

CHAPTER 4

Proposals and their preparation

4.1 Types of Proposals (Updated 5/24/2023)

This chapter is concerned mainly with proposals for new or revised undergraduate programs, including majors, minors, and concentrations, as well as new courses or revisions of courses, such as changes in title, course prefix, number, credits, description, or prerequisites. Proposal originators must be full-time faculty at the college, and each proposal must be supported by a college department. There is now just one proposal form, containing parts A through G, and it is available for download on the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) website. It contains various instructions as screen tips (just hold your cursor over any blue highlighted words/phrases to read) that should be fully read before you fill it in. Only submit those parts that pertain to your proposal. **All** proposals require parts A and G, but most will only need a selection of B through E in addition to these, depending on what you plan to request. Delete from your document those sections that are not needed before submitting the proposal. The UCC looks at all proposals affecting 000 to 400-level courses, however, proposals affecting 400-level courses that are also offered as 500-level, must first be approved by the Graduate Committee before coming to the UCC. All proposals that affect only graduate programs and 500-600 level courses go through the Graduate Committee alone. Any questions: please e-mail the Chair of UCC at curriculum@ric.edu.

In some cases it is possible to combine related proposals onto a single form, such as when a course proposal also necessitates a program revision, or if you are making the same change to a group of courses, but, in general, each proposal needs its own form to ensure smooth passage. A single form can be used to make multiple changes to a single course (but if you are changing everything this should be presented as a new course rather than a revision). A single form may be used to make the same change to more than one course (for example, to make the same prerequisite change to two or three courses), so long as the rationale for each addition is given (in the case of there being different reasons). When making different changes to several courses, it is better to use separate forms for each course or it becomes too confusing for the reader. Bear in mind, if you combine different elements onto a single form and one of them should not be approved, then the whole proposal gets rejected. If the proposal is for a new program (sections E or F) then the proposal must follow guidelines described in the policies listed on the RIOPC website at: <https://www.riopc.edu/page/policies/>

The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee also receives proposals for policy statements, investigations, etc. either from individuals or from subcommittees. It is helpful to the Committee to have as specific a proposal as possible, particularly something that can easily be put in the form of a motion. An individual wishing to communicate with the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee for any of these purposes should contact the Chair of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee at curriculum@ric.edu.

4.2 Information About the Preparation of Proposals

Audience

Proposers should remember that the audience for the proposal, initially members of the UCC (but then students, advisors, Records Office, and other administration) may not be experts in your field of study, so please pitch your explanation at a level appropriate for the readership, to whom it needs to make sense. A clear and compelling "curricular rationale" for why you are making this proposal is key and is the first thing the committee considers, so make sure this explains ALL the changes you intend and the reasons why you are making them, or a full explanation of why this new course/program should be created and will benefit the students and the college.

Filling Out the Form

Use the current form that is available on the UCC website and **not** an older version. It is a single form that has different parts, and the type of proposal will determine which of these parts you need to include. Delete whole sections (B, C, D, E, F) that have not been used. Follow the explanations given on the form directly as well as under various screen tips—the latter are indicated by blue highlighted words and phrases that create pop up text boxes when you hold your cursor over them. The proposal form is a Microsoft Word document (.docx). It is designed to be downloaded, completed electronically, then saved as a Word file and emailed to the Chair of the UCC at curriculum@ric.edu. Please **do not** convert to .pdf files as the Executive Committee needs to be able to write on these documents and make corrections, where appropriate. The Committee needs the electronic file, **along with a separate single electronic file of its accompanying catalog copy (use a copy of the current catalog with tracked changes; Word files for this are available on the UCC Forms and Information page)**, as soon as possible, and you can send this in while still collecting signatures so you can get feedback should anything have been overlooked. We need to have a copy of the proposal **with all of the required signatures**, before your proposal can go before the UCC. We accept electronic signatures or confirmation of approval or acknowledgement e-mails sent to curriculum@ric.edu in place of this—the Chair of the UCC should have the approval signatures prior to the Executive UCC meeting for that month (see timetable on announcements page) so that we do not waste time looking over proposals that do not have the required approvals. Always double-check that numbers for program credits add up correctly if you have made any changes to course credits or program requirements. If making changes to a course that is used by other department programs outside of yours, be sure to note this on your proposal (A. 6) and get a signature from said department and their Dean if different from yours (they may need to make changes in the Academic Rhode Maps). Include relevant catalog copy that shows ALL the places your changes/additions need to be changed in the catalog (consider information lists of programs and where courses get listed in programs other than your own department's). Make sure you note any website updates that will be needed (A. 11) or anything that might impact current transfer agreements (A. 12). For A. 13 check the list on the Forms and Information page of the UCC website for a list of proposals that may need to be approved by NECHE, and enter that expectation here, and contact Institutional Research for further guidance. Catalog copy needs to be without error (and should agree **exactly** with whatever was stated on the proposal—please double-check).

