

## Title

# Curriculum Review Procedures and Documentation Requirements

## Purpose of the Policy

University Regulation 3-8-102 specifies that the Division of Academic Affairs has accessible curriculum review procedures and documentation requirements.

*University Regulation 3-8-102. Curriculum. Review procedures and documentation requirements are available from the Office of Academic Affairs.*

The purpose of this document is to specify review procedures and documentation requirements as related to processes associated with academic programs and courses in the Division of Academic Affairs. This document has been developed after a thorough review of relevant UNC, State of Colorado, Higher Learning Commission, and US Department of Education policies and regulations.

## Detailed Policy Statement

### Underlying Principles of Curriculum Review in Academic Affairs

#### Board Policy Manual

#### University Regulations

1. University Regulations 3-3-501 “The purpose of the curriculum approval process is to ensure the integrity and quality of academic programs through a collaborative effort between faculty and administration.” “The faculty’s role and responsibility is to develop and deliver academic programs and curriculum. The administration’s role is to assure that curriculum proposals are appropriate to the disciplinary responsibility of the unit and the University and that adequate resources are available to implement proposed curriculum.”
2. Board Policy 1-1-304 Curriculum design is within the purview of the faculty.
3. Board Policy 2-3-402(1)(a) “Instructional staff members are responsible for stating clearly the instructional objectives of each course they teach at the beginning of each term. It is expected that each instructional staff member will direct his or her instruction toward the fulfillment of these objectives and that examinations will be consistent with these objectives. Instructional staff member are responsible to orient the content of the courses they are assigned to teach to the approved course descriptions.”
4. Board Policy 2-3-402(1)(b) “Instructional staff members are responsible for informing students in their classes of the methods to be employed in determining the final course grade and of any special requirements of attendance...”
5. Board Policy 2-3-408 “Faculty will maintain student records for at least one semester from the date the class ended.” Student “records include grade books or other documentation for assigning grades; and include exams, papers, projects, etc., which have not been returned to the students.”
6. Board Policy 2-3-501 “For the mutual benefit and protection of students and faculty, every faculty member is obligated to share in writing with students before the add deadline: (1) course objectives/outcomes; (2) the general strategy, topics, subject matter, materials, and tasks employed to meet those objectives/outcomes; (3) evaluation criteria and weight to be applied to each

assignment/activity in determining the final grade; (4) a list of tentative deadlines for accomplishment of assignments.”

7. Board Policy 2-3-401(1)(f) Workload assignments will “adhere to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education standards for contact time per credit hour.”

### **CO Commission on Higher Education (CCHE)/Higher Learning Commission (HLC)**

1. The [Colorado Commission on Higher Education](#) requires that all Colorado public institutions of higher education be accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).
2. The [HLC](#) requires that institutions offer a demonstrably high quality education in which instruction includes clear learning objectives and assessment plans.

#### *Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support*

*The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.*

*Core Component 3A. The institution’s degree programs are appropriate to higher education.*

*3.A.1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.*

*3.A.2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.*

*3.A.3. The institution’s program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).*

#### *Criterion Four. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement*

*The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.*

#### *Core Components 4A and 4B*

*Criterion 4: The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.*

*4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.*

*4.A.1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.*

*4.A.4. The institution maintains and exercises authority of the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning...[continues].*

*4B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.*

*4.B.1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.*

*4.B.2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.*

*4.B.3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.*

*4.B.4. The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.*

### **Office of the Provost**

1. The Office of the Provost supports high quality academic programs, student services, and co-curricular programs in collaborative partnerships with faculty, staff, administrators, and students.
2. Per University Regulations, the Office of the Provost assumes responsibility for documenting, evaluating, and ensuring university compliance with state, federal, and HLC requirements related to the integrity of courses, programs, and other academic offerings.

## Applicability

These guidelines apply to the documentation of all UNC academic courses and programs.

## Implementation Procedures

### Documentation and Review

The following requirements represent a non-exhaustive list of curriculum areas for which a centralized repository of materials is maintained and periodically assessed in order to document compliance with Board Policy, University Regulations, state requirements, federal requirements, and accreditation criteria.

#### A. Curriculum Approval Process

Reference: [University Regulations](#)

The development and modification of academic courses and programs are outlined in *University Regulations Part 5: Curriculum*. Operational procedures for curriculum flow charts and other materials are summarized on the [Curriculum site housed by the Office of the Registrar](#).

