

NEW GRADUATE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

POLICY NUMBER	ED 8-5
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AUTHORITY	SENATE
PRIMARY CONTACT	ASSOCIATE VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

POLICY

The criteria outlined in this policy are to be used by Senate in deciding whether to advance a new graduate program to the Board of Governors for approval. In order to maximize the reputation of TRU's graduate programs we are committed to ensuring that new graduate programs: build on existing research strengths; are feasible, viable and sustainable; share courses and faculty members with other programs wherever possible and desired; facilitate cross-disciplinary studies; and support the mission, values and goals of Thompson Rivers University.

REGULATIONS

- I. Proposal presentations should follow Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) format.
- II. When considering new graduate programs for approval the following criteria will be assessed by the Graduate Studies Committee of Senate. The Graduate Studies Committee will prepare a synopsis of its evaluation of these criteria in making its recommendation for approval to the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APPC) and then Senate.

III. Criteria

A. Program Description

(Program is clearly articulated, there is a clear justification for adding this program to the offerings at TRU, and the program supports academic plans.)

1. The **name** is appropriate and conveys the meaning and content of the degree.
2. The **mission and goals** of the proposed graduate program are clearly defined, including how the proposed program supports the mission, values and goals of TRU, the TRU Strategic Research Plan, the Academic Plan and the TRU Strategic Research.

3. The **academic rationale** for offering this program at TRU, including evidence for how this program builds on areas of existing institutional strengths in teaching, research and scholarship, including synergies with Research Centres (*see Policy BRD21-0*).
4. Program **outcome/s** are clear, including:
 - a. The purpose of the program, key objectives and key outcomes.

Is the program is designed to prepare students for the workforce and/or for more advanced academic studies?
 - b. The curriculum as presented clearly meet the articulated outcome/s.
 - c. Any special requirements for accreditation, registration, certification, etc. are stated and evidence is included that the proposed program meets those requirements.
5. The **curriculum** is clear and feasible including:
 - a. Providing evidence for synergies with other graduate programs.
 - b. Providing evidence for ways in which the proposed program enhances the undergraduate curriculum.
6. The potential **student body** is clearly defined in terms of:
 - a. Numbers;
 - b. Demographics;
 - c. Admission criteria;
 - d. Anticipated contribution of the student body to stimulating the academic environment and research culture at TRU.

7. **Other model programs.**

The proposal should identify three other similar graduate programs, as applicable, regarded as excellent that would be comparable to the proposed program, or that represent a standard the proposed program should strive to achieve, and indicate:

- a. How the proposed program would develop a similar reputation within 5 years (including a plan for achieving and identifying excellence).
- b. Ways in which the proposed program distinguishes itself from the competition (Why would students come to the TRU program rather than go to a similar program elsewhere?).

8. The contribution of the proposed program to the TRU academic environment, including:
 - a. Contribution to other fields of study at the graduate and upper level/honours undergraduate programs at TRU.
 - b. Ways in which the proposed program:
 - i. detracts from the ability of TRU to offer other programs.
 - ii. competes or conflicts with (an) existing program(s) at TRU (and an indication of whether the impact is totally considered and acceptable).
 - iii. may lead to reductions in existing TRU programs in order to meet workload and resource requirements of the new program.

B. Assessment of need by the public, student demand (local, national, international), and institutional priority

1. How was the need assessed? What resources were consulted to determine student need/demand? Was there a **market analysis** conducted?
2. What is the anticipated **duration of the demand**, and what is the basis for the estimate?
3. Is there evidence that potential employers will recognize the degree such that it contributes to the professional advancement of the graduate?
4. If the program is primarily designed to lead to doctoral studies, is there clear evidence that graduates of this program would meet the entrance requirements of those doctoral programs?
5. Does the proposal provide clear evidence that it meets a public need and student demand for some or all of the following **specific audiences**?
 - a. Is this program primarily designed to cater to TRU graduates?
 - b. Is the program is primarily designed to meet a local demand, and if there is a pent-up demand because the program was lacking, how long will it be before the local audience is exhausted and what plans are in place to recruit students more broadly?
 - c. Is the program designed to meet a national demand, and if so, is there clear justification for why students would be attracted to the TRU program rather than going elsewhere.
 - d. Is the program designed to meet an international demand and has TRU-World has been consulted and provided a letter of support stating such?
 - e. Is the program designed for a more traditional student body; current professionals who will continue working while upgrading their education; people with considerable workplace experience?

6. The program clearly defines the **demographics** of the anticipated student body and the methods of program delivery clearly meet the expectations and requirements of the potential student body in terms of:
 - a. The approach (professional program -- mostly advanced coursework versus thesis-based program) consistent with the requirements and the expectations of potential students.
 - b. The mode of delivery and timetable are articulated with evidence that it meets the requirements of the proposed student body (distance learning, evening courses, weekend courses on and off campus, summer institutes, direct to client video conferencing, shared classroom environments, etc.)
7. Who are the **potential employers** or doctoral degree programs and have they been consulted? Is there an advisory committee?

