

Program Structure & Definitions	
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Recommended by: Academic Council	
Associated Documents Graduation and Completion Procedure	

PURPOSE

The Program Structure & Definitions policy governs the development, documentation, and delivery of programs to satisfy established quality standards. It has defined academic criteria that certificate, diploma, applied degree, and baccalaureate degree programs must satisfy.

SCOPE

This policy applies to credit programs.

POLICY

Curriculum and programs are designed in accordance with the institutional mandate and with oversight by Advanced Education including, but not limited to, Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) guidelines, the Alberta Credential Framework (ACF), the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework, Accreditation bodies, and institutional policies.

Principles

1. Curriculum is informed by the mission, vision, and values of the institution; principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion; and the commitment to the CiCan Indigenous Protocol and the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.
2. Programs and curriculum are planned, developed, delivered, and reviewed in accordance with the Program Quality Assurance Policy.

1. Program Definitions

Advanced Certificate: Successful completion of published graduation requirements normally consisting of 30 credits where admission is based on completion of a post-secondary credential.

After Degree: A student who has accepted an offer of admission to a second degree at Red Deer Polytechnic (RDP) after being awarded a first is considered to be in an 'After Degree' arrangement. Considerations for residency, transfer credit will be part of the institutional decision.

Apprenticeship: A post-secondary education program consisting of on-the-job and classroom instruction.

Bachelor's Degree (four-year): Successful completion of published graduation requirements for an approved Program of Study normally consisting of at least 120 credits of academic credit.

Bachelor's Degree (Honours): At least 120 credits of academic credit with a particular focus of specialization. An Honours program within a Major provides additional research experience to students in a 4-year Degree; however academic requirements for admission, continuation, and graduation are higher than those for the general program.

Bachelor's Degree with an Applied Focus: Normally the completion of a diploma plus up to 60 academic credits earned through one year of study and one year of work experience or the completion of 90 academic credits with 30 credits of applied study for a total of at least 120 credits.

Certificate: Successful completion of published graduation requirements for an approved Program of Study normally consisting of 30 credits of academic study or completion of a Career Development program.

Certificate of Attendance: For compliance with the attendance expectations of a prescribed non-credit learning activity or for participation in a credit program offered at RDP in collaboration with another credential-granting post-secondary institution.

Certificate of Completion: Successful completion of the final year of an Apprenticeship program.

Credit Program: Programs approved for delivery by Red Deer Polytechnic under the Programs of Study Regulation with a prescribed set of courses or academic credit. Completion results in the awarding of a credential that has received or requires Academic Council approval.

Diploma: Successful completion of published graduation requirements for an approved Program of Study normally consisting of 60 credits of academic study.

Diploma in University Transfer Studies: Successful completion of the equivalent of 60 university transfer credits.

Dual Degree: The combining of two degree programs based on a set of prescribed courses as determined by the Schools and approved by Academic Council.

Embedded Certificates: A certificate students can take during the completion of their regular degree program that defines a specific area of focus within their degree program. There are no additional fees assessed for courses taken towards an embedded certificate other than those that would normally apply to those courses.

High School Equivalency Diploma: Successful completion of published graduation requirements in the Academic Upgrading program.

Joint Degree: A partnership with an accredited institution allowing students, registered at another institution, to complete a portion of an RDP degree.

Non-credit Program: All on-campus and off-campus courses, programs, and learning activities such as Corporate Training, Extended Education programs, and Micro-credentials.

Program Core: The Program Core is a set of prescribed Courses and requirements within a program that defines the primary area of study or major. Courses taken to satisfy this component of the program may not also be used to satisfy requirements in either of the other categories. Program Core Requirements are detailed in the Academic Calendar for each program.

Second Degree: 2nd Bachelor's degree after the conferment of the 1st Bachelor's degree upon completion of an additional 60 credits. Considerations for residency and transfer credit will be part of the institutional decision.

2. Course Definitions

Cognate Course: A course from outside the Major but is complementary in expanding the breadth and depth of knowledge and skills within the program.

Credit Course: A series of learning opportunities within a specific subject area to which academic credit is assigned on the basis of the number and type of instructional hours. Normally credit courses may range from one to six credits in weight.