Documentation: The *Curriculum Depository and Tracker* are maintained by the Office of the Registrar. New or modified courses, programs, and any pertinent information related to academic curriculum are housed in the Curriculum Tracker as permanent documentation of the curriculum approval process.

Review: University Regulations Part 5 outlines the steps for curriculum review. Once the review steps have been completed, the course and/or program additions or modifications are entered into the catalog according to catalog deadlines.

#### B. Directed Studies

References:

[HLC Federal Compliance Program](#)

HLC Federal Compliance Program [Information for Institutions and Peer Reviewers](#)

HLC Federal Compliance [Filing by Institutions](#)

HLC Commission Policy FDCRA 10.020 – Assignment of Credits, Program Length, Tuition

HLC Commission Policy FDCRA 10.060 – Title IV Program Responsibilities

HLC Commission Policy FDCRA 10.070 – Public Information: Required Information for Students and the Public

[UNC Undergraduate Catalog Directed-Studies](#) (2015-2016)

[UNC Graduate Catalog Directed-Studies](#) (2015-2016)

As specified in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, the directed study “provides a vehicle to allow a qualified student to receive university credit for an individualized investigation under the direct supervision of a UNC faculty member.” “The investigation must be on a specific topic that is not duplicated by an existing course within the University’s curriculum. The nature of the study must involve intensive use of relevant literature, materials, or techniques, and the study report must reflect a synthesis of the information or techniques acquired.”

The directed study, including the submitted title for the course, becomes part of a student’s transcript and can count toward degree completion as outlined in the academic catalogs. Because a directed study has not, individually, gone through the institutional curriculum approval process, and given that the learning objectives, outcomes, readings, and assessment vary across individual directed studies, the documentation and review processes identified below are necessary for the institution to demonstrate adherence to internal and external policies and regulations.

3. Documentation: The [Directed Study Form](#) must be completed for each Directed Study. To ensure eligibility for federal financial aid and the College Opportunity Fund, the student must be registered by the DROP date of the term. Retroactive credit will not be awarded. Copies of the completed Directed

Study form are to be maintained by the Office of the Registrar as part of a student's academic record, the department/school, and the student. Per Board Policy 2-3-408, "Faculty will maintain student records for at least one semester from the date the class ended." Student "records include grade books or other documentation for assigning grades; and include exams, papers, projects, etc., which have not been returned to the students." Due to time frames for academic appeals and external audits or accreditation reviews, the department/school is asked to retain documentation of student performance associated with the Directed Study for a period of three years.

Review: The Department Chair/School Director signs the form having considered resource issues and ensuring that forms are maintained in the unit. Materials that document student performance may be required for review by an appeals committee, external auditors, and/or accreditors. Periodically, the Office of the Registrar reviews directed studies forms for compliance with [Scheduling Guidelines and Instructional Methods](#) as explained in the subsections below. Similarly, the Provost's Office will from time to time examine directed studies forms for the extent to which students taking directed studies participate in an educational experience with specified learning goals and for information regarding the resource issue of faculty deployment.

Directed Study Contact Hours/Regulations:

Minimum contact hour ratio with the instructor is .75:1.

For each credit hour, the instructor must have direct instructional contact with the student for 9.375 hours over the duration the course is offered. Each credit must also incorporate time for student work. Catalog listings designate a minimum of 37.5 clock hours required for students per credit hour. The instructor contact time may be included in the 37.5 hours.

The student should apply through the program in which he or she is doing the study. At the undergraduate level, directed studies cannot be used for Liberal Arts Core credit. [UNC Undergraduate Catalog Directed-Studies](#)

At the graduate level, the faculty member providing the supervision must be approved to teach graduate-level courses. [UNC Graduate Catalog Directed Studies](#) Graduate policy includes a cap on the number of credits accepted through variable topic or directed study. [UNC Graduate Catalog Variable Topic Courses](#)

Additional requirements are summarized in catalog descriptions. If a student takes more credits of directed study than allowed by UNC policy and/or as indicated within an academic program, those credits may interfere with the student's federal financial aid or GA/TA position.

