

# RWU Curriculum Policies

*Approved by Faculty Senate 12/6/2023*

## Table of Contents

Purpose .....	1
Overview of the Process .....	1
Committees.....	2
Initial Planning.....	2
Documentation.....	2
Major Curricular Changes: .....	3
Technical Changes .....	4
Special Topics Courses.....	4
Process for General Education Certification of Courses .....	5
Interdisciplinary Curriculum Review.....	7
Structure.....	7
Governance and Curricular Process .....	7
Petition Review .....	8
Initial Registrar Review: .....	8
Review by Dean: .....	8
School Committee/GECPC/Advisory Board Review:.....	8
Review by the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee (FSCC):.....	9
Review by the Faculty Senate:.....	9
Review by the Provost: .....	10
Registrar:.....	10
RWU Curriculum Flow.....	11

## **Purpose**

This document sets out curriculum policies and procedures for the purpose of establishing an orderly, transparent and broad-based process for the thoughtful consideration of curricular matters at Roger Williams University.

## **Overview of the Process**

Petitions for curriculum changes all follow a similar path from initial planning stage to final approval and publication in the University's Catalog and Web site.

There are two different types of curriculum petitions:

- Major changes, which include new programs and courses
- Technical changes, which do not

Typographical errors in catalog copy should be addressed directly to the Registrar's and do not need to go through the curricular process.

There are three possible approval paths (see Flow Char, page 11):

- Undergraduate/Graduate curriculum
- General Education curriculum
- Interdisciplinary program curriculum

Petitions move from the proposing area/program/department, division, or school to the appropriate Dean, or Associate Provost (for Interdisciplinary Programs), who reviews the petition and then forwards it to the relevant committee

- School Curriculum Committee
- General Education Curriculum and Planning Committee (GECPC)
- Program Advisory Board

The appropriate committee members (above) give each petition their consideration and accept or reject the petition. If a petition is rejected by the relevant School Curriculum Committee and the Dean (or the GECPC and the appropriate Dean/Associate Provost) it does not move to the next level for consideration. If a petition receives approval of either the School Curriculum Committee or the Dean/Associate Provost, it moves to the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee for review. Petitions approved by the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee then move to the Faculty Senate for ratification before moving to the office of the Provost for final review and implementation.

## Committees

School and college curriculum committees are composed of the relevant faculty members and are elected by the relevant departments, areas, or programs. Each school should have an approved policy for the formation of the School Curriculum Committee and election of its chair. This policy should be published and available to all members of the school.

## Initial Planning

**For all changes:** Transparency is central to the curricular process. In the interest of avoiding *unnecessary* duplication, it is the ultimate responsibility of the petition sponsor to make sure that all of the areas, programs, departments affected by the petition are informed of the details of the petition. The curriculum process requires evidence of communication across disciplinary boundaries to determine the effective use of resources.

**Curricular petitions** originate and approved by the area/program/department, division, or school meetings and proceed directly to the appropriate Dean. Curricular petitions originate by full-time RWU faculty. See below for definitions of Major and Technical changes. Petitions must be submitted in electronic format through the Curriculog website.

**Any New Programs or changes** that are determined by the Dean to require additional resources (e.g., new majors, minors, degree or certificate programs) go through a more extensive planning process, including the completion of a Business Plan. A summary prospectus must be presented to the Dean of the relevant School(s) or program(s) prior to submission of the actual petition.

Such a plan should include:

1. Description of the new program or major
2. Relevance to mission and strategic plan
3. Resource summary, including projected enrollments and additional faculty needed
4. Time-line for implementation of the program.

## Documentation

Documentation indicating review by all the faculty from the area, program, department, division or school submitting or reviewing the petition must be included in the Proposal. In the case of an area, program or department, meeting minutes indicating the approval of the proposal must be attached to the petition. For School Curriculum Committee review, the vote tally must be noted in the petition by the School Curriculum Committee chair and reflected in the committee minutes. Alternatively a signature sheet indication faculty approval may be submitted.

If the petition will impact the requirements of other programs, the proposal should include documentary evidence that communication between the affected parties (programs, departments, etc.) has taken place. Such documentation should include PDFs of the document used to communicate with each affected program regarding the proposed change and the affected program's response, including agreement/concern/acknowledgment.