Cross-listed Course: A course that is offered by more than one discipline or department but has the same content and in which students should expect to have the same learning experience. Students cannot receive credit for both courses.

Electives: A series of unrestricted courses that may be used to satisfy program requirements.

Junior Courses: Junior Courses are normally defined as 1st year courses (normally numbered 1000). Some second year courses (normally numbered 2000) may be defined as Junior if they are foundational in nature.

Senior Courses: Senior courses are 2nd year or above and are normally numbered 2000, 3000, 4000). Senior courses may or may not have pre-requisites.

Concentration: A concentration represents an increased focus on a particular discipline or area of interest. Concentrations are comprised of no less than 18 academic credits (normally 6 courses) and no more than 30 academic credits (normally 10 courses) from prescribed courses (including option courses). The designation of the Concentration will normally appear on the transcript and the parchment.

Major: Normally a Major is a first level of specialization in a degree program. Majors are comprised of a set number of courses with no less than 42 academic credits (14 x 3 credit courses) of which a prescribed number are at the senior level (2000 level or higher). The number of academic credits for a Major may vary by program type. To add a Major requires ministerial approval. The designated Major will appear on the transcript and may appear on the parchment.

Normally a Major is comprised of courses within the same discipline and may be referred to as a *specialization*.

Majors within an interdisciplinary program are comprised primarily from courses with the same course code but may include Cognate courses.

Teaching Majors are prescribed for Bachelor of Education degrees and may have specific requirements.

Minor: A minor is lower-level area of focus outside the Major. A minor is comprised of a set number of courses with no less than 12 academic credits (4 x 3 credit courses) and no more than 30 academic credits (10 x 3 credit courses) from prescribed courses. Minors will normally include a combination of junior and senior courses. To add a Minor no ministerial approval is required. The designation of the Minor will appear on the transcript but not on the parchment. Teaching Minors are prescribed for Bachelor of Education degrees and may have specific requirements.

Option Course: A series of restricted courses allowing for some choice within the program.

Specialization: A specialization is synonymous with a Major in a four year degree program, and it can also be referred to as a Concentration. The distinguishing factor is whether it is a first or second level of specialization within the degree. First level specialization is defined as the program Major which requires ministerial approval. Second level specializations do not require ministerial approval allowing the approval of new concentrations through the internal governance process.

Program Restrictions:

Minors:

- Minors must be constructed to ensure students can complete them without taking additional courses outside the Minor.
- Courses in the Major/Concentration may not be used towards the Minor (and vice versa); Elective/Option courses can be used for the Minor
- No More than 50% of courses in the minor can be at the Junior/1st Year Level (normally 1000 and possibly 2000 level).
- Senior course requirements, if any, are listed with each Minor.
- Student access to Minors may not be guaranteed
- Students may pursue a maximum of two (2) Minors in a degree program
- No more than 50% of the courses used to satisfy one (1) Minor may be used to satisfy requirements for a second Minor.

Wellness Requirements

- Students in some programs may have Wellness Course Elective Requirements. Wellness Electives cannot be used to satisfy Major course requirements.

Indigenous Knowledge and Perspective Requirements

- Students in some programs may have an Indigenous Knowledge

Double Majors

- Discipline choices for a Double Major must be made within a single degree.

- All core requirements must be met for each Major in a manner approved by the Dean or Delegate.
- Electives can be used to satisfy requirements for a Double Major.
- Normally there is no time limit on application of credit toward an RDP credential for any Course completed at RDP.
- Externally completed courses are assessed through the Transfer Credit Procedure with a 10-year limitation.
- Some programs (see Academic Calendar) have different limitations.
- Time limitations may be imposed if Course content is particularly time-sensitive.

EXEMPTIONS FROM PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

In cases where there are demonstrable accreditation requirements that would necessitate an exemption from the stated definitions, programs may apply to Academic Council for a modification of the Program Definition requirements. Where such modifications are necessary, they should be made while retaining as much of the normally prescribed Program Definition requirements as possible.

RELATED POLICIES

Admission to Credit Programs

Assignment of Academic and Billing Credits

Graduation and Completion

Program Quality Assurance

Recognition of Prior Learning and Transfer Credit