Make sure you complete all necessary responses, and only leave blank those parts that are irrelevant to your proposal (All parts of A.7 need completing, even if it is just a simple “none” and if A. 5 and 6 are left blank, then you may want to rethink why you are making this proposal if it will have no impact!!). On the flip side, don’t fill in sections that are irrelevant—for example, when making course revisions only include the old and new of those things **you are changing** (except for the course prefix and number that should be included to allow the committee to place the proposal). Where the form includes possible choices just delete the words in the boxes when they do not apply in order that the Committee can clearly focus on the details that are being changed. Do not use highlight to choose words (as when printed in black and white these do not show up) but delete the words you do not wish to use. Course learning outcomes are especially important for new courses, but also apply when making substantial revisions to a course. We do not need the full syllabus you would be giving a student—but a two-tier outline to convey a sense of what material/skills the course will include (make sure this is detailed enough to justify the number of course credits being requested).

Ensure you indicate enrollment numbers in the program proposal forms (E and F). This is so we have an idea of how many students will be affected by the proposal. Check with Institutional Research for advice if you need to furnish a CIP number (as well as if you answer YES to 8, 9, or 10. Make sure when revising programs that you include clear tables of the before and after in section 5 that clearly indicate to the committee what aspects of the program are being altered. If you have any questions just e-mail them to curriculum@ric.edu. All new programs need clear program goals.

Any suggested changes after the proposal has been read, including minor ones, will be reviewed with the originator/proposer before forms are sent to the UCC at large. Maintaining the proposal as a Word document allows it to be posted to the UCC web site, where all members of the college community may view proposals and track them through the approval process, and also allows for any needed future editing should there need to be friendly amendments.

Submission of Proposals

After completing your proposal, you should forward it to your department or program chair and your dean for approvals and signatures before submitting it to the UCC; if they do not all sign off then you should not be wasting the committee's time with the proposal. **If proposals involve more than one department, department chairs and deans of all affected programs must acknowledge or approve and sign the proposal** (see below for further guidelines on acknowledgements and approvals). While the Executive Committee will look at a proposal without the signature page, it will not be placed upon the agenda of the UCC until the Chair has a copy of the signature page with all of the necessary signatures. The agenda is typically published one week before the UCC's scheduled meeting. Proposals to revise anything within the General Education Program **must** be approved by the Committee on General Education **before** they are submitted to the UCC and need to be signed by **ALL the Deans**. Proposals which affect Graduate courses **must** be approved by the Graduate Committee and need to be signed by the Chair of that committee, **before** they are submitted to the UCC. The OPC must approve proposals for new programs and/or substantial revisions (more than 25%) of existing programs for Higher Education once they have passed through UCC. The UCC website will indicate when

the necessary approvals have been made on its documents page, and the date on which the proposal, if passed, will go into effect. The originator will receive an e-mail confirmation once their proposal has reached final approval (along with other people who will need to know, such as the Directors of the Library, OASIS, and Records, the Chief Information Officer, Assistant Director of College Communications and Marketing, and the Office of Institutional Research).