For new programs or substantial changes to programs that require additional faculty, facilities, and/or financial resources, such as new majors, minors, degree or certificate programs, evidence that a business plan has been reviewed and approved by the Provost is required as part of the petition. Either a PDF of the email from the Provost or a PDF of the plan itself satisfies this requirement.

### **Major Curricular Changes:**

This includes not only new courses and new programs, but also all other curricular changes that alter a course/program.

Such changes shall include **a minimum** the following information:

- Brief (75 word) description of petition
- Name of the Sponsoring College/School
- Name of the Sponsoring Department/Program/Area
- Name of the Sponsoring Faculty Member(s)
- Title of Proposed Program or course
- Description of the proposed new major, minor, program
- Rationale for the proposed addition/deletion
- A comprehensive list of new courses, changes to courses, deletions of courses and any other changes involved
- Indication of resources necessary for offering this program or course, e.g., faculty, library resources, facilities.
- Proposed catalog copy for any new courses or degree requirements
- The impact of the change on the existing program or programs (e.g. cross-listing, banking)
- Timeline for implementation of the petition.

### **Additional Requirements for New Courses:**

- Proposals for a new course shall include proposed syllabus and/or a course outline with student learning outcomes

Petitions for major curricular changes that affect three or more courses (removal, addition or substitution) or those that affect another program, should include as a minimum the following information:

- Brief description of petition
- Name of Sponsoring College/School
- Name of Sponsoring Department/Program/Area
- Name of Sponsoring Faculty Member(s)
- Detailed description of the proposed change
- Specific rationale for the proposed change
- Analysis of impact of proposed change on students
- Analysis of impact of proposed change on other programs
- Indication of any existing courses or programs that will be dropped if the proposal is approved

### **Technical Changes**

These are changes that do not affect the way the course is taught. Examples are: Changes of course number (same class level), frequency of offering changes (i.e. fall, spring, special offering, etc.), removing prerequisites, and banking and unbanking courses.

These changes will receive their final full review at the School Curriculum Committee and will then be sent to the FSCC for review. Any objection on any technical change raised by a member of either the FSCC or Faculty Senate will bring that item up for full review by that body.

- Brief description of petition
- Name of Sponsoring College/School
- Name of Sponsoring Department/Program/Area
- Name of Sponsoring Faculty Member(s)
- Indication of the Specific Change, such as:
- Changes involving Banking/Unbanking of course(s)
- Changes describing a specific course
- Changes to catalog copy describing a Program, Major, Minor
- Changes to Requirements of a Program, Major, Minor involving fewer than three courses
- Rationale for the change.

### **Special Topics Courses**

Every program (with a distinct Prefix) has been assigned four special topics numbers, 179, 279, 379, and 479. These can be used by programs to offer courses that are not a part of the regular approved curriculum. These special topics courses do not have to go through the full

curriculum process, but the parameters of these courses is limited.

1. All special topics courses must receive the approval of the sponsoring program before they can be placed on the schedule.
2. A special topics course may be placed on the schedule a maximum of three times. After the third time a course must successfully complete the curriculum process for a new course and be added to the regular approved curriculum.
3. Courses offered as Special Topics cannot be a required part of any degree program (major, minor, certificate or graduate degree), but can be considered as an elective within a degree program.

Proposed new courses approved through the curricular processes may be added to the curriculum without being offered as special topics courses first.

Variable topics courses are different from special topics courses. Variable topics courses are designed to rotate topics and may be taken multiple times for credit (as long as they are different topics). Variable topics courses are a part of the regular approved curriculum and have been vetted through the regular curriculum process.

### **Process for General Education Certification of Courses**

For faculty seeking to have their existing course(s) reviewed for possible inclusion in the General Education program, there is a specific form in Curriculog for these requests. Once submitted to Curriculog, the petition goes directly to the Faculty Director of General Education who will:

1. Approve the petition and move it to the GECPC
2. Send the petition back to the originator for additional information.

The GECPC will review all such proposals for inclusion in the General Education program and:

1. Approve the petition and move it to the Dean of General Education, or
2. Send the petition back to the originator for additional information.

