topics in the course, as demonstrated by the topics listed in the weekly schedule.

Exceptions

There are no exceptions to this policy. Changes that have not been approved prior to student registration cannot be executed in courses.