TITLE: CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR CREDIT PROGRAMS

POLICY STATEMENT:
Curriculum for each credit program meets curriculum standards, requirements for documentation, and requirements for regular review.

PURPOSE:
1. Identify curriculum standards for Red Deer College (RDC) programs. RDC is responsible to its many stakeholders for the currency and quality of its curricula. The curriculum of each program identifies the framework and requirements of the program. As such, it represents core intellectual property of RDC and, therefore, requires stewardship. The components and standards of curriculum identified in this policy are used in the development, approval, review, and revision of curriculum.

2. Provide for documentation of curriculum. Documentation that is accurate, complete and current protects the integrity of the curriculum by providing foundational material to faculty members and others who are responsible for implementation of the curriculum. Documented curriculum also protects the integrity of transfer agreements.

3. Provide principles and guidance for periodic review of curriculum as aligned with the Program Review Policy Comprehensive Program Review. This policy informs the governance processes of RDC with respect to curriculum.

SCOPE:
This policy applies to all credit programs. This policy does not apply to apprenticeship programs and continuing education programs.

PRINCIPLES:
Procedures and decisions at Red Deer College:
1. Treat all persons fairly and respectfully.

2. Are nondiscriminatory and non-intrusive.

3. Incorporate open, honest and timely communication.

4. Are made in a timely manner.

5. Provide appropriate confidentiality and privacy.

6. Provide appropriate access to education.

7. Ensure that all persons have access to informed support regarding policies, procedures, rights and responsibilities.

8. Operate with clear written expectations for conduct and handling of complaints.

9. Meet all accreditation standards.

10. Maintain and clearly state a high standard of instruction and administration in all areas of educational programs and services.

11. Are communicated in alternate forms to those who require such accommodation.

Specifically for this policy:

1. Development, renewal, quality, and documentation of curriculum are shared responsibilities of faculty members, program units, other College departments, and administration.

2. The College is responsible for stewardship in relationship to curriculum.

3. Programs and courses are intentionally designed to provide flexible pathways to completion and transfer routes for both internal and external programs.

4. Curriculum meets or exceeds national, provincial and professional and/or accreditation standards where applicable.

5. Stakeholders are engaged through consultation.

6. Regular review ensures curriculum is current and relevant.

7. Curriculum documentation is publicly available and accurate.

8. Curriculum is documented in such as a way as to respect faculty academic freedom.

9. Approval of curriculum occurs according to the governance policies of the institution primarily under the purview of Academic Council.

10. Curriculum reflects consideration of principles of Universal Design.

DEFINITIONS:

Course Curriculum Elements: components that constitute curriculum of an individual course. These include course name, acronym, number, title, description, hours, academic credits, pre and co-requisites, outcomes, topics/concepts, learning activities, student assessment, learning resources and instructor qualifications.

Credit Program: a credit program is comprised of a set number of courses that, upon completion, result in the awarding of a credential (certificate, diploma, applied degree or degree) that has received or requires Academic Council approval.

Curriculum: the aggregate of courses of study in a Program or Program of Studies and their attributes. Curriculum includes program outcomes, admission requirements, in-program requirements, graduation requirements (where applicable), map of courses to program outcomes, and course curriculum elements for each course.

Curriculum Documentation Standards: minimum required documentation for each component of curriculum.

Curriculum Standards: minimum quality requirements for each component of curriculum.

Program: official name of the credential awarded on graduation or the name of the program in the case of programs where RDC credential is not awarded (e.g. University Transfer, Academic Upgrading).

Program of Studies: a course or selection of courses that a student is enrolled in and does not necessarily result in a specific credential as an outcome.

Universal Design: the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaption or specialized design.[1]

GUIDELINES:

1. CURRICULUM DOCUMENTATION STANDARDS

The curriculum for each program, at a minimum, includes and meets the following standards: (*denotes documentation that is part of the Academic Calendar)

1.1 *__Credential or Program Name:__ Official name of the credential awarded on graduation or the name of the program in the case of programs where RDC credential is not awarded (e.g. University Transfer, Academic Upgrading).

