

Guidelines: Reactivations

These guidelines identify considerations and offer advice to support the development of proposals for reactivation of a program or a specialization (major) within a program following a ministry-approved suspension period.

The ministry requires institutions to seek approval for reactivations following suspensions of ministry-approved programs or specializations since such reactivations represent a shift in system offerings.

The ministry reviews reactivation proposals to:

- ascertain if the issue that necessitated the suspension has been comprehensively addressed; and
- ensure that system offerings remain reflective of the needs and interests of current and prospective students and in alignment with institutional mandates and Campus Alberta priorities.

Reactivation approvals also ensure that institutional offerings remain aligned with the Provider and Program Registry System (PAPRS), on which many ministry departments (including Alberta Student Aid) and systems (e.g., LERS, ASI, and PFD) depend for their operations.

Scope

All categories of ministry-approved programming fall under the requirement for institutions to request ministry authorization for program reactivation, including non-credentials, certificates, diplomas, applied degrees, and degrees.

Guiding Principles

- Advance planning and transparent communications are important underpinnings of effective program reactivation decision-making.
- Consultation processes are key to effective planning and implementation.
- Program reactivations are part of larger institutional planning processes.
- Proposed program reactivations should be supported by appropriate rationale as they have potential impacts for the Alberta post-secondary system and its stakeholders.
- Programming reactivations should align with the institution's mandate and role within the Campus Alberta system and should not expose to risk the institution's ability to carry out that mandate.

Assessment of Proposals

Reviews of program reactivation proposals differ from those for new program proposals since these reviews are premised on the fact that these programs have previously undergone a system coordination review and gained ministry approval.

Although the primary purpose of a review of a reactivation proposal is to ensure that the original issue(s) requiring the suspension have been satisfactorily addressed, reviews of proposals will also assess the degree to which:

- there continues to be demand for the program from learners and employers;
- program costs remain viable and sustainable for both students and the institution; and
- the program continues to align with the vision, values, and priorities of the Alberta post-secondary learning system.

The level of scrutiny given to these other aspects of a reactivation proposal will be primarily contingent on:

- the length of time since the program has been delivered to students; and
- if there have been any significant changes during the period of suspension to the institution or population which the program serves that might affect delivery of or demand for the program.

In cases where the program has been suspended for an extended period of time, particularly when significant changes in the landscape of post-secondary programming or in the provincial economy have occurred, a comprehensive proposal (similar to those submitted for new programs) may be required.

Institutions are advised to consult with the Post-Secondary Programs branch in these instances so an appropriate course of action can be developed.

Differentiating Program Reactivation Proposals from New Program Proposals

In certain cases, revisions to a program during the period of suspension may be significant enough that the department will advise an institution that the reactivation proposal should be submitted as a new program proposal (in the appropriate credential category).

Changes to a program that may be significant enough to qualify as a new program include:

- changes to the credential conferred to graduates;
- significant modifications in program learning outcomes; and
- changes to credit loads and/or method of delivery for the program.

In cases of uncertainty regarding the appropriate proposal type, institutions are advised to consult with the Post-Secondary Programs branch.

Comprehensive and Integrated Planning

The ministry expects that proposed program reactivations are part of a broader strategic programming plan and, as such, are reflected in the Comprehensive Institutional Plans that institutions submit annually to the ministry. While there will be cases in which unforeseen circumstances necessitate changes in programming not identified previously, these instances should be relatively rare.

Institutions should consult with the Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) in cases where a degree program was previously reviewed and recommended by CAQC.

Timeline Considerations

Institutions should submit program reactivation proposals at least four months in advance of a July 1 effective date. Failure to submit a timely proposal may result in the proposed reactivation being deferred to the start of the following academic year (see Guidelines: Proposal Timelines for detailed information).

Institutions should submit reactivation proposals with a start date of July 1 to align with system-wide protocols. In special cases where circumstances warrant, alternate start dates can be accommodated.

Institutions are able to submit program reactivation proposals earlier than program suspension end dates under specific conditions. Institutions who may wish to do so should consult with the department prior to submitting a proposal.

Formulating a Rationale

Institutions should provide a compelling rationale for requesting a program reactivation that comprehensively address the original issue(s) that necessitated the suspension of the program. This rationale should include:

- background information on the prior suspension request, sufficient so that governance committees and department reviewers can understand the full scope and context of the original situation;
- a comprehensive explanation of how the issues necessitating this suspension have been addressed, with supporting documentation (when applicable); and
- an account of the benefits that the reactivated program offers learners and other stakeholders that justify its addition to institutional and system offerings.

In cases where financial considerations necessitated the original suspension, a detailed budgetary plan should be included as part of the proposal.

Other Reactivation Considerations

The department requests information on student and labour market demand for the program, as well as enrolment and budgetary plans, as part of reactivation proposals.

The information required is typically less comprehensive than that for new program proposals. This information is needed, however, to demonstrate financial viability and sustainability and to document enrolment plans and student pathways.

Reactivated programs are still subject to the Tuition Fee Regulation.

Consultations and Internal Approvals

Depending on the kind of program and specific circumstances of the proposal, institutions may also need to document consultations undertaken with:

- regulatory, accreditation, and quality assurance bodies;
- professional and industry associations; and
- advisory committees.

When appropriate, institutions should provide information about the kinds of consultations that occurred, dates of the consultations, and a summary of the feedback received. Attaching relevant documentation such as meeting minutes or survey results is also useful.

Institutions should conduct an internal proposal review and approval process in compliance with their own institutional policies and governance committee mandate prior to submitting a reactivation proposal to the ministry. Proposals should include:

- names of the approving committees or executive officer; and
- the dates of approval.

Communicating the Programming Change

Institutions should develop a communications plan so that stakeholders are appropriately advised of the reactivation.

Institutions should follow their internal policies and practices concerning website notices, calendar information updates, and key institutional planning documents.

Further Information and Assistance

For additional information contact:

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Related Guidelines:

- Suspensions
- Proposal Timelines
- Program Learning Outcomes
- Enrolment Planning

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.