Guidelines:
Proposal Timelines

These guidelines provide information and advice about timelines associated with the ministry's program review and approval requirements.

Post-secondary institutions and the department are committed to program review and approval processes that are timely and efficient.

The department publishes timeline information to clarify expectations about proposal submission and review timeframes. A variety of factors influence how expeditiously proposals can be reviewed and processed.

Scope

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

- new programs and specializations;
- program change;
- suspensions, terminations, or reactivations;
- program recording (apprenticeship);
- program brokering; and
- program transfer.

Guiding Principles

- Proposal review processes should proceed expeditiously so that institutions can anticipate and respond to changing labour market demands and innovations occurring in business, industry, and research fields.

- Institutions require sufficient lead time prior to implementation and following approval in order to promote programs, register students, and deploy resources.

- Review processes should be of sufficient duration to support a thorough system coordination review.

- Review processes should be of sufficient duration to accommodate stakeholder consultation and peer review.

- Review processes should be of sufficient duration to accommodate reviewer feedback and institutional response.

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Timeline Requirements

Proposals can be submitted at any time throughout the year. The table below should be used as a guideline to ensure that proposals are submitted with sufficient time to allow for both proposal review and institutional preprations for delivery of program.

Institutions should submit proposals according to timeline requirements and deadlines.

Proposal Type	Submission Timeline Requirements	Submission Deadline
New Degrees*	18 months prior to implementation	January 1 of the year prior to proposed implementation
New Certificates New Diplomas New Non-Credentials	6 months prior to implementation	January 1
Suspensions	3 months prior to implementation	March 1
Terminations	3 months prior to implementation	March 1
Reactivations	4 months prior to implementation	March 1
Program Brokering	3 months prior to implementation	March 1
Program Transfer	3 months prior to implementation	March 1
Program Changes	4 months prior to implementation	March 1
Program Recording (apprenticeships only)	3 months prior to implementation	April 1

*Reviews of degrees include quality reviews by Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC).

Submission deadlines falling on the first day of the month should be interpreted as requiring submission in the first week of institutional operations during that month, since institutions may be closed or observing holidays on first days of particular months.

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Effective Dates and Implementation Dates

Institutions are encouraged to submit completed proposals well in advance of proposed implementation dates, whenever practicable.

The department reviews proposal submissions throughout the year regardless of proposal submission dates; however, when proposal submissions fall outside of suggested timelines, effective dates may involve a negotiated process and require adjustments.

The department uses July 1 as a standard effective date for approved programs recorded in PAPRS. Although effective dates can be adapted when circumstances warrant (e.g., some institutional proposals designate January 1 as effective dates), program effective dates will only be backdated in exceptional circumstances.

The department uses June 30 as the standard end date for program suspension.

System Co-ordination Review

The department typically can conduct review and approval processes in a timely fashion according to published timeframes and deadlines.

Proposals can take longer to review and approve in cases where:

- proposals concern emerging technologies and/or novel programs of study;

- there is insufficient and/or unclear information;

- there is a lack of supporting evidence and/or documentation; and/or

- the Deputy Minister requests additional consultation or follow-up.

Proposal reviews and approvals can exceed the above minimum timeframes published above depending on:

- the response time of post-secondary institutions to questions that arise;

- the additional review time required following additional material submitted in response to information requests; and/or

- the response time of the department in formulating recommendations.

Institutions can choose to withdraw proposals and resubmit them at a later date in cases where significant time is required for substantive proposal revisions. In some cases, the department may request institutions to withdraw proposals (and potentially resubmit later) in cases where:

- review processes have extended beyond 18 months in duration; and/or

- system co-ordination materials and analyses have become outdated.

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CAQC Review

Degree programs require quality reviews of Part B proposals in addition to system co-ordination reviews of Part A proposals. CAQC publishes a handbook and posts information on its website concerning quality review processes.

Reviews of degree proposals conducted by CAQC may proceed in one of three ways:

- full review;
- partially expedited review; or
- fully expedited review.

Fully expedited reviews typically require shorter review periods than full reviews.

Follow-Up and Recommendation

Following a CAQC recommendation for degree proposals, additional system co-ordination processes may be required, particularly in cases where the quality review has resulted in changes impacting program resourcing, program load/duration, etc.

The follow-up and recommendation phase of program review and approval typically occurs within a one-month period. (Timelines can be extended in cases where the Deputy Minister solicits additional input, consults across ministries, or requires deferral of the program proposal adjudication.)

Approval letters include information concerning approved effective dates, tuition and fees regulation compliance matters, and other conditions.

Further Information and Assistance

For additional information contact:

Director, Program Design and System Innovation

Alberta Advanced Education

780-643-9472

Related Guidelines:

- Suspensions
- Terminations
- Program Recording
- Reactivations
- Program Transfer

Other related documents:

- Adult Learning System Principles
- PAPRS Templates
- Schedule of Institutional Accountability Data Submissions, Alberta Advanced Education
- CAQC Handbook

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

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