

Athabasca University General Faculties Council

Academic Planning, Policy, and Standards Committee (APPSC)

Terms of Reference

Approved July 09, 2015 (GFC Motion 27-06)

The *Post-Secondary Learning Act* gives the Athabasca University General Faculties Council (GFC) responsibility, subject to the authority of The Governors of Athabasca University (Board), over “academic affairs” (section 26(1)), including the ability to delegate (section 26(3)).

Further, the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* (sections 60(1)(c) and (d)) gives the Board authority over certain admission requirements and rules respecting "enrolment of students to take courses". The Board has delegated its authority over these areas to GFC. GFC has thus established an Academic Planning, Policy, and Standards Committee (APPSC) and has delegated certain powers to APPSC.

The complete wording of the section(s) of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, as referred to above, should be checked in any instance where formal jurisdiction needs to be determined.

APPSC is responsible to GFC for the specific matters itemized below, but may also be asked to consider or recommend to GFC on any academic issue, including 1) those issues under the purview of other GFC committees, or 2) issues linked to academic service units where those issues have a significant academic impact. In like manner, the President, Vice-President Academic, or other Vice-Presidents may refer any matter to APPSC for consideration or recommendation to GFC. APPSC is also responsible to GFC for promoting an optimal learning environment for students and excellence in teaching, research, and graduate studies.

APPSC has the following powers and duties:

1. Planning, Policies, and Priorities

- a. Recommend to GFC on planning, policies, and priorities with respect to the University's longer term academic development.

2. Faculties, Centres, and Departments

- a. Recommend to GFC on the establishment, termination, or merger of faculties, centres, and departments.
- b. Receive and discuss recommendations from the President or the Vice-President, Academic concerning reviews of faculties, centres, or departments and to consider and recommend appropriate action.
- c. Recommend to GFC and the Board on proposals to change the names of faculties, centres, and departments.

3. Academic Programs

- a. Recommend to GFC on the establishment of new academic programs at Athabasca University or those administered in cooperation with other post-secondary institutions.
- b. Recommend to GFC on all proposals for establishment of undergraduate and graduate degree specializations.
- c. Recommend to GFC on new majors, new degree credentials and substantive degree program changes.

- d. Approve proposals for minor changes to existing undergraduate and graduate programs (e.g., new degree designation, new curriculum, new certificates or diplomas, name change, degree FLE change, new thesis/course route) unless, in the opinion of the VPA, the committee should recommend to GFC concerning the proposal.
- e. Recommend to GFC on the termination of academic programs at Athabasca University or those administered in cooperation with other post-secondary institutions.
- f. Approve changes affecting broad academic and access aspects of all degrees, university certificates, diplomas, concentrations, or programs. These changes include any change in the core courses, cross-listing of courses, and changes in other course and program requirements.
- g. Approve policies and regulations for awarding credentials.
- h. Approve policies and procedures for the evaluation and review of the quality of courses and programs. Report to GFC on all matters related to the quality and integrity of the university's programs of study.
- i. Approve the criteria and processes for the review of undergraduate and graduate programs.

4. Admission and Transfer, Academic Standing, Marking and Grading, Examinations

- a. Approve admission criteria of students to the University's programs.
- b. Approve all proposals from the faculties or the administration related to admission and transfer, to the academic standing of students, and to institutional marking and grading policies.
- c. Approve routine and/or editorial changes to both admission/transfer policies and academic standing regulations, and act for GFC in approving all proposals for:
 - i. changes to examination regulations, and
 - ii. changes to the University calendar schedule
- d. Respond to proposals that may affect the admission or transfer of students to Athabasca University.
- e. Approve either of the following kinds of proposed changes to courses recommended or required for admission:
 - i. a course previously recommended for admission is now required for admission; or
 - ii. a course previously required for admission is now only recommended for admission

5. Teaching and Learning

- a. Report to GFC on broad policy directions and initiatives for excellence in teaching and learning.

6. Other

- a. Recommend to GFC on any other matter deemed by APPSC to be within the purview of its general responsibility.
- b. Biannually review the Terms of Reference for the Committee and recommend any changes to GFC.
- c. Where the Chair of APPSC deems it necessary, a special meeting of the Committee shall be called to deal with urgent matters.