1.2 **Program Outcomes:** Program outcomes are clear statements of what students are able to do upon completion of the program as a result of what they have learned in the program. Program outcomes:

- Represent the essential knowledge, abilities and attitudes that constitute the integrated learning needed by a graduate of the program. Usually include both general education outcomes (for example life-long learning skills, literacy) and specific program-related, field-specific knowledge, abilities and attitudes.
- Are consistent with Board Ends and College mandate.
- Are consistent with external stakeholder feedback and requirements of the field.
- May focus, in the case of non-credential programs like University Transfer or Academic Upgrading, on successful transfer or entrance to other post-secondary programs, general education outcomes and foundational content focus (e.g. within a major), rather than more specific knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Are documented and include date of last review.

1.3 ***Admission Requirements:** Admission requirements include all requirements for applicants to be clearly admitted to the program, including previous education (stating minimum standards) and other academic and non-academic requirements. Admission requirements:

- Do not contravene the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom.
- Provide accessibility and also provide for reasonable likelihood of success.
- May include requirements that reflect occupational requirements.

1.4 ***In-Program Requirements:** In-program requirements include items besides courses that are needed to progress through the program (e.g. CPR re-certification, typing speed) and include any academic standards required for progression.

1.5 *__Graduation Requirements:__ For credential programs, graduation requirements include all courses and other requirements needed to attain the credential. Suggested sequence is usually included. Graduation requirements:
- Include academic standard(s) to graduate.
- Include time restrictions for program completion if applicable.

1.6 **Program Content for Program of Studies**
For non-credential programs (such as University Transfer), program content is the suggested program of studies and sequencing based on requirements of institutions

---

[1] Center for Universal Design, North Carolina State University, 1997

receiving transfers. For Academic Upgrading, program content is the list of courses offered.

1.7 **Map of Courses to Program Outcomes:** The map of courses to program outcomes demonstrates the presence or absence of contribution by each course to each program outcome, usually expressed in a grid format. Each course does not necessarily contribute to every outcome and several courses can contribute to a single outcome. University Transfer and Academic Upgrading program areas include a map only if it provides useful information regarding curriculum.

1.8 **Curriculum Elements of Each Course:** Curriculum elements form the foundation for course outlines developed for all offerings of the course (see Course Outline Policy). Curriculum elements of each course include:

1.8.1 *Code Name*: Calendar abbreviation; 4 letters assigned by Registrar

1.8.2 *Course Number*: Current 3 digit number

1.8.3 *Course Title*: Describes the subject of the course. The course title:
- Is consistent with similar courses in the post-secondary system.
- By virtue of its generality and language, is likely to endure.
- Is brief.
- Uses key words.

1.8.4 * Course Description*: A concise summary of the nature and focus of the course intended to convey basic information to prospective students. The course description:
- Avoids stating specific content which changes frequently.
- Is often expressed in sentence fragments omitting phrases like 'the student will learn…" or "an examination of ..."
- Is written in the third person, present tense.
- Has a maximum length of 50 words unless an exception is granted by the Registrar.
- Is consistent with other course descriptions in the subject area.

Note: A separate, longer description which includes aspects such as context and significance may be included in the course outline but not the calendar.

1.8.5 * Course Hours:* Instruction time (or equivalence) expressed in hours. Hours are expressed by type of instruction. Course hours:
- Typically expressed in hours per week and number of weeks, or total hours.
- May be expressed in equivalent hours of instruction where courses are delivered using methods that are not face-to-face instruction. (See Academic Credit Assignment to Courses Policy for description of instructional hours.)

1.8.6 *Course Academic Credits*: Single number assigned to each course based on instructional hours (see Credit Assignment to Courses) and used to calculate student weighted academic average.

1.8.7 *Course Pre-Requisites and Co-Requisites*:
Pre-requisite: Usually a list of post-secondary courses the student must successfully complete before registering in the course. Pre-requisites may also

include other requirements such as high school subjects, number of credits in a program, or standard in a previous course.

Co-Requisite: Another course(s) that the student must register in at the same time as the course.

Pre/Co-Requisite: Another course(s) that must be either successfully completed before registering in the course, or at the same time as the listed course.

