Governance and Procedures of Basic Degree and Graduate Curriculum and Course Approvals
at TST (March 10 2022)
Approved by Academic Council - April 18, 2022

I. Goals

The goals of the process are:

- To provide for governance consistent with UTQAP and ATS accreditation requirements (for reference, see the video of workshop on Quality Assurance on the Faculty Assembly Quercus site, https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/150560/modules/items/3154953);
- To promote collaborative processes of consortium-wide curriculum and course planning that involve faculty and administrators;
- To encourage syllabus production and peer review as a scholarly, creative and mutually supportive activity;
- To distinguish clearly those course elements that require governance approval ("canonical material") from those that individual faculty members have discretion to decide.

II. Components of the course syllabus

A syllabus should have three components.

1. Canonical material

"Canonical material" is "governed," so must be approved by TST processes, either by or delegated from the Academic Council. Canonical material includes the course code, the course title, the course description, the delivery mode (in person, hybrid, online), the weight and contact hours, and the way the course contributes to curricular learning outcomes. (Faculty provide other information on the course proposal form that can assist administrators in "mapping" the place of the course in the curriculum, as part of the quality assessment of degree programs.)

2. Standard Course Policies

University and Ministry policies are not "governed" but are assumed to apply to every course. Key policies include those established by the University's Grading Practices Policy, and matters of academic integrity and discipline such as plagiarism, and attendance. Current policies in these areas form part of a TST syllabus template published on the TST website, which instructors can copy and paste into their own course syllabuses, along with their own course policies. (The TST syllabus template is revised from time to time as requirements evolve.)

3. Non-canonical course content

Instructors determine other elements of each course they teach, including the assessment plan, the selection and organization of readings, the course outline, and the pedagogical approach.

III. Principles Governing the Review of Syllabi

1) Each college is responsible for establishing a first review of the course proposals and eventual review of syllabi of all its courses, insuring that course proposals and syllabi satisfy the quality and technical requirements of the University, the ATS, and the TST, as well as its own.
2) The components of the TST syllabus template should be included in all course syllabi, although colleges or instructors may choose to reorder them.
3) The Research and Teaching Areas (RTAs), which have been here-to-fore informal conversation groups, will be formally constituted as subcommittees of the Academic Council for the purposes of peer collaboration on syllabi. TST faculty members, working collegially in their Research and Teaching Areas, review and discuss the syllabi as works-in-progress. As colleagues, they offer one another encouragement and counsel; they do not approve, reject, or modify courses.
4) TST will review syllabi administratively to ensure that they accurately state the canonical elements of the course as approved by governance and the Standard Course Policies, as discussed above.
5) Presentation of course proposals and syllabi are now distinct processes, chronologically separated by many months.

IV. Principles Governing Curriculum

1) Each college is responsible for its Basic Degree curriculum, taking into account its the mission and the goals and requirements of its programs. The GCTS is responsible for the curriculum of its graduate programs. Collaboration among colleges at the BD level is encouraged, and collaboration at the graduate level is required.
2) TST faculty members, working collegially in their Research and Teaching Areas, review and discuss the syllabi as works-in-progress. As colleagues, they offer one another encouragement and counsel; they do not approve, reject, or modify courses.
3) Changes in programs and curriculum are approved by academic governance according to the policies and procedures of UTQAP.
4) The Basic Degree Council (BDC) and the Graduate Studies Council (GSC) review course proposals and provide recommendations on course offerings. The Academic Council (AC) is responsible to approve TST's course offerings. The Councils do not review the instructor's pedagogical decisions. They are concerned with how the aggregate of courses and the learning outcomes they address, support the curriculum and the needs of students. For instance, they consider whether unnecessary redundancies can be avoided, curricular gaps can be filled, apparent scheduling problems can be addressed, and collaborative opportunities have been recognized. Finally, the Senior Executive

Council reviews and approves the resources available to mount the curriculum. (The current Curriculum Committee will be eliminated.)

5) Two or more member colleges frequently teach courses on similar topics. Where courses have different outcomes, they remain separate courses with distinct canonical material. Member colleges *may* collaboratively establish common learning outcomes (for ATS purposes) and outcomes at proficiency levels (for QA purposes) for frequently taught courses that might be taught collaboratively. When desirable to the colleges, they may sponsor courses with the same course descriptions and canonical information, that are taught by different faculty members with different syllabi.