**C. Non-Scheduled Courses**

Courses that were approved through the institutional curriculum approval process and reside in the academic catalog may be offered as non-scheduled courses. Non-scheduled courses are offered in one of the following situations. Either the course is not being offered during a particular term and the student needs the course to graduate or the course is offered at a time the student cannot attend and the student needs the course to graduate. Either way, if a faculty member decides to offer a non-scheduled course, the faculty member must teach the course as approved through the curriculum process and as listed in the catalog. Contact time ([Contact Hours](#)) depends on course type such as lecture, lab, seminar, etc. Course type and credits will have previously been determined through the curriculum process and may not be altered. Thus, if a course was approved as a 3-credit lecture, the faculty member may not change the course type (e.g., lecture), number of credits (e.g., 3), or the course objectives as approved through the curriculum process. Non-scheduled courses show up on a transcript as the actual course that is listed in the catalog. The expectations for a non-scheduled course remain the same as a regularly scheduled course. The documentation and review processes identified below will assist the institution in demonstrating adherence to all internal and external policies and regulations.

Documentation: The [Non Scheduled Course](#) form must be completed for each non-scheduled course. To be eligible for financial aid and the College Opportunity Fund, the student must be registered by the

DROP date of the term. Retroactive credit will not be awarded. Copies of the completed Non-Scheduled Course form are to be maintained by the Office of the Registrar as part of a student's academic record, the department/school, and the student. Per Board Policy 2-3-408, "Faculty will maintain student records for at least one semester from the date the class ended." Student "records include grade books or other documentation for assigning grades; and include exams, papers, projects, etc., which have not been returned to the students." Due to allotted time frames for academic appeals, the department/school is asked to retain documentation of student performance associated with a Non-Scheduled Course for a period of one year.

Review: The Department Chair/School Director signs the form indicating a commitment to store the information within the program for a one-year period and with due consideration to issues of faculty workload. Materials that document student performance may be required for review by an appeals committee, external auditors, and/or accreditors. Periodically, the Office of the Registrar reviews non-scheduled course agreements for compliance with [Scheduling Guidelines](#) and [Instructional Methods](#). The Provost's Office will from time to time examine non-scheduled course forms for the extent to which students participate in an educational experience with specified learning goals that are equivalent to those pursued in the course being substituted, and with a focus on the resource issue of faculty deployment.

**D. Internships, Practica**  
(forthcoming)

**E. Scheduling, Contact Hours, Instructional Methods**

Reference: UNCOA-001 [Scheduling Guidelines](#)

Reference: UNCOA-002 [Instructional Methods](#) (includes contact hours)

Documentation: Courses entered into Banner must use and follow the federal definition for instructional method, the designated contact hours as approved by the Colorado Department of Higher Education, and scheduling guidelines developed to adhere to Title IV Federal Aid requirements.

Review: Integrity reports are run weekly out of the Office of the Registrar. Examples of reports include (a) relationship between instructional method and room assignment (e.g., all F2F classes must be assigned to a meeting space) and (b) relationship between course credits, course type, and length of time the course is scheduled in Banner (e.g., per the federal definition of a credit hour, it is impossible to offer a 3-credit lecture course in one week).

Inconsistencies are identified with an immediate follow-up to the academic unit. Compliance is required to prevent loss of Title IV Federal Financial Aid and the College Opportunity Fund (COF) for UNC students.

**F. Program Review.** Program review at the University of Northern Colorado supports, develops, and maintains high quality academic, student services, and co-curricular programs. It is a collaborative process involving faculty, staff, administrators, and students that respects the diversity of program missions and cultures while also recognizing the primacy of institutional mission. Program review outcomes are used by faculty, staff, and administrators to promote progress toward goals of the program and the University at large; support strategic planning and decision-making; and inform budget and resource allocation.

All academic, student services, and co-curricular programs within the division of Academic Affairs complete a comprehensive review at least once every ten years. The review process includes an extensive self-study, examination of relevant program data for benchmarking progress, and assessment of student learning outcomes. A key component of program review at UNC is a focus on using the results to establish specific program goals for the next review period and identifying the resources necessary to accomplish these goals.

Information about assessment guidelines is available on the university's site for [Assessment](#). The Director of Assessment is the Provost's designee for matters related to program review and collaborates with the Provost in formulation of recommendations for programs.

## **Policy Authority**

Provost

## **Contact Information**

Ann T. Bentz, PhD

Special Assistant to the Provost

Carter Hall 4008A

970-351-1519

[ann.bentz@unco.edu](mailto:ann.bentz@unco.edu)