To submit your proposal to the UCC, email the Word copy file of your completed form as an attachment (make sure you have the names and affiliations typed onto the signature sheet of those who will be signing before sending it out for those signatures). Only include those parts of the form that apply to your specific proposal (for example, if this is just a course revision, just delete sections E and F from the form). Please name the file to reflect the content of the proposal (eg. The number of the course being proposed or changed [such as ENGL261] or the discipline of the program [such as CHEMprog] and **do not** leave spaces in the name as these can cause problems during upload). Please **send this single file and a single file covering the catalog changes**, to the Chair of the UCC, at curriculum@ric.edu. Use this e-mail and not the Chair's personal e-mail. Please follow the detailed instructions that appear on the "Forms and Information" section of the UCC website to create your catalog copy. On completing your proposal, please acquire all necessary signatures, as noted above, these can be collected electronically. If the Chair does not have all the signatures by the time of the UCC meeting, your proposal will be tabled. Dates of meetings and when proposals are due for each one are posted on the UCC website, but as a general guide, proposals need to be sent in three weeks ahead of the meeting at which you would like your proposal to be considered. This is to give the Executive Committee time to check them over before submitting them to the full committee.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the UCC examines proposals for completeness (which includes all necessary signatures) and conformity to committee policy. They then recommend or do not recommend that the proposal be placed on the agenda of the next UCC meeting. Failure to recommend placement on the agenda will mean that the proposal is returned to the originator for repairs or revision or consultation with other concerned elements of the College community. If a proposal is returned to the originator, the Chair of the UCC confers with the originator about needed revisions. If these problems are relatively minor and can be fixed in time, the Executive Committee may allow placement on the agenda for that month's meeting. If the UCC finds further problems with the proposal during its meeting, there is also the possibility of friendly amendments to effect repairs on the floor. These, however, must be made by the representatives of the originator's constituency or by a member of the Executive Committee, in consultation with the originator. Only members of the UCC may make motions to amend a document before the Committee.

The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

The UCC receives proposals listed on its agenda, and after deliberation, approves, rejects, or tables a proposal. If a copy of the proposal, with all required signatures, has not been submitted to the Chair prior to this meeting, the proposal will be automatically tabled. It is recommended that the originator/proposer (or a representative) attend the UCC meeting at which their proposal

is being discussed in order to be able to respond to any questions that may arise. If questions about the proposal cannot be resolved at the meeting, then it will need to be tabled to the next meeting. If a proposal is not approved by the UCC, it may be referred back to the originator with an explanation of the reasons for disapproval. The proposal may be revised and resubmitted. Once a proposal is approved, an Action Form (see Appendix II-A), which includes an explanation of the proposal, is completed by the Chair of the UCC. This is forwarded to the Provost/Vice President, who signs or does not sign the Action Form after checking it for content, and forwards it to the President who approves or rejects the action. Proposals that are rejected by the President are returned to the UCC for reconsideration, with an explanation of the reason for the rejection. Notice of fully approved proposals is sent to the originator. The UCC website shows the progress of any submitted proposal, including when the proposal has been forwarded from the Executive Committee to the UCC, when it has been approved or rejected by the UCC, the Provost/Vice President, the President, and, if necessary, the OPC, along with the date on which the proposal will go into effect.

The action contained in a proposal becomes official only after presidential approval and, if needed, OPC approval or notification. Monthly lists of all actions approved by the UCC are also included on the UCC website.

Policy

It is the policy of the Chair of the UCC with the advice of the Executive Committee of the UCC to refuse to accept for agenda, proposals that are incomplete or that do not contain necessary information as outlined in the UCC Manual. It is the responsibility of the proposer to keep abreast of any changes in these requirements. The Executive Committee may ask for minor revisions. Revised proposals must be ready at least one week before the scheduled meeting of the UCC to give the committee time to read materials thoroughly prior to the meeting.

The Executive Committee may also suggest major revisions to a proposal or recommend that the proposal be withdrawn or reconsidered. These recommendations are made based on the consensus that the proposal would not be approved by the UCC as a whole. The proposer may decide to revise the proposal or elect to withdraw it entirely.

If your proposal will require any resources managed through Information Services, then the VP of Information Services must be informed prior to submitting the proposal to ensure that such resources will be available, and there should be a signature from the VP of Information Services on the form to reflect their approval of this. This action also should be noted on your proposal in the relevant section (A.7), where you are asked to describe the impact of the proposed change on college resources.

Once the Executive Committee forwards proposals to the UCC, the Chair will place them on the agenda of the Committee in chronological or logical order as received with other proposals. A proposal with interdepartmental or institutional concerns may be considered at one meeting with final action postponed until a subsequent meeting.

The UCC does not have jurisdiction over administrative arrangements for implementing approved proposals. Hence, any references in proposals to administrative arrangements are viewed solely as informational by the committee.