V. Schedule for Collaboration

1) By October 30, college registrars will collect and submit to TST the courses proposed for the following academic year. (The actual date when registrars will collect this information will be established by their school.) Preferably, schools will move toward a multiple year rotation of courses for this purpose in order to stabilize the curriculum and allow for student advanced planning. Registrars will also submit the "canonical information" for proposed new or revised courses for Fall, Winter and Summer. TST will consolidate the information to be made available to the BDC and GSC for consortium-wide curriculum planning.

2) Each November, the BDC will consider the distribution of 1000, 2000 and 3000 level courses, identifying curricular redundancies and gaps, as well as potential scheduling issues. TST will provide curriculum mapping information and a spreadsheet of proposed courses, grouped by course code, to inform these deliberations. As part of its deliberation, BDC will consider the ecclesial mission of the member college from which the course is approved. On this basis, the BDC will recommend new and revised courses and make recommendations about the schedule of course offerings.

Each November, the GSC will similarly consider the distribution of proposed graduate 6000 and 5000 level courses, identifying curricular redundancies and gaps, as well as potential scheduling issues. TST will provide curriculum mapping and a spreadsheet of proposed courses, grouped by course code, to inform these deliberations. As part of its deliberation, it will consider the mission and vision of the GCTS and ecclesial mission of the member college from which the course is proposed. On this basis, GSC will recommend new and revised courses and make recommendations about the schedule of course offerings.

If changes are needed—for example, if gaps exist in the curriculum or if multiple courses on a given topic are scheduled for the same semester — the BDC or GSC, as the case will be, will refer recommendations to the SEC and RTAs for consideration.

3) By late November, recommendations in regard to collaboration, curricular duplication and gaps, and scheduling may be referred to the next regularly scheduled Research and Teaching Area (RTA) meeting for consideration. RTAs will communicate any proposed changes through their SEC members.

4) Each December, SEC considers (a) the recommendations and distribution of courses coming from BDC and GSC, and (b) any adjustments proposed by the colleges as a result of conversations in the RTAs. SEC recommends the curricular offerings for the following academic year to Academic Council.

5) Each January, Academic Council receives the recommendations from BDC and GSC and approves course offerings. AC may also refer its observations about curricular offerings back to BDC, GSC, or SEC for consideration in the following year. After AC, courses are timetabled. Any insights about areas where TST is using significant numbers of adjuncts or is missing subject coverage are referred back to SEC for complement planning.

Note: There will always be last-minute changes in courses as faculty loads change. AC will be kept apprised of changes that might affect the overall curricular balance. Any BDC or GSC meeting may recommend additional courses to AC and SEC and may raise other concerns about the overall curriculum.

6) Each October and March, the RTAs will convene in small groups in the week after reading week to discuss work-in-progress syllabi. If significant numbers of new or revised courses are approved, the November and April meetings of RTAs may also arrange additional conversations about syllabi. The goal will be collegial and creative discussion that supports course creation as scholarly and intellectual work.

7) At a specific time each semester (to be decided), all syllabi will be submitted to TST for administrative review for compliance with handbook and ministry policies and archiving, as defined above. If this review identifies problems, the reviewer will alert the SEC member who will communicate with the faculty. They will arrange to archive the syllabi in an appropriate location.

Questions to be determined:
- How does graduate cohort course planning fit into this schedule?
- How are junior faculty members mentored in developing their courses and syllabuses? We think that ideally senior faculty members in their RTA's, not necessarily from their own colleges, would be involved.
- Should graduate faculty beyond the GSC reflect collaboratively on the overall shape of the curriculum at the graduate level?
- How might we reclaim TST's early vision for cross-college team-teaching?
- We don't have access to the Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation at U of T, although individual TST faculty members sometimes manage to get accepted into some of their programs. But the encouragement, challenge, and resources offered there are valuable. Can we move together beyond the kinds of practices that identify and address problems to the kind of procedures that challenge us towards excellence?

Acronyms:
AC: Academic Council
BDC: Basic Degree Council
GSC: Graduate Studies Council
SEC: Senior Executive Council
RTA: Research and Teaching Area
MOA: Memorandum of Agreement between the member colleges and the University of Toronto.
MOU: Memorandum of Understanding among the member colleges.

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