The Dean of General Education will:

1. Approve the petition and move it to the Registrar's for inclusion in the General Education program, or
2. Send the petition back to the originator for additional information.

Once a petition has been approved at all three steps, it becomes part of the General Education program.

For departments/programs seeking to have their existing minors reviewed for possible inclusion in the General Education program, there is a specific form in Curriculog for these requests. Once submitted to Curriculog, the petition goes directly to the Faculty Director of General Education who will:

1. Approve the petition and move it to the GECPC, or
2. Send the petition back to the originator for additional information.

The GECPC will review such petitions for inclusion in the General Education program and will:

1. Approve the petition and move it to the Dean of General Education, or
2. Send the petition back to the originator for additional information.

The Dean of General Education will:

1. Approve the petition and move it to the Registrar for inclusion in the General Education program, or
2. Send the petition back to the originator for additional information.

Once a petition has been approved at all three steps it becomes a part of the General Education program

For faculty or departments/programs wishing to submit a NEW course or program for consideration to be added to the RWU Curriculum and inclusion in the General Education program, there are specific forms in Curriculog that are set up to account for both the standard curriculum process for new courses/programs AND consideration of the courses/programs for inclusion in the General Education program. During the review process, petitions will move as follows:

1. Initial Registrars Review
2. Dean or Associate Provost
3. School Committee or Advisory Board
4. GECPC
5. Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee
6. Faculty Senate
7. Provost

Once proposals are approved through this process they will be part of the RWU Curriculum and also the General Education program.

## Interdisciplinary Curriculum Review

### Structure

All interdisciplinary programs will be situated administratively in one of the schools in the university.

A new interdisciplinary major/minor/certificate program which incorporates courses across colleges or schools will be assigned a “home” school/college by the Provost in consultation with the faculty proposers and the deans. This decision will be informed by the alignment of the proposed program with the school and the necessary and available resources (faculty, staff, space, equipment, budget, etc.).

### Governance and Curricular Process

For each **new** interdisciplinary program, an **advisory committee** will be established to act as a curriculum review committee for that program. This committee will review and approve the original curriculum proposal for the new program and thereafter will review and approve any petitions to change the curriculum of the program that are needed. The committee shall consist of representatives from each department/program whose curriculum is a part of the interdisciplinary program. The committee shall elect a coordinator from among its members. The coordinator’s specific duties and compensation shall be determined by the Provost in consultation with the relevant Dean and the RWUFA. The curriculum flows as follows:

Originator

Dean of the hosting school

Interdisciplinary Advisory Committee (acting as the department/program)\*

School Curriculum Committee (if program has been assigned to a school)\*

Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee

Faculty Senate

Provost

\*Programs that have been assigned to Academic Affairs rather than an academic school will skip the step of School Curriculum Committee. The Interdisciplinary Advisory Committee will act as both program and school.

Interdisciplinary programs existing prior to fall 2023 shall establish a similar advisory committee or identify the membership of the committee that already exists. The committee shall elect a coordinator from among its members whose duties and compensation shall be determined by the Provost in consultation with the relevant dean and the RWUFA.

## Petition Review

### **Initial Registrar Review:**

Once submitted through Curriculog, petitions will receive a cursory review by the Registrar's office to ensure the petition has been completed properly and that nothing has been left off of the petition that may affect it down the line. Any issues with the petition will be communicated to the originator.

### **Review by Dean:**

The Dean or Associate Provost (Interdisciplinary programs) will review the petition **within two weeks** from the petition arriving in their approval queue. It is the responsibility of the Dean to offer suggestions and recommendations to the proposing faculty regarding the submitted petition.

The Dean will do one of the following:

1. Recommend the petition be moved forward to the appropriate School Curriculum Committee.
2. Return the petition to the faculty submitting the petition with suggestions for changes.
3. Reject the petition and forward it to the appropriate School Curriculum Committee along with a written rationale for objections to the petition.\*

Following review, the Petition moves forward via the curriculum website to the chair of the appropriate faculty committee:

- School curriculum petitions are moved from the Dean of the school to the school's Curriculum Committee.
- General Education petitions are moved to the GECPC.
- Interdisciplinary Curriculum petitions are moved from the Associate Provost to the appropriate Advisory Board committee.