Additional Guidelines

Course numbering: If changing the number, or creating a new one, please check to make sure the number is not being used for another course, especially for a newly approved course that does not yet appear in the current catalog. Check for recent approvals that may not yet be in the catalog on the UCC website—the document names reflect abbreviations and numbers of courses/programs that are being proposed or revised. To help avoid confusion in transcripts and course repetition, the course number should not have been used for a course recently discontinued (in the past five years).

Course numbering system:

First digit: Indicates the level of the course.

- 0: These courses carry college credit in terms of the student's credit total for the semester, but do not count toward graduation requirements, so courses numbered 000-099 are effectively non-credit courses.
- 1 or 2: Lower division undergraduate courses, primarily for first year students or sophomores. These are introductory and foundational knowledge courses normally taken in undergraduate students' initial years at the college.
- 3 or 4: Upper-division undergraduate courses, usually taken by juniors or seniors. **All must** have a prerequisite—either other lower division courses, number of credits taken, or permission of department/program chair. Courses whose first digit is 4 may be taken by graduate students, but the number of 400 level credits acceptable in a graduate program is limited by graduate program policies.
- 5: Graduate courses. Undergraduates are not usually admitted to these courses.
- 6: Doctoral program courses, available only to doctoral students.

Second digit: Conveys special information about the course.

- 6: A seminar or general education Connections course (a few of the latter also use 7).
- 8: A workshop.
- 9: Directed study

Second and third digit:

- 50: Courses with temporary topical content or courses that are being developed. These courses must be approved by the dean or director but do not come before the Curriculum Committee until they have been offered with the same content three times, when they should be converted to become permanent courses.
- 80: Workshop courses with temporary topical content. These courses must be approved by the dean or director but do not come before the Curriculum Committee.

Word limits: Titles are limited to six words, course descriptions to 30 words.

Credit hours per semester (and issue of discrepancy between this and contact hours per week): Courses are usually no more than four, although student teaching and internships may have more than four credit hours. Often the number of contact hours per week and credit hours per semester is the same, although courses with labs or studio time may have more contact hours than credit hours. If there is a difference between contact and credit hours, indicate why in the designated space.

Curricular rationales: This is a very important section, and often the one to which committee members first turn. **Never** leave this blank. Explain how your proposal strengthens the curriculum of a department, program, major, or concentration. Reasons may include the changing knowledge base of the field, updated language and terminology, the changing needs of students and society, relationships among and consistency with other College programs, professional needs, and changes in content emphasis. When revisions of programs are in response to external evaluations, the proposal must include the curricular reasons for the revisions. Clearly explain how the proposal will satisfy the goals of the department and the goals and mission of the College.

Catalog Copy for programs: include all information you want published in the catalog, formatted as you want it to appear. Information may include Course Requirements, Admission Requirements, Retention Requirements, Course Requirements for a Minor, Professional Components, etc. If program information will require the addition of new catalog pages, indicate the placement of these pages, in relation to the existing catalog.

Acknowledgments and Approvals

In brief:

- A new program that includes courses from other departments, needs all of their **approval** signatures (along with their respective Deans).
- A revised program that is adding courses from other departments (whether they be required or optional), or changing a course previously included that is offered by another department from optional to required, needs their **approval** (along with their respective Deans).
- If your department wishes to delete a course that is offered in a program in another department, you need only their **acknowledgment**.
- A revised program that is deleting courses from other departments, or changing a course previously included that is offered by another department from required to optional, needs only their **acknowledgment**.
- A revised program that utilizes courses from other departments, but in the revision these courses are not being added or deleted needs neither acknowledgment nor approval from those departments (only the departments for which a change is being made need sign).

In more detail:

Acknowledgement signatures (with dates) are needed from:

- The chair or director of any department or program which includes a course that you are revising or deleting as part of their program, along with the Dean of that department/program.
- Any persons in charge of other elements of the College that are affected by this proposal. For example, proposals that directly or tangentially involve or affect resources provided by or activities of other elements of the College, such as the computer center, multimedia center, or other departments.
- The library will be automatically informed of all proposals once they have been approved, and so proposals will no longer require the acknowledgment signature of the Director of the Library, unless specialized resources are necessary.

Acknowledgment signatures indicate awareness (not necessarily endorsement or approval) of the impact of the proposal. If appropriate, these signatures may be accompanied by statements of support (or nonsupport) for the proposal. Affected persons may also appear before the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee to speak for or against a proposal.