Pre-Requisites and Co-Requisites:

- Should consist of only those items that, by virtue of the content or the level of the course, are required for student success, or to undertake the learning activities of the course safely.
- Do not include pre-requisites of pre-requisites (e.g. if a 200 level course is required for a 300 level course; do not list the 100 level course that is the pre-requisite for the 200 level course).

1.8.8 *Course Learning Outcomes:* Intended course learning outcomes comprised of specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be mastered by learners upon the successful completion of a course. Course outcomes:

- Describe all the significant and essential learning in the course.
- Are measureable and therefore, amenable to assessment.
- Form the basis for identifying important concepts and designing learning and student assessment.
- Align with program outcomes.

1.8.9 *Course Topics/Concepts:* Categories or clusters of knowledge and skills that form significant units of the course. Major topics/concepts:

- May be expressed as a definitive list or examples of major topics/concepts.
- Allow for faculty choice regarding specific content where possible.

1.8.10 *Learning Activities:* General statements regarding the types of learning activities students can expect. Learning activities:

- Align with the course learning outcomes.
- Include, for example, lecture, in-class group work, context-based learning seminars, on-line learning, self-directed learning, group projects, labs, clinical, field work, field trips.
- May be highly specified or expressed as a range of possible learning activities.
- Allow for faculty and student choice regarding structuring of learning where possible.

1.8.11 *Assessment:* General statements regarding the types of assessments students can expect. Student assessment:

- Align with the course learning outcomes.
- May address some general education program outcomes that are not specifically included in course learning outcomes (e.g. writing skills, ethics, critical thinking).
- May be highly specified or expressed as a range of possible types of student assessment.
- Allow for choice regarding the specifics of assessment where possible.

1.8.12 Course Grading Method: Statement of grading method e.g. Letter Grading System, Credit/No-Credit. (See Assessment and Grading Policy.)

1.8.13 Learning Resources: List of the types of learning resources that are used in the course. Specific titles are not required: description should convey principles underlying choice of resources (e.g. introductory Microeconomics text with Canadian focus).

*1.8.14 *Prior Learning Assessment Status:* Statement that the course is or is not available for Prior Learning Assessment. (See Assessment and Grading Policy, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Policy)

1.9 **Transfer Arrangements:** Transfer arrangements are documented by the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT). Programs document, as part of the curriculum record, current block transfer arrangements with other institutions, but not course level transfer arrangements. Programs are responsible for currency and accuracy of transfer arrangements documented by ACAT.

1.10 **Minimum and Preferred Instructor Qualifications:** Minimum and preferred instructor qualifications are to be included at the course or program level.

2. CURRICULUM DOCUMENTATION STANDARDS

2.1 Deans, or their designate, are responsible for submission, review and revision of curriculum documentation to ensure accuracy and currency, subject to academic governance provisions.

2.2 Each aspect of the curriculum above is archived by the Registrar in a centralized system.

2.3 Documentation of curriculum is available to the public.

2.4 Complete documentation that meets the minimum standards is required for new programs.

2.5 The Curriculum Committee considers the content, accuracy and currency of curriculum documentation when making program and course change recommendations to Academic Council.

3. CURRICULUM REVIEW

3.1 Curriculum for each program is formally reviewed on a regular basis as required by the Comprehensive Program Review (Program Review Policy). (See Appendix 1)

3.2 Recommendations of the Comprehensive Program Review may include changes to the curriculum.

3.3 Changes are effected through the governance processes of RDC.

PROCEDURE:

1. School Council recommends the approval of all curriculum elements included in the Academic Calendar (all those items marked with an asterisk in Guidelines, Section 1). School Council approves all other components of curriculum.

2. The Dean or designate of the Program submits School Council approved additions, updates, and changes to the records, and submits program and course changes to Curriculum Committee.

3. The Dean or designate of the Program submits editorial changes to the Registrar. Editorial changes to curriculum include those that correct errors, clarify written text and provide shared meaning. Requests for editorial changes to correct spelling, grammar, punctuation and adding new approved transfer agreements are submitted to the Registrar for updating of the Academic Calendar.

4. Curriculum Committee reviews submissions and recommends the submission to Academic Council for approval.

5. Academic Council approves all changes to the Academic Calendar.

6. The Registrar makes all of the curriculum record available to the public, using the Academic Calendar and whatever other means necessary.