### **School Committee/GECPC/Advisory Board Review:**

Once a complete petition is received electronically by the chair of the School Curriculum Committee (or GECPC, or Advisory Board), the petition will be included on the agenda of the School Curriculum Committee's next regularly scheduled meeting providing the petition is received one week before the scheduled meeting date. Each committee may establish their own procedures for reviewing petitions and these procedures must be published. These procedures must be published and made available to all faculty.

All petitions must be reviewed in a timely fashion, and the agenda and minutes of the meetings must be sent to all faculty in the School. See Curriculum Flow.

The School Curriculum Committee may:

1. Return the petition to the petitioner with suggestions for changes.
2. Approve the petition and move it to the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee.
3. Reject the petition and move it to the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee with comments.\*

After reviewing the petition, the Chair of the appropriate committee will electronically forward the petition with their recommendations, if any, to the chair of the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee.

\* If a petition receives a negative vote by both the Dean and the School Curriculum Committee it does not move to the next level of consideration. If a petition receives a positive vote from either the appropriate committee or the Dean, it moves on to the next level.

**Review by the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee (FSCC):**

Upon receipt of the petition from the initial reviewing committee, the Chair of the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee will place the petition on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled **meeting** provided the petition was received one week prior to the date of the meeting. The Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee may establish their own procedures for reviewing petitions and these procedures must be published. All petitions must be reviewed in a timely fashion, and the agenda and minutes of the meetings must be sent to all faculty.

The FSCC may:

1. Approve the petition and place it on the agenda of the next Faculty Senate meeting for ratification.
2. Return the petition to the petitioner requesting changes.
3. Reject the petition and place it on the agenda of the next Faculty Senate meeting for evaluation with an explanation of the FSCC objections

**Review by the Faculty Senate:**

Upon a recommendation of approval of the petition from the FSCC, the President of the Faculty Senate will place the petition(s) on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Faculty Senate meeting. The Faculty Senate may establish their own procedures for reviewing and ratifying petitions and these procedures must be published. All petitions must be reviewed in a timely fashion, and the agenda and minutes of the meetings must be sent to all faculty.

The Faculty Senate may:

1. Approve the petition move it electronically to the office of the Provost.
2. Return the petition to the petitioner requesting changes.
3. Reject the petition and move it to the Provost with an explanation of the Senate's objections).

**Review by the Provost:**

Upon receipt of the petition from the Senate, the Provost will review the petition in a timely fashion. The Provost may:

1. Accept petition and notify Registrar and University Faculty.
2. Return the petition to any of the previous reviewing bodies, and/or the petitioner, with concerns
3. Reject the petition with an explanation to the petitioner and to those bodies that have approved it.

**Registrar:**

Upon receipt of the approved petition from the Provost, the Registrar will include the new curriculum in the upcoming catalog.

**RWU Curriculum Flow**

	<b>All Undergraduate/Graduate Curriculum Changes</b>	<b>All General Education Curriculum Changes</b>	<b>All Interdisciplinary Program Curriculum Changes</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>1</b>	Department/Area/Program Planning Process	Department/Area/Program Planning Process	(Interested & supportive faculty) Planning Process	VARIES
	↓ creation of courses, majors, minors, programs, Certificates	↓ ← ← → → creation of courses	↓ ← ← ← creation of courses, majors, minors	
<b>2</b>	School Dean Recommends CC Review ↓	General Education Dean Recommends CC Review ↓	Associate Provost Recommends CC Review ↓	2 WEEKS
<b>3</b>	School CC (representative or of the whole) ↓	GECPC ↓	Program Advisory Board ↓	4 – 8 WEEKS
<b>4</b>	<b>Faculty Senate CC</b> ↓			4 WEEKS
<b>5</b>	<b>Faculty Senate</b> ↓			
<b>6</b>	<b>Provost</b> ↓			
<b>7</b>	<b>Registrar – for Upcoming Catalog</b>			