Approvals

Approval signatures (with dates) are needed from:

- The chair or director of the department originating the proposal must sign, as well as the appropriate dean.
- The chair or director of any department or program that will be offering any courses you request in a new or revised program, along with the relevant Dean.
- Proposals that involve more than one school of the College must be signed by all concerned deans.
- If a proposal involves a general education course or policy in any way, the proposal must come before COGE for consideration and obtain the Chair's signature before it comes to UCC. It must also be signed each dean or their proxy. If COGE disapproves a proposal that has General Education implications, the proposal may come before the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee on appeal from a negative response from COGE, but rarely will the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee contradict a decision by its own subcommittee.

N.B. Proposals that do not have the necessary signatures prior to a UCC meeting will be tabled.

4.3. Revision of Existing Policy or Practice or a New Policy or Practice

Proposals for revisions of existing curricular policy, curricular practice, or for new policy or procedures may be submitted in writing to the Chair of the UCC. Such proposals should include a clear rationale and explanation of the need for the proposed revision or addition of policy or practice. It should also describe the possible impact on the College-faculty, students, staff, administration and resources. The UCC may schedule open hearings on proposals of far-reaching implications, if appropriate, or may agree if requested to do so. Note that proposals for changes

in Academic policy or practice must be sent to the Committee on Academic Policy and Procedures or to the Executive Committee of the Rhode Island College Council.

4.4 Glossary of Terms (Updated 11/21/2014)

The following glossary of terms are used to define parts of programs:

Capstone means culminating or crowning. It is used to describe a course that is the culminating experience for a program of study.

Certificate of Undergraduate Studies (CUS) programs are primarily for undergraduate-level students, where the certificate components consist mostly of Rhode Island College undergraduate-level courses. Admission and retention requirements are significant. These certificates typically provide applied academic and/or professional training.

Certificate of Continuing Studies (CCS) programs are primarily for non-degree students, where the certificate components consist primarily of courses and/or workshops earning credits not associated with undergraduate or graduate programs at Rhode Island College, such as continuing education units (CEUs), college Outreach Program credit, etc. Admission and retention requirements for most CCS programs are minimal. These certificates typically provide professional development, vocational training, or personal enrichment.

Cognates are required courses in disciplines related to the major; they are intended to broaden and enhance the major.

Concentration is the area of specialization. Courses in the concentration are a group of courses that relate specifically to the student's area of study.

Curriculum represents the student's total program of study (normally requiring a minimum of 120 semester hours) and usually consists of (1) the General Education Program; (2) a major, or for elementary education, a teaching concentration; (3) cognates; and (4) electives. Education curricula also require a professional education sequence. For the sake of clarity, "program of study" is preferred over "curriculum."

Directed Study are courses numbered X90 and are designed to be a substitute for a traditional course under the instruction of a faculty member.

Electives are courses that the student may choose beyond the specifically required courses in order to fulfill the degree requirements (normally 120 semester hours for undergraduate degrees).

Independent Study are courses numbered X9X and the term applies to courses in which students select a topic and undertake concentrated research or creative activity mentored by a faculty member. These are the courses that students who are pursuing departmental honors will take.

Interdisciplinary major is a group of ten or more courses that form a major but that cut across departmental lines.

Major is the discipline or academic area that the student studies in depth (normally requiring a minimum of 30 semester hours).

Minor is a secondary specialization in a degree program (normally requiring a minimum of 18 semester hours).

Mode of Instruction (under revision by Committee on Online Learning)

- **Standard Classroom:** A course that meets at a pre-determined time and place, in-person, on a regular schedule throughout the term. The course may include use of online learning management system(s).
- **Hybrid:** A course in which a portion of standard classroom instruction is replaced by online learning.*
- **Distance:** A course in which all teaching and learning takes place online. There are no in-person meetings.

* All General Education Connections courses must include at least 50% Standard Classroom instruction.

Sequence is a listing of courses in the order they are to be taken by the student.

Specialization. See **Major** and **Minor**.

Specialized requirement is a course, or group of courses, within the major (this needs defining in order to set these courses apart from regular required courses or cognates).

Teacher education program is used in the elementary and secondary education curricula to describe the major and other requirements necessary to earn certification for teaching.

Teaching concentration is a group of courses satisfying the requirement for a specialty in the education curriculum.

Other terms such as focus, module, cluster, track, emphasis etc. should not be used to define programs and should be avoided in the text.