7. Curriculum for each program is formally reviewed as part of a Comprehensive Program Review and in accordance with the Program Review Policy.

   7.1 Program outcomes are reviewed and documented with stakeholder input specifically related to program outcomes.

   7.2 Curriculum review and recommendations are included in the Comprehensive Program Review Report to the Dean, who submits the report to the Program and Service Review Committee

   7.3 Change to the curriculum is based on Report recommendations, context and best practices according to the governance processes of RDC.

   7.4 Appendix 1 includes process guidelines for the Curriculum Review portion of the Comprehensive Program Review, including special considerations for programs without RDC credentials.

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: Chair of Academic Council

RECOMMENDING AUTHORITY: Academic Council

CONSULTATION FOR REVIEW: Deans' Council, School Councils, Academic Policy Committee, Curriculum Committee, Center for Teaching and Learning, Registrar, Academic Program Development Manager

POLICY REVIEW DATE: November 2019

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2015

REVISION HISTORY: July 1, 2011 (Curriculum for Credit Programs Policy)
                             July 1, 2015 (renamed Curriculum Standards for Credit Programs Policy)

RELATED POLICIES:
- Program Development and Redevelopment for Credit Programs Policy
- Academic Credit Assignment to Courses Policy
- Final Examination Policy
- Assessment and Grading Policy

- Programs: Advice from Stakeholders Policy
- Program Review Policy
- Course Outline Policy
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
- Universal Design Policy
- Academic Freedom

CONNECTION TO BOARD POLICIES:
All RDC policies support relevant Board of Governors policies.

Appendix I

Curriculum Review Process Guidelines

<u>Review Process</u>

1. Gather and analyze initial Program Review information:
   With the assistance of a Learning Designer, identify themes and trends.

2. Define the scope and method of Curriculum Review: (Programs may complete partial curriculum reviews for specific purposes, apart from the Comprehensive Program Review. Activities completed in such reviews should be considered in planning for the Curriculum Review associated with the Comprehensive Program Review.) Scope includes:

   a. Review of Program Outcomes and Course Alignment
      (Required) Work with a Learning Designer to:
      - Map current courses to program outcomes. If program outcomes are not written, then faculty should draft outcomes and then create a current map.
      - Look for issues: gaps or overlaps in program, significant course activity not captured in outcomes.
      - Redraft outcomes. Validate outcomes with stakeholders and revise outcomes as required.
      - Resolve gaps and overlaps of courses as required.
      - Revise course curriculum elements (title, calendar description, hours, credits, pre and co-requisites, course outcomes, major topics/concepts, learning activities, student assessment, learning resources) as required.

3. Additional <u>priority</u> curriculum review projects based on analysis of data in #1 may be undertaken. Priorities should take into account program viability, College strategic directions, and resource implications, and should be approved by the Dean.

4. Summarize review and include in the Comprehensive Program Review report. Include summary and validation of recommendations.

5. Submit changes through approval processes if required: e.g. School Council, Academic Council (Curriculum Committee) budget.

6. Update curriculum documentation.

<u>Special Cases</u>
University Transfer Programs, Career and Academic Preparation program: Reviewing a program area that does not confer an RDC credential requires some creative approaches. The program proposes a methodology to be approved by the Dean or designate.

Example 1: University Transfer program outcomes are mostly general education outcomes that prepare students to successfully continue to senior years, along with foundational knowledge in a major. Mapping to these kinds of outcomes are supplemented with external benchmarking through consultation with receiving institutions. E.g. Receiving institutions could be asked for their most recent course outlines. They could be asked if major changes are planned for the near future

Example 2: Career and Academic Preparation may have some general education outcomes to prepare students for further education, but the students in the courses are in CAP or Open Studies, which really aren't programs. In this case, the curriculum element of courses within subject streams (along with other student success initiatives) may be more important than program outcomes. External benchmarking through comparison with high school subject outcomes and consultation with receiving programs is needed. Other priority review projects may be more significant.

<u>Resources for Reviews</u>

Dean
Associate Dean
Center for Teaching and Learning
Strategic Planning and Analysis
Program Administration and Faculty
Registrar
Curriculum Committee
Academic Program Development Manager