University of Vermont Course Action Process

Definitions

Course Action – a significant change to a course, including:
- inauguration of a new course (including cataloguing a course that has been taught as a special topics offering)
- change to an existing course
- deletion of a course that has been previously offered
- deactivation of a course that has been previously offered
- reactivation of a course
- request for General Education requirement review for a new or existing course

Course Action Form – The electronic form (developed by the Provost's Office in concert with Faculty Senate leadership, General Education review committees, and the Registrar's Office) by which course actions are formally initiated.

Required Documentation

All required course action information and documentation is collected electronically in the [CourseLeaf system](#).

Depending on the course action, you may be asked to upload the following documents:

Syllabus
- For all proposed new courses
- For all courses (new or existing) proposed for General Education requirement review
- For all existing graduate courses undergoing substantive change

Faculty Instructor CV
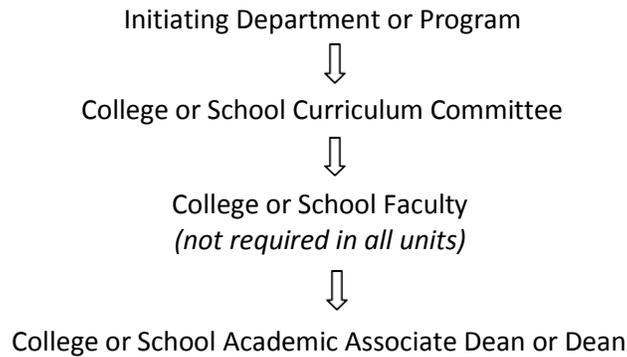- For all proposed new graduate courses offered by non-graduate faculty instructors

Evidence of Consultation
- From departments which might be affected by the proposed course or course change

Submission and Approval Process (please also see important notes that follow)

1. *Initial Communication* - In the process of developing a new course – or planning a significant change to an existing one – faculty members will contact any units that may have an interest in the course in question, particularly if they might offer courses with similar content. Evidence of communication between units (e.g., memos, e-mail exchanges) must be attached to the Course Action Form.

2. *Course Prefix* - If the new or modified course carries an acronym (course prefix) not currently used in the catalogue, a request for the addition of the acronym must first be requested via memo to the Curricular Affairs Committee (CAC) of the Faculty Senate. The CAC will forward approval of the new prefix to the Registrar and the Office of the Provost.

3. *Unit Level Review and Approval* - The Course Action Form and supporting materials are reviewed and approved by:

Initiating Department or Program

⇩

College or School Curriculum Committee

⇩

College or School Faculty
(not required in all units)

⇩

College or School Academic Associate Dean or Dean

If a course is housed (cross-listed) in multiple units, it must be reviewed and approved at all levels, by all units.

4. *Submission* - All approved Course Action Forms and supporting materials are submitted electronically by the initiator for review and approval at all levels.

5. *General Education and Graduate College Executive Committee Review* - As appropriate, the electronic CourseLeaf system will route the Course Action Forms and supporting materials to the appropriate committees for review and approval. In the event of an unfavorable review by a committee, the form will be "rolled back" to the initiating department with an explanation of the negative decision, and, if appropriate, a request for revision.

6. *Public Comment & Conclusion* - The Office of the Provost will regularly notify all chairs, deans and faculty that proposed Course Action Forms are available for review at a publicly accessible web site. After two weeks, if there have been no objections, the course actions will be sent to the Registrar's Office for inclusion in the University Course Listing and the next published Catalogue. Valid reasons for objecting to a proposed course action include, for example, overlap between the content of a new or changed course and one offered by another unit, or a perceived adverse effect on one program by a proposed course change in another. In the event objections are raised about a specific course action, the Provost's Office will be notified and the departments and programs involved should meet and attempt to resolve the issue amongst themselves. If the conflict cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all involved, then the Provost's Office will refer the issue to the Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee for resolution. Results of the Curricular Affairs Committee's decision will be reported to the Provost's Office and the departments or programs in question.

Notes

Definition of a Credit Hour

A signed Course Action Form indicates compliance with the University's definition of a credit hour. That definition is:

(1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester hour of credit or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

(2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

(3) *"Direct faculty instruction" must include regular and substantive faculty/student contact regardless of delivery mode (for example, face-to-face, hybrid, distance/online).*
Note: This third item is pending Faculty Senate approval but is included here for informational purposes.

Graduate Courses/Graduate Credit

The syllabus/reading list for new graduate courses and requests to approve undergraduate courses for graduate credit should describe the kinds of graduate-level academic work expected, and explain how graduate-level learning will be facilitated. Evaluation methods used to assess graduate student performance should also be addressed, and if the course is a 200-level offering, describe the different learning experiences and evaluation methods to be used for graduate and undergraduate students.

Special Topics Courses

When a course that has been taught as a special topics course (e.g. 095/ 096, 195/196, 295/296 designation) is proposed for permanent inclusion in the course listing and catalogue, a *new* course form (and accompanying documentation) should be submitted.

Syllabus Resources

The Center for Teaching and Learning and the Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate have developed guidelines to assist faculty in providing informative and complete syllabi. These guidelines can be found here on the CTL website under Teaching Resources: http://www.uvm.edu/ctl/syllabus