

The Not-So-Dummies Guide for Curriculum Proposals: Getting It Right the First Time

The University of Akron curriculum is a key factor in attracting and retaining students. The curriculum proposal and approval system is meant to ease the process of making your traditional, online, or blended courses, available to students as quickly as possible. With your help and a little attention to detail, the system can work smoothly and efficiently.

Some basics (follow the Three Cs)

1. **Clarity:** Describe your proposal as clearly as possible to ensure that everyone understands your intent. Many reviewers will be from other colleges and departments.
2. **Completeness:** Always attach the necessary documentation, especially the course syllabus. If you are moving a traditional course to the online environment, attach both the traditional syllabus and the online version.
3. **Conditions:** Make sure your proposal meets the requirements of the University Review and Distance Learning Review committees.

University Review Committee (URC)

1. Is the course outline and syllabus attached and complete (for course proposals)?
2. Are course proposals accompanied by program proposals outlining the effect the course changes have on programs that depend on them?
3. Do the required fields contain the appropriate information?
4. Are all related proposals listed on the Related Proposals tab and are they all in the system at the same time?
 - a. For instance, if proposing a new course, any program that includes this course has a proposal in the system as well and they are all linked together.
5. Is the intention of the proposal clear and exhibit proper spelling/grammar?
6. Is all the requested information *in the proposal* form in the correct area (do not refer reviewers to an attachment)?

Graduate Review Committee (GRC)

1. Is the intent of the proposal clear?
2. Is the Summary complete?
3. Is all necessary information provided in required fields?
4. Is the bulletin description clear and rationale well-specified?
5. Is a complete syllabus attached for a course proposal?
6. Are all related proposals identified (if any)? If a course addition/deletion/change proposal affects a program, then a related program change proposal should be initiated simultaneously

General Education Advisory Committee (GEAC)

1. Is a syllabus attached?
2. Is the course college-level? That is, does the course have the required entry-level college proficiencies appropriate to the course?
3. Is the course broadly-focused, not a narrowly-focused technical or pre-technical course?
4. Does the course help students to evaluate arguments in a logical fashion?

5. Does the syllabus require effective communication? Is significant reading and writing required? Writing could be accomplished through essay tests, a combination of tests and a research paper, lab reports, etc.
6. Does the course employ methods of inquiry characteristic of the natural sciences, social sciences, and the arts & humanities?
7. Does the course reflect how students will acquire an understanding of our global and diverse culture and society?
8. Does the course describe how the student will engage in our democratic society?
9. Does the syllabus reflect how the student will demonstrate critical thinking skills in the course?
10. Which area of General Education will the course satisfy? Or partially satisfy? How does the course fit with the other courses which have already been approved for that area?
11. Does the course fit into one of the requirement areas for the Ohio Transfer Module?

Distance Learning Committee (DLRC)

(All questions need to be satisfied to have a proposal approved)

1. Are appropriate syllabi attached?
2. Is it clear whether the course is intended to be web-based or is intended to be online?
3. Is it clear which parts of the course are synchronous and/or asynchronous?
4. Is it clear how students will communicate with the instructor?
5. Is it clear how students will access the course and course materials (Springboard, CourseCast, other)?
6. Is it clear how student work will be collected and evaluated?
7. Is it clear how class participation/attendance will be assessed?
8. Is it clear how student work integrity will be maintained (testing procedures, etc.)?
9. If this is an online course, does it pass the distance test (i.e. could a student in a very remote destination complete this class)
10. If this class is a new section of an existing course, does it appear to cover the same Learning Objectives as the existing course (i.e. is it pedagogically equivalent)?

Understanding This Form/Only one box applies

Traditional	<input type="checkbox"/>	100% face-to-face instruction. This mode of instruction can be web supported but the number of face-to-face sessions is not reduced. Real time instruction utilizing a remote, distance learning, classroom is included in this category.
Web-enhanced	<input type="checkbox"/>	1-30% online instruction; any program that meets more than 70% of the time in a traditional classroom setting with the remaining instruction delivered over the internet/intranet.
Web-based	<input type="checkbox"/>	31-99% online instruction; any program that meets less than 31% of the time in a traditional classroom setting with the remaining instruction delivered over the intranet/internet.
Online	<input type="checkbox"/>	100% online instruction; any program that does not meet in a traditional classroom setting.
Total:		<input type="checkbox"/>

The above form might be a bit misleading, but remember, your proposed course can be only one of the above. The DLRC only reviews web-based and online courses. The key factor is face-to-face classroom interaction. If all information is delivered in a lecture based, in-person setting, the course is traditional. If almost all (70%), is done in the previous manner with perhaps one or two online lectures, the class is web-enhanced. If most of the information is delivered to students via the web with little face-to-face classroom interaction, the course is web-based. Finally, if the proposed course is completely taught so

that a student does not have to come to The University of Akron campus to meet any requirements, including testing, the course is truly online.

Program/Track/Certificate/Minor proposals

Enter group header (e.g. core, electives)	<input type="text"/>
Minimum credits required	<input type="text"/>
Include in bulletin?	<input type="checkbox"/>

When adding or removing a course from a program, list all the course group listings for the program on the Program Description tab. The General Education group does not need to be listed. If a course group is to be listed in the bulletin description, check the box next to “Include in bulletin?”

The bulletin description field on the Program Description tab should be laid out exactly as it should appear in the bulletin, minus the course groups. The course groups will be listed according to the Course Group Listing section

Terms to Know

(This list is not all-inclusive; updates will be made as new clarifications are needed.)

Definitions:

Course Outline: A document that contains course content and learning outcomes. What will be taught and how will it be evaluated.

Syllabus: A document outlining the delivery of the course, elaborating and adhering to the course outline. It includes a course description, rationale, evaluation method (tests, projects, reports, homework, etc.), grading methods, late policy, instructor/grader contact information, calendar, etc. This document should adhere to department/college/university standards.

Summary: A clear outline of what the proposal intentions are.

Rationale: A clear explanation of why these changes are necessary.

All Proposals

Related Proposals – All proposals that relate to another proposal, should select this option as “Yes”. The Related Proposals tab will enable and the other proposals in the system can be added to the current proposal. All proposals that relate to each other should be submitted at the same time.

For example, a new course should relate to the program change proposal that is adding the course and vice versa.

Summary – This field should have a clearly outlined description of what change is being proposed.

For example, a program change would list out all changes such as courses being removed, courses being added, courses that are changing, title and credit hour changes, etc.

Rationale – Explain the reasons for the changes being made to the curriculum.

All Required Fields – There are several fields that are required and will not allow the proposal to be submitted without containing a value. Any requirements that are empty will be highlighted in RED by pressing the “Validate” button. Validation only checks that a field contains information, it does not mean the information is correct. For the text boxes, make sure to provide all the information requested so that the proposal does not incur any delays in the reviewing process.

If a field is required, it must be filled out. Do not refer a reviewer to another text box or an attachment containing the information. The proposal may be sent back for correction in these cases.

Course proposals

Course Outline – A course outline must be attached for all course proposals. If this is a change to an existing course, then attach the existing course outline to the proposal.

Bibliography – List any material that will be covered in the course outside of the textbook content.

Syllabus – A syllabus must be provided for every course. If this is an online course, then the syllabus for *the online version and the syllabus for the traditional version* needs to be attached so reviewers can compare.

Textbooks – Specify the textbook(s) that will be used. If no textbook is required, explain the reasoning.

New or Delete Course – When adding new courses or deleting courses, a proposal must be entered for any program that contains these courses outlining the course groups as they should be comprised.

Change Course – If the course change will affect the program/track/certificate/minor it belongs to, such as a credit hour change, then a program/track/certificate/minor proposal must be submitted to reflect its new configuration.