C. Institutional capacity to offer the program and sustainability of the program

1. Evidence is provided of consultation and support by relevant academic units and faculty councils.
2. Is there a good fit with other graduate programs and an opportunity to share graduate and advanced undergraduate courses across the disciplines offered?
3. What is the capacity of the program: numbers of faculty offering course and supervising students/year, number of students the program can sustain on an annual basis?
4. **Faculty and Staffing**
 - a. There is evidence that there is a critical mass of faculty available and qualified to initiate the program (given the anticipated demand and estimated student body) who are actively engaged in research and scholarship relevant to the program.
 - b. There is commitment, if appropriate, to hiring additional faculty in later years.
 - c. There is evidence that the faculty in aggregate have the necessary experience and research activity to offer and sustain the program, including evidence that faculty members meet the criteria for Full Graduate Instructor/Supervision. (The CVs of faculty participants should be included with the program proposal, along with a suggested level of participation as per the criteria approved by Senate. www.tru.ca/senate/minutes.html)
 - d. There is evidence that the faculty will provide opportunities for scholarship at the frontier of inquiry in the discipline.
 - e. There is evidence that faculty will be teaching in their area of expertise, which is appropriate to graduate-level instruction.

- f. There is evidence that faculty workloads are considered to ensure appropriate time for faculty to teach in the graduate program, maintain a high level of scholarship, and advise student research projects/theses.
- g. There is evidence that other support staffing is identified, adequate and available to offer the program.

5. **Facilities**

- a. The proposal provides evidence that classroom, teaching laboratory, research laboratory, office, and any other type of space that is necessary for the proposed program is sufficient to initiate the program.
- b. The proposal provides evidence that necessary and sufficient equipment to initiate the program is available.

6. **Library and Research Resources**

The proposal provides evidence that library resources are sufficient to initiate the program as verified by the TRU Director of Libraries describing the materials available to support this proposed new degree program, along with a letter from the Dean committing to enhancing those resources.

7. **Scholarships, Research Assistantships, and Teaching Assistantships**

The proposal provides evidence that, if appropriate, scholarships, and graduate assistantships are sufficient to initiate the program.

8. **Internships**

The proposal provides evidence that, if appropriate, clinical and internship sites have been arranged.

9. **Recruiting**

Based on the defined potential student body, what plans are in place to recruit students and what resources are required for recruiting students?

10. **Finances**

- a. The proposal provides a complete and reasonable budget for the program that is supported in the text of the proposal.
- b. A financial analysis considers price comparison among other similar programs that are considered to be program competitors.
- c. Program income and expenses are clearly outlined and it can be demonstrated that the program is financially viable in the short term and sustainable in the long term.

D. Program Administration

1. Is the Graduate Program Committee identified with an interim Chair?
2. Alumni: How does the proposal propose to follow up with graduates to assess long-term career success and develop continued graduate loyalty?

E. Curriculum Standards and Ongoing Program Assessment (includes DQAB Standards)

1. There is a complete description and justification for degree requirements including the duration of the program, core course work and electives, thesis requirements, examination requirements, and residency requirements.
2. The proposal provides the following details of curriculum:
 - a. Depth and breadth of knowledge, including a systematic understanding of knowledge and a critical awareness of inquires that are at the forefront of the discipline, and informed by current research.
 - b. Development of methodological competencies including research methods, problem solving, critical thinking, and originality in the application of knowledge.
 - c. A syllabus for each course that includes a course number, title, description, credit hours, prerequisites, and potential instructor/s.
 - d. Anticipated sequencing of courses and a clear description of the capstone experience (thesis proposal, comprehensive exam, oral exam, thesis defense, composition of thesis committee).
3. Potential thesis supervisors are identified along with a one paragraph statement describing their research program, and listing potential research projects for graduate students, and their funding sources.
4. There is clear evidence that the curriculum is comparable to respected, high quality programs offered elsewhere.
5. Student research and scholarship outcomes are clearly articulated.
6. Student outcomes are clearly identified, along with a set of generic skills the program aims to develop, and an indication of how those skills will be developed such as research methods, critical thinking, problem solving, communication skills, initiative, responsibility, research integrity, decision-making in complex situations, intellectual independence, etc.
7. The proposal identifies clear plans for ongoing program assessment that includes an assessment of student outcomes.
8. Program suspension and/or closure conditions are specified.
9. Have external reviewers been consulted?

F. General

1. Does the program name, quality and standard enhance the reputation of TRU as a university?