

TST Curriculum & Course Approval Procedures

Goals

The goals of the approval processes are:

- To provide for governance consistent with The University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) and the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) accreditation requirements;
- 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.

Principles Governing Curriculum and Course Approval

- Each college is responsible for its Basic Degree curriculum, taking into account its 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.
- Changes to program structure or requirements are approved by academic governance according to the policies and procedures of UTQAP.
- Each college is responsible for establishing a first review of their course proposals and eventual review of syllabi of all its courses, ensuring that course proposals and syllabi satisfy the quality and technical requirements of the TST, as well as its own.
- The Academic Council (AC) is responsible for approving TST's course offerings. The Council does not review the instructor's pedagogical decisions. It is 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.

Principles Governing Syllabus Approval

- The components of the TST syllabus template should be included in all course syllabi, although colleges or instructors may choose to reorder them.
- At an annual Faculty Assembly (FA) meeting, TST faculty members review and discuss new course syllabi. The results of the collegial review for each syllabus are sent to the colleges.
- 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.
- Approval of course proposals and review of syllabi are distinct processes, chronologically separated by many months.

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 credit value, the number of 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 of Toronto'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 syllabi, 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.

Schedule for Collaboration

Course Proposals

Ongoing between September and April, colleges will submit to TST new courses being proposed. The information submitted will include a course title, description, canonical information, and brief rationale for the creation of the course. TST will consolidate the information for review and approval at the next AC meeting.

Curriculum Mapping

Each January, colleges will submit to TST their intended course offerings for the upcoming academic year. Course distribution will be reviewed to identify curricular redundancies and gaps, as well as potential scheduling issues. Deliberations will also include consideration of the ecclesial mission of the member college from which the course is approved. Recommendations will be made to address any issues found. Recommendations may also be referred to the next regularly scheduled FA meeting for consideration.

Syllabi

Once a year, typically at the final FA meeting of the year, all syllabi will be reviewed. The goal will be collegial and creative discussion that supports course creation as scholarly and intellectual work. TST will also review syllabi for compliance with handbook and ministry policies, as defined above.