

Guidelines:

Enrolment Planning

These guidelines offer advice about enrolment projections and other enrolment considerations in support of the development of comprehensive proposals for submission to the ministry.

Enrolment planning is an essential component of programming development. Such planning follows from institutional research and findings related to student and labour market demand considerations.

Enrolment planning should also be closely linked with budget forecasting, with institutions harmonizing enrolment projections with tuition revenue forecasts for accuracy and fit.

The ministry is committed to a review and approval process that includes consideration of enrolment planning (in relation to student and labour market demand) as a measure of program viability and sustainability.

Scope

These enrolment planning guidelines pertain to program proposals submitted by institutions to the ministry through the Provider and Program Registry System (PAPRS). These proposals can be for non-credential, certificate, diploma, and degree programs in matters concerning:

- new programs;
- new specializations; and
- reactivations of suspended programs and specializations.

Enrolment plans include projections related to:

- headcounts (full-time and part-time); and
- graduates.

In proposals for non-credential programming, projected numbers of completers are substituted for projected numbers of graduates.

Guiding Principles

- Enrolment planning should be reflective of government priorities and values related to accessibility, affordability, coordination, and accountability.
- Enrolment forecasting is a complex process that should be linked to student and labour market demand factors.
- Enrolment forecasting is based on assumptions as identified by institutions.
- Enrolment planning is an iterative and collaborative process.
- Enrolment planning is part of a comprehensive enrolment management process designed to achieve and maintain optimal recruitment and retention of students within the broad context of student success and institutional mandate and mission.
- Enrolment plans should be realistic, attainable, and specific.

Pre-Planning Considerations

Prior to setting enrolment targets for a new program or specialization, institutions should consider a variety of factors and questions. Examples include:

- What is the appropriate projection in view of student and labour market demand?
- What is the appropriate projection in view of classroom/facility space and teaching capacity?
- What is the appropriate projection in view of availability of work integrated learning placements?
- What is the appropriate projection given enrolment data in similar programs?
- What are the relevant demographic considerations?
- What is the appropriate mix of students?
- What are the funding considerations?
- What are the likely impacts on other programs?
- What risks can be identified and mitigated?

Displaying Projections

Institutions should adhere to the following general guidelines in projections included in proposals.

- Enrolment projections should be displayed in table form with a five-year timeframe.
- Enrolment projections should be displayed by headcount.
- Enrolment projections should be sub-categorized by year of study when appropriate (e.g., a diploma program should include Year 1 and Year 2 of study). Year of study may not be applicable for non-credential programs and particular delivery modes.
- Projections for numbers of graduates should be displayed in table form with a five-year timeframe for certificates, diplomas, and degrees.
- Projections for numbers of completers should be displayed for non-credentials, when appropriate.
- Proposals should indicate the percentage of international students in the enrolment projections, in cases where international student enrolment is anticipated.
- Proposals should indicate the rationale regarding how the percentage of international students was established.
- An additional enrolment table should be included when proposing a new major or specialization within an existing approved program or non-credential. For these proposals, the comprehensive enrolment table should:
 - display typical enrolment and graduate number projections for the whole program, including all majors/specializations; and
 - include headcounts.

Institutions should discuss this requirement with a staff in the Program Design and System Innovation unit in cases where questions arise or to determine relevancy in particular proposal circumstances.

Clarifying Assumptions and Rationale

In proposals, it is important for institutions to provide clear rationales for how enrolment projections were established. In particular, institutions should identify assumptions upon which enrolment projections were based, including assumptions about:

- student transfers into program (when applicable); and
- international enrolments.

In addition, institutions should explain what enrolment impacts are anticipated for other programs within their institution as well as for other programs within the Alberta Adult Learning System.

In cases of new majors/specializations, institutions should explain how the proposed major/specialization enrolment plan relates to and links with the overall program enrolment plan.

Institutions should identify if particular constituencies of students are targeted (e.g., indigenous students) and show linkages with admission criteria or practices (when applicable).

Identifying and Mitigating Risks

Enrolment plans should include information outlining identified risks and strategies undertaken to mitigate the identified risks. For example, in cases where enrolment plans include significant percentage of international students, institutions should clarify how the risk of domestic student displacement will be mitigated.

Further Information and Assistance

For additional information contact:

Director, Program Design and System Innovation

Alberta Advanced Education

780-643-9472

Related Guidelines:

- Reactivations

Other related documents:

- PAPRS
Templates

To obtain a copy of other guideline documents, or to ensure that you have the most recent copy of this guideline, please send a request via email to ae.psp-paprs@gov